



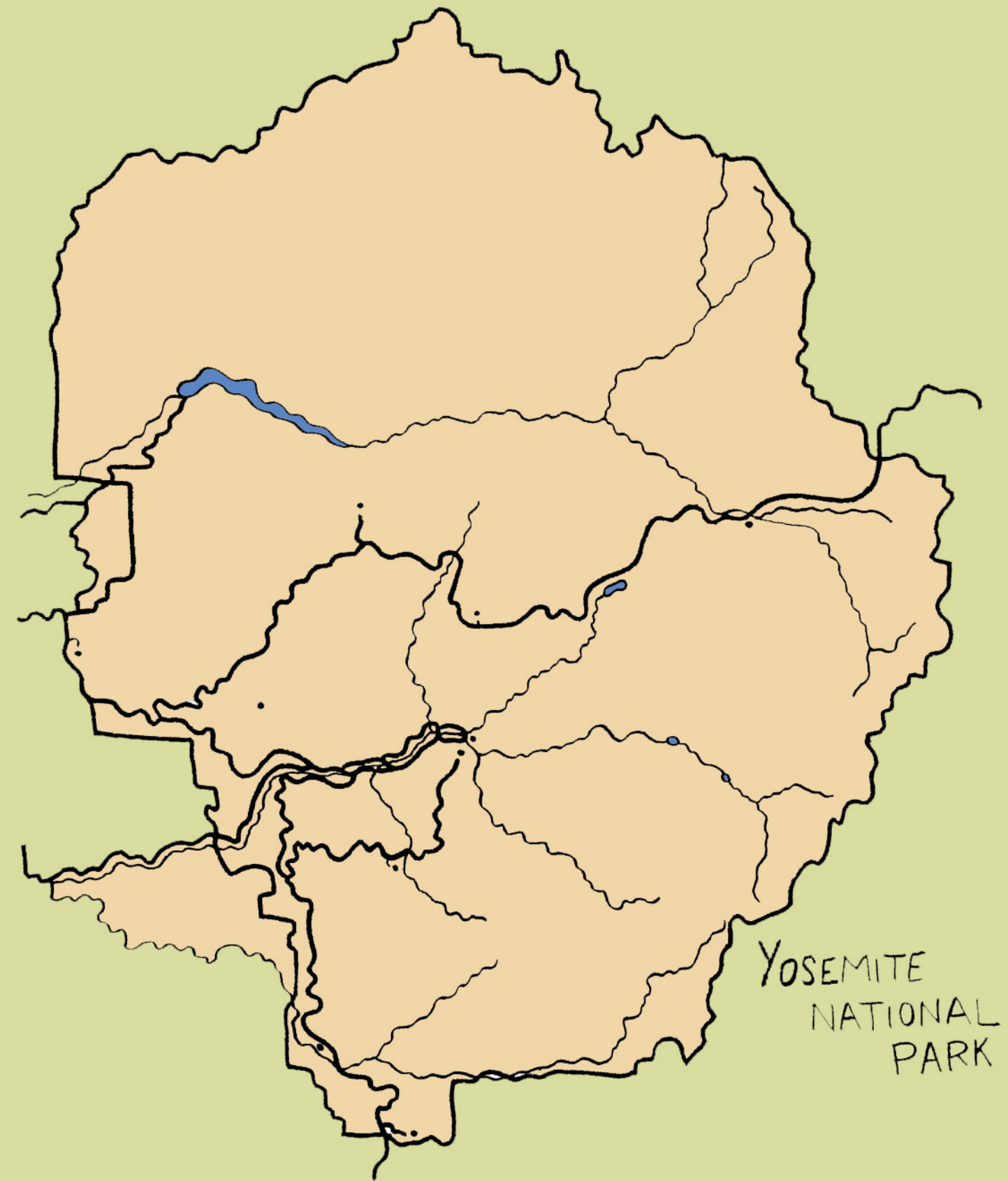
THE
NATIONAL
PARK
SERVICE

"THE BEST
IDEA
WE EVER
HAD"

The National Parks

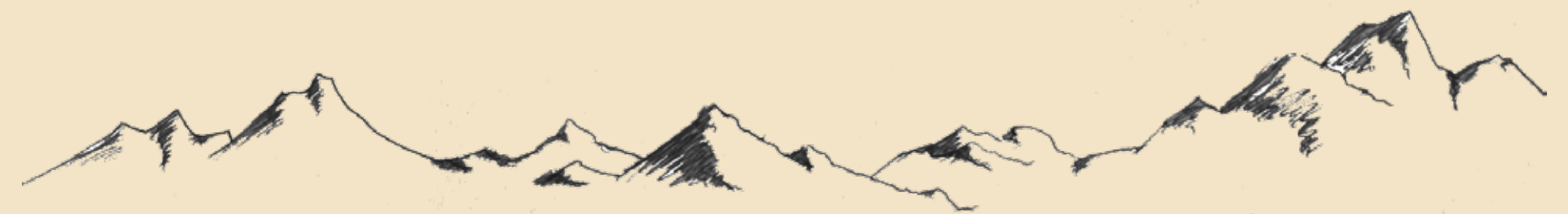
Lis Cinelli
Ciara Donley-Burnham
Devon Gates
Max Raign





The National Parks:

The Best Idea We Ever Had



DCGR Corporation, Denton

The National Parks: The Best Idea We Ever Had

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“I only went out for a walk
and finally concluded to
stay out till sundown, for
going out, I found, was
really going in.”

— John Muir

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SECTION: I

INTRODUCTION

An Introduction & History

“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.”

— Wallace Stegner —

The National Park System of the United States is considered to be a national treasure. Some national parks and monuments are even referred to as “crown jewels.” These ideas are congruent with the National Park Service’s mission to preserve natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of United States citizens.

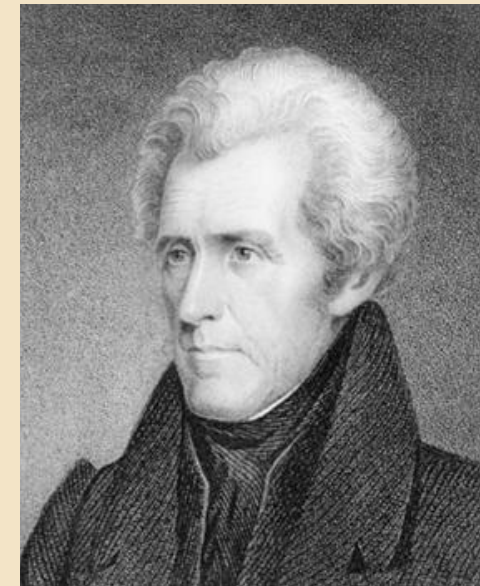
The system includes 419 areas covering more than eighty-five million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These areas consist of national parks, monuments, battlefields, military and historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House.

All national parks must meet the following standards:

- 1 They provide an outstanding example of a particular resource, such as the vast woods of Acadia National Park.
- 2 They retain integrity as a true and pristine example of that resource.
- 3 They signify natural or cultural themes of the United States. The promotion of coral reef preservation at Biscayne National Park, for example, illustrates the theme of valuing nature.
- 4 They offer opportunities for recreation, public use and enjoyment, or scientific study.

