



FIELDREPORT

Pacific Region | Winter 2017



NPCA's Restore America's Parks Campaign

The unsustainable backlog of national park repair needs threatens the long-term preservation of our heritage. This \$11.3 billion repair backlog includes projects like degraded trails, decaying historic buildings, leaky water systems, damaged roads and more. Some of the backlog, if left unchecked, also impairs the visitor experience, which can ultimately impact the economy of nearby gateway communities if the backlog limits or somehow influences visitation numbers. The backlog also threatens to compromise the protection of both cultural and natural park resources. California alone faces \$1.7 billion in overdue repairs.

The backlog has grown in large part because of a lack of funding from Congress. NPCA continues to work towards increased funding for the Park Service, including a larger allocation for maintenance and other park needs like staffing. To address the repair backlog, we've also worked with our partners and congressional champions to secure a bipartisan bill in both the House and Senate, the National Park Service Legacy Act (S. 751/H.R. 2584). This bill would dedicate \$11 billion over thirty years toward the maintenance

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Advocacy Training and Field Trip Promotes Latino Heritage and Prepares LA Youth to Create Positive Change

In September, NPCA's Los Angeles Field Office partnered with Community Nature Connection and the Bresee Foundation to sponsor a Civic Voice Lessons advocacy training. Over 30 individuals participated in the two-day event, which focused on advocating for an expanded Cesar Chavez National Historic Park to better tell the full story of the farm worker movement and concluded with a trip to the existing Cesar E. Chavez National Monument. The curriculum highlighted the importance of the youth voice, explored Hispanic Heritage Month and introduced advocacy skills through the real-world example of Cesar E. Chavez National Monument. During the park tour, the group viewed a documentary and took a NPS-guided tour of Cesar Chavez's office and gravesite. Afterward, the participants had an engaging conversation with Cesar's son and President of the Chavez Foundation, Paul Chavez. He shared stories of his family's struggles, as well as inspirational lessons learned from his father's work. Participants then had the opportunity to share what they learned over the two days. They discussed how the trip expanded their knowledge of Chavez's legacy and improved their confidence in their own ability to speak out for justice. They also committed themselves to engaging in advocacy and supporting NPCA's efforts to create the Cesar Chavez National Historic Park.



Top: The César E. Chávez National Monument in Keene, California honors the founder of the United Farm Workers of America. ©Jim West | Alamy Stock **Above Right:** The office of Cesar E. Chavez ©George Ostertag | Alamy Stock **Above:** Gravesite for Helen and Cesar E. Chavez ©Brian McGuire | Alamy Stock

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NPCA's Pacific Region Welcomed Two New Members to its Team this Year



NPCA's new California Desert Program Manager, **Chris Clarke**, has loved California's desert parks for decades. A long-time environmental journalist based in the San Francisco Bay Area, Chris left the Bay in 2008 to heed the pull he felt to the Mojave.

Chris has spent the last nine years reporting extensively on desert environmental issues, mainly through Los Angeles public television station KCET. After joining NPCA in July, Chris wasted no time jumping into the fray on top desert priorities, such as the Cadiz Inc. proposal to mine water near the Mojave National Preserve. He lives in Joshua Tree with his dog Heart.

Despite growing up in the plains of Kansas, NPCA's new Sierra Nevada Field Representative, **Mark Rose**, is finding it surprisingly easy to adjust to his new life alongside the towering ranges of California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. Mark's background includes an environmental law degree from Vermont Law School and policy experience obtained through his years at Save the Bay, Sierra Club and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He leads NPCA's campaigns as they relate to Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, with a specific focus on local park issues in the areas of clean air, park funding, and NPCA's zero-landfill initiative.

Top Left: NPCA's new California Desert Program Manager Chris Clarke in the Mojave Desert ©Chris Clarke
Right: NPCA's new Sierra Nevada Field Representative Mark Rose visiting McWay Falls in Big Sur ©Erika Golin

NPCA's Restore America's Parks Campaign

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backlog. We are building the list of bill cosponsors and are seeking an avenue for congressional movement on this important legislation. We urge our supporters to reach out to their members of Congress to ask them to cosponsor this important piece of

legislation. To take action, asking Congress to support the legislation, please navigate to this link on NPCA's website: www.npca.org/advocacy/62-help-fix-the-national-park-service-repair-backlog

Below: Point Loma Lighthouse in Cabrillo National Park in San Diego, CA ©Sborisov | Dreamstime



Rim of the Valley Bill Helps Preserve Los Angeles History

Representative Adam Schiff's Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (H.R. 5467) proposes more than doubling the size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Not only will this protect native habitat, pristine landscapes and iconic wildlife, it helps preserve and interpret some of the region's most important historic and cultural treasures, including early Native American settlements, the routes of Spanish colonial-era explorers, the iconic Griffith Park Observatory, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles, which is the city's birthplace. The location of the West's first commercial oil well is in the corridor, as are several historic movie ranches that contributed to the rise to the region's entertainment industry. Through the Rim of the Valley expansion, these sites will

