



An Overdue Dose of Wilderness

In February, Congress passed a bill designating a new wilderness area for the first time in five years—the longest lapse ever between such designations. The bill specifically protects 32,500 acres at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, a national park site in Michigan famous for its immense sand dunes and bluffs, as well as its beaches, forests, and inland lakes on the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan.

It took 30 years of hard work building consensus among people who use and love this park to achieve this milestone. The new bill doesn't add any new land to the existing park boundaries, but it does add a higher level of protection to existing areas within the park.

What does the new bill mean for the park? Fortunately for most park visitors, there will be virtually no change in their experience at Sleeping Bear Dunes. The designation doesn't restrict public access to any part of the park, and it doesn't change most of the ways visitors already enjoy the park. Hiking, camping, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and even scientific research are all permitted on wilderness lands and park officials will continue to allow most recreational activities.

continued inside

One Step Closer to Chicago's First National Park

Nestled in a quiet setting on Chicago's far South Side is the Historic Pullman District. Much of the neighborhood appears to be relatively untouched since the late 19th century when industrialist George Pullman set his mind to creating an ideal company town.

To ensure that the rich history in Pullman will be preserved, Senators Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin, and Representative Robin Kelly of Illinois have introduced bipartisan bills in Congress to designate the Pullman National Historical Park as Chicago's first national park.

Few sites showcase the history of American industry, labor, and urban planning as well as Pullman. There is powerful African-American history that has its roots at Pullman as well, and due in part to the leadership of NPCA, this historic neighborhood is well on its way to becoming a national park.

The stories began in 1879, when George Pullman bought land to build his town and launch the Pullman Palace Car Company. Over a few short years, he created what he believed was an "ideal" community for his workers, complete with homes, schools, a church, shops and parks. But during the economic panic of 1893, Pullman reduced wages without reducing rents. A widespread

and violent strike followed, disrupting freight and passenger rail service nationwide. Thousands of U.S. Marshalls and some 12,000 U.S. Army troops intervened.

During the course of the strike nearly 100 workers were either killed or injured. When the strike was settled, Congress passed legislation creating a national Labor Day holiday.



By the end of the 1890s, the town was all but shuttered, but the Pullman Company survived. In the 1920s, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters—the first African-American union with collective bargaining rights—was organized

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FIELD REPORT

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Protecting Pullman



By Congresswoman Robin L. Kelly (IL-2nd)

Once upon a time it was called the “world’s most perfect town,” renowned for its distinctive architecture. It’s the same place where freed slaves first came to work the railroads. And it’s the birthplace of our Labor Day holiday. More recently, it’s where the world’s most famous “community organizer” first hit the streets.

The Pullman neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side is where so many uniquely American stories of opportunity and freedom were written, tales about the rise of industry, the emergence of the labor movement and the struggle for civil rights that enrich the narrative of our nation’s history. Pullman’s story is America’s story—and one that’s worthy of being preserved by designating the neighborhood as America’s next national park.

Pullman’s place in Americana is as impressive as its clock tower, as colorful as its Greenstone Church, and as diverse as its rowhouses. The National Parks Conservation Association agrees with me, as do many of Chicago’s civic leaders, including U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. They all support my House Resolution 3929 to create the Pullman National Historical Park.

Pullman’s history began with industrialist George Pullman, whose classic company town produced the world’s most luxurious passenger railcars for nearly a century. But during the economic recession in 1893, Pullman reduced wages without lowering rents. Those cuts fueled a labor movement that escalated into a strike and eventually a bloody confrontation. The bloodshed spurred Congress to create the world’s first Labor Day holiday.

Pullman’s story is America’s story—and one that’s worthy of being preserved by designating the neighborhood as America’s next national park.

Throughout it all, the Pullman Company played a major role in America’s civil rights movement. To better serve cross-country rail riders, Pullman hired ex-slaves as porters. These porters quickly emerged as some of the most respected, well-traveled men of their era. For years, the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters (the nation’s first black union with bargaining rights) was led by organizer A. Philip Randolph. Later in life, Randolph helped a young Martin Luther King Jr. organize the civil rights efforts in the 1960s. Half a century later, the Pullman neighborhood welcomed another young organizer, named Barack Obama.

