



THE COALITION TO PROTECT AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

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Membership Update

The Coalition's membership currently stands at 1,868 members.

Website Links

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Webinar Opportunity

Join us on August 6, 2020, at 2:00 PM ET for a virtual discussion on oil and gas leasing and the impacts on our national parks and public lands. Learn about the leasing process, the Coalition's advocacy efforts, and how you can become an advocate and help protect our parks. The event will feature Matt Kirby, the Director of Energy and Landscape Conservation in the Southwest for the National Parks Conservation Association, Mike Murray, Executive Council Member for the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, and Coalition member Cordell Roy. Click the link in the box below for more information and details to log-in.

[Webinar Opportunity](#)

Great American Outdoors Act

It was a tremendous month for our national parks and public lands, as the House of Representatives passed the Great American Outdoors Act with strong bipartisan support. The Coalition has been a strong and vocal supporter of this legislation and we recently had over 400 Coalition members sign on to a [letter of support](#) we sent to Congressional offices. The bill now moves to President Trump's desk for signature.

[Statement on GAO Act](#)

Oil and Gas Lease Sales

We joined the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and other environmental groups and signed on to [comments](#) submitted regarding the upcoming Utah BLM September 2020 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale. The comments state that the Lease Sale EA violates several laws, including NEPA and the Mineral Leasing Act. Coalition member Phil Brueck also submitted an [oped](#) to the Salt Lake Tribune about the dangers of this upcoming lease sale.

The Coalition also released a statement of support for Senator Tester's legislation that would require BLM to issue all oil and gas leases through competitive auction, ending noncompetitive leasing and encouraging government efficiency. This statement is linked in the box below.

[Statement of Support](#)

FOIA Filings

The Coalition submitted yet another [FOIA request](#) to the NPS, asking for the cumulative number of NPS employees with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

A second [FOIA request](#) request was related to the recent 4th of July holiday events and the impacts on the NPS.

More on Alaska

The Coalition submitted comments on the proposed rule - NPS jurisdiction in Alaska - expressing concern that the proposed rule goes far beyond the narrow focus of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Sturgeon v. Frost*. This will likely create public confusion regarding NPS's legitimate authority to regulate activities on park, monument, and preserve lands and non-navigable waters, and in parks that pre-dated the 1959 Statehood Act. Comments linked below.

[Alaska Comments](#)

MORU Fireworks

The Coalition issued a [statement](#) about our opposition to bringing fireworks back to Mount Rushmore this year, citing concerns over the potential for wildfires, the impacts to the resource, and the risk of exposure to COVID-19. In addition, Coalition member and former Mount Rushmore Superintendent Cheryl Schreier was a very visible presence in the lead-up to the July 3 event, speaking about the inadvisability of the fireworks returning to MORU. Her [oped](#) in the *Washington Post* is linked below.

[MORU Fireworks a Bad Idea](#)

Success Story!

We have a great [success story](#) to report! Dominion Energy and Duke Energy announced that they have canceled the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline project, which would have carried natural gas across the Appalachian Trail, as well as the Blue Ridge Parkway. Both companies said that lawsuits, mainly from environmentalists aimed at blocking the project, had increased costs to as much as \$8 billion from the roughly \$5 billion amount projected when it was first announced in 2014. The Coalition filed a joint amicus brief in this case back in January.

Air Quality Actions

The Coalition and NPCA and filed an amicus brief with the DC Circuit Court of Appeals in a legal challenge to the Trump

Administration's attempt to eliminate California's authority to apply its own automobile emission standards under the Clean Air Act. In the brief, we are asking the court to deny the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) attempt to prevent California from setting its own vehicle emissions standards – standards that are needed to reduce air pollution, combat climate change and prevent further harm to our national parks and communities. The brief is linked in the box below.

In other air quality news, we also signed on to a [letter](#) sent to the EPA, strongly opposing the proposal to retain the current, inadequate secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Particulate Matter, urging the agency to revise the proposal considering the decade of science it has ignored, and proposing a new rule in a new comment period to protect the public welfare.

[Amicus Brief](#)

NEPA Updates

We released a [statement](#) following the administration's implementation of their proposed NEPA rollbacks, writing that, "weakening NEPA and allowing projects to move forward without proper review and public input - and ignoring the impacts of these projects on climate change - President Trump and his administration are jeopardizing the health of our environment and the American people."

NPS and Funding

The Coalition signed on to a [letter](#) sent to the House leadership urging support for H.R. 2, the "Moving Forward Act." The \$1.5 trillion infrastructure package is an investment in wildlife and public lands conservation programs that will create thousands of jobs and provide benefits to people, communities, biodiversity, and the environment.

We also signed on to a joint letter sent to Congress regarding FY21 appropriations for Interior, Environments, and Related Agencies. Click on the link in the box below to read the full letter.

[FY21 Appropriations Letter](#)

What We're Reading & Tracking This Month

Julius Rosenwald was part-owner of Sears, Roebuck and Co. and a dedicated philanthropist. A meeting with Booker T. Washington in 1911, and their continuing relationship, helped to define his philanthropy in the subsequent decades. His investment in over 5,300 Rosenwald Schools and related buildings in 15 southern states helped to educate roughly one-third of Black children in the South. Now, the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park Campaign is leading the charge to establish a park to honor this legacy. [Read more](#) and learn how you can help [here](#).

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 was passed by Congress and is among the oldest wildlife protection laws on the books. [Simply stated](#), it is a law that protects birds from people. However, recent changes proposed by this administration puts birds at risk by no longer holding industries accountable for "incidental" bird deaths. Read the recent comments we signed onto [here](#).

National parks across the country continue to face difficulties as they adjust to operations during a pandemic. [This piece](#) in *Outside Magazine* is a good look at how difficult it can be to operate in a safe space when the NPS is not mandating masks.