The Beginning

Photo from battlefields.org.



On April 20, 1832

President Andrew Jackson signed legislation to set aside four sections of land around Hot Springs, Arkansas to protect the natural thermal springs and neighboring mountainsides for the future use of the US government. This was the first effort by the US government to set aside land for federal use, and this area of land is now known as the Hot Springs Reservation.

On July 1, 1864

President Abraham Lincoln ceded the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias—an area that later became Yosemite National Park—to the state of California. According to this bill, private ownership of land in this area was no longer permitted. The state of California was given the task of managing the park for “public use, resort, and recreation.” This legislation was one of the first of its kind, and it sparked a heated debate over whether the government had the right to create national parks.

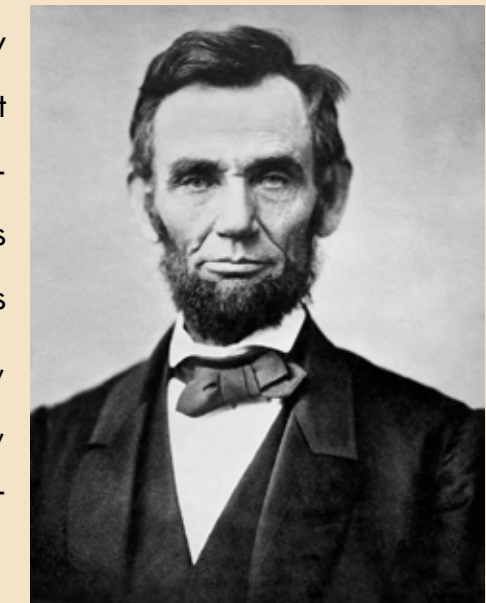


Photo from fineartamerica.com.



*President
Theodore Roosevelt*

Out of all of Roosevelt's achievements, he was proudest of his work in conservation of natural resources and extending federal protection to land and wildlife.

Through his efforts, Roosevelt established the United States Forest Service, signed the creation of five new national parks into law, and signed the 1906 Antiquities Act, under which he proclaimed eighteen new US national monuments. He also established the first fifty-one bird reserves, four game preserves, and 150 national forests. In total, he placed about 230 million acres of natural land under the protection of the federal government.

The First National Park

Yellowstone was originally part of a federally governed territory. With no state government that could assume stewardship of the land, the federal government took direct responsibility for Yellowstone's management and conservation. So, in 1872, through the combined effort of conservationists, politicians, and the Northern Pacific Railroad, Yellowstone National Park was established as both the United States' and the world's first national park.

Theodore Roosevelt and his group of conservationists, the Boone and Crockett Club, were influential in convincing fellow Republicans and big businesses to back the bill that established Yellowstone as the first national park. Roosevelt eventually played a pivotal role in the preservation of many subsequent parks as a result of watching Yellowstone suffer at the hands of poachers. He and his newly formed Boone and Crockett Club successfully took the lead in protecting Yellowstone from this plight by creating new laws to conserve the natural resources in national parks.

The American Antiquities Act of 1906

The American Antiquities Act grew out of concerns that developed in the late nineteenth century for the preservation of archeological sites. Educators and scientists, some of which were pioneers of professional archeology, joined in a movement to safeguard sites on public lands that were being endangered by haphazard digging and commercial-artifact looting.

After a generation-long effort, on June 8, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act. This established the legal protection of cultural and natural resources in the United States. It obligated federal agencies that managed public lands to preserve the historic, scientific, commemorative, and cultural values of archaeological sites, historic sites, and noteworthy structures for present and future generations. It also authorized the President

to protect landmarks, structures, and objects of historic or scientific interest by designating them as national monuments.

The Antiquities Act stands as a milestone in the progress of conservation and preservation efforts in the United States. The Act was the first of its kind, and its effects are still felt. Today, many organizations cooperate in diverse partnerships, including governments at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels, professional and scholarly groups, and communities. In shaping public policy to protect a broad array of cultural and natural resources, the impact of the Antiquities Act is unmatched.

The Birth of the National Park Service

Originally, national parks and monuments in the United States were managed by the Department of the Interior. The movement for a new, independent agency to oversee these federal lands was spearheaded by conservationists Stephen Mather and J. Horace McFarland. With the help of journalist Robert Sterling Yard, Mather ran a publicity campaign for the Department of the Interior. Together, they wrote numerous articles that praised the scenic and historic qualities of the parks and their educational, inspirational, and recreational benefits.

This campaign resulted in the creation of the National Park Service. On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill that mandated the new national agency "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."



John Muir

John Muir, renowned as the "father of the national parks," was an influential Scottish-American naturalist, author, environmental philosopher, glaciologist, and an early advocate for the preservation of wilderness in the United States of America.

His letters, essays, and books describing his adventures in nature, especially in the Sierra Nevada, have been read by millions. His activism has helped to preserve Yosemite Valley, Sequoia National Park, and other wilderness areas. The spiritual quality and enthusiasm toward nature expressed in his writings have inspired readers, including presidents and congressmen, to take action and help preserve large nature areas.

Reorganization & Shifting Focus

On March 3, 1933, President Herbert Hoover signed a Reorganization order which allowed the president to reorganize the executive branch of the United States government. It wasn't until later that summer when the new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, made use of this power.

Deputy Director Horace M. Albright had suggested to President Roosevelt that the historic sites from the American Civil War should be managed by the National Park Service rather than the War Department. So on June 11, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed two executive orders that consolidated all national parks and national monuments, national military parks, the eleven national cemeteries, national memorials, and the national capital parks into the National Park System.

In 1966, as the National Park Service turned fifty years old, government dominion began to expand from basic park preservation to making parks accessible to the public, which began with the creation of national lakeshores and national recreation areas.

SECTION: II

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) is a bureau of the US Department of the Interior. The director is nominated by the president of the United States and confirmed by the US Senate. The director manages national programs, policies, and budgets from the national headquarters in Washington, DC. The national headquarters also house other departments that span the interest of the entire system, including administrative services, cultural and natural resource stewardship, facilities planning, visitor experiences, and the United States Park Police.

The NPS organization is divided into seven regions: **Alaska, Northeast, Intermountain, Midwest, National Capital, Pacific-West, and Southeast**. Each region's director oversees national park management and program implementation in their region.



Photo from nps.gov.

Classifications

The National Park Service uses over twenty classifications to label the sites that it manages. The most well-known are national park, national monument, and national historic site or park.

The classifications are:

- » National Park (61)
- » National Monument (87)
- » National Historic Site (77)
- » National Historical Park (52)
- » International Historic Site (1)
- » National Memorial (29)
- » National Military Park (9)
- » National Battlefield (11)
- » National Battlefield Park (4)
- » National Battlefield Site (1)
- » National Recreation Area (18)
- » National Preserve (19)
- » National Reserve (2)
- » National Wild and Scenic River & Riverway (10)
- » National River (5)
- » National Seashore (10)
- » National Parkway (4)
- » National Scenic Trail (3)
- » National Lakeshore (3)
- » Other (11)

Section 3 briefly summarizes each national park. Section 4 highlights and summarizes other sites within the NPS system.

