



FIELDREPORT

Midwest Region | Winter 2016



Find Your Voice

NPCA teamed up with high school students, fishermen, youth conservation crews, neighborhood advocates, community leaders, and even the Chicago Police Department to support three projects in Minnesota and Chicago. These events are part of NPCA's Find Your Voice initiative, launched last spring, to educate, engage and empower new national park advocates ensuring that America's favorite places continue to thrive into their next century.



Our 2015 Find Your Voice Events

NPCA and a high-school science class at the Volunteers of America High School in Minneapolis removed invasive burdock bushes and foxtails along the riverbanks of the Mississippi River. The students learned about the role of their “backyard” national park in fostering plant and wildlife growth, and how their time and voice truly matter in stewarding this urban treasure.

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A National Park for Chicago

On a very cold day, President Barack Obama came to his hometown to make Pullman a national monument. On February 19, 2015 the president gave a moving speech about the unique history at Pullman and his personal connections with the south side neighborhood. More than 600 vocal supporters attended the designation ceremony on a day when the temperatures dipped to minus 25.

We could tell you more about the great Pullman stories and the importance they have in our shared heritage, but we think that the President's words are far better than anything we could say.

Excerpts from President Barack Obama's speech designating Pullman National Monument

February 19, 2015

It is good to be home. Even in February. It's always been a dream of mine to be the first President to designate a national monument in subzero conditions.

I'm here because next year is the 100th birthday of the National Park Service. For a century, rangers, and interpreters, and volunteers and visitors have kept alive what the writer Wallace Stegner once called “the best idea we ever had”—our belief that the country's most special places should belong not just to the rich, not just to the powerful, but belong to everybody—not just now, but for all time.

More than 150 years ago, a carpenter named George Pullman moved to Chicago from New York. And he didn't start out with much, but he built his railway car company into one of the largest of its day.



But for all his success, Mr. Pullman wasn't always that keen about making sure their workers were able to live out the same promise.

Pullman slashed his workers' pay... And a strike started here in Pullman, and it spread across the country. Federal troops were called to restore order; and in the end, more than 30 workers were killed.

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Top: President Barack Obama designates Pullman National Monument in Chicago. ©Antonio Dickey
Above: We Support Pullman even when the temperatures dip below zero. ©Antonio Dickey

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This newsletter was printed on FSC-certified paper with 10% post-consumer recycled content using soy-based inks.



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What's Next for Chicago's New National Park?

Pullman National Monument is a must-see treasure on Chicago's South Side. A landmark Chicago neighborhood, Pullman's stories were entrusted to the National Park Service earlier this year when President Obama came to his home town to make the designation.



Strategies to commemorate important buildings that have been lost; programming historic buildings; and incorporating land and streetscape design and construction guidelines based on the historic character of the neighborhood.

There is much to celebrate. But there are many questions about what's next and what the new designation means for the people living in Pullman, the adjacent neighborhoods, and the greater south side.

NPCA, in cooperation with American Institute of Architects (AIA) Chicago, started to address some of these questions as part of a collaborative design workshop called "Positioning Pullman" (PositioningPullman.org). The purpose was to engage people in discussions with the Chicago design community on how to enhance the visitor experience while advancing important community development goals.

More than 40 urban planners, architects, engineers, economists and historians came together for the three-day design workshop. They produced concrete ideas to improve everything from transit to traffic flow to tourism opportunities, including:

- Designs for transit stations inspired by historic Pullman train cars; strategies to manage pedestrians crossing a busy industrial corridor; and new bike trails linking Pullman to other neighborhoods.

- Potential career paths for local youth; connecting residents and visitors to nearby Lake Calumet and its surrounding natural areas; and establishing Pullman as a new southern gateway to the city of Chicago.
- Plans to help visitors explore and navigate the site, including self-guided routes that convey stories of factory and neighborhood life.

Pullman is now positioning itself to welcome people from around the world. As the National Park Service approaches its centennial celebration in 2016, the lessons learned at Pullman could help shape what happens in other great urban parks for the next 100 years. See the vision at PositioningPullman.org.

Richard Wilson is an urban planner with Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill (AS+GG). He led the "Positioning Pullman" workshop and has 20 years of experience working with the public and private sectors to envision, plan, design, and build dynamic regions, cities, and neighborhoods.

Below: AS+GG rendering of renovated Pullman Administration Building at night ©NPCA



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.

A National Park for Chicago

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The idea they had sparked, the idea of organizing and collectively bargaining, couldn't be silenced. And so just six days after the strike ended, an act of Congress established Labor Day—a day to honor working men and women of America.

The white workers who built Pullman's rail cars won new rights. But those rights were not extended to the black porters who worked on these cars—the former slaves, and sons and grandsons who made beds and carried luggage and folded sheets and shined shoes. And one summer night in 1925, porters packed a hall in Harlem, and a young man there named A. Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters around the strategy that he would employ throughout his life: "If you stand firm and hold your ground, in the long run you'll win."

