



Voices from the Field

By Fernando Gracia

The United States is becoming increasingly more diverse, with the Census Bureau reporting that millennials (those born between 1982 and 2000) constitute a larger and more varied group than any preceding generation. As is expected, this generation's behaviors and interests reflect the diversity inherent in its demographic composition: the activities in which millennials choose to participate and the products we consume are more varied and plentiful than previously seen. Despite these attributes, millennials are relatively absent from the national parks arena. National Park Service (NPS) data show that millennials are under-represented among visitors and employees. The lack of millennial participation in these spaces is problematic for the future of America's national parks.

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the NPS, we must recognize that both the NPS and the nation have undergone changes in the last 100 years—and will continue to evolve in the future. It is imperative that our current generation

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Building a More Inclusive National Park System

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

By Stephanie Heidbreder

In January 1917, women's rights advocate Alice Paul led twelve suffragists called the "Silent Sentinels" in the first-ever picket outside the White House. The women carried banners directed at President Woodrow Wilson, including one that read: "MR. PRESIDENT, WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE?"

On April 12, 2016—Equal Pay Day—almost one hundred years, many hard-won victories, and several waves of the women's rights movement later, President Barack Obama designated the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument as the 411th site in the National Park System.

This historic designation built on the passionate leadership of U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland), who, in the spirit of the Silent Sentinels, had penned a letter to President Obama asking him what he would do to honor Women's History in the final year of his presidency. Mikulski



subsequently introduced bipartisan legislation with 17 cosponsors including Shelley Moore Capito (R-West Virginia), Ben Cardin (D-Maryland) and Chris Coons (D-Delaware). Mikulski's vision and leadership plus a National Park Service feasibility study laid the foundation for Belmont-Paul's designation, the ninth national park site honoring women's history.

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Top: 1917 - The Silent Sentinels picketed the White House six days a week to raise public awareness of women's suffrage and garner the attention of President Wilson. ©Library of Congress **Above:** NPCA Board Member Audrey Peterman and Cultural Resources Director Alan Spears celebrate the historic designation of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. ©NPCA

FIELD REPORT

FALL-WINTER 2016-2017

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Maryland, Pennsylvania,
Virginia, West Virginia

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Voices from the Field



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of stakeholders and policymakers work directly with the next generation to implement policies and practices that attract millennials to our national parks and allow for greater representation within the system.

For the past 100 years, generations of Americans have benefited in a variety of ways by engaging with national parks. For example, gateway communities around national parks reap the benefits of tourism and investment, and visitors to national parks receive well-documented health and social benefits. The absence of millennials in these sites is an issue relevant to a variety of stakeholders, from public health

officials to urban planners. A key set of stakeholders, however, is the NPS and its supporting nonprofits and organizations. Our parks and communities will greatly benefit from the critical engagement and support of the next generation of park-goers.

Fernando Gracia is member of NPCA's Mid-Atlantic Regional Council. He also serves on NPCA's Next Generation Advisory Council, along with 12 other millennials who have taken on the responsibility of thinking strategically about how NPCA can build the next generation of national park advocates.

Above: Fernando Gracia enjoys the view at Yosemite National Park. © Fernando Gracia

INTERN SPOTLIGHT



This summer, the Mid-Atlantic team hosted interns Wenyu Zhang from Duke and Vaaruni Eashwar from Yale, whose respective projects focused on park gateway communities and on agricultural practices on national park lands. They also joined other staff and interns at events such as Paddle the Potomac in June. L-R: Melanie McDowell, Wenyu Zhang, Kristin Murphy, Vaaruni Eashwar, Sara Snyder, Stephanie Heidbreder. ©NPCA

HAVE A PHOTO OR COMMENT TO SHARE? We welcome photos from members enjoying national parks, particularly those in the Mid-Atlantic region. We also appreciate feedback on our *Field Report*. Share your digital photos, comments, and ideas with us via email: midatlantic@npca.org

Building a More Inclusive National Park System

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Located just steps away from the U.S. Capitol, the former Sewall-Belmont House became the National Woman's Party headquarters in 1929 and is home to the most complete collection of suffrage and equal rights movement artifacts in America. Purchased by suffragist Alva Belmont, the house is where the National Woman's Party honed the political and civil disobedience tactics that became a blueprint for civil rights organizations throughout the 20th century.

