



EST 1919

# FIELDREPORT

Mid-Atlantic Region | Fall 2020 - Winter 2021



## Clean Air for Parks— and for People

By Halle Van der Gaag and Joy M. Oakes

**A**mericans expect national parks and wilderness areas to have clean, clear air. However, a shocking 96% of national parks—including nearly every one of the 77 national park units in the Mid-Atlantic region—are plagued by significant air pollution, which diminishes views, threatens public health and contributes to the climate crisis.



**LEARN MORE:**  
[www.npca.org/pollutedparks](http://www.npca.org/pollutedparks)

Here's the good news: Federal clean air protections provide a key tool to restore clean air in these special places. Under the Clean Air Act's Regional Haze Rule, each state must now develop and implement plans to clear the air in our parks and wilderness areas by addressing in-state sources of haze pollution.

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## WE DID IT! Celebrating the Great American Outdoors Act

By Kyle Hart and Joy M. Oakes

**I**n August, NPCA and our partners celebrated the largest financial investment in America's public lands in a generation when the U.S. Congress passed, and President Trump signed, the Great American Outdoors Act. The bill authorizes billions of dollars in funding for two urgent National Park System needs: preserving additional key lands and addressing the backlog of major repairs.

NPCA's members and staff worked tirelessly with allies across the country to generate strong bipartisan support. For two decades we made phone calls, wrote emails, organized meetings in districts and on Capitol Hill, elevated the conversation via print and digital media, and leveraged a deep and shared love for America's heritage.

Two bills—the Restore Our Parks Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act—formed the basis of the Great American Outdoors Act, which

This is the largest investment our country has made in our national parks and public lands in more than 50 years, and it comes not a moment too soon.

— THERESA PIERNO, NPCA PRESIDENT AND CEO

dedicates \$1.3 billion per year for five years to address the national parks' nearly \$12 billion repair backlog. It also dedicates \$3 billion to be shared among the U.S. Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Education to address major repairs on other federal public lands. Finally, the legislation permanently and fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

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**Top:** With enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act, more Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars will be available every year to preserve and protect America's most beautiful and culturally significant places, like New River Gorge National River. ©Sean Pavone | Dreamstime **Left:** Effective regional haze plans are critical for protecting the health of wildlife, including Appalachian brook trout, at Shenandoah National Park. ©James D. Nations | NPCA

# FIELD REPORT

FALL 2020 - WINTER 2021

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Maryland, Pennsylvania,  
Virginia, West Virginia**

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## Clean Air for Parks—and for People

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Haze consists of tiny airborne particles that block light and can lodge in human lungs, reducing visibility and jeopardizing public health. Industrial sources that contribute to haze include coal-fired power plants, chemical manufacturers, oil and gas operations, industrial agriculture, cement plants, and pulp and paper mills. NPCA has developed sophisticated tools to better identify the specific sources of pollution harming national parks and nearby communities. Our research illustrates a hard reality: Communities of color and those struggling with poverty are disproportionately affected by air pollution, furthering public health disparities and racial inequities, concerns now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because pollution can travel hundreds of miles from its source, reducing the pollution harming parks and wilderness areas can benefit communities across a wide region. In addition, because haze-causing pollution contributes to the climate crisis, measures taken to clean up the air will advance our efforts to mitigate climate change.

NPCA is leveraging its technical expertise and our ability to rally public support to ensure that states submit effective, enforceable regional haze plans to the EPA by July 2021. When public comment periods open later this year/early next year, we will need park supporters like you to weigh in and support strong state plans.

Please let us know if clean air is of particular interest to you!

### HELP US FIGHT FOR CLEAN AIR IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Please contact Halle Van der Gaag  
at [hvandergaag@npca.org](mailto:hvandergaag@npca.org)

Learn more about regional haze:  
[www.npca.org/cleanairfacts](http://www.npca.org/cleanairfacts)

**Below:** Two decades ago, Shenandoah National Park suffered many days of hazy, polluted skies, shown at right, and too few days with clean, clear air. Enforcement of clean air protections is improving air quality, but many under-controlled pollution sources continue to foul the air here and at parks across the country. ©NPS, 2003



### 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 at [midatlantic@npca.org](mailto:midatlantic@npca.org)

# Maryland's Proposed Highway Expansion Threatens Parks

By Allison Killea

**S**ix national parks in metropolitan Washington, D.C. risk significant degradation from a proposed massive highway expansion. Maryland's Department of Transportation (MDOT) recently released a draft environmental impact statement for its proposal to add four toll lanes to Interstates 495 and 270. The proposed project would cost an estimated \$11 billion, take many acres of existing parkland, destroy wetlands and ephemeral streams, and damage historic structures. Unfortunately, there's little assurance that the project would meet its goal of relieving traffic congestion.