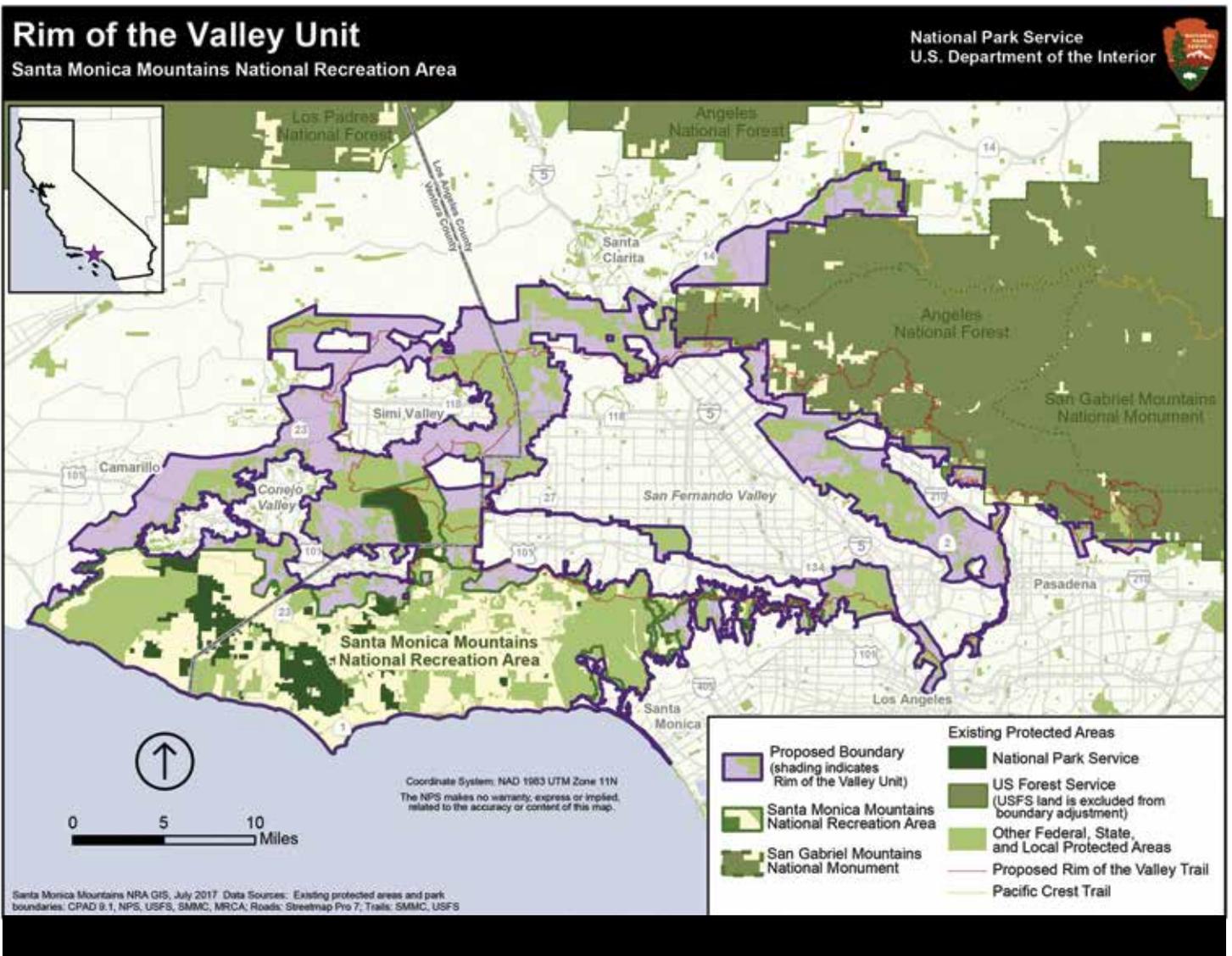
The Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (H.R. 5467) proposes more than doubling the size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Not only will this protect native habitat, pristine landscapes and iconic wildlife, it helps preserve and interpret some of the region's most important historic and cultural treasure.

gain national recognition, and efforts to draw visitors will receive a boost from the National Park Service's interpretive, educational and community engagement programs.

In October, Schiff reintroduced the bill, which adds over 190,000 acres to the park and

expands outdoor recreational opportunities for the region's 17 million residents. Senator Dianne Feinstein joined him by introducing a companion bill, and the campaign continues to be a focus of NPCA's Los Angeles Field Office. For the latest on the campaign, visit www.rimofthevalleycoalition.com.