The site's designation is particularly appropriate during 2016, the centennial anniversary of both the National Park Service and the National Woman's Party. Threatened by demolition during construction of the adjacent Senate Hart Office Building and starting to show wear and tear from deferred maintenance, the house now will benefit from long-term protection as a national monument.

National Woman's Party Executive Director Page Harrington says the designation will further publicize the site and its history, adding, "We've come a long way since those protests almost a century ago...if we work together and empower one another, we can make our government work better for all of us."

Obama designated the site as a national monument through his authority under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Sixteen presidents of both parties have used the Antiquities Act to safeguard federal lands and preserve cultural and historical sites. Today, two-thirds of the 413 national park sites represent our country's cultural and historic significance. Yet, prior to the Belmont-Paul designation, just eight sites focused on women's history. Obama has prioritized designating sites that reflect our diverse American story.

In April, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, District of Columbia Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, DC Councilmember Charles Allen, and other federal and local representatives hosted a community meeting to gauge support for the proposed designation. Following the meeting, NPCA Mid-Atlantic Leadership Council member Jackie Kaye said, (the reminder that) "we live in a country where anyone can walk up to a microphone and speak directly to public officials was an uplifting experience."



Top: Built more than two centuries ago, the Sewall-Belmont house has been the National Woman's Party home since 1929. In April it became a national monument. ©NPCA **Middle:** National Woman's Party (NWP) founder Alice Paul (**Left**) and fellow suffragist and NWP primary benefactor Alva Belmont (**Right**) are memorialized at the newly designated Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. **Bottom:** Picket line outside the White House in February 1917. ©The National Woman's Party at the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, Washington, D.C.





Blitzing for Biodiversity in First State National Historical Park

By Amanda John

National parks serve as sanctuaries for native animal and plant species of all sizes and varieties. Often serving as the last line of defense for threatened or endangered species, national parks reduce the risk of extinction and can restore populations that have historically lived in park landscapes.

To bolster knowledge of the biodiversity within America's most special places, the National Park Service and the National Geographic Society team up annually for a nation-wide BioBlitz—a fun, fast-paced, scientist-supported and volunteer-led inventory of plant and animal species.

In this centennial year of the National Park Service, more than 250 BioBlitzes have taken place in parks across the country. In May, First State National Historical Park (NHP) in Delaware and Pennsylvania—one of the Mid-Atlantic's newest historical parks—hosted one such event with gusto. NPCA staff, 200 students and nearly 100 volunteers and local stakeholders delved into a biodiversity field survey and were amazed by the diversity

of life the park's verdant landscape supports.

Enduring spitting rain, NPCA, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Sens. Chris Coons (D-Delaware) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island), and other partners joined committed volunteers to survey the park's hardwood forests, Brandywine Creek and the wide open spaces of Beaver Valley to count macroinvertebrates and amphibians, tally numerous plant species, and total the number of birds identified.

To further the study of wildlife behavior at First State, NPCA installed six cameras in prime animal habitat throughout Beaver Valley, capturing 24-hour footage of local creatures for several weeks. Enjoy more images and other information from the First State NHP BioBlitz in an upcoming NPCA blog post at www.npca.org/parkadvocate.

Participants celebrated the 2013 establishment of Delaware's first national park, wished the National Park Service a happy birthday, and took action by urging their members of Congress to ensure the preservation of our national parks for generations to come. For many, NPCA's Find Your Voice campaign

provided their first opportunity to voice their love of First State NHP and parks throughout the country.

The BioBlitz fostered greater understanding of the natural treasures found in First State NHP, located just five miles outside of downtown Wilmington, and demonstrated the importance of efforts to conserve this special place. Participants left with new appreciation for the park, new tools to support stewardship of local ecosystems and a better understanding of how our national parks support the incredible biodiversity of our country.

Find more information and results of the BioBlitz inventory here: www.nps.gov/frst/learn/nature/centennial-bioblitz.htm

Above: First State National Historical Park is Delaware's first and only national park and provides critical habitat for a rich population of plant and animal species. ©Greg Young **Lower Left:** Students and community leaders used personal observation and binoculars to capture data on the park's biodiversity at the May BioBlitz. ©NPS **Below:** Using camera trapping and 24-hour surveillance, NPCA snapped photos of creatures like raccoons (**L**) and red fox (**R**) who reside in the Beaver Valley park site. ©NPCA



CREATURE FEATURE

Bog Turtle

By Melanie McDowell

The bog turtle (*Glyptemys mullenbergii*) is the smallest turtle species in North America, and one of the most threatened. This 4-inch-long creature ranges between Massachusetts and northern Georgia, and is divided into two distinct northern and southern East Coast populations. The bog turtle calls many Mid-Atlantic national parks home, including the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Like many other turtles, bog turtles can be found soaking in the sun when it's cool outside and resting under vegetation or mud when it's hot or cold. These little omnivores undergo brumation (the reptilian form of hibernation) inches deep in mud during the winter, emerging in the spring to breed. Because of their size, they are easy prey to many predators.