As Americans, we believe that workers' rights are civil rights. That dignity and opportunity aren't just gifts to be handed down by a generous government or by a generous



employer; they are rights given by God, as undeniable and worth protecting as the Grand Canyon or the Great Smoky Mountains.

That's the story of this place—that, together, we can do great things that we cannot accomplish alone. **That's why today I'm designating Chicago's Pullman District as America's newest national monument.** I want future generations to know that while the Pullman porters helped push forward our rights to vote, and to



work, and to live as equals, their legacy goes beyond even that.

This place, historic Pullman, teaches us we have to keep standing firm and together. That's the story of who we are. That's the story of our past. And I have no doubt that we will pass the torch from generation to generation so that it is the story of our future as well.

— Barack Obama

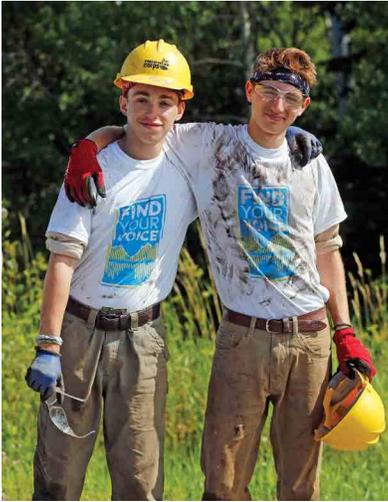
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Above (Left): Deputy Regional Director Patty Trap, Director Jon Jarvis, and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell at the Pullman celebration ©Antonio Dickey **(Right):** President Barack Obama spoke of our shared history at Pullman. ©Antonio Dickey

More than 40 urban planners, architects, engineers and many others worked with community leaders and residents to create a blueprint for Pullman. Positioning Pullman is a comprehensive vision that produced ideas to improve transit, traffic flow, tourism opportunities, and new ways to tell the Pullman story. The advocates that worked together to bring a national park to Chicago are now collaborating to make Pullman National Monument a model for urban national parks of the future. See more about Positioning Pullman on page 2. © NPCA



Find Your Voice



Above (Left): Members of the Conservation Corps MN/IA crew take a break from tree planting. ©Eric Miller **Above (Right):** Student Conservation Association volunteers at Pullman National Monument. ©NPCA **Below:** 2015 marked the third year that students planted trees to stem erosion at Voyageurs National Park. ©Eric Miller



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At **Voyageurs National Park**, NPCA and volunteers planted trees along a river that flows into the park's beautiful lakes. These trees will help stabilize the riverbanks, improve water quality, and attract walleye to spawn once again. This year was the third in a row that the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club, NPCA, and a Conservation Corps youth crew were at work at Voyageurs.

At **Pullman National Monument** NPCA organized the first volunteer initiative since Pullman was designated in February of this year. On a rainy day in July, more than 150 volunteers of all ages helped build the community garden, care for plants in historic Arcade Park, and "spruced up" the national monument. Many were visiting Pullman for the first time, including a crew from Student Conservation Association. A

dozen members of the nearby Chicago Police Department district stopped by to help!

Next year, the centennial anniversary year of our National Park System, NPCA will sponsor more events across the country. The National Park System has grown to include more than 400 of our country's most important historical and cultural sites and iconic landscapes. While our national parks are referred to as our country's "best idea," they face many challenges, ranging from encroaching development to climate change to years of underfunding.

The parks need people to visit and to learn about our shared history, hike their trails and explore their protected wilderness. We know that together we can protect them. For more information about next year's events, go to npca.org.

Connecting Chicago to Indiana Dunes

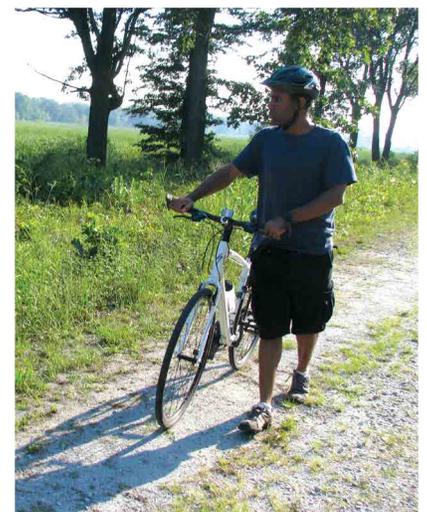
Drive just one hour east of Chicago, and you'll reach one of our most ecologically diverse national parks, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Towering dunes, rare black oak savannah forests, vast wetlands that are home to migratory birds, and many bike and walking trails, the iconic Indiana Dunes is a great park in an urban/industrial area. Nearly 2 million people visit this fragile landscape every year, but there isn't a lot of parking to accommodate them.

The South Shore Line—a railway running right through the park—was the only commuter line in the country that didn't allow bikes on trains. Until recently. For more than four years, NPCA has been working with fellow advocates to change the South Shore's policy. Following a successful trial in 2015, cyclists will be able to take bikes east from Chicago for trail riding in the national park.

NPCA with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission championed a study that helped the South Shore Line make what we see as an easy decision—it's both feasible and it's a service that is in demand.