Remarkably, 133 years after George Pullman first settled along what is now 111th Street, the community he built—the mansions and the market square, the firehouse and the factory—still stand, largely unscathed.

For decades, local residents have worked hard to preserve Pullman’s story. But such an effort takes more than a few neighbors—because this story is bigger than one neighborhood.

National parks were created almost a century ago to preserve and interpret American history. Pullman is a remarkable chapter in that history. Please call your Member of Congress in support of HR 3929.

Above: Representative Robin Kelly at Pullman. Photo courtesy of Rick Bryant

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What do you like about this newsletter? What other topics or features would you like to see? Please contact us with your feedback at midwest@npca.org.

Isle Royale: Cold Temps Have Heated Debate

The public's fascination with the ebb and flow of Isle Royale National Park's wolf population reached new heights over the winter thanks to very cold temperatures and calm winds on Lake Superior. These conditions helped form a rare ice bridge between the mainland and the island, creating a natural highway to and from this remote place. The bridge fostered hope that new wolves would be able to reach Isle Royale and help rescue the current population from what many believe is certain extinction. Instead, one of the island's female wolves used the bridge to leave Isle Royale in late January. She was recently found dead from a pellet gun wound on the mainland.

Despite this recent loss to the island's wolf population, the current pack continues to breed. Two pups born last spring were discovered by the island's researchers to have survived the winter, bringing the current wolf population to nine. While this number still raises concerns about the long-term fate of Isle Royale's most famous inhabitants, the natural rise and fall of the population



has raised more questions and sharpened the debate about the actions the National Park Service should take, if any, to address the declining wolf population. Among the many questions: If the wolves continue to breed, how does that impact the health and longevity of the pack? Could future ice bridges lead new wolves to the island? Should the park service introduce wolves in order to keep the population stable and growing?

In April, the agency announced that it would not intervene as long as wolves are breeding, but bringing new wolves to the island does remain an option. In the meantime, the park will undertake a comprehensive planning process that considers long-term management of wolves, moose and vegetation on the island. This process will kick off in the fall of this year. The agency's decision on a way forward is based on information developed over the last two years in consultation with scientists, wildlife managers and other experts.

As the debate rages on about how to manage wildlife at Isle Royale, the park's iconic wolf population is stable but could very well decline further. The park service must move through the planning process quickly and arrive at a conclusion on how to manage wolves—and all the wildlife in the park—with speed. The actions taken at Isle Royale are critical not only at this park, but will help inform how wildlife is managed in the face of climate change at other national parks.

Left: Wolf at Isle Royale National Park ©Rolf O. Peterson/Michigan Technological University