At the First State National Historical Park BioBlitz in May, around 300 students and volunteers gathered for a two-day citizen-scientist-led biodiversity survey. First State



NHP has seven sites in Delaware and Pennsylvania and is home to a variety of species including the bog turtle. Using camera trapping, binoculars and personal observations, participants recorded sightings of more than 100 species—but none of this small reptile, which is easily identified by the large orange spots on each side of its head and dark brown shell and body. So, why didn't anyone catch a glimpse of this tiny creature?

Aside from being small and often hiding under vegetation, bog turtles have been struggling with population decline for years, and are the hardest-to-find turtle in North America. Protected under the Endangered Species Act, bog turtles have been listed as federally threatened for almost two decades. Populations have declined largely due to habitat loss and the illegal collection of bog turtles for the pet trade and international sales.

Like many other animals and plants, bog turtles rely on clean water and a healthy environment to survive. Their population struggle indicates not just a decline in the health of bog turtles themselves, but of wetlands at large. Wetland conservation and habitat restoration efforts are essential to increase the population.

NPCA's campaigns for clean air and water in parks across the country help protect creatures like the tiny bog turtle. We hope you catch sight of one on your next park adventure!

Above: Bog turtle populations have declined by 50 percent over the last 20 years in the U.S. The National Park Service at First State National Historical Park works to protect the park's bog turtles. ©Jason Ondreicka | Dreamstime.com

Will You Help Protect Our National Parks?



Become a Trustee for the Parks with a donation of \$1,000 or more, and join a community of national park enthusiasts who obtain unique insights into the advocacy and political lobbying that occurs—locally and nationally—to defend our parks.

Our Trustees are invited to special opportunities throughout the year including receptions, brown-bag speaker presentations, park tours, and volunteer opportunities.

To learn more about the Trustees for the Parks program, visit www.npca.org/trustees.

Above: A group of NPCA's Northeast Trustees for the Parks enjoys a trip to Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, New Jersey. ©NPCA

MID-ATLANTIC CAMPAIGN UPDATES

By Pam Goddard

Protection Advances for Historic Petersburg Battlefields



Legislation to allow the National Park Service to add unprotected Civil War battlefields to Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia is making progress in the U.S. Congress, and NPCA staff are guardedly optimistic that the 114th Congress will enact this bipartisan bill.

Site of the longest siege in American military history, Petersburg led to the surrender of the Confederacy and the end of the U.S. Civil War.

H.R. 1621, the Petersburg National Battlefield Boundary Modification Act introduced by U.S. Reps. Randy Forbes (R-Virginia) and Bobby Scott (D-Virginia), would authorize the National Park Service to acquire an additional 7,238 acres. The bill passed the House of Representatives in May for the first time since 2009 when it was included in the National Defense Authorization Act! U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine (both D-Virginia) introduced the companion bill, S. 718.

America's Civil War battlefields are being destroyed by development at the alarming rate of 30 acres each day, leaving our nation's history unprotected. NPCA and the Petersburg National Battlefield Foundation, a new regional friends group, are working diligently to ensure that these important historic sites are protected by Congress by the end of the year.

Above: The Petersburg National Battlefield Foundation conducts a park restoration project to help preserve an important historic site. ©NPCA

Right-sized Alternative Needed to Protect Historic Jamestown

Dominion Virginia Power continues to pursue its controversial plan to build a mega-sized transmission line at historic Jamestown, part of Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia. Conservationists and preservationists are urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to require the utility to explore reasonable, right-sized alternatives to this devastating proposal.

Dominion claims building this 7-mile-long transmission line with 44 towers, many as tall as the Statue of Liberty and covered with lights, is the only way to meet the region's energy needs.

However, research by NPCA and Princeton Energy Resources International shows that Dominion's forecast for regional energy needs exaggerates needed capacity and drives up costs of alternatives.