Pullman National Monument on Chicago's south side also lies along the South Shore line and we hope to see a new stop added soon to connect visitors between these two regional assets. The South Shore Line presents a tremendous opportunity to connect people from Chicago and South Bend with their nearby national parks.

Below Cyclist on the Calumet Trail at Indiana Dunes. ©Nathan Miller

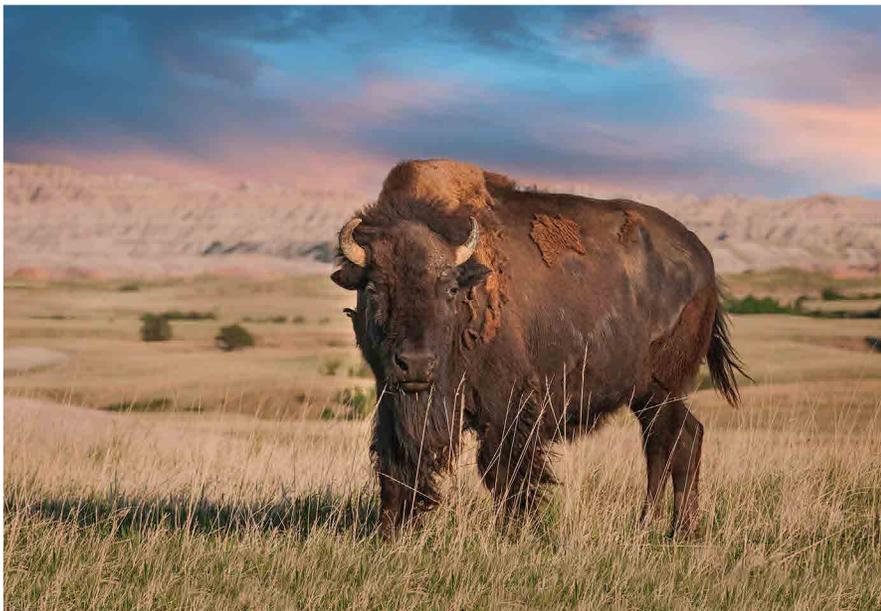


Room to Roam

At Badlands National Park, the magnificent topography prevents bison from freely moving to other, more-visited parts of the park. Consequently, many visitors miss seeing this iconic wildlife and the herd doesn't have room to grow to a healthy population size.

NPCA BRIEFS

Thanks to a recent land exchange between the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and a private landowner, the bison will now have more room to roam. As soon as the rancher can relocate his cattle to nearby Forest Service land, the fences that have been up since the mid-1950s will come down and visitors will see bison in the North Unit of Badlands.



Apostle Islands Just Got More Light

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in northern Wisconsin has more lighthouses than any other national park and thanks to legislation championed by Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Rep. Sean Duffy, the Ashland Breakwater Light in nearby Ashland is now officially part of the park. Built in 1915, this breakwater lighthouse is the ninth in Apostle Islands, providing a new opportunity for visitors to experience the great history of our Great Lakes.

Locking Out Carp

Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes, is taking steps to make sure it is not the land of a million Asian carp. On June 10, 2015, a lock on the Mississippi River within the

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area was officially closed to traffic to stop invasive carp from migrating further up the river into the park and the Mississippi headwaters. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Rep. Keith Ellison were critical in pushing through the legislation that mandated the lock closure. NPCA led the "Stop Carp" Coalition that educated boaters and worked with our members of Congress to close the lock.



NPCA and the National Park Service will be working together to envision how the closed lock can provide an "on the river" experience for park visitors.

Above: Silver carp (one species of Asian carp) ©Goruppa | Dreamstime.com **Left:** With a recent land swap, the park service hopes to increase the Badlands bison herd to 1,000. ©Geoffrey Kuchera | Dreamstime.com **Bottom:** The Ashland Lighthouse, now part of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore ©James Bushelle | Dreamstime.com





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The Wolves of Isle Royale



Every year for nearly 60 years, scientists have spent seven weeks during the winter observing the lives and interactions of wolves and moose at Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior. This is purported to be the world's longest continuous study of a predator-prey system in the world.

At the end of last year's Winter Study, scientists observed only three wolves, the lowest number ever recorded, and a growing population of moose. According to the 2014-2015 annual report on the study,

UPDATE

the moose population has grown at a mean rate of 22 percent for each of the past four years, and could more than double over the next three years if the current rate of growth continues. More moose means more native plant consumption.

Recently the National Park Service launched a critical wolf-moose-vegetation study to determine what, if anything, the agency will do to stabilize the delicate balance between predator, prey and native plants. The study should be complete within two years.

After extensive review, with assistance from a small team of researchers, NPCA recommends that the Park Service bring new wolves to the island to augment the current population or reintroduce wolves if augmentation is no longer possible. Wolves serve a critical role in maintaining the health of the island's ecosystem. In the absence of wolves it would be necessary to manage or cull the moose population or replant native vegetation. Look for results from this year's winter study in spring 2016.

Above: The three wolves remaining at Isle Royale National Park, winter 2015. ©Rolf Peterson