Visiting National Park Service Sites

Entrance Fees

The majority of NPS sites have no entrance fee. As of January 1, 2020, only 112 of the 418 sites charge an entry fee, some per person (\$3 to \$20) and some per vehicle (\$7 to \$30 per motorcycle, and \$10 to \$35 per other vehicle). At least eighty percent of the money stays in the park where it is collected, and the remainder is used to benefit parks that do not collect fees. On select days of the year, NPS sites that normally charge entrance fees will grant free access to all.

For parks that do collect fees, annual and lifetime passes are available for purchase—or for free for those who qualify. Passes can be obtained at any federal recreation site that charges an entrance fee.

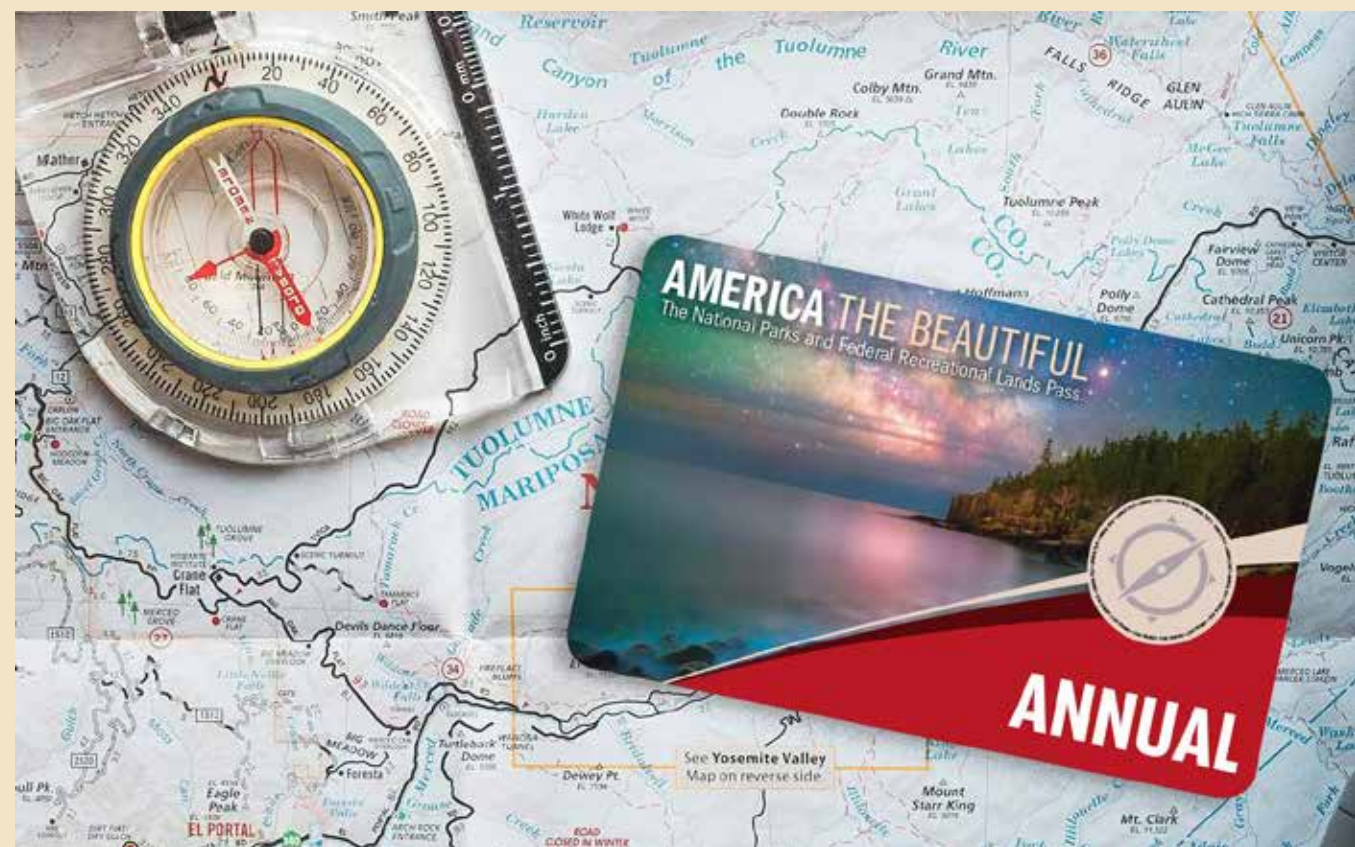


Photo from ontheluce.com.

Things to See and Do

There are many opportunities for recreation, sightseeing, and lodging at America's national parks and other NPS sites.

TRAILS

Many national park sites have fully accessible trails. Trails may have a compact gravel surface, asphalt pavement, or a boardwalk. Many have guardrails, but others may have a safety ridge along the edge, which assists the visually impaired and those in wheelchairs. Many trails have undetectable edges at certain parts. Visitors should check the park's website to ensure that the trails are designed to meet their individual needs.



Scenic road in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Photo by NPS.

VISTAS

Many NPS sites are known for their scenic vistas. Paved overlooks with accessible parking are common, though not always accounted for in written materials. Road designs are usually configured to provide landscape viewing from vehicles.

LODGING

In 2015, over fifteen million visitors spent more than one night at an NPS site. Overnight accommodations vary based on location, but options include campsites (tent and RV), lodges, and backcountry camping. Over 120 NPS sites have campgrounds with tent sites. Many NPS sites have accessible campsites. Some NPS sites have pull-through trailer sites.



Lobby of the El Tovar Hotel in Grand Canyon National Park. From grandcanyon-lodges.com

In an effort to increase visitation and appeal to a larger audience, hotel lodging is available at select sites, including:

- » Badlands National Park
- » Bryce Canyon National Park
- » Death Valley National Park
- » Grand Canyon National Park
- » Mount Rushmore National Memorial

- » Yellowstone National Park
- » Yosemite National Park
- » Zion National Park

Behind the Scenes

The National Park Service offers special divisions, programs, and support initiatives. While not as visible as programs offered to visitors to NPS sites, each serves a special purpose.

Preservation Programs

The Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (**HABS/HAER**), is the oldest federal preservation program. It produces graphic and written documentation of historically significant architectural, engineering, and industrial sites and structures. Dating from 1934, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) was chartered to document historic architecture—primarily houses and public buildings—of national or regional significance. Originally a New Deal employment/preservation program, after World War II, HABS employed summer teams of advanced undergraduate and graduate students to carry out the documentation, a tradition followed to this day. Many of the structures that they documented no longer exist.

HABS/HAER produces measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written histories of historic sites, structures, and objects that are significant to the architectural, engineering, and industrial heritage of the US. Its twenty-five thousand records are part of the Library of Congress. HABS/HAER is administered by the NPS Washington office and five regional offices.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program is designed to assist local communities and the general public in the preservation of rivers, trails, and greenways. Unlike the mainline national park programs, these programs take place on non-federal property at the

request of the local community. One of their better-known programs is Rails to Trails, where unused railroad rights-of-way are converted into public hiking and biking trails.

The National Trails System is a joint mission of the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service. It was created in 1968 to establish a system of long-distance national scenic and national historic trails, as well as to recognize existing trails in the states as national recreation trails. Several additional trails have been established since 1968, and in 2009 Congress established the first national geologic trail.

