



# THE COALITION TO PROTECT AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

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VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

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Bad Budget

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President Trump's proposed budget includes cuts to the Department of Interior's budget. It calls for a 97% cut in discretionary spending on the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and \$581 million in cuts to the National Park Service. Coalition Chair Phil Francis issued a statement denouncing the proposed budget, calling it "ill-informed, irresponsible, and exactly what we've come to expect from this administration." Our statement was picked up by various media outlets, including The Weather Channel and USA Today Network.

[Coalition Statement on Budget](#)

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## Lack of NPS Director Problematic for Parks

Coalition Chair Phil Francis authored a joint op-ed with President and CEO of NPCA, Theresa Pierno. In it, they enumerate our many concerns over the high number of vacancies in the administration, including the role of NPS Director. For three years, the NPS has been without a Senate-confirmed director. And this problem isn't isolated to the top of the agency; it is prevalent throughout the ranks. Several national parks, including some of our nation's most iconic and heavily visited sites, like the Grand Canyon, Denali and Yosemite National Parks, are currently without a permanent superintendent.

### The Hill Op-ed

### National Monuments Under Attack

The Coalition issued a statement immediately after the Interior Department's decision to open up land that was formerly protected as part of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments to oil, mining, and logging interests. Chair Phil Francis called the decision a "grave attack on our public lands."

### Statement on Final Plans for Monuments

## Shopping On Amazon Smile

[Amazon Smile](#) is exactly like Amazon and has all the same products, but when you shop on Amazon Smile, Amazon donates to the Coalition.

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## Membership Update

The Coalition's membership currently stands at 1,787 members.

## Website Links

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## Coalition Testifies on NEPA

Coalition Executive Council member Sarah Bransom recently testified at a public hearing over the [proposed changes](#) to NEPA regs in Denver, Colorado, this month. Sarah testified about our concerns over the proposed changes to NEPA, stating that "current NEPA procedures have long provided a critical mechanism for ensuring that the Park Service fulfills its mission to 'conserve [parks]... unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.'" You can read her full testimony [here](#).

Coalition Executive Director Amy Fehir also testified at the recent NEPA hearing in Washington, DC. Her full testimony can be found [here](#). The Coalition's statement, released in advance of the testimony, is linked below.

## NEPA Statement

## LE Conversion Concerns

The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks opposes the initiative to convert all National Park Protection Rangers from the current Park Ranger (0025) series to the Inspection, Enforcement, and Compliance (1801) series. We recently sent a letter to Acting Director Vela, expressing our concerns, primarily that the "1801 series is strictly a law enforcement/inspector series and is not appropriate for National Park Rangers, who need to continue to perform a broad spectrum of resource and visitor

protection duties."

[Contact Us](#)

## Letter to Acting Director Vela

### Public Lands Are Not For Sale

President Trump's latest nominee to the Federal Reserve Board, Judy Shelton, has expressed the view that the U.S. government should sell-off its "numerous federal land holdings" in order to "expedite the achievement of a balanced budget."

Coalition Chair Phil Francis issued a statement, remarking that this idea, which has been introduced before, "was a bad idea then and is a bad idea now. To sell lands for short term gain at the expense of long-term benefits makes no sense at all."

### Statement on Public Lands

### Oil and Gas Leasing Conversation Continues

Coalition Executive Council member Doug Morris urged support for HR3225 - Restoring Community Input and Public Protections in Oil and Gas Leasing Act - in a recent [Letter to the Editor](#) in the *Missoulian*.

Coalition member Mark Butler recently submitted an [op-ed](#) to the *Nevada Current*, urging support for another piece of legislation related to oil and gas leasing - Senator Catherine Cortez Masto's recently

introduced legislation, End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act of 2020. This legislation would help protect Great Basin and other national parks across the West by prohibiting attempts to lease public lands with low-to-non-existent drilling potential.

## Opposition to Eagle Crest

The Coalition and several conservation organizations signed on to a joint letter sent to California Assembly Members Chris Holden and Laura Friedman, expressing opposition to legislation that would favor projects like Eagle Crest pumped energy storage project, which is **proposed** to occur adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park.

## Joint Letter

### What We're Reading & Tracking This Month

In a **recent oped** for *National Parks Traveler*, Coalition member Rick Smith expresses **grave concern** over the impacts to national parks, caused by construction of the border wall. Rick writes, "the damage being done to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument by the construction of this border wall will last for centuries; in fact, it may very well be irreversible."

Coalition Member Gary Davis recently served as a **panelist** for the session *Parks in Peril: National Parks in a Changing Climate at*

*Outdoor Retailer*, a business-to-business outdoor sports show for those working in the industry.

Coalition Chair Phil Francis, also a former Smokies superintendent, **commented** on the rising visitation and declining staff at parks across the country in a story about visitation at Great Smoky Mountains NP. Francis said the cuts proposed in President Trump's budget]would put extra strain on the already over-worked park staff.

According to a **recent report** in *The Guardian*, The Trump administration has offered oil companies a chunk of the American west that's four times the size of California - an expansive drilling plan that threatens to entrench the industry at the expense of other outdoor jobs, while locking in enough emissions to undermine global climate policy. The fossil fuels extracted from those leases could equal half a year of emissions from China, the world's top carbon polluter.

**Here** is an excellent profile on the work of the Southern Environmental Law Center, who are headed to the Supreme Court of the United States to defend their victory in a court of appeals decision that helps keep an unnecessary, costly natural gas pipeline from carving through national forest and national park lands and one of the most protected landscapes in that mountain range. The Coalition has been very involved in this issue, **filing** a joint amicus brief supporting conservation respondents in this case.

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