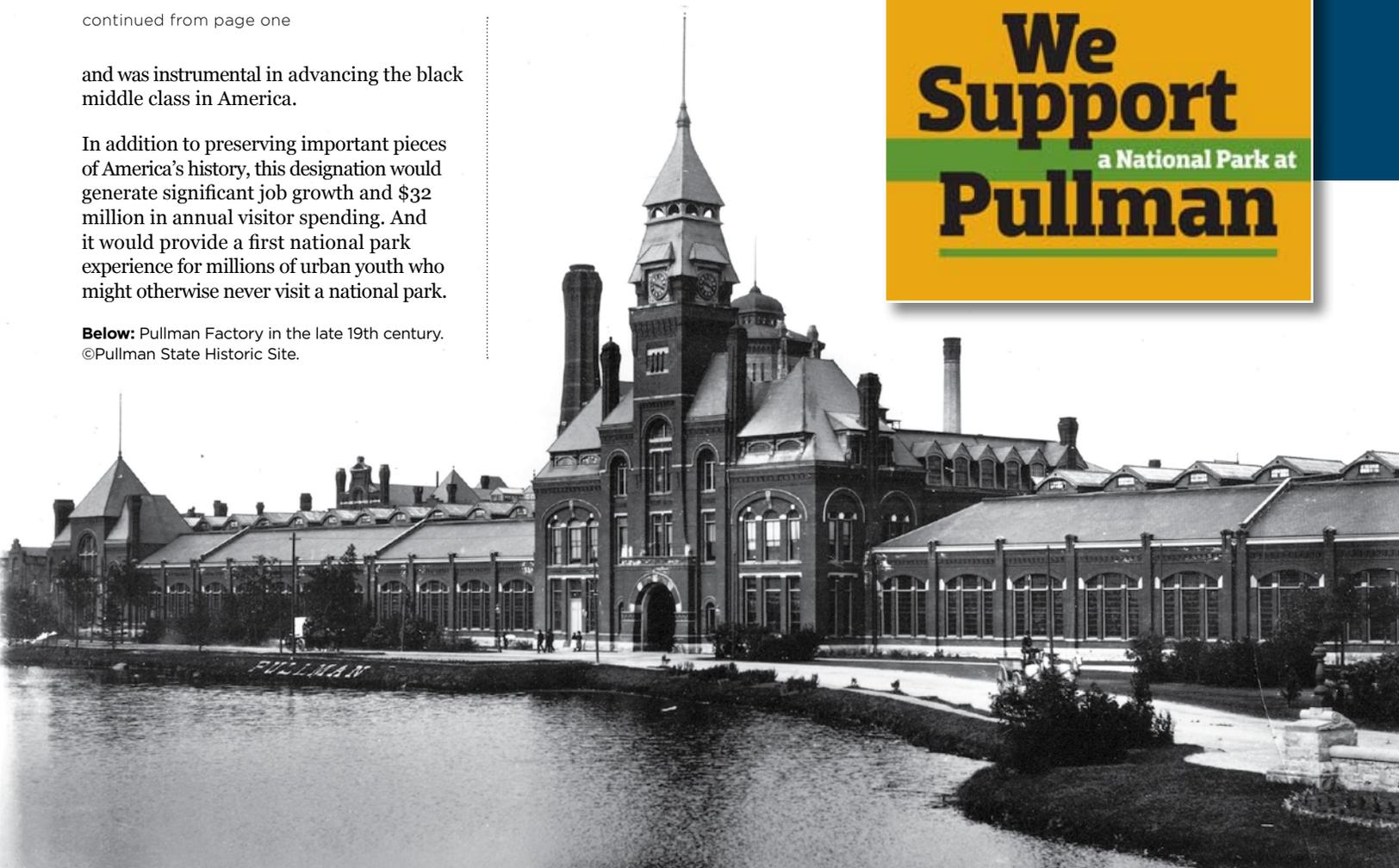
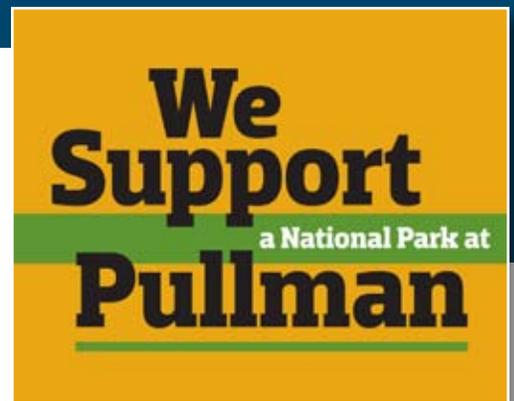
Chicago's First National Park

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and was instrumental in advancing the black middle class in America.

In addition to preserving important pieces of America's history, this designation would generate significant job growth and \$32 million in annual visitor spending. And it would provide a first national park experience for millions of urban youth who might otherwise never visit a national park.

Below: Pullman Factory in the late 19th century. ©Pullman State Historic Site.