If built, the project would harm Rock Creek Park, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Greenbelt Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Suitland Parkway, and dozens of local and regional parks. The project would push the highways into Greenbelt Park next to the park's popular Perimeter Trail. Multiple historic locks would be degraded, and the C&O Canal towpath would be closed to the public for at least five years. Increased stormwater runoff would scour Rock Creek Park.

Massive new elevated traffic ramps, access roads and signage would destroy natural areas and scenery at George Washington Memorial Parkway, Baltimore-Washington Parkway and Suitland Parkway. America's national parkways were created to provide motorists with peaceful access to our country's natural and historic sites—not to serve simply as land banks for future development.

MDOT's draft environmental impact statement fails to analyze reasonable transit and park-friendly alternatives—as required by law.

## TAKE ACTION!

Please urge MDOT to reject the proposed highway expansion and embrace sustainable transportation solutions. Submit comments at [parkb.it/495270](https://parkb.it/495270) by Nov. 9.

Submit  
by Nov 9

Learn more at: [www.npca.org/nopaving](https://www.npca.org/nopaving)



Native Pickerelweed and Buttonbush thrive in area wetlands and support diverse butterfly species including Eastern Swallowtails. Valuable wetlands would be destroyed if this proposal advances. **Above:** Pickerelweed ©Maren Winter | Dreamstime **Left:** Eastern Swallowtail ©Kyle Hart | NPCA **Top:** Pickerelweed ©Tony Bosse | Dreamstime **Bottom:** Locks on historic C&O Canal would be degraded by the highway expansion, and parts of its towpath would be closed for at least five years. ©Melanie McDowell | NPCA



# WE DID IT! Celebrating the Great American Outdoors Act

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## Preserving History and Heritage Using Land and Water Conservation Fund Dollars

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of our most important tools to preserve the integrity of our national parks. Congress created the program in 1965 but has funded it at the authorized \$900 million annual level only twice. The Great American Outdoors Act allocates the full \$900 million to this vital program each year in perpetuity.

The National Park Service and its partners use Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to purchase privately owned lands inside or occasionally adjacent to parks from willing sellers, protecting parks from incompatible development at Harpers Ferry and Valley Forge National Historical Parks, Gettysburg National Military Park, New River Gorge National River, and many other nationally significant places.

The demand for this funding is urgent. Thousands of acres remain privately owned



inside the congressionally designated boundaries of many parks, including many in the Mid-Atlantic region. Full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund enables the Park Service to preserve historic sites, improve visitor access, conserve plant

and animal habitat, and avoid conflict over incompatible development.

## Addressing the Major Repair Backlog

This new investment will help the Park Service address top-priority major repairs, including those to visitor centers, trails, roads, bridges, and water and electrical systems.

Parks in the Mid-Atlantic region require more than \$3 billion to address needed repairs. The backlog at the National Mall and Memorial Parks alone in Washington, D.C. totals \$655 million, with significant work needed at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial and on roadways providing access to the monuments. And in Virginia, Shenandoah National Park's trails and structures need more than \$88 million in repairs. Through the Great American Outdoors Act, our parks finally will get the attention they deserve so they can continue to meet the needs of park visitors for decades to come.

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Thanks to our members and supporters, enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act will provide funds for major repairs at parks including the National Mall and Valley Forge National Historical Park. **Top** ©Howard Nevitt, Jr. | Dreamstime **Above** ©Olivier Le Queinec | Dreamstime **Below:** ©Hunterbliss | Dreamstime





Land and Water Conservation Fund funds have protected parks including **(Top)** Gettysburg National Military Park ©Delmaslehman | Dreamstime and **(Below)** Harpers Ferry National Historical Park ©Zrfphoto | Dreamstime from incompatible development projects. **Above:** During NPCA's April 2017 Capitol Hill Day, volunteer leader Ted Armbrecht and Mid-Atlantic Senior Director Joy Oakes enjoyed a moment with Rep. John R. Lewis (D-GA-05), whose bill for America's national parks became the vehicle for passage in 2020 of the Great American Outdoors Act. ©Ted Armbrecht | NPCA



## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

### Restore Our Parks Act champions

Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)  
 Senator Mark R. Warner (D-VA)  
 Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)  
 Senator Angus S. King (I-ME)

### Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act leaders

Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV)  
 Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO)

### Our thanks also to Mid-Atlantic members of the U.S. Congress who voted to enact the Great American Outdoors Act:

#### Delaware

Senator Thomas R. Carper (D)  
 Senator Christopher A. Coons (D)  
 Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-01)

#### Maryland

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D)  
 Senator Chris Van Hollen (D)  
 Representative Anthony G. Brown (D-04)  
 Representative Steny H. Hoyer (D-05)  
 Representative Kweisi Mfume (D-07)  
 Representative Jamie Raskin (D-08)  
 Representative C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-02)  
 Representative John P. Sarbanes (D-03)  
 Representative David J. Trone (D-06)

#### Pennsylvania

Senator Robert P. Casey (D)  
 Representative Brendan F. Boyle (D-02)  
 Representative Matt Cartwright (D-08)  
 Representative Madeleine Dean (D-04)  
 Representative Michael F. Doyle (D-18)  
 Representative Dwight Evans (D-03)  
 Representative Brian K. Fitzpatrick (R-01)  
 Representative Chrissy Houlahan (D-06)  
 Representative Mike Kelly (R-16)  
 Representative Conor Lamb (D-17)  
 Representative Daniel Meuser (R-09)  
 Representative Mary Gay Scanlon (D-05)  
 Representative Lloyd Smucker (R-11)  
 Representative Glenn Thompson (R-15)  
 Representative Susan Wild (D-07)

#### Virginia

Senator Tim Kaine (D)  
 Senator Mark R. Warner (D)  
 Representative Donald S. Beyer (D-08)  
 Representative Gerald E. Connolly (D-11)  
 Representative Elaine G. Luria (D-02)  
 Representative A. Donald McEachin (D-04)  
 Representative Robert C. Scott (D-03)  
 Representative Abigail Davis Spanberger (D-07)  
 Representative Jennifer Wexton (D-10)  
 Representative Robert J. Wittman (R-01)

#### West Virginia

Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R)  
 Senator Joe Manchin (D)  
 Representative Carol D. Miller (R-03)



## Meet Allison Killea, Our Summer Fellow

Allison Killea is a graduate student at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. She will graduate this fall with dual master's degrees in Environmental Management and Forestry and a certificate in geospatial analysis. She is looking forward to starting her career in ecosystem

STAFF NEWS

conservation and large-scale land management. As NPCA's Summer 2020 Transportation Stanback Fellow, Allison led projects on proposed MDOT highway expansions, regional haze and GIS.

Left: ©Allison Killea | NPCA

## Mid-Atlantic Park News and Campaign Updates

By Pamela Goddard

### CAMPAIGN UPDATE

#### Jamestown Needs You!

**N**PCA continues to fight for the James River's historic integrity at Jamestown—and we need your help.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) expects to release a draft environmental impact statement this fall in a process that will determine the future of a massive transmission line built with an illegally-approved permit across Jamestown's historic landscape.

In 2017, after finalizing an incomplete analysis, the Corps granted Dominion Energy a permit to build its massive project across the James River. In 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit found that the Corps illegally granted the permit and ordered the agency to complete a rigorous environmental impact statement. As part

of that, the Corps must thoroughly evaluate the project's purpose and need, examine all feasible alternatives and allow citizens to weigh in on the Corps' findings.

**TAKE ACTION:** We need your help to urge the Corps to choose an alternative that provides electricity without sacrificing America's history and heritage. Please visit [www.npca.org/justiceforjamestown](http://www.npca.org/justiceforjamestown).

### CAMPAIGN UPDATE

#### Victory! Dominion Abandons Atlantic Coast Pipeline

**C**onservationists celebrated a tremendous victory in July when Dominion Energy officials announced they were abandoning their proposed \$8 billion, 600-mile-long Atlantic Coast Pipeline. This gas pipeline would have cut under the Appalachian Trail and along the Blue Ridge Parkway, devastating waterways and wildlife corridors, ruining scenic views, and disrupting historic communities of color.

Over the past six years, NPCA submitted numerous comment letters against the pipeline to state and federal agencies, and also participated in litigation. Earlier this year when the case went before the U.S. Supreme Court, NPCA joined the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks and prominent park advocates Jon Jarvis, former director of the National Park Service, and Pam Underhill, former superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, in filing a joint amicus brief that made the case for protecting the national parks. Stopping this unnecessary pipeline is a victory for millions of community residents, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts.

