



KEEPING THE *GRAND* IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

**MEET PRESIDENT AND CEO
THERESA PIERNO**

**BIG WIN FOR AMERICA'S
FIRST NATIONAL RIVER**

**INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S
PARK STEWARDS**

**HONORING PARKS' FIRST
PROTECTORS**



PROUD AND HUMBLE

Those feelings don't seem to go together, but proud and humble is exactly how I feel about taking the helm at National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) as this great organization's new President and CEO.

Proud, as the first woman to serve in this role in NPCA's 96-year history, and more than a decade since I joined the staff. Leading our work on behalf of America's national parks while encouraging the next generation to get involved in conservation is a point of pride for me.

Humble, because I can't do this job — let alone succeed at it — without the help of NPCA Trustees for the Parks like you. So I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for being an essential partner in all of our efforts.

Protecting Grand Canyon National Park against sprawl, giving Buffalo Soldiers their due for safeguarding national parks in their earliest years, and activating the next generation of parks stewards only scratches the surface of what we are up to on the eve of the National Park Service's 100th anniversary. I hope learning about the latest impacts of your support will fill you with pride both today and throughout the coming Centennial.

Happy New Year!

Theresa Pierno
President and CEO



Mike Quinn/National Park Service

Desert View Watchtower designed by Mary Colter and built in 1932

KEEPING THE GRAND IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

“The greatest threat to the Grand Canyon in the 96-year history of the park.” That is how Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Dave Ueberuaga describes massive commercial development proposed for a site just half a mile from the park's southern entrance.

It is not a new threat. For decades, an overseas developer has been intent on building hotels, restaurants, stores, and luxury homes within sight of this crown jewel national park. But this battle to preserve the natural beauty, scarce water, and remarkable wildlife of the Grand Canyon has reached a turning point.

The Percassi Group of Italy, its web of real estate subsidiaries, and local politicians in Tusayan, Arizona, beholden to the company, are all lobbying the U.S. Forest Service to greenlight road construction on public land adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park. If they succeed, a sprawling complex larger than the Mall of America will begin to rise next to the only Natural Wonder of the World located in America.

National Park Conservation Association's (NPCA) Arizona Senior Program Manager, Kevin Dahl worries that future visitors to Grand Canyon National Park will have a

decidedly different — and disappointing — experience than anticipated. “More than five million people come here every year to witness nature at its astounding, unspoiled best — not for neon signs, snarled traffic, and noise pollution. But that's exactly what they will be confronted with if this project is allowed to proceed.”

Beyond Visual Blights

Eyesores will be only the most obvious negative impacts of commercial development near the Grand Canyon's South Rim. New retail outlets, restaurants, and homes will drive up water consumption by 400 percent in an already arid area — putting the Grand Canyon's delicately balanced ecosystem at risk of collapse.

The developer has proposed a number of options, none of them workable, for meeting the huge tourist trap's water needs. Any new wells could dry up fragile springs, seeps, and creeks within Grand Canyon National Park. Just downstream, Havasu Creek — the entire water supply for the Havasupai Indian Nation — and its iconic blue waterfalls would also be threatened.

Grand Canyon wildlife including the California condor, bighorn sheep, and desert

tortoise simply can't survive without adequate water. Even the park's most durable plant species won't last long if the water they need is diverted for commercial purposes.

"People need to understand," Kevin Dahl says, "that tapping into the Grand Canyon aquifer is a dangerous gamble. It's possible the majority of water supplying the park's springs and creeks is fossil water, which is not readily replaced by the region's meager rain and snow."

Unprecedented Public Outcry

NPCA is part of a coalition leading opposition to the proposal, which has stepped up public education and mobilization efforts surrounding the current permitting process for new roads in the Kaibab National Forest. More than 200,000 comments were submitted this summer alone, including tens of thousands from NPCA members and supporters.

A U.S. Forest Service public affairs officer, Jacqueline Banks, puts the number of comments at, "about 203,000. This is an incredibly large number of comments [that] lets us know the level of controversy about the project."

In addition to the formal public comment process, NPCA gathered concerned citizens' signatures on petitions and continues to sound the alarm about, "the greatest threat to the Grand Canyon" on social media.

Whether Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Heather Provencio heeds public opposition to despoiling Grand Canyon National Park is yet to be seen. She has a number of options ranging from outright rejecting requested road easements — NPCA's preferred outcome — to requiring a minimal environmental assessment or ordering a more rigorous environmental impact statement.

Although a decision on road easements is expected any day now, that has been the reported status of the process for months. Kevin Dahl offers no predictions on when the decision will be made or what it will be, but he does make two promises to NPCA members and all Americans who cherish Grand Canyon National Park. "First, this won't be the end of the fight no matter how the Forest Service rules. Even if they make the right call, there's just too much potential money to be made for the developers to quit after a setback. Second, we won't stop fighting this terrible idea until Grand Canyon National Park is permanently protected against such desecration. There are just too many people who have yet to experience the park in its undisturbed glory for us to back down."