National Heritage Areas are a unique blend of natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources. Today (2019), there are fifty-five designated national heritage areas in the US.



Children stroll on the sands by the Annisquam Lighthouse of Essex National Heritage Area. Photo by NPS.

Initiatives

The National Park Service supports many initiatives to encourage biodiversity, climate awareness, preservation, and restoration. Major initiatives undertaken by the NPS include:

24-HR ALL TAXA BIOBLITZ

In 2004, the National Geographic Society and the National Park Service began a ten-year program of hosting a major biological survey of ten selected national park sites. The intent was to develop public interest in the nation's natural resources, to develop scientific interest in America's youth and to create citizen scientists.

SOUTH FLORIDA RESTORATION INITIATIVE: RESCUING AN ECOSYSTEM IN PERIL

In partnership with the State of Florida and the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service is restoring the physical and biological processes of the South Florida ecosystem, which has historically contained some of the most diverse habitats on earth.

VANISHING TREASURES INITIATIVE: RUINS PRESERVATION IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

The goal of this initiative is to reduce backlogged work and to bring sites and structures up to a condition where routine maintenance can preserve them. This initiative began in 1998 to reduce threats to prehistoric and historic sites and structures in forty-four parks of the Intermountain Region. In 2002, the program expanded to include three parks in the Pacific West Region.

GREEN PARK PLAN: THE CLIMATE FRIENDLY PARKS PROGRAM

Created in collaboration between the National Park Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, the aim of the program is to measure and reduce greenhouse gases to help slow the effects of climate change. Parks in the CFP program create and implement plans to reduce greenhouse gases by reducing energy and water use. Facilities are designed and retrofitted

using sustainable materials. Alternative transportation systems are developed to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. The program provides climate-friendly solutions to the visiting public, like using clean energy, reducing waste, and making smart transportation choices.

SECTION: III THE NATIONAL PARKS

The National Parks

A national park is a protected area of land that is operated by the National Park Service. The National Park Service was created on August 25, 1916, when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Organic Act into law. The first national park, however, was created much earlier, on March 1, 1872, when Congress and President Ulysses S. Grant created Yellowstone National Park.

National Parks help to preserve large areas of nature that might otherwise be at risk of deforestation or pollution. National parks serve to preserve and protect significant natural areas—as opposed to national monuments, which only preserve a single cultural site or natural feature. Both types of sites are incredibly important in preserving the country's natural landscape.

Several national parks and other NPS sites are also designated as World Heritage Sites. A World Heritage Site is chosen by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a site that has enough natural and cultural recognition to warrant worldwide protection. Additionally, UNESCO has also labeled some NPS sites as a Biosphere Reserve. These are terrestrial, marine, and coastal ecosystems that promote science for sustainability issues.

UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites are noted with an ◊ icon, and UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserves are noted with an • icon.



Acadia National Park. Photo by NPS.

Acadia National Park, Maine

Established February 26, 1919. Acadia National Park features land on Mount Desert Island and other coastal islands. The park is home to Cadillac Mountain, the largest mountain peak on the Atlantic coast, as well as temperate forests, granite cliffs, lakes, and ocean shorelines.



American Samoa National Park. Photo by NPS.

American Samoa National Park, American Samoa

Established October 31, 1988. This southernmost national park covers three Samoan islands and showcases white sand beaches, coral reefs, active volcanoes, and rainforests. The park is also home to flying foxes, brown boobies, sea turtles, and nine hundred species of fish.



Arches National Park. Photo by NPS.

Arches National Park, Utah

Established November 12, 1971. Arches National Park is home to over two thousand natural sandstone arches that display the beautiful power of erosion. Although named after the arches, the park also contains other geologic formations including pinnacles, fins, and balancing rocks.



Badlands National Park. Photo by NPS/Carl Johnson, 2009 Artist in Residence.

Badlands National Park, South Dakota

Established November 10, 1978. With towering buttes, pinnacles, spires, and large prairies, this park contains the largest collection of mammal fossils from the Eocene and Oligocene periods. Bison, bighorn sheep, black-footed ferrets, and prairie dogs call the park home.



Big Bend National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *Big Bend National Park, Texas*

Established June 12, 1944. Nestled on the US–Mexico Border and the Rio Grande, Big Bend features a large section of the Chihuahuan Desert. With deep canyons and fast rivers, this park has cretaceous fossils and Native American cultural artifacts. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Biscayne National Park. Photo by NPS.

Biscayne National Park, Florida

Established June 28, 1980. Located at the Northern end of the Florida Keys, this park has four intermingled marine ecosystems (mangrove forest, bay, keys, and coral reefs) and is home to many endangered animals, including manatees, crocodiles, sea turtles, and peregrine falcons.



Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Photo by NPS.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado

Established October 21, 1999. Running along the Gunnison River, this park has some of the oldest rocks and steepest cliffs in North America, making it a popular destination for rock climbers. Some parts of the gorge only receive thirty-three minutes of sunlight per day due to the cliffs' steepness.



Bryce Canyon National Park. Photo by NPS.

Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah

Established February 25, 1928. Originally settled by Native Americans and later home to Mormon pioneers, this park is a geological amphitheater that features hundreds of tall, multi-colored sandstone rock formations set on top of the Paunsaugunt Plateau.



Canyonlands National Park. Photo by NPS.

Canyonlands National Park, Utah

Established September 12, 1964. Divided into three sections, this park was eroded into a maze of canyons, buttes, mesas, and other geological rock formations by the Colorado and Green Rivers and their tributaries, and is the location of artifacts from the Ancient Pueblo peoples.



Capitol Reef National Park. Photo by NPS.

Capitol Reef National Park, Utah

Established December 18, 1971. This park is home to Waterpocket Fold, a one hundred mile geologic formation that displays the earth's diverse geologic layers, monoliths, cliffs, and sandstone domes shaped like the United States Capitol Building, which help give this park its name.



Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Photo by NPS.

◇ Carlsbad Caverns National Park, New Mexico

Established May 14, 1930. Featuring 117 caves buried deep under the Chihuahuan Desert, Carlsbad Caverns National Park is an ancient beauty deep in New Mexico. The caves are home to over four hundred thousand Mexican free-tailed bats and sixteen other species.

UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Channel Islands National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *Channel Islands National Park,
California*

Established March 5, 1980. With more than half of the park underwater, the Channel Islands offer a unique Mediterranean ecosystem with two thousand species of land plants and animals (145 of which exist nowhere else in the world), including the island fox.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Congaree National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *Congaree National Park,
South Carolina*

Established November 10, 2003. This park has the largest section of old-growth floodplain forest left in North America. Some of the tallest trees in the eastern US form one of the highest temperate deciduous forest canopies remaining in the world. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Crater Lake National Park. Photo by NPS.

Crater Lake National Park, Oregon

Established May 22, 1902. Crater Lake is in the collapsed Mount Mazama volcano crater. It is the deepest lake in the US and is noted for both its clear water and deep blue water. With no inlets or outlets, the lake is replenished only by precipitation.



Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Photo by NPS.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio

Established October 11, 2000. With numerous waterfalls, hiking trails, historic homes, bridges, exhibits on early rural living, and a scenic train that travels through the park, Cuyahoga Valley National Park is an excellent place to enjoy nature and learn about early American settlers.



