



THE COALITION TO PROTECT AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

— VOICES OF EXPERIENCE —

In This Brief

2019 Annual Report

Award Winners

NEPA Changes

Amicus Brief

Leasing Reform

More on Ebikes

Sochan Gathering

2019 Annual Report

2019 was a busy year for the Coalition and you can see the actions and issues we tackled in this year's Annual Report. You can view the electronic version of the report [here](#) but keep an eye on your mailbox - a hard copy should arrive soon!

Award Winners

Business Office
Reminder

What We're
Reading and
Tracking

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The George Hartzog Award is given to an individual who demonstrates outstanding support for the mission of the National Park Service or National Park System. This year, the Coalition has selected two winners: Roxanne Quimby and Kate Cannon.

The 1872 award is given to an individual for outstanding service and support for the mission of the Coalition. This year, the Coalition has selected Rick Smith as the winner.

Congrats to all of our award winners. For more information on their incredible contributions to the National Park System and/or the Coalition, please click the link in the box below.

2019 Award Winners

Proposed Changes to NEPA

The current administration recently proposed sweeping changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will impact all federal agencies, including the National Park Service. Coalition Chair Phil Francis issued a [statement](#), condemning the proposed changes, saying "NEPA exists to ensure that there is proper review of proposed projects and provides an opportunity for the public to comment; the



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Membership Update

The Coalition's membership currently stands at 1,762 members.

proposed changes will harm both objectives." Coalition member and NEPA expert Judith Hazen Connery supported this view in her [recent oped](#), which ran in *Newsweek*.

The Coalition also submitted a letter requesting an extension of the comment period for the proposed NEPA changes in order to "accommodate additional public hearings as well as allow the Coalition and other interested parties to adequately assess the implications" of the revisions. Read our full letter below.

NEPA Extension Letter

Legal Actions

We joined our partners at NPCA, as well as Jon Jarvis, former NPS Director, and Pam Underhill, former Superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, in filing an amicus brief to the Supreme Court of the United States, voicing our strong opposition to Dominion Energy's plan to run a pipeline through the Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway. This action would be in a clear violation of the Mineral Leasing Act and other long-standing laws that protect our national parks from irresponsible development. Coalition Chair Phil Francis issued a [joint statement](#) with our partners, stating "Dominion Energy's proposed path for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline jeopardizes that

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protection and years of hard work by Parkway superintendents over the past 50 years." The full text of the brief is found in the link in the box below.

AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF

Oil and Gas Leasing Reform

Senator Cortez Masto recently introduced **legislation** to end the leasing of land with low to no oil and gas potential. "Leasing lands with little to no potential for drilling, in many cases on the doorstep of our national parks, impacts wildlife habitat and negatively affects the visitor experience," Coalition Chair Phil Francis said in a statement. "Senator Cortez Masto's legislation would put an end to this harmful practice."

The Coalition is also actively supporting HR 3225 - Restoring Community Input and Public Protections in Oil and Gas Leasing Act. Coalition Executive Council member Sarah Bransom submitted **this** Letter to the Editor, encouraging Colorado Representative Neguse to cosponsor and support the legislation.

Ebike Debate Continues

The Coalition expressed concern about the NPS decision to allow the use of electrical bicycles (“ebikes”) on designated bike trails at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and the proposal to allow the use of ebikes on designated bike trails at units of the National Park System in Alaska. These decisions are in conflict with existing NPS regulations. Click [here](#) to read our letter to Cuyahoga National Park and click the box below to read our letter to the Alaska region.

Alaska Park Ebike Comments

Comments on Sochan Gathering

The Coalition previously submitted [comments](#) on the Environmental Assessment - Sochan Gathering for Traditional Purposes by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In January, we submitted additional comments about the proposed amendment to the General Agreement. The Coalition believes it is critical to ensure that any collecting is done in a sustainable way that leaves the park’s resources unimpaired for future generations, particularly in light of the initial General Agreement’s potential to impact park resources and the precedent it sets for the entire National Park System. Full comments are linked below.

Business Office Address Reminder

Just a quick reminder that our business office address has changed.

Correspondence should be sent to:
**The Coalition to Protect America's National
Parks**
1346 4th Street SE #908
Washington, DC 20003

What We're Reading & Tracking This Month

Jon and Destry Jarvis, who have spent a combined 87 years in the conservation of parks and public lands, penned [an oped](#) for The Guardian, detailing the systematic dismantling of America's national parks. They recommend that, "when this nightmare ends, and we begin to rebuild, we suggest it is time for Congress to consider making the National Park Service an independent institution, more akin to the Smithsonian, and no longer subject to the vicissitudes of a hostile political agenda in a Department of the Interior dominated by extractive industries and anti-public land crusaders."

The Center for Western Priorities has developed a [tracker](#) that identifies 74

policies the Interior Department is seeking to implement, further weakening protections for wildlife and expanding fossil fuel development on public lands. This analysis will be updated monthly until the end of the Trump administration's first term, noting policy changes that have been finalized and others that have been identified for action.

We recently had the pleasure of speaking with Catherine Baldau, Executive Director of the Harpers Ferry Park Association. Read more about how this Cooperating Association provides philanthropic support and educational programming to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in our latest installment in the [Focus on Friends](#) series.

January 2020 is a month of dubious distinction. It marks the end of President Trump's third year in office and wraps up our third full year without a permanent Director for the National Park Service. The agency has suffered without the constancy and vision of a permanent Director and we see this is a series of harmful actions that have taken place in the last three years. Read more in our [blog](#).

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