Visit npca.org/parksinperil for updates on our work to keep the "grand" in Grand Canyon National Park and opportunities to make your voice heard by decision makers.

NPCA's #PARKSINPERIL campaign brings attention to 9 national parks that need safeguarding before permanent damage is done.



Teddy Roosevelt, John Hance, & The Colgate Party start down the Bright Angel Trail in Grand Canyon. 17 Mar 1911. Kolb Bros.

Courtesy of National Park Service

“
LEAVE IT AS IT
IS. YOU CANNOT
IMPROVE ON
IT. THE AGES
HAVE BEEN
AT WORK ON IT,
AND MAN CAN
ONLY MAR IT.”

— PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S ADVICE TO HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND FUTURE AMERICANS REGARDING THE GRAND CANYON

SEE AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

NATIONAL
PARKS
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION

NOW LEASING
MEGA MALL
AT THE GRAND CANYON

#PARKSINPERIL

STRENGTHEN NPCA AND SUPPORT THE NATIONAL PARKS

Building the future of our National Park System requires dedication — dedication to the issues and opportunities facing the national parks and dedication to NPCA. As the sole organization focused on protecting and strengthening the national parks, NPCA has depended on the commitment and strength of its loyal members for its achievements over the last 96 years.

MAKE A GIFT

Give today and support NPCA's most critical programs. Please contact Eric Olson at 202.454.3331, eolson@npca.org, or visit www.npcap.org/trustees.

CONSIDER A PLANNED GIFT

With numerous ways to make and fund a planned gift, you can increase your current income, diversify your holdings, reduce your taxes, and avoid probate costs. Please contact Morgan Dodd, toll-free at 877.468.5775 or mdodd@npca.org.

TRAVEL WITH US

Check off a few more national parks from your list! Join one of NPCA's small group tours in partnership with Off the Beaten Path. Most tours are limited to 16 participants, with two guides. Please contact Ben Sander at 202.454.3305, bsander@npca.org, or visit www.npcap.org/travel.

CONTACT US IN THE FIELD

Tracy LaMondue, Washington, DC
Senior Vice President of Development
202.454.3368 | tlamondue@npca.org

Paul Balle, Seattle, WA
Alaska, Northern Rockies, and Northwest
206.276.2597 | pballe@npca.org

Lynne Bierut, Los Angeles, CA
Southern California and Texas
310.650.1730 | lbierut@npca.org

**Roxanne Bradley, San Francisco, CA/
Washington, DC**
Northern California, Southwest, Hawaii
and Pacific Islands
202.454.3303 | rbradley@npca.org

Michelle Davis, Fort Myers, FL
Southeast and Sun Coast
239.841.1453 | mdavis@npca.org

Diane Gerrish, Chicago, IL
Midwest
312.267.0825 | dgerrish@npca.org

Eric Olson, Washington, DC
Trustees for the Parks & Mid-Atlantic
202.454.3331 | eolson@npca.org

Cover Photo: Yavapai Point, Grand Canyon National Park

photo credit: © Lunamarina | Dreamstime.com



Lit Liu/Bigstockphoto

Virgin Islands National Park is one of Theresa's favorite national parks.

MEET NPCA PRESIDENT AND CEO THERESA PIERNO

Q: How did you form your first connection with nature?

A: I was very young — literally four or five years old — and we had a forest in our neighborhood in suburban south Jersey. I would go in those woods and play. I climbed trees, created forts, and did all of the kinds of things that kids did. Then I lost the forest to development and soon after we moved to Philadelphia and I discovered Pennypack Park, a local park that to me was paradise.

Later in life, we were able to go to places like Shenandoah and Gettysburg, and I continued to connect with parks as magical places with natural beauty that told stories of our past.

Q: At some point you took to the water as well.

A: On family vacations in the Poconos, we went to Lake Harmony and I learned to sail. I found it thrilling to be in control of a boat, though of course, you're not in control of the wind. You have your mishaps and you learn to fend for yourself. It taught me to appreciate and love the water.

Q: How do you think NPCA can make parks and park advocacy relevant for a wider audience?

A: It starts with our youth. Since my grandson Jack was very young, I would take him to our local park in Annapolis, Quiet Waters. Now he always asks me, "When are we going back?" Getting children and grandchildren into those parks makes a huge difference.

As an organization, NPCA's Find Your Voice initiative is an important way that we are connecting more young people, families, and Millennials with these important places.

Q: What are your biggest priorities moving forward?