Death Valley National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *Death Valley National Park,
California & Nevada*

Established October 31, 1994. Death Valley is the lowest, driest, and hottest place in the US. With vast sand dunes, salt flats, canyons, badlands, mountain ranges, and one thousand plant species, this seemingly unchanging valley is an ecological treasure. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Denali National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *Denali National Park, Alaska*

Established February 26, 1917. Covered in glaciers and boreal forests, Denali National Park is home to the tallest mountain in North America, Denali Peak, and countless wildlife, including grizzly bears, Dall sheep, Porcupine caribou, and wolves. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Dry Tortugas National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida*

Established October 26, 1992. Found on the westernmost end of the Florida Keys and accessible only by boat, Dry Tortugas National Park is the site of Civil War-era Fort Jefferson as well as numerous shipwrecks and undisturbed coral reefs. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Everglades National Park. Photo by NPS/Constance Mier.

• *Everglades National Park, Florida*

Established May 30, 1934. Everglades National Park is a one-and-a-half million-acre wetland preserve on the southern tip of Florida. The largest tropical wilderness in the US is home to panthers, crocodiles, and manatees. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Gates of the Arctic National Park. Photo by NPS.

Gates of the Arctic National Park, Alaska

Established December 2, 1980. This is the country's northernmost park and features a large section of pure wilderness in Alaska's Brooks Range. The park has no facilities and is only inhabited by Alaskan Natives who have relied on the land and caribou for eleven thousand years.



Gateway Arch National Park. Photo by NPS.

Gateway Arch National Park, Missouri

Established February 22, 2018. Built to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Gateway Arch is surrounded by important locations from America's history, including the courthouse from the Dred Scott slavery case, and features a museum on westward expansion.



Glacier National Park. Photo by NPS.

• ◇ *Glacier National Park, Montana*

Established May 11, 1910. This park includes the US half of Waterton–Glacier International Peace Park, a US–Canada joint union. The park includes twenty-six glaciers and 130 lakes surrounded by Rocky Mountain peaks. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Photo by NPS.

• ◇ *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Alaska*

Established December 2, 1980. Tidewater glaciers, mountains, and fjords define Glacier Bay. Covered by glaciers when George Vancouver discovered the area in 1794, the glaciers have since receded more than sixty-five miles. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Grand Canyon National Park. Photo by NPS.

◇ *Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona*

Established February 26, 1919. The Grand Canyon, with extensive canyons up to a mile deep and exposed layers of colorful rocks dating back to Precambrian times, is a popular destination for those hoping to experience the beauty of the Arizona Desert. UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Grand Teton National Park. Photo by NPS.

● *Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming*

Established February 26, 1929. Grand Teton is the largest mountain in the Teton Range where the mountains seem to crop up suddenly from the valleys below. Historic Jackson Hole and reflective piedmont lakes teem with endemic wildlife. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Great Basin National Park. Photo by NPS.

Great Basin National Park, Nevada

Established October 27, 1986. Featuring the limestone Lehman Caves and the Wheeler Peak Glacier, this park is incredibly isolated and has some of the darkest night skies in the country. Wildlife includes the Townsend's big-eared bat, pronghorn, and Bonneville cutthroat trout.



Great Sand Dunes National Park. Photo by NPS.

Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado

Established September 13, 2004. This park features the tallest sand dunes in North America, which seem out of place surrounded by alpine lakes, mountain ranges, and forests. Human habitation in the area dates back eleven thousand years to the Southern Ute Tribe, Apaches, and Navajo.



Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *◇ Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina*

Established June 15, 1934. Nestled on the border between Tennessee and North Carolina, the Great Smoky Mountains are part of the Appalachian Mountain chain. Hiking is a popular attraction, with over eight hundred miles of trails. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *◇ Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas*

Established October 15, 1966. Featuring McKittrick Canyon and the Chihuahuan Desert, this park is home to Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas. The ruins of a stagecoach station stand near the Pine Springs visitor center and gypsum sand dunes lie on to the west.



Haleakalā National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *Haleakalā National Park, Hawaii*

Established August 1, 1916. With numerous cinder cones in the large crater, Hosmer’s Grove of alien trees, and scenic pools of freshwater fish, Haleakala National Park on Maui protects the largest number of endangered species of any national park. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Figure 4.31. Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park. Photo by NPS.

• ◇ *Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii*

Established August 1, 1916. Located on the “Big Island” of Hawai’i, this national park features the very active Kilauea and Mauna Loa volcanoes. Diverse ecosystems range from tropical forests to barren lava beds. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Hot Springs National Park. Photo by NPS.

Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas

Established March 4, 1921. First established as a Federal Reserve in 1832, this park is the oldest park protected by the National Park Service and features natural hot springs that flow from the Ouachita Mountains. Bathhouse Row preserves examples of nineteenth-century architecture.



Indiana Dunes National Park. Photo by NPS.

Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana

Established February 15, 2019. Previously a national lakeshore and running for nearly twenty-five miles along the southern shore of Lake Michigan, Indian Dunes National Park is home to more than two thousand species of animals. The sandy beach adjoins a grassy prairie, bog, and wetlands.



Isle Royale National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *Isle Royale National Park, Michigan*

Established April 3, 1940. Isle Royale is the largest island in Lake Superior, although the park covers over four hundred small islands. The Island is home to only twenty types of mammals, and the moose and wolf populations are incredibly dependent on each other. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Joshua Tree National Park. Photo by NPS/Hannah Schwalbe.

• *Joshua Tree National Park, California*

Established October 31, 1994. This park encompasses large areas of the Colorado and Mojave Deserts and is known for its vast forests of Joshua Trees. Contrasting environments include sand dunes, dry lakes, rugged mountains, and monoliths. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Katmai National Park. Photo by NPS/M. Fitz.

Katmai National Park, Alaska

Established December 2, 1980. This park protects the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, a historic ash flow formed from the eruption of the Novarupta and Mount Katmai volcanoes. Over two thousand grizzly bears come out every year to catch spawning salmon. All hunting is banned.



Kenai Fjords National Park. Photo by NPS/Kaitlin Thoresen.

Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska

Established December 2, 1980. This park is located near the Alaskan city of Seward and serves to protect the Harding Icefield and over thirty-eight glaciers and fjords. Of the glaciers within the park's grounds, only Exit Glacier is accessible by road; all others require boat tours to view.



Kings Canyon National Park. Photo by NPS/M. Gieskes.

• *Kings Canyon National Park, California*

Established March 4, 1940. This national park features granite canyons, deep caves, and giant sequoias. The largest of the park's sequoias is the General Grant Tree, thought to be about 1,650 years old. Sequoia National Park shares a border. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Kobuk Valley National Park. Photo by NPS/John Tangney.

Kobuk Valley National Park, Alaska

Established December 2, 1980. This park protects over sixty miles of the Kobuk River as well as three different regions of sand dunes. The sand dunes were created from glacial erosion and are the largest sand dunes in the arctic. River bluffs in the park expose well-preserved ice age fossils.



Lake Clark National Park. Photo by NPS/Kara Lewandowski.