Right-sized alternatives exist, and should be further examined in an Environmental Impact Statement that will thoroughly research all rational alternatives to Dominion's current plan.

As part of NPCA's "Parks in Peril" initiative, we are calling on the Obama administration to act now to protect Colonial National Historical Park and historic Jamestown by denying Dominion's permit request and requiring a new design that preserves our national parks. Learn more at www.npca.org/parksinperil

Below: Dominion's proposed oversized transmission line threatens Jamestown's historic landscape that remains evocative of the time of North America's first permanent English settlement. ©Joy Oakes | NPCA



Find Your Voice in the Mid-Atlantic!

Find Your Voice is NPCA's initiative to educate, engage and empower new national park advocates to ensure America's favorite places continue to thrive into their second century. The Mid-Atlantic staff organizes events throughout the year

to inspire the next generation of advocates to find their voices for our national parks.

For more information on NPCA and to Find Your Voice in our region, go to www.findyourvoice.camp/.



Above (Left): "Music at the Monument" at the Sylvan Theater on the Washington Monument grounds provides a gateway into American history as participants enjoy jazz and other good music from Grammy-nominated artists, honor veterans, and soak up the scene on the National Mall. Learn more about these regular concerts at www.musicatthemonument.com ©Stephen Leung via Wikimedia Commons **(Right):** In April, thousands of students and park advocates visited NPCA's booth at the USA Science & Engineering Festival - the largest and only national science festival in the United States. ©NPCA

Upcoming NPCA Events in the Mid-Atlantic

OCTOBER 14-16

2nd Annual Northeast Friends Group Convention: Join NPCA, NPS, and other friends and heritage groups in this second annual convention. **Paterson Great Falls NHP, Paterson, NJ**

OCTOBER 25

Canoemobile: NPCA and Wilderness Inquiry connect youth to public lands at this Canoemobile event. Canoemobile is a crew of outdoor educators and fleet of 24-foot Voyageur canoes delivering place-based education on urban waterways nationwide. **Thompson's Boathouse at Rock Creek Park, DC**

NOVEMBER 1

Canoemobile: NPCA and Wilderness Inquiry connect youth to public lands at this Canoemobile event. **Bladensburg Waterfront Park, DC**

NOVEMBER 9-10

Canoemobile: NPCA and Wilderness Inquiry connect youth to public lands at this Canoemobile event. **Petersburg National Battlefield, VA**

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

National Parks & America's Untold Stories: Join Alan Spears, Director, Cultural Resources for a presentation about African American history in our national parks, what those stories tell us about our shared past, and why maintaining an inclusive and relevant National Park System is a critical component to a healthy second century for the parks we love. **Widener Commonwealth Law School, Harrisburg, PA.**

EARLY MARCH

Speaker Series: Join NPCA staff for a discussion of our work protecting and promoting the national parks in the Delaware River Watershed. **Philadelphia, PA**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

APRIL 6

Salute to the Parks: This annual event celebrates America's national parks, calls attention to their needs, and honors organizations and individuals that advocate for the preservation of our national parks. **Washington, DC**

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For more information about events in your area sponsored by the National Park Service, go to www.nps.gov, click on "Find a Park," and search for the park by name or state. For an updated list of NPCA-sponsored events in the region, go to www.npca.org/midatlantic, click on "Events and Travel."

For updated information about NPCA's events or advocacy campaigns, contact any of our offices (see p.2).



MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Help Make National Parks a National Priority

After years of funding shortfalls harming parks, the FY16 Congressional appropriations bill approved in December 2015 boosted park funds by 9% for needed repairs, visitor services, and to care for our national treasures. That bill also increased Centennial Challenge funds—NPCA supports this program which matches private dollars with federal dollars for park projects.

The new federal fiscal year began on October 1 with a short-term funding measure. NPCA continues to advocate for an FY17 budget that builds on last year's increases to fund repairs, rangers, and educational programs.

TAKE ACTION

Please contact your House and Senate members and ask them to support robust funding in FY17 to protect our national heritage, including funding for the Centennial Challenge.

Capitol Switchboard: 202.225.3121



Above: This fall and winter, check out the four national parks of the Scenic, Wild Delaware River in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Watch bald eagles soar, enjoy beautiful scenery, and learn about American history and heritage. Learn more at www.DelawareRiver.natgeotourism.com.

Delaware River ©Mandritoiu | Dreamstime.com



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