Ozark Riverways: A Park in Peril

Rivers and streams within Ozark National Scenic Riverways are among the most scenic and best for canoeing in the Midwest. This national park was established in 1964 to protect 134 miles of two rivers—the Current and Jacks Fork—in the Ozark Highlands of southeastern Missouri. The park is also home to some of the largest natural springs in the nation, however, these springs that feed the park’s two rivers, have a tough time rebounding from the pollution caused by people, horses, and boats during heavy spring and summer use.

The National Park Service is in the midst of analyzing public comments during the General Management Plan process and will come out with a plan that protects the Riverways while allowing for a balance of recreational use and resource protection. But a local Congressman would rather see the State of Missouri run this park than to see any potential reductions in motorboat use or limits on the number of horses allowed in the rivers.

Taking a national park out of the National Park System is not the answer. Finding balance is important, and balance can be

achieved by listening to national park visitors, local businesses, and conservationists.

[... at the current rate of misuse, the Ozark Riverways simply will not survive for future generations ...]

Recreation in the Riverways is important for the local economy, but at the current rate of misuse, the two rivers of the Ozark Riverways simply will not survive for future generations of residents and national park visitors. Re-directing some recreational activities to areas where damage is minimized, establishing levels of use that keep the rivers cleaner, and allowing damaged areas to heal are the keys to stewardship of the Ozark Riverways. And this can be done while supporting the local economy.

Let us know how you feel about protecting the Ozark National Scenic Riverways at midwest@npca.org.

Above: Big Spring at Ozark National Scenic Riverways. ©NPS

Where the Parks Are

You may know that Illinois is the state (along with Delaware) with the least number of national park sites, but did you know that California has the most? Bet you can’t name them all, and since we don’t have room here, we won’t tell you either! Go to nps.gov “Find a Park” to learn more about the national parks in California—and around the country.

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See America Without Leaving Home

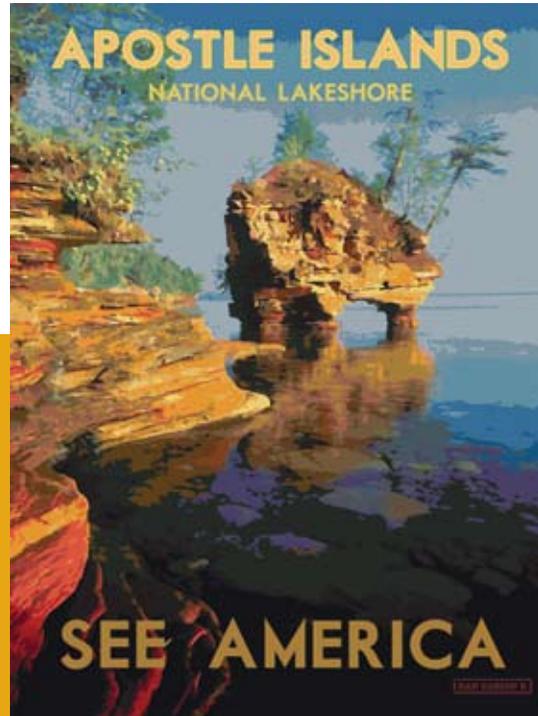
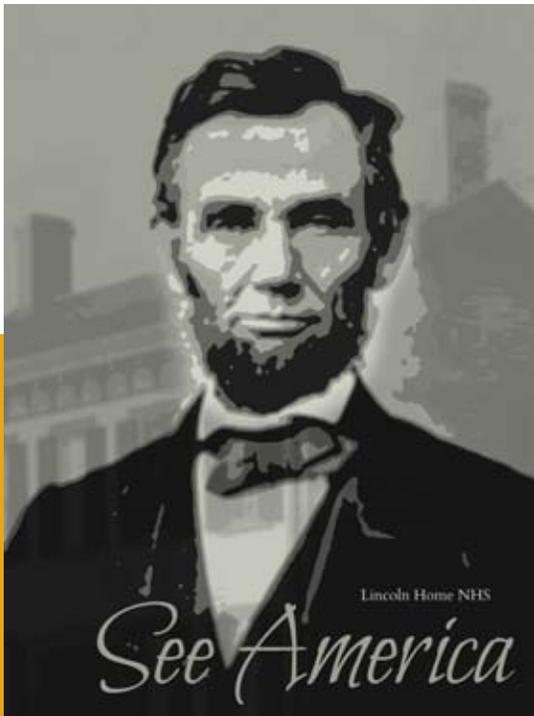
More than 75 years after the government first commissioned posters to showcase the country's most stunning natural features under the banner "See America," NPCA has partnered with the Creative Action Network to do it again and launch a new version of this iconic poster campaign enlisting artists

from all 50 states to create a collection of artwork celebrating our national parks and other treasured sites.