Lake Clark National Park, Alaska

Established December 2, 1980. Found along the southwestern coast of Alaska, Lake Clark National Park features multiple active volcanoes, rivers, waterfalls, and glaciers. Temperate rainforests, a tundra plateau, and three mountain ranges complete the landscape.



Lassen Volcanic National Park. Photo by NPS.

Lassen Volcanic National Park, California

Established August 9, 1916. This park contains active shield, cinder cone, lava dome, and composite volcanoes, as well as numerous other geothermal features. Lassen Peak, the largest lava dome volcano in the world, last erupted in 1915. The rest of the park is continuously active.



Mammoth Cave National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *◇ Mammoth Cave National Park,
Kentucky*

Established July 1, 1941. With more than four hundred miles of explored caves, Mammoth Cave is the largest cave system in the world. Confusing caverns and tight tunnels helped the massive cave earn its name of Mammoth. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Mesa Verde National Park. Photo by NPS/Sandy Groves.

◇ Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado

Established June 29, 1906. This park was created to preserve and understand Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and other cliff dwellings and archeological remains of the Ancestral Puebloan people who lived in Mesa Verde for at least seven hundred years. UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Mount Rainier National Park. Photo by NPS.

Mount Rainier National Park, Washington

Established March 2, 1899. Mount Rainier is an active stratovolcano and one of the tallest mountains in the Cascades Mountain Range. The area on the southern slope of Mount Rainier is known as Paradise and is the snowiest place on Earth. The mountain is popular for climbing.



North Cascades National Park. Photo by Andy Porter.

North Cascades National Park, Washington

Established October 2, 1968. This park features two unique geographical regions, Ross Lake National Recreation Area and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. Popular hiking and climbing areas include Cascade Pass, Mount Shuksan, Mount Triumph, and Eldorado Peak.



Olympic National Park. Photo by NPS.

• *◇ Olympic National Park, Washington*

Established June 29, 1938. Olympic National Park is one of the largest national parks in the US and features several unique ecosystems including the pacific shoreline, temperate rainforests, and glacial mountains. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Petrified Forest National Park. Photo by NPS/T. Scott Williams.

Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona

Established December 9, 1962. Surrounded by the unique Painted Desert, this park is full of 225 million-year-old petrified wood (fossilized trees) and is an exciting view of ancient Earth. Dinosaur fossils and over 350 Native American sites are also protected in this park.



Pinnacles National Park. Photo by NPS.

Pinnacles National Park, California

Established January 10, 2013. Made from the eroded remains of an extinct volcano, the park features beautiful gold and black monoliths made from andesite and rhyolite. The park is a popular destination for climbers and offers a chance to see the endangered California condor.



Redwood National and State Parks. Photo from needpix.com.

◇ *Redwood National and State Parks, California*

Established October 2, 1968. Although best known for its famous coastal redwood trees, the tallest trees on earth, Redwood National and State Parks also features forty miles of coastline, vast prairies, oak forests, and a variety of plants and animals. UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Rocky Mountain National Park. Photo by NPS.

- *Rocky Mountain National Park,
Colorado*

Established January 26, 1915. Bisected north to south by the Continental Divide, the park contains a large portion of the Rocky Mountains and features multiple different ecosystems. The park is a popular destination for backpackers and campers. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Saguaro National Park. Photo by Joe Parks.

- *Saguaro National Park, Arizona*

Established October 14, 1994. Named after giant saguaro cacti, this park also contains barrel cacti, chollas, and prickly pears. Saguaro National Park contains six biospheres and is home to many unique animals such as spotted owls, lesser long-nosed bats, and javelinas.



Sequoia National Park. Photo by NPS/Alison Taggart-Barone.

• *Sequoia National Park, California*

Established September 25, 1890. This park protects one of the largest sequoia forests in the world. The largest tree in the park, the General Sherman, is the largest living single-stem tree in the world. Kings Canyon National Park shares a border. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Shenandoah National Park. Photo by NPS.

Shenandoah National Park, Virginia

Established December 26, 1935. Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, this park features more than five hundred miles of hiking trails, the most famous of those being the historic Appalachian Trail. Skyline Drive is a scenic roadway that runs the entire 105-mile length of the park.



Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Photo by NPS/Mark Hoffman.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota

Established November 10, 1978. Named after the US president, this park lies in the gorgeous northern badlands. Numerous scenic drives, camping, and back-country opportunities abound. The Maltese Cross Cabin was owned by Roosevelt before becoming president.



Virgin Islands National Park. Photo by NPS.

Virgin Islands National Park, United States Virgin Islands

Established August 2, 1956. This park is located on the Caribbean island of St. John and is surrounded by clean beaches, mangrove forests, and coral reefs. This park features the ruins of the sugar plantations created by Christopher Columbus when he traveled to the west in 1493.



Voyageurs National Park. Photo by NPS.

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

Established January 8, 1971. This park features four lakes along the US–Canadian border and is a popular site for canoers, kayakers, and fishermen. This park was the original home of the ancient Ojibwe Native Americans, whose descendants still live in the area today.



Wind Cave National Park. Photo by NPS.

Wind Cave National Park, South Dakota

Established January 9, 1903. Wind Cave is one of the largest and most complex caves in the world and has some unique geologic formations, boxwork, which is found almost nowhere else in the world. The cave is also culturally and historically significant to the Lakota people.



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Photo by NPS.

◇ *Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska*

Established December 2, 1980. This park, at over eight million acres, is the largest in the national park system. Deep in Alaskan mountains, this park has many of the tallest mountains and volcanoes on the continent, including Mount Saint Elias. UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Yellowstone National Park. Photo by NPS/Curtis Akin.

• ◇ *Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, extending into Montana and Idaho*

Established March 1, 1872. Yellowstone National Park is the oldest of the national parks and has sights such as the famous Old Faithful geyser. The entire park is situated on the Yellowstone caldera, a supervolcano. UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.



Yosemite National Park. Photo from Wikimedia.

◇ *Yosemite National Park, California*

Established October 1, 1890. First achieving protection status in 1864, Yosemite National Park features over eleven hundred square miles of valleys, meadows, and forests of giant sequoia trees. On average, four million people visit the park every year. UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Zion National Park. Photo by NPS/A. Washuta.

Zion National Park, Utah

Established November 19, 1919. Located next to the Mojave Desert, this park has desert sandstone formations and the wonder of erosion can be seen in the Virgin River Narrows. Because of how the river cuts through the canyon, the park is divided into four ecosystems.

National Monuments & Other Sites

SECTION: IV

NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND OTHER SITES

National monuments preserve a single unique cultural or natural feature. Unlike national parks, which mainly conserve land and nature, national monuments were created to preserve and protect historic and prehistoric sites, ruins, and artifacts. The National Park Service currently manages eighty-five national monuments. Most protect places of natural significance, including geological, marine, and volcanic sites. Some protect places of historic significance, including Native Americans and African American sites.



Photo by Carol M. Highsmith.

African Burial Ground National Monument

African Burial Ground National Monument is in the Civic Center section of Lower Manhattan, New York City. The site contains the remains of more than 419 Africans buried during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a portion of what was the largest colonial-era cemetery for people of African descent. Historians estimate there may have been as many as ten to twenty thousand burials in what was called the “negroes burial ground” in the 1700s.

The burial ground site is New York’s earliest known African-American “cemetery.”