A: For me, it's really about making sure that we have more people — diverse communities, younger people — connecting with these places and understanding that national parks play a primary role in the foundation of our democracy and the future of our ecosystems. Protecting parks is protecting both of these things that are so fundamentally important to all of us.

Q: You are leading the organization on the eve of two major anniversaries: the Park Service's 100th in 2016, and NPCA's 100th in 2019. What is your vision for these centennials?

A: We want to use increased media attention to leverage our message, which is: Now that you've discovered these places, find your voice to do everything you can to help protect them. My role will be to amplify that message every chance I get and encourage a broader constituency to step up and protect our national parks for the future. People will be able to experience so much through the stories that are going to be told over this next year, whether it's IMAX movies or television shows like "Rock the Park". We're going to do everything we can to leverage each one of those opportunities.

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S PARKS STEWARDS

Fred and Alice Stanback are National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) Trustees for the Parks and Duke University alumni who generously fund an internship program that gives Duke students opportunities to gain meaningful conservation work experience. NPCA has benefited greatly from the enthusiasm and intelligence of Stanback interns, including Caroline Schechinger who worked on national parks water rights and other issues this summer.

Caroline's primary summer research project focused on the federal reserved water rights doctrine which is well established as it applies to national parks in western states. Its potential for ensuring sufficient water supplies for parks in the east, however, has gone largely untapped. Caroline helped change that with her research on the doctrine and how it can better serve more national parks.

Caroline, a senior at Duke, is majoring in Biology and Environmental Sciences & Policy. She says her Stanback internship at NPCA solidified her decision to pursue a career in environmental law. "From day one, everyone was so welcoming. Their

passion for the parks is both evident and contagious. This was my first 'real job' and the whole experience was so great that I've joked with friends that everything else is going to be a letdown."

We doubt there will be many — if any — career letdowns for Caroline. And once she finishes law school, we hope she continues to pursue her interest and support the parks in whatever career path she takes.

We are thankful for all of the wonderful students from the Stanback Internship Program that have worked with us over the years and look forward to welcoming many more to the NPCA team.

Stanback interns work on national park issues ranging from water rights to clean air and park funding.



From left to right: Summer 2015 Stanback Fellows Nina Berlin, Bernice Kwan, and Caroline Schechinger
© NPCA



“

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE MORATORIUM BECOME PERMANENT BECAUSE THERE WILL NEVER BE A TIME WHEN IT'S APPROPRIATE TO PUT SUCH A BEAUTIFUL, POPULAR RIVER AT RISK.”

— NPCA SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER EMILY JONES



Buffalo National River
© Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism

BIG WIN FOR AMERICA'S FIRST NATIONAL RIVER

It is hard to imagine why anyone might think it would be a good idea to put a factory farm with 6,500 confined pigs producing millions of gallons of waste just a few miles upstream of a pristine national river. But officials at two federal agencies apparently came to that conclusion when they guaranteed \$3.6 million in taxpayer-backed loans to C&H Hog Farms located in the Buffalo National River watershed of northwestern Arkansas.

Jones recalls. “They knew plopping down a hog farm 15 times larger than any other in Arkansas just a few miles from the river was a terrible idea. But they didn’t know how to fight back against an agribusiness giant.”

Fortunately, NPCA does know how to wage such battles. Along with local conservation partners, NPCA went to court and won what the environmental law group Earthjustice called, “a rare win against industrial agriculture and federal malfeasance.”

U.S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr. ruled in NPCA’s favor by ordering the federal agencies to conduct a thorough environmental review with full public scrutiny. The Small Business Administration and Farm Service Agency are about to complete the review that should have occurred in the first place. Depending on the review’s results, C&H Hog Farms could be required to meet new environmental conditions or reduce the scale of its operations — either of which would be an improvement over the stinky status quo.

In addition to this litigation victory, Emily Jones points out that public protests against C&H Hog Farms and hard work by NPCA’s allies at the Ozark Society convinced the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission to issue a five-year moratorium on new medium- or large-sized factory farms in the Buffalo River watershed. “We would like to see the moratorium become permanent because there will never be a time when it’s appropriate to put such a beautiful, popular river at risk.”

This big mess started three years ago when the Small Business Administration and Farm Service Agency approved loans for the huge commercial hog farm with little public notice and only nominal consideration of the farm’s environmental impact on the Buffalo River. Disposing of millions of gallons of hog waste upstream of America’s first national river, where thousands of families swim and fish, is bad enough in itself. But the region’s porous geography — known as “karst” is particularly susceptible to spreading contaminants,

making the seriousness of the farm’s violations even more harmful.

Soon after C&H Hog Farms began operations, phone calls from worried neighbors started pouring into NPCA’s Southeast Regional Office in Knoxville, TN.