Below: The Rim of the Valley would add 190,000 acres to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. ©NPS





California Steps Up to Oppose Cadiz Project



The Cadiz, Inc. water mining project seriously threatens California’s desert national parks. The company proposes pumping 16 billion gallons of water each year from an aquifer underlying Mojave Trails National Monument and Mojave National Preserve, then pumping it to California cities via a 43-mile pipeline to the Metropolitan Water District’s aqueduct east of Joshua Tree National Park.

Mining of water in this desert ecosystem would endanger numerous seeps and springs that sustain local and migrating wildlife.

Cadiz had hoped to escape environmental review by siting its pipeline strategically along a railroad that crosses federal lands and invoking a 19th-century law to sidestep the usual environmental assessment. Earlier this year, the Interior Department signaled it would allow Cadiz to build its pipeline without federal review, forfeiting a scientific evaluation of the impacts of this mining on desert wildlife.

Thankfully, Cadiz hit a roadblock in September when a state agency said it may subject the project to additional environmental review. Essentially, a mile-long section of the railroad (alongside which Cadiz hopes to locate its pipeline) crosses state lands, where that old railroad law doesn’t apply.

California’s State Lands Commission (SLC) informed Cadiz that the company would have to apply for a lease, and that SLC might require additional environmental analysis of the project before deciding whether to grant that lease.

With recent research suggesting that the aquifer Cadiz would drain is linked to important protected springs, additional review could persuade SLC to deny Cadiz the lease. NPCA will be tracking SLC’s work closely.

Above: NPCA’s David Lamfrom at Bonanza Spring, a crucial desert water source in Mojave Trails NM threatened by the Cadiz project. ©Chris Clarke | NPCA

Above: Pico House, one of Los Angeles’ earliest hotels located at El Pueblo de Los Angeles, in the Rim of the Valley. ©Tom Gamache

Right: Pico Oil Well #4, in the Rim of the Valley, was the first commercially successful oil well west of the Mississippi. ©Tom Gamache

Below: Representative Adam Schiff’s Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (H.R. 5467) proposes more than doubling the size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. ©Laura Torres | NPCA



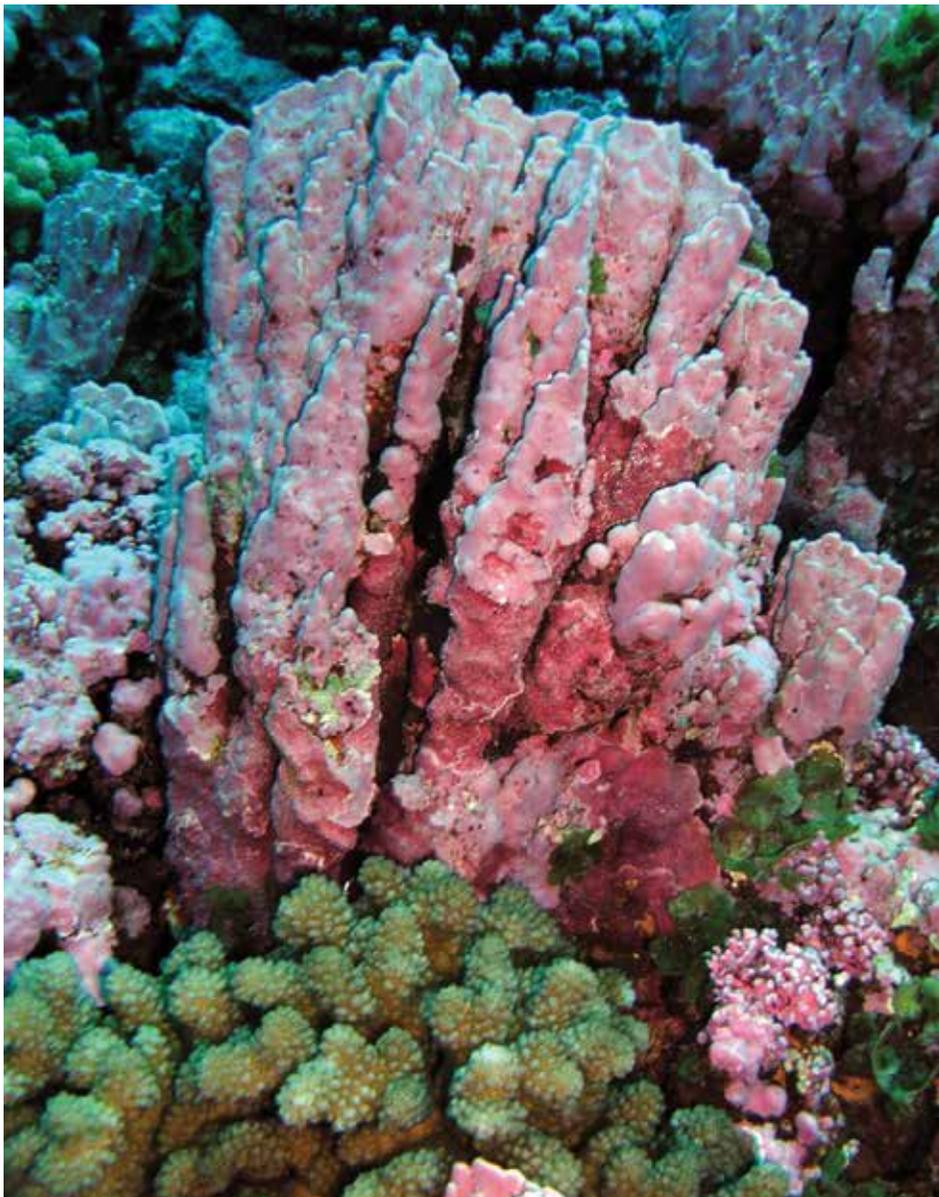
Defending Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

