

Yellowstone Is Worth Far More Than Gold

by Stephanie Adams

Standing beneath the famous Roosevelt Arch that marks the northern entrance to Yellowstone National Park, one can gaze across meadows filled with bison and pronghorn antelope. Electric Peak looms in the background and the Yellowstone River meanders along the park's border.



Each year millions of visitors pass beneath the Roosevelt Arch. Some pause to take in the wild scenery while others reflect on the history and value of our nation's parks. Yet visitors could soon be faced with another sight. Multinational mining companies have proposed two industrial-scale gold mines in the northern

continued on page 4

Why I am Speaking Out to Protect the Park I Love

by Valerie Naylor

In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt stated, "Of all the questions which can come before this nation ... there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt National Park this year, his comment still rings true—but now, it is shrouded in irony.

The last 10 years have challenged the sanctity of President Roosevelt's name-sake park in western North Dakota, a place that stands as a testament to our country's conservation legacy and the very president who helped shape it. The park faces threats in the form of drilling rigs, pump jacks, noise and traffic related to energy development projects on its borders. There are proposals for a river bridge near the park, a four-lane highway through the North Unit and other permanent infrastructure nearby. And if the biggest oil boom in the United States in the last 50 years was not enough for the park to endure, Meridian Energy Group is now proposing a 55,000-barrel-per-day oil refinery just 3 miles from the boundary of the park's South Unit.

[Theodore Roosevelt National Park] faces threats in the form of drilling rigs, pump jacks, noise and traffic related to energy development projects on its borders.

I can speak to how these obstacles have affected the park because my history with this inspiring place is long and special. I first saw Theodore Roosevelt National Park in 1973, and it instantly became a place I loved and wanted to return to. Six years later I began my first of five summers working at the park. My early experiences in Theodore Roosevelt launched a 31-year career with the National Park Service, and in 2003 I returned to this park as superintendent. It was a full-circle homecoming, returning to the park that launched my career. The park was still the amazing, beautiful, expansive wildlife haven I had remembered. But trouble was on the horizon, in the form of the region's third oil boom.

The last four years of my time as park superintendent were largely occupied by working both with and against oil companies,

continued on page 4

FIELD REPORT

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Grand Teton National Park Should Be Off-Limits to Energy Development

by Sharon Mader

In 2007, Lower Valley Energy, the local power cooperative in Jackson, Wyoming, proposed a hydropower development

on the Jackson Lake Dam in Grand Teton National Park. This proposal was pitched as a “green alternative” for the park’s energy needs, but in reality was far from it and was ultimately rejected by park managers. Hydroelectric development impacts park resources and is not compatible with the National Park Service’s mission to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system.”

Today, the Park Service is receiving renewed calls by a small group of community members to develop hydroelectric power on the Jackson Lake Dam. NPCA supports clean energy but stands by the Park Service’s original position that the Jackson Lake Dam is not an appropriate site for new hydroelectric energy production.

A new hydropower project on the Jackson Lake Dam would alter natural river flows and harm the Wild and Scenic Snake River’s

cold water fishery. The addition of power production infrastructure opens the door to prioritizing energy production over the downstream fishery and resources in the future.



NPCA applauds the Jackson Hole community for its efforts to move toward green energy sources. However, national parks are special places that require special consideration. We believe that other renewable and efficiency options need to be explored

outside of the park to fulfill both the park’s and our region’s energy demands. Today, Grand Teton National Park meets the majority of its energy needs through the purchase of green energy and energy efficiency practices. Since 2008, the park has purchased 100 percent green power from Lower Valley Energy.

Expanding energy infrastructure in national parks is a slippery slope. We must make conservative choices when it comes to protecting parks with an eye toward future generations. National parks are our most special places, and protecting their scenic and natural values must always come first.

Above: Snake River cutthroat trout ©Kevin Cass | Shutterstock
Below: Jackson Lake, Grand Teton National Park ©Yongyut Kumsri | Dreamstime



Oil Trains Threaten Glacier

by Sarah Lundstrum

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River is a designated Wild and Scenic river, nestled between Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. It's home to bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout and a myriad of other species. It's also home to a major highway and rail corridor. Every day through the Middle Fork corridor millions of gallons of Bakken oil travel along the rail line—it's an accident waiting to happen.

In April, the Middle Fork Flathead River was designated as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers by the conservation organization American Rivers. The designation is based upon the threat of a derailment of an oil train carrying Bakken oil. That's why we are asking that people contact the Federal Railroad Administration and ask them to be more proactive in protecting the Middle Fork, such as requiring additional avalanche sheds and upgraded rail cars. For more information and to take

action, please visit: <http://parkb.it/2rINzlj>.

As part of the ongoing attempt to protect the Middle Fork, NPCA partnered with other NGOs on an educational video about the Middle Fork and the threat of oil trains. That video is available here: <http://cfrech.com/oil-and-water/>.

Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved and support NPCA's work to protect this special river.