“People didn’t know what was going on,” NPCA Senior Program Manager, Emily

Ed Barham



Park Superintendents and Buffalo River supporters attend the Celebrate the Buffalo Gala held in October 2015. Top row: Pea Ridge Superintendent Kevin Eads, NPCA Program Manager Emily Jones. Bottom row: LaDean Eads, Cameron Cheri, and Buffalo National River Superintendent Kevin Cheri.

HONORING PARKS' FIRST PROTECTORS

You wouldn't learn much from a U.S. history book with entire chapters ripped out. Yet that is essentially how the story of America's national parks is being told — with the roles played by Americans from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds too often left out.

These errors of omission include the often overlooked and undervalued contributions of Buffalo Soldiers. That error is beginning to be corrected as the result of legislation National Parks Conservation Association helped get passed in Congress last year.

Prior to the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, the U.S. military — including segregated units of black troops known as Buffalo Soldiers — served as the primary guardians of national parks. In the American West of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Buffalo Soldiers protected Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks against illegal grazing and logging while escorting visitors to those then-remote and occasionally dangerous parks. They also built roads that are still in use today by millions of park visitors.

In effect, Buffalo Soldiers were some of America's first park rangers. Their job was made more difficult by societal prejudice as well as rampant racism in the military. But they quite literally soldiered on with determination and grace that should have

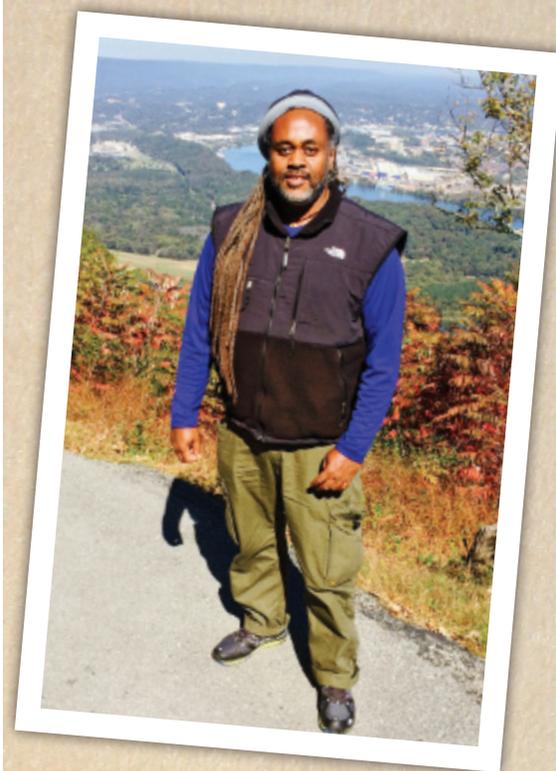
earned these African-American veterans a more prominent place in U.S. history.

The Buffalo Soldiers in the National Parks Study Act aims to give our national parks' first protectors the recognition they deserve by directing the Secretary of the Interior to:

- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a national historic trail commemorating the route Buffalo Soldiers traveled between their post at San Francisco's Presidio and Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks.
- Identify properties to be considered for the National Register of Historic Places or National Historic Landmarks.
- Develop educational initiatives and a public awareness campaign about the contributions of Buffalo Soldiers.

The national parks' Centennial year is a fitting time for NPCA to be leading this story-telling process and helping ensure all Americans see themselves — as well as their ancestors — in their parks.

Listen to Alan's presentation: National Parks & America's Untold Stories by visiting npca.org/speakerseries.



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“THE AMERICAN WEST WAS MUCH MORE CULTURALLY COMPLEX THAN WE'VE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE BY MOVIES AND HISTORY BOOKS. PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, INCLUDING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUFFALO SOLDIERS, TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE HISTORY OF BELOVED NATIONAL PARKS LIKE YOSEMITE.”

— NPCA CULTURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR ALAN SPEARS

Buffalo Soldiers in Yosemite National Park



Courtesy of NPS



777 6th Street, NW | Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-3723
P 202.223.6722 | F 202.872.0960 | npca.org/trustees

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NEWSLETTER WINTER 2016

Delivered to Trustees for the Parks, Mather Legacy Society members, travelers, and friends



To celebrate the National Park Centennial in 2016, NPCA's Find Your Voice initiative will feature projects and activities for you to pitch in and get involved in protecting our national parks. Visit FindYourVoice.camp to find an activity near you. Thank you to our volunteers in 2015!

Volunteers take down a wire fence to allow for antelopes to roam near West Yellowstone, MT.



Thomas Lee

NPCA partnered with Sebago Canoe Club and the Wounded Warrior Project to host a veteran's paddling tour of Jamaica Bay at Gateway National Recreation Area, NY.



Ed Lefkowitz

Find Your Voice volunteers planting native plants at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, CA.



Alex Pitt

Find Your Voice volunteers in the Community Garden at Pullman National Monument, IL.