Photo by NPS.

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

The Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument is a historic house and museum of the US women's suffrage and equal rights movements located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC. The monument is named after suffragists and National Woman's Party leaders Alva Belmont and Alice Paul. Since 1929 the house has served as headquarters of the National Woman's Party, a key political organization in the fight for women's suffrage.

The Belmont-Paul House is the oldest house still standing in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.



Photo by NPS/Susanna Pershern.

Buck Island Reef National Monument

Buck Island Reef National Monument, or just Buck Island, is a small, uninhabited, 176-acre island about one-and-a-half miles north of the northeast coast of Saint Croix of the Virgin Islands. The monument includes 18,839 acres of submerged lands totaling 19,015 acres. It was first established as a protected area by the US Government in 1948, with the intention of preserving “one of the finest marine gardens in the Caribbean Sea.” Buck Island National Monument is home to endangered species native to the Virgin Islands.



Photo by NPS.

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, in Coolidge, Arizona, and just northeast of the city of Casa Grande, preserves a group of Ancestral Puebloans Hohokam structures of the Pueblo III and Pueblo IV eras. The monument consists of the ruins of multiple structures constructed by ancient people in the early thirteenth century. Archeologists have discovered evidence that the ancient Sonoran Desert people who built the Casa Grande also developed wide-scale irrigation farming and extensive trade networks which lasted over one thousand years until about 1450 CE.



Photo by NPS.

Devils Tower National Monument

Devils Tower National Monument, also known as Bear Lodge Butte, is a butte in the Bear Lodge Ranger District of the Black Hills in northeastern Wyoming. The name originated during an 1875 expedition led by Colonel Richard Irving Dodge when his interpreter reportedly misinterpreted a native name to mean "Bad God's Tower." The tower rises 1,267 feet above the Belle Fourche River, standing 867 feet from summit to base. The summit is 5,112 feet above sea level. Devils Tower, established September 24, 1906, was the first national monument.



Photo by NPS.

Effigy Mounds National Monument

Effigy Mounds National Monument preserves more than two hundred prehistoric mounds built by Native Americans. Effigy mounds are shaped like animals, including bears and birds. These were built mostly in the first millennium, by peoples of the Woodland culture. Effigy mounds were constructed primarily in the areas now known as southern Wisconsin, northeast Iowa, and small parts of Minnesota and Illinois. The monument is in Allamakee and Clayton Counties, Iowa. In 2017, they were featured in the America the Beautiful Quarters Program.



Photo by NPS.

Fossil Butte National Monument

Fossil Butte National Monument is located fifteen miles west of Kemmerer, Wyoming. It centers on extraordinary remains of the Eocene epoch (fifty-six to thirty-four million years ago) animal and plant fossils associated with Fossil Lake. Fossils preserved—including fish, alligators, bats, turtles, dog-sized horses, insects, and many other species of plants and animals—suggest that the region was a low, subtropical, freshwater basin when the sediments accumulated, over about a two million-year period. The Visitor Center features over eighty fossils and fossil casts on exhibit.



Photo from Wikimedia.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

The Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, located at the springs of the Gila River in southwest New Mexico, is a US national monument created to protect Mogollon cliff dwellings in the Gila Wilderness. The terrain around the ruins is rugged and arid and contains steep-sided canyons cut by shallow spring rivers and mesas and forested bluffs. The area geologic history stems from leftovers from the Paleogene period and volcanic activity that covered the area with ash. The monument's hot springs are remnants of this volcanic history.



Photo by NPS/A. W. Biel.

Hovenweep National Monument

Hovenweep National Monument is located between Cortez, Colorado and Blanding, Utah on the Cajon Mesa of the Great Sage Plain. Although Hovenweep National Monument is known for its six groups of Ancestral Puebloan villages, there is evidence of occupation by hunter-gatherers from about 8000 BC to AD 200 in the area. Later, a succession of early Puebloan cultures settled in the area and remained until the fourteenth century. Ute and Navajo guides of the mid-1800s considered the ruins to be haunted.



Photo by NPS/Mel Mashman.

Muir Woods National Monument

Muir Woods National Monument is an old-growth coastal redwood forest named after naturalist John Muir. It is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and is twelve miles north of San Francisco. Due to its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, the forest is regularly shrouded in a coastal marine layer fog, contributing to a wet environment that encourages vigorous plant growth. The fog is also vital for the growth of the redwoods as they use moisture from the fog during droughts, particularly during the dry summer.



Photo by NPS.

Navajo National Monument

The Navajo National Monument is located within the northwest region of the Navajo Nation territory in northern Arizona. It was established to protect three well-preserved cliff dwellings of the Ancestral Puebloan people: Keet Seel (Broken Pottery), Betatakin (Ledge House), and Inscription House. The monument is high on the Shonto plateau, overlooking the Tsegi Canyon system. It features a visitor center with a museum, two self-guided mesa top trails, two small campgrounds, and a picnic area. Rangers guide visitors on free tours of the cliff dwellings.

National Historic Sites & Historical Parks

National historic sites protect a significant historical resource that is not a complicated site. Most historic sites are single objects or features directly associate with a subject. National historical parks are larger areas with more complex subjects. Historic sites may also be protected in national parks, monuments, seashores, and lakeshores.



Ford's Theatre National Historic Site. Photo from Wikimedia.

A selection of national historic sites and historical parks include:

- » Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Kentucky
- » Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Kansas
- » Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia
- » Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, Ohio
- » Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, California
- » Ford’s Theatre National Historic Site, Washington, DC
- » Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Washington, DC
- » Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, Maryland
- » Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland
- » Independence National Historical Park, Pennsylvania
- » Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Parks, Oregon, Washington
- » Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Arkansas
- » Manhattan Project National Historical Park, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington
- » Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, South Dakota
- » Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park, California
- » Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, New York
- » San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Texas

- » Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, Alabama
- » Valley Forge National Historical Park, Pennsylvania
- » Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, New York

National Memorials

National memorials are officially recognized areas that memorialize a historical person or event. There are numerous national memorials, many of which the National Park Service has no connection to. The NPS national memorials represent US presidents and other historic figures, commemorate wars, memorialize disasters, and represent early exploration.



Pearl Harbor National Memorial. Photo by NPS.

Some other national memorials are:

- » Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, Virginia
- » Flight 93 National Memorial, Pennsylvania
- » Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Pennsylvania
- » Mount Rushmore National Memorial, South Dakota
- » Pearl Harbor National Memorial, Hawaii
- » Wright Brothers National Memorial, North Carolina

Washington, DC–area memorials include:

- » Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Washington, DC
- » Korean War Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC
- » Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC
- » Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, Washington, DC
- » Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Washington, DC
- » Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC
- » World War I Memorial, Washington, DC
- » World War II Memorial, Washington, DC

National Military Sites

National military parks, national battlefield parks, national battlefield sites, and national battlefield preserves are areas associated with military history. The different designations reflect the complexity of the event and the site. Many of the sites preserve important Revolutionary War battles and Civil War battlefields.



Gettysburg National Military Park. Photo by NPS.