In September, a leaked memo revealed that Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended that the president reduce the size and change the management priorities of numerous national monuments. These changes could lead to oil and gas exploration, mining, timber harvesting and commercial fishing in these monuments that were formerly protected from such extractive uses.

One of the monuments threatened is Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, located east of American Samoa. This underwater monument, one of the most pristine atolls in the world, is home to a vibrant coral reef ecosystem and numerous threatened and endangered species, including nesting sea turtles. Because it is so remote, animals that are severely threatened elsewhere—such as giant clams, humphead wrasse, large parrotfishes and whitetip sharks—have been able to thrive here. Rose Atoll is also integral to the protection and preservation of the National Park of American Samoa, whose reefs are showing signs of overfishing.

An attack on any of our national monuments is a betrayal of the American public. NPCA maintains that these changes to the monuments would be illegal, and we stand ready to defend our heritage.

Right: Coralline Algae at Rose Atoll ©Fearnstock | Alamy Stock Photo



Fixing the Parks' \$11 Billion Repair Backlog

In September, the California State Assembly and Senate unanimously passed AJR-23, a joint-assembly resolution co-sponsored by NPCA and by the Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau. AJR-23 urges all members of California's congressional



delegation and its two United States senators to support the bi-partisan National Park Service Legacy Act of 2017 (H.R. 2584 and S. 751). The NPS Legacy Act would dedicate \$11 billion from mineral extraction fees to the Park Service over a 30-year period to fund critical park repairs, including crumbling roads, bridges, historic buildings, trails and water systems. Assembly Member Frank Bigelow (R-District 5), who represents a large portion of the Sierra Nevada region, authored AJR-23. We thank Assembly Member Bigelow for his leadership and support of our national parks.

Left: Fallen sequoia tree in Yosemite National Park, California ©Reinhardt | Dreamstime **Right:** California Assembly member Frank Bigelow





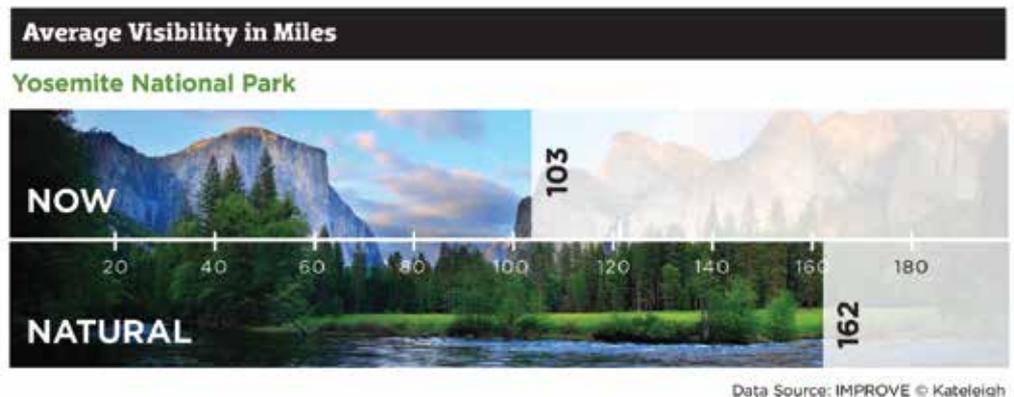
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The Fight for Clean Air in California's Sierra Parks Starts in the Central Valley

Each year, millions flock to Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks hoping for pristine wilderness and clear mountain vistas. The unfortunate reality, however, is that these three parks now suffer from some of the worst air quality of any of our National Parks—posing risks to visitor's respiratory health and significantly reducing scenic views. Looking for solutions, NPCA's new Sierra Nevada Field Office is campaigning for tougher air quality standards in the neighboring Central Valley. Currently, we are working with local stakeholders to call for stronger standards being considered by the Central Valley's local air district to limit the amount of haze causing fine particulate matter pollution from industrial and agricultural sources.



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