Speak Up for Our National Monuments



by Holly Sandbo

In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge designated a nearly 15,000-year-old lava field in southern Idaho as the Craters of the Moon National Monument, deeming it "a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself" with "great educational value." The volcanic features of Craters are so unique that the national monument was expanded in 2000 to include an additional 600,000 plus acres. This expansion included a robust public process that engaged local stakeholder groups and resulted in the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management co-managing the land. Subsequent legislation was passed to further ensure that diverse user needs, including hunters', were being met and changed the Park Service-managed portion of the expanded monument to a preserve.

national monuments that it is reviewing. As a result of the review, the department might propose to change or lift the national monument's protections altogether. Sadly, the list includes iconic natural and historical sites around the country. The Antiquities Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 gives presidents the authority to create national monuments; it has been used by a

long list of Democratic and Republican presidents over the last 111 years. National Parks Conservation Association retained a legal analysis that determined the sitting president "has no power unilaterally to abolish a national monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906." We hope you will contact Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and let him know our national monuments should be left unchanged.



Please write to Secretary Zinke by July 10, 2017 and let him know that you want Craters of the Moon and all national monuments to remain under their current designation. You may submit written comments online at npca.org/craters



Recently, the Department of the Interior included Craters of the Moon on the list of

Above: Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve ©Kwikkor | Dreamstime **Inset:** Craters supports a surprising diversity of plants, such as these bitterroot flowers ©Daniel Larson | Dreamstime

Yellowstone Is Worth Far More Than Gold

continued from page 1

gateway to America's first national park—threatening this world-famous landscape. One of the proposed mines would be within view of the Roosevelt Arch.

Massive gold mines simply don't belong on the border of Yellowstone. The mines could diminish the park's air quality, pollute scenic views, impact unique geothermal resources, as well as affect the iconic Yellowstone grizzly bear and a long list of other wildlife. Additionally, the mines could have disastrous impacts to the Yellowstone River that flows out of the park.

Yellowstone is worth far more than gold. There is too much at stake for the land, the water, the wildlife, the millions of visitors and the local communities to let these short-sighted plans become a reality. In order to protect Yellowstone from this threat, NPCA is working with our conservation partners and the local community members including the Yellowstone Gateway Business Coalition—a growing coalition of more than 350 regional businesses that believe this is not a political issue, but a business, community, and quality-of-life issue.

Progress toward preventing these mines is occurring thanks in part to national park advocates and the local community speaking up for Yellowstone. In the fall of 2016, the U.S. departments of Interior and Agriculture responded to our call and announced a

Right: Yellowstone River in Paradise Valley, Montana ©Welcomia | Dreamstime



two-year moratorium on gold exploration or mining on more than 30,000 acres of threatened public lands. This time-out ensures that no new mining activity takes place on the public lands while the Department of Interior and the Forest Service undertake

a public process to determine whether to extend protection for these lands on Yellowstone's doorstep for up to 20 years.

Hitting the pause button also buys the community and Congress time to discuss and consider the prospect of a longer-term solution. Just this April, Sen. Jon Tester from Montana took the next step to permanently protect these treasured public lands by introducing "The Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act." Concerns over the threats to Yellowstone and its nearby communities and waterways have been echoed by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Montana Gov. Steve Bullock and Sen. Steve Daines.

The threat of mining on the doorstep of Yellowstone is a stark reminder that we must all remain vigilant in our efforts to protect Yellowstone, America's first national park.



We need your help. Join us in standing up for this world-famous landscape by asking the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture to withdrawal these public lands from mineral development for twenty years.

Visit www.npca.org/dontmineyellowstone



Why I am Speaking Out to Protect the Park I Love

continued from page 1

trying to achieve win-win situations that would allow for development while protecting the viewsheds and soundscapes and integrity of the national park. There were victories, failures and compromises. When I retired in 2014, the oil boom was beginning to release its grip on the North Dakota badlands. But now this proposed refinery looms at the park's doorstep.

Meridian Energy recently submitted its request to the North Dakota Department of Health for an air quality permit. It has already received zoning approval, and a water-use permit is pending. If the air quality permit and some wastewater permits are issued,

construction on the refinery could begin immediately. But even if the proposed refinery somehow meets the stringent air quality standards required for a national park under the Clean Air Act, it should not be built so close to the park. The facility would still threaten the park's air, dark night skies and scenic views. It would also be the first thing most visitors would see as they approached the park.

Regardless of where you live, you can speak up for the park and tell Meridian Energy Group to consider alternate locations in North Dakota. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who proudly proclaims his admiration for Theodore Roosevelt, can join this chorus of

opposition. Together, we can and must ensure that the area that inspired Theodore Roosevelt and still inspires so many people today is protected for future generations.

Valerie Naylor is the former superintendent of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and currently serves as a consultant for NPCA.



To learn more about what you can do visit npca.org/advocacy/64

GLACIER'S HEADWATERS: Water Tower to Our Continent

by Michael Jamison

People tend to think Glacier National Park is all about mountains.

And people are wrong.

Glacier is also about water: icy cold water rushing clean and clear across gravel and stone; whitewater plunging over cliff-band falls; sky-blue water eddying into lakes set like sapphires into the deep green of wilderness.

From the summit of the park's Triple Divide Peak, meltwater flows west to the Pacific, east to the Atlantic, north to the Arctic by way of Hudson Bay. Glacier is water tower to a continent, spiked by peaks sharpened on a grindstone of Pleistocene ice.