Military sites include:

- » Antietam National Battlefield, Maryland
- » Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site, Mississippi
- » Fort Necessity National Battlefield, Pennsylvania
- » Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania
- » Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Georgia
- » Manassas National Battlefield Park, Virginia
- » Vicksburg National Military Park, Mississippi, Louisiana

National Recreation Areas

National recreation areas originally were units surrounding reservoirs which were impounded by dams that were built by other federal agencies. Many of these areas are managed under a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. Now, because of the recommendations of a presidential commission, some national recreation areas are in urban centers.



Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Photo by NPS.

A few national recreation areas are:

- » Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Montana, Wyoming
- » Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
- » Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California
- » Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Nevada, Arizona

National Preserves & Reserves

National preserves are like national parks, but some resource-extractive activities may be allowed, such as hunting, fishing, mining, and oil/gas exploration. National reserves are like national preserves, but the operational authority can be placed with a local government. Many national preserves are joined with other NPS units.



Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. Photo by NPS.

Some national preserves and reserves include:

- » Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Alaska
- » City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho
- » Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Idaho
- » Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Washington
- » Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Colorado
- » Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Kansas

National & Wild and Scenic Rivers & Riverways

National rivers and national wild and scenic riverways protect free-flowing streams over their length. The riverways may not be altered with dams, channelization, or other changes. Recreational pursuits are encouraged along the waterways, and some units are joined with national recreation areas.



Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. Photo by Bob Wick, BLM California.

A few national rivers and riverways include:

- » Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Kentucky, Tennessee
- » Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Minnesota
- » Missouri National Recreational River, Nebraska, South Dakota
- » Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, Texas
- » Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, New York, Pennsylvania

National Seashores & Lakeshores

National seashores and national lakeshores offer preservation of the national coastline. While all the protected sites have extensive beaches for recreation, they extend inland to include other natural resources like wetlands and marshes, forests, lakes and lagoons, and dunes. Many also feature historic lighthouses and estates.



Point Reyes National Seashore. Photo from Wikipedia.

National seashores and lakeshores include:

- » Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin
- » Assateague Island National Seashore, Maryland, Virginia
- » Cape Cod National Seashore, Massachusetts
- » Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina
- » Padre Island National Seashore, Texas
- » Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan

National Parkways

The NPS also manages scenic roadways and surrounding parkland areas. National parkways often connect cultural or historic sites. In the 1930s, as part of the New Deal, the US federal government constructed national parkways designed for recreational driving, and to commemorate historic trails and routes.



Blue Ridge Parkway. Photo by NPS.

A few national parkways are:

- » Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia, North Carolina
- » George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia, Maryland, Washington, DC
- » Natchez Trace Parkway, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee

National Scenic & Historic Trails

The National Trails System preserves long-distance routes across America. The system was created in 1968 and consists of two major components. National scenic trails are long-distance trails through some of the most scenic parts of the country. National historic trails commemorate the routes of major historic events.



Appalachian Trail. Photo from Wikimedia.

Some national trails are:

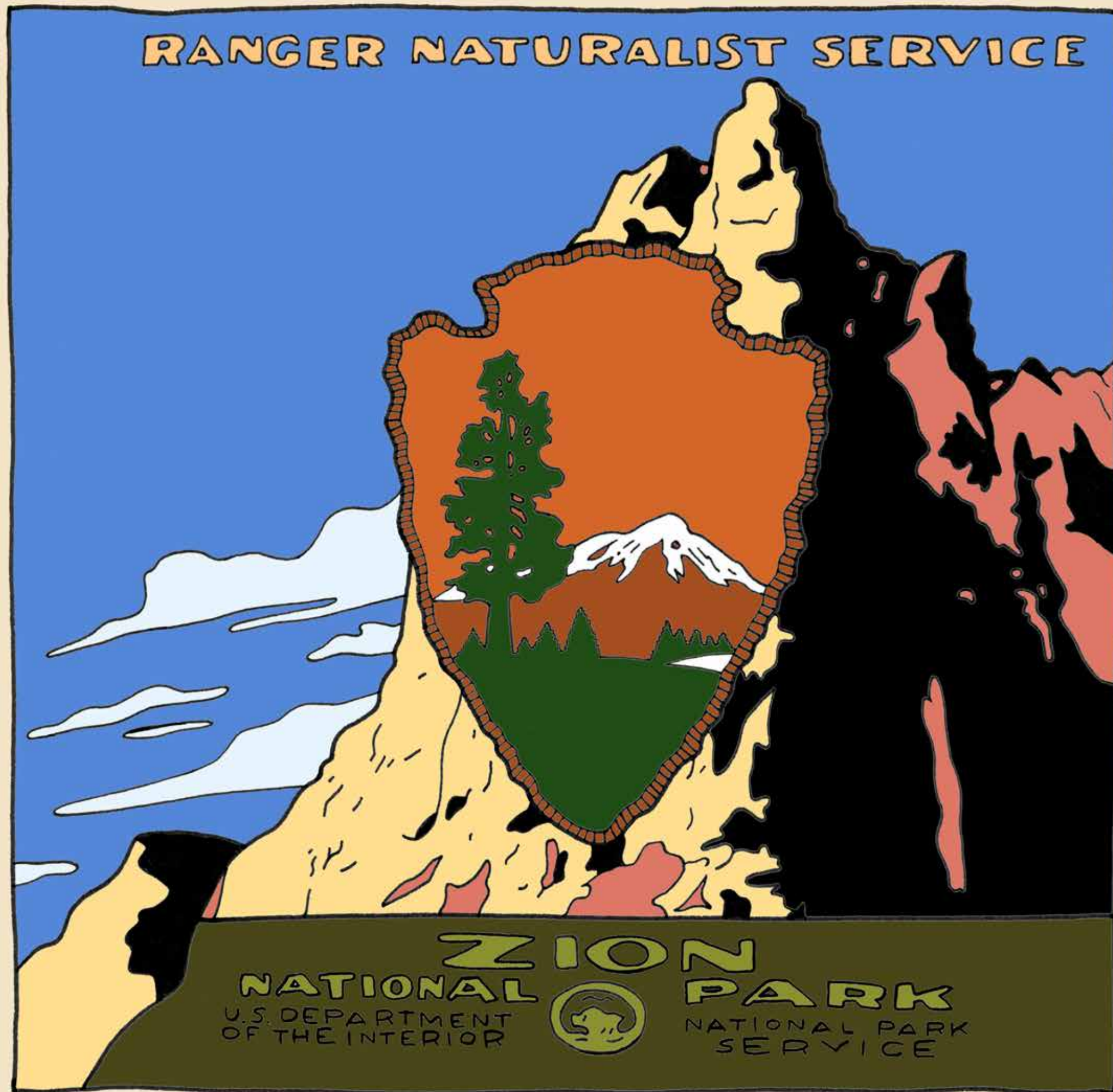
- » Appalachian Trail, Maine to Georgia
- » Natchez Trace Trail, Mississippi to Tennessee
- » Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC

Other Sites



National Capital Parks. Photo by NPS.

There are eleven NPS sites that are not included in the designations already discussed. Some of these other sites contain, or are part of, sites with designations listed previously. The most well-known “other” site is National Capital Parks, which include buildings, memorials, sites, parkways, and other NPS sites in Washington, DC and its surrounding area.



Artwork by Max Raign.

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Idea We Ever Had is set in Futura,
a sans serif typeface created by
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1927 and based on visual elements of the Bauhaus design
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undoubtedly have been full-color
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