A LEGACY THREATENED
How the 2017 Hurricanes damaged America’s National Parks
Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria damaged or destroyed historic structures, housing, visitor centers, ferry boats, levees, boardwalks, docks, trails, roads, dams, bridges and lodging at many national parks. Storms harmed natural habitat, threatening water quality, affecting wildlife and making communities more vulnerable to future storm surges. National parks bring people together. These beloved destinations inspire millions of visitors, and create dependable regional tourism economies. We must rebuild the places that were devastated by these storms.
The six national park sites in the Caribbean experienced significant damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Each site closed for extended periods without electricity or water, displacing park staff due to destroyed housing. The recovery of these national parks is directly linked to the economic recovery of these islands.
At Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, park staff housing, park facilities and some of the oldest historic structures were destroyed. The damage is so extensive that the park could be closed for an entire year.
Nine national parks in Florida sustained damaged from Hurricane Irma. Historic structures, staff housing, visitor centers, ferry boats, levees, boardwalks, docks, trails and roads were damaged or destroyed. **Hazardous conditions** caused by flooding and downed powerlines and trees closed most parks for nearly a month.
Among the most severely damaged: a 55-foot section of the moat wall at Fort Jefferson at Dry Tortugas National Park; visitor centers on the Gulf Coast and at Flamingo at Everglades National Park; and park buildings, boardwalks and docks at Biscayne National Park.
Hurricane Irma caused a considerable amount of structural damage, flooding, downed trees and extended closures at national parks in Georgia, specifically at the parks along the Atlantic coast.
At Cumberland Island, the docks in St. Marys for the park ferries were destroyed and one of the ferries sank. The park closed for an extended period and canceled camping reservations for months.

At Fort Pulaski, the cumulative impacts from Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Irma in 2017 have damaged every building throughout the park, including extensive damage to the fort roof, drawbridges and water tank.
National parks across South Carolina closed for days or weeks with most experiencing some flooding and downed trees from Hurricane Irma. **Fort Sumter held four feet of standing water as a result of near-record flooding.**

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PARKS AFFECTED**
- Charles Pinckney National Historic Site
- Congaree National Park
- Cowpens National Battlefield
- Fort Sumter National Monument
- Kings Mountain National Military Park
- Ninety Six National Historic Site
- Reconstruction Era National Monument

Fort Sumter National Monument © NPS
Fort Sumter closed for nearly two weeks with damage to the dock, dock railings and septic system.
Hurricane Harvey made landfall along the Middle Texas Coast and stalled in the region for days bringing record rainfalls, damaging winds and deadly floods.
Big Thicket National Preserve suffered unprecedented flooding, damaging miles of trails, roadways and bridges.

Padre Island National Seashore experienced severe coastal flooding and erosion, resulting in damages to boat ramps and campgrounds.
The views expressed in this booklet are those of the National Parks Conservation Association and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Park Service.