I recently flew north out of Glacier, over a long slice of Alaska—another place branded by its mountains. Chugach. Wrangell-St. Elias. The Aleutians and Brooks and Chilkats.

But Alaska, like Glacier, is not really about mountains.

What I saw unfolding below was, again, a wild country defined by water: an endless winding coastline; miles of muskeg pooling like quicksilver; rivers washing the feet of mountains, slicing tundra and stone, spilling sediment braids into an ocean the color of steel.

Montana and Alaska are alike in this way. They also share a common headwater: British Columbia.

The Canadian Rockies tumble out of British Columbia into both Montana and Alaska, coursing through wild transboundary rivers. Glacier's western border is marked by the North Fork Flathead River, which spills south from Canada's high alpine country. Farther north, Canadian headwaters flow into Alaska's LeConte Wilderness, by way of the winding Stikine.

These borders matter, even to rivers.

In Glacier's headwaters, British Columbia's leadership once planned vast coal mines. We and our partners fought for decades, and in 2011 the province finally banned industry from the watershed that feeds our protected park.

But right next door, in the next valley west, Canadian coal mines still send selenium and other toxins south into Montana's Kootenai River. It's the same story in Alaska. Mines old and new and still proposed dot the Canadian maps of the transboundary Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers.

That's why I flew up north—to join forces with Alaskan allies, and to confront our common problems in these transboundary watersheds. It's long since time that British Columbia clean up its paltry process for permitting industry in our headwaters. It's long since time that the province's regulations catch up to those of its American neighbors. It's long since time that waste from old mines be contained, that waste from working mines be treated, and

that proposals for new mines be reviewed with a critical eye. It's long since time, frankly, that downstream stakeholders have a meaningful seat at the Canadian table and a voice for protecting places like Glacier National Park.

So. We're asking that our Canadian neighbors strengthen their permitting process for industry in our headwaters. We're asking that they not allow more mines until we first have time to collect baseline science. And most importantly, we're asking that they designate new parks and protected lands, adjacent to Glacier Park, to offset the loss of mine-impacted habitat.

This is still a new partnership, with Alaska and Montana pressing British Columbia from both north and south. But already the coalition includes state, tribal and federal officials, outfitters and guides, commercial fishermen, scientists, and conservationists — pretty much everyone who drinks from the downstream end of the upstream straw.

Together, we shared some stories, shared some salmon, tracked whales to the mouth of the Taku, and began the long work of reversing the tide. With your help, we will become a powerful current, pressing back against the flow of Canadian industry into these last wild watersheds.

Below: North Fork of the Flathead River
©Mark LaRowe





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Antelope Flats Receives Permanent Protection

by Sharon Mader

We are pleased to report that after six years of advocacy by NPCA and our partners, the 640-acre Antelope Flats property, a Wyoming state-owned inholding within Grand Teton National Park, was purchased in late 2016 thanks to a combination of private and federal funds and transferred to the National Park Service. Antelope Flats is one of two priority Wyoming-owned parcels within Grand Teton that NPCA has been working to protect as a permanent part of the park.

NPCA advocated effectively with our partners in both Washington, DC and Cheyenne to ensure federal decision makers allocated \$23 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation fund for this purchase. These successful efforts provided important leverage for our philanthropic partners to secure private donations to acquire this critical parkland. We are grateful for the tremendous fundraising effort led by the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the generosity of the many donors who supported this campaign. None of this would have been possible without the strong leadership and perseverance of former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead, former Rep. Cynthia Lummis, and Wyoming Sens. John Barrasso and Mike Enzi. NPCA will be working with our partners in the coming years to ensure a second inholding, known as the Kelly parcel, is acquired by the National Park Service from the state of Wyoming.

Volunteers Restore Pronghorn Migration Routes

by Rachel Caldwell

If you head toward Yellowstone in the spring, signs of the changing season are all around. Snow-capped peaks top greening foothills, RVs transport early season campers down the road, and mule deer gather in lush fields. If you're lucky, you may see another sign of spring: pronghorn antelope migrating back into Yellowstone from their winter range.

Yellowstone pronghorn need to migrate outside of the park to escape Yellowstone's harsh winters. But pronghorn aren't good jumpers and increased fencing along their traditional migration corridors has prevented them from reaching winter habitat beyond park borders. As pronghorn try to follow historic migration routes, fences stop them in their tracks.

Recognizing the risk these pronghorn faced, NPCA stepped in. Since 2010, we have worked collaboratively with landowners and hundreds of student and local volunteers to remove or modify more than 25 miles of fencing beyond Yellowstone's borders. By simply raising the bottom wire of a traditional fence, we enable pronghorn to crawl underneath, reach their winter range and then return to the park come springtime.

So this season, look for another sign of spring: a team of NPCA staff and volunteers working on a fence line. Perhaps the next time you pass through you'll see pronghorn where we once stood.

To learn more about pronghorn and how you can help restore their ancient migration route visit www.npca.org/pronghorn.

Below: Student volunteers modify a fence west of Yellowstone ©NPCA