**Bottom Left:** Stopping the 600-mile-long Atlantic Coast Pipeline is a major victory for park visitors, surrounding communities, forests and wildlife, including the Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Nelson County, VA ©Patrick Morrissey | Dreamstime **Bottom Right:** A massive transmission line built with an illegally-approved permit spoils the James River's beautiful, historic landscape at Jamestown. NPCA continues to fight for justice for Jamestown. ©Ismael Gama Jr. | NPCA





# Historic Preservation at Delaware Water Gap

By Sharon Davis and Halle Van der Gaag

**F**rom the namesake water gap, where the Delaware River carves through the ancient Pocono Mountains, to the place names that pay homage to the Lenape Nation, whose culture thrived for centuries before Europeans arrived, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area contains natural, cultural and historic resources that reflect the heritage of this region and the nation.

Delaware Water Gap spans the New Jersey/Pennsylvania border within a two-hour drive of New York City's and Philadelphia's metro areas. This proximity enables urban dwellers to experience the great outdoors and learn about the region's history. Every year, the park attracts over 3 million visitors from all over the world, with visitor use up 18% in recent years. The park also is an important economic engine, supporting small businesses that serve visitors and communities near the park.

In 2020, after a multi-year planning process that sought widespread public input, the National Park Service completed a historic properties management plan for the park. The plan puts forth strategies to preserve the buildings, ruins, anthropological sites, villages and homesteads within the park's boundaries and to leverage these historic assets to expand opportunities for experiences for visitors beyond outdoor recreation.

The plan illuminates the park's challenges to meet ongoing maintenance needs while providing interpretive programming that more fully speaks to the park's diverse visitors. These needs illustrate why NPCA fought so hard for passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, which provides new, dedicated funding for park projects and major repairs.

Moving forward, NPCA's unique role will focus on marshalling our network of advocates in support of projects that protect the park's historic and natural resources from the impacts of climate change and lay a sustainable foundation for future visitors to experience the park's assets.



**Top:** Historic building in Millbrook Village, New Jersey, one of several historic districts and town sites within the park. ©Gary718 | Dreamstime **Above Left:** Traditional yarn dyeing demonstration at historic Millbrook Village, New Jersey. With several historic districts and town sites within its boundaries, the park showcases the region's rich history and culture. Park staff and partner organizations collaborate to offer programs and events that bring traditional crafts and cultural activities to life. ©NPS **Above Right:** Historic building in Millbrook Village. ©Gary718 | Dreamstime

## SHOW YOUR PARK LOVE

*Your passion and dedication to national parks continues to make a tremendous difference—thank you! We hope we can count on you to commit to NPCA and our parks.*

*Here are some impactful ways you can show your love for our national parks.*

### Make a Gift

Your generous support is more critical than ever. To learn more about how you can support NPCA financially, visit [npca.org/give](https://npca.org/give).

### Leave Your Park Legacy

Leaving a gift to NPCA in your will or trust is a personal way you can ensure national parks thrive for generations to come. To learn more about making national parks a part of your enduring legacy, visit [MyParkLegacy.org](https://MyParkLegacy.org).

### Volunteer

Partnering with NPCA as a volunteer is a fun way to support your favorite national park. To learn about volunteer opportunities, contact Melanie McDowell at [mmcdowell@npca.org](mailto:mmcdowell@npca.org).

### Become an Online Activist

Learn more about the threats facing our parks and take action online at [npca.org/advocacy](https://npca.org/advocacy).

### Attend an Event

Join NPCA for virtual events, including free Park Talks, to hear from staff, park experts and partners about some of the park stories, victories and threats we most want to share. Visit [npca.org/events](https://npca.org/events) to learn more.

### Your Next Adventure Awaits

Don't just dream about your next park adventure. Take this time to plan ahead for one of our small-group educational land adventures or small-ship cruises and experience the very best of our national parks. Find details at [npca.org/trips](https://npca.org/trips).

### Stay Engaged from Home

Engage in national park activities and learning without leaving your home at [parkit.npca.org/](https://parkit.npca.org/).



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



1963 March on Washington ©AB Historic | Alamy  
©NPS

**The National Mall and other park sites commemorate Americans' long struggle for universal voting rights. Let's honor that history in 2020 by exercising our right to vote!**

— JOY OAKES, NPCA

Report Design by **Kelley Albert Design**

