



THE COALITION TO PROTECT AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

In This Brief

[GAO Passage](#)

[Webinar](#)

[Parks as Campaign
Stops](#)

[The VP and Parks](#)

[NPS Leadership
Change](#)

[CORE Act](#)

[Oil and Gas Lease
Sales](#)

[Alaska Regs](#)

[Pendley](#)

[Bike Trail Concerns](#)

[What We're
Reading and
Tracking](#)

[Support the
Coalition with
Amazon Smile](#)

[Membership
Update](#)

[Website Links](#)

[Donate Today](#)



[Website](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[Instagram](#)

[Forward
This Email](#)

Support the Coalition By 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.

[Shop on
Amazon Smile](#)

Membership Update

The Coalition's membership currently stands at 1,876 members.

Website Links

[Coalition News](#)

[Donate](#)

[Membership](#)

[Update Your
Membership
Information](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Great American Outdoors Act

The Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law! This landmark piece of legislation will help to address the crippling maintenance backlog in our national parks and fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

While we celebrate this **success**, we are keeping an eye to the future. Coalition Chair Phil Francis **spoke** with *National Parks Traveler* about what's next in terms of projects and funding and also **chatted** with *The Hill* about his hopes for "transparency and fairness in how the funds are administered."

Catch Up on Our Webinar

Our inaugural webinar in our new Take Action series is online and available for viewing! This webinar focused on oil and gas lease sales and featured participants from both the Coalition and NPCA. Click on the link in the box below.

[Take Action: Oil and Gas Lease Sales](#)

Parks as Campaign Backdrops

The Coalition has been incredibly busy this month responding to questions and issuing statements involving the use of our national parks as campaign stops.

We sent a **letter** in response to reports that President Trump was considering Gettysburg National Military Park as the setting for his speech to accept the Republican Presidential nomination, writing that it "is profoundly inappropriate to stage a high profile and partisan political event, such as a major political party's presidential nomination acceptance speech, at Gettysburg National Military Park, a hallowed site that belongs to all Americans." As a follow-up, we issued a **broader letter** to express our concerns about continuing reports that the Trump Campaign or Republican National Committee is planning to hold upcoming campaign events in units of the National Park System.

You can also read Coalition Chair Phil Francis' interview with *The Hill* about this topic at the link in the box below.

[Parks as Campaign Props](#)

Objections to Campaign Activities

In addition to our actions involving GETT, we submitted a **FOIA request** for more information that relates directly to the NPS closure of portions of Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial on August 17, 2020, to allow filming of a Republican political campaign ad involving Vice President Mike Pence.

We also took several actions related to the Vice President's campaign speech at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine at the Republican National Convention. We **sent a letter** to Acting Director Everson, expressing our concerns over the use of the site and **issued a press release** detailing not only concerns about appropriate use but reports of resource damage. Coalition Executive Council member Rebecca Harriett also **spoke** with several media outlets about the damage to the site.

NPS Leadership Changes

David Vela stepped down as Acting Director of the NPS, replaced by Margaret Everson. Coalition Chair Phil Francis **said** in a recent interview, "David has always expressed his support and love for the green and gray. For all that David has accomplished to support and promote the NPS and its mission, we offer him our gratitude." Phil spoke to several other outlets about Vela's departure, including *Mashable* and *E&E News*.

We've also addressed the new Acting Director's comments that a lack of park employees due to the pandemic should not be a reason to limit access to parks. Phil Francis **said** in a **statement** that, "this directive from Acting Director Everson demonstrates her complete lack of understanding regarding how parks operate and what National Park Service (NPS) employees actually do."

CORE Legislation

We submitted a **letter** to Congressional leadership, urging them to keep the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act when the conference committee meets. In addition to other measures that would benefit national parks, this Act would also officially authorize the establishment of Curecanti National Recreation Area, thus making it a full-fledged member of the National Park System.

A group of Coalition members with a combined 26.5 years of experience as superintendents of Curecanti National Recreation Area also submitted an oped to endorse the passage of the CORE Act. Read the oped, linked in the box below.

[CORE Oped](#)

Oil and Gas Updates

The Bureau of Land Management's Utah state office announced that it will defer all of the controversial 87,000 acres of oil and gas lease parcels in southeastern Utah's redrock country that it had proposed to be offered for lease at the September 2020 sale. We've issued several statements and opeds about this sale and issued **this joint release** following the announcement. However, we still oppose the lease sale and **joined a protest** that was organized by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and also includes numerous other groups such as the Sierra Club and NPCA.

Alaska News

The Coalition joined with partners **in a lawsuit** filed in federal District Court in Alaska that charges the Interior Department and National Park Service with violating multiple laws when adopting a rule that would open up national preserves in Alaska to hunting practices like baiting brown bears and killing wolves during the denning season.

We also issued a **short statement** condemning the Trump Administration's decision to open a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.

Opposition to Pendley

The Coalition signed on to a letter sent to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of over 300 organizations, Tribes, and businesses, urging the Committee to reject the nomination of William Perry Pendley for Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Mr. Pendley's public record over decades both in and outside of government made abundantly clear that he is unfit to lead any government agency and particularly the BLM. The Letter is linked below. While the White House did withdraw Mr. Pendley's nomination, he still continues in an acting capacity.

[Pendley Letter](#)

Bike Trail Concerns

The Coalition submitted comments on the proposed mountain biking trail system that would be developed within a section of the Foothills Parkway, an area administered by Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It is extremely rare, if not unprecedented, for the NPS to develop a new single-track "mountain bike trail system" and associated facilities on park lands. See our comments by clicking on the box below.

[Coalition Comments](#)

What We're Reading & Tracking This Month

Coalition Executive Council Member Mike Murray was a guest on a *National Parks Traveler* podcast, covering the roundup of national park news. You can listen **here**.

In our latest Focus on Friends installment, we highlight the incredible work of The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. **Read more** about their successes and challenges on our blog.

This article from *National Geographic* is an excellent and in-depth look at the implementation of controversial hunting regs in Alaska's national preserves - and why the change has some worried the National Park Service is ceding control to states with less conservation-oriented goals.

Here's a fascinating look at the controversy over Confederate monuments at Gettysburg. It's a complicated issue that numerous parks across the system will have to face.

Thanks for reading! See you next month.