



CLEAN AIR 4 PARKS

HEALTHY PARKS
CAN'T WAIT

“My wife has severe asthma which she has to medicate herself for every day. Two of my four children have it, and out of my 10 grandchildren four of them have asthma...

We always have inhalers with us when we go [to Yosemite] in the summer. It's just the way that it is.”

— Kevin Hamilton,
Central California
Asthma Collective



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Ozone Pollution in Our Parks

Limits on ozone pollution are meant to protect us all. But new efforts to derail them put parks in the crosshairs—endangering visitors, rangers, plants and wildlife.

It's not news that ozone pollution is unhealthy—that's why it's been regulated for decades. But it keeps getting clearer just how dangerous ozone is.

In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency found that existing limits on ozone pollution were too weak, so it lowered the amount of ozone that's permitted in the air. Two years later, people and parks are still hurting because that limit hasn't been put into action.

Now the administration is taking steps to delay—or even reverse—ozone pollution limits that protect our parks and health. It's sometimes unsafe to breathe in more than 100 parks already—the very air itself can trigger asthma attacks in people just trying to get outside.

We can't let this assault on parks and neighboring communities continue. That's why NPCA is fighting efforts by the administration and Congress to delay and weaken protections from ozone pollution.

Ozone Offensive

How the Administration and Congress are Plotting to Pardon Polluters

Every delay is another day polluters don't have to control their emissions. Here are some of the schemes to let polluters off the hook.

1. Not identifying places with unhealthy air.

The administration had a deadline of October 1, 2017 to name parts of the country that aren't meeting the standard. They didn't.

2. Changing the law.

Congress is pursuing bills that would change the Clean Air Act to delay cleanup of ozone pollution.

3. Sham standards.

Unqualified politicians want to take decision-making out of the hands of scientists and medical professionals, setting ozone limits recommended by polluters instead of doctors.

What's at Stake

More than half the United States' population lives in areas where health is threatened by ozone pollution—with people of color and people with lower incomes most at risk.

Many of our parks are in unhealthy areas, too. The National Park Service has identified over 100 parks where ozone levels are of "significant concern" with regard to human health.

Meet some of the parks in places across the country that are already having trouble—or won't likely meet the more protective ozone limit set in 2015.

Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

One monitor here showed unsafe levels of ozone for 76 days so far in 2017. That's two and a half *months*.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

This popular Ohio park helps 2.4 million visitors each year get outside to hike, bike and play. But it'll need our help to achieve healthy air.

Friendship Hill National Historic Site

There's nothing friendly about the pollution wafting towards this Pennsylvania park from two massive coal plants a few miles down the road.

Dinosaur National Monument

Thanks to oil and gas development on its doorstep, parts of the park in Utah are in areas with high ozone.

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

Multiple sources contribute to the "significant" ozone that sometimes greets visitors to this Georgia park.



What is Ozone?



Ozone is a gas produced when other pollutants combine in sunlight. Above the earth, ozone is beneficial. But at the surface, ozone is harmful to living things.

For people and wildlife, ozone makes it harder to breathe by inflaming and irritating our lungs. It can cause asthma attacks and is particularly dangerous when we breathe heavily—like when we're hiking in a park.



For plants, ozone is a highly damaging air pollutant—slowing growth and increasing vulnerability to diseases and insect damage. On a global scale, it's also a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.



Parts of these parks don't meet the old ozone standard; most won't likely meet the 2015 standard either.



Parts of these parks are newly in trouble: they met the old standard, but won't likely meet the 2015 standard.

CONTACT INFO

Visit npca.org/issues/clearing-the-air to learn more about what you can do.

Ulla Reeves
Advocacy Manager,
Clean Air Program
ureeves@npca.org



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