With the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service approaching in 2016 and the continued threat of budget cuts today, Creative Action Network put out a call to

its community of artists and designers around the world to create a new collection of See America posters for a new generation. The posters of natural, cultural and historic sites across the country depict our shared history and encourage people to reconnect with these national parks and other special places.

Check out the growing collection of "See America" posters online at SeeAmericaProject.com.



Above: Lincoln Home National Historic Site ©Rendall M. Seely. Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. ©Dan Gardiner.

Wilderness: Sleeping Bear Dunes

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The new designation primarily helps to protect future threats to the parks' fragile dunes, bluffs, and vegetation. Now, people will not be permitted to drive motorized vehicles through these sensitive areas (except in emergencies), and developers may not establish new roads, utility lines, buildings, or shelters on these parcels.

What's exciting about declaring these parts of Sleeping Bear Dunes wilderness? These lands aren't swaths of vast and intimidating backcountry. Often, people view wilderness as potentially dangerous places where they can get lost. By comparison, in most places, Sleeping Bear is literally a walk on the beach. The park is a long and relatively narrow strip of land along the coast, and the new wilderness areas are places that are

relatively easy to explore. The wilderness areas on north and south Manitou Islands do provide a more traditional rustic, woody backcountry experience, but overall the new designation makes the concept of wilderness more accessible to many visitors.

In other words, people can continue to enjoy these lands like they always have, but park officials must preserve and protect them "in their natural condition" as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man," as stated in the Wilderness Act. All in all, it's a good deal for people, for wildlife, and for the park.

This newest designation comes just a few months shy of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, a landmark preservation bill that President Lyndon Johnson signed into law on September 3, 1964, creating the

first 9.1 million acres of protected wild lands in America. Over the last five decades, Congress has helped to protect more than 100 million additional acres of land around the country through the National Wilderness Preservation System.



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore ©NPS



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Spring Break in a National Park

College students often dream of heading someplace warm for spring break, but a group of students opted for something chillier this year. Thirty students from Ohio and other Midwest states spent a weekend of their vacation at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio planting trees and clearing trails. In a snowstorm.

These brave students, passionate about our national parks, worked alongside National Park Service and NPCA staff, and the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley for an incredible weekend of restoration activities designed to engage students in conservation and stewardship of our national parks.

“In addition to seeing the great work they accomplish, it is moving to see the engagement level of the students throughout the year,” said Lisa Meranti, Director of Volunteer Services for the Conservancy.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park—one of the Midwest’s most popular national parks—is a culturally-rich, historic and natural asset to northeast Ohio. Visitors can easily explore the diverse urban landscape by traveling on the famed Towpath Trail, which runs parallel to the Cuyahoga River and winds

through the park. But as an urban national park, Cuyahoga Valley faces many challenges including the proliferation of invasive species and flooding during rainy spring and summer months caused by roads and surrounding development. During Alternative Spring Break in March and again on Earth Day in April, NPCA’s partnership with the park and the Conservancy has allowed volunteers to begin restoring 22 acres of habitat along the Cuyahoga River. The project will improve habitat for fish and wildlife, reduce

soil erosion and help prevent flooding and ultimately enhance water quality in Lake Erie watershed.

As our partnership with Cuyahoga Valley grows, we will continue building advocates by engaging students to become the next generation of national park stewards.

Bottom Left: Workday at Cuyahoga. **Bottom Right:** LeAaron Foley of NPCA (left) volunteering at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. © NPS/D.J. Reiser.

