



FIELDREPORT

Northeast Region • Summer 2023



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FIELD REPORT

Summer 2023

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Welcome Kristen, Our New Director!

We are excited to introduce Kristen Sykes as the new Northeast Regional Director of the National Parks Conservation Association! Kristen comes to us from the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) where she was the Director of Southern NE Conservation Projects and Partnerships. She joined AMC in 2004 and since that time has worked extensively to advance land conservation, trails, and recreational access throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.



As the Northeast Regional Director, Kristen oversees NPCA's work in New Jersey, New York, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont and leads advocacy campaigns to benefit the forty-nine national park sites in the region.

Kristen is based out of Western Massachusetts where she volunteers her time as a board member for the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, The Venture Out Project and the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition. She is also Vice Chair of the Holyoke Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. She and her husband own Pie in The Sky Berry Farm, a u-pick organic strawberry, blueberry, and flower farm in Northampton, MA. She enjoys biking, hiking, paddling, cross-country skiing, and traveling.

Above: Kristen Sykes ©NPCA

Before joining AMC, Kristen was the Interior Department Watchdog for Friends of the Earth and the Eastern Forest Advocate for the American Lands Alliance in Washington DC. She has a Master of Science in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana and a BA in International Relations from California State University Sacramento.

Lobby Day Recap

This March, nearly one hundred NPCA members and staff gathered in Washington, DC to walk the halls of Congress, advocating on behalf of our beloved national parks. Our Northeast regional office fielded three teams and called for an increase in national park appropriations, a reauthorization of the Great American Outdoors Act, protection of the Antiquities Act, and the passage of modern mining reform legislation. NPCA's Lobby Day, an annual event each spring, is both fun and inspiring, reminding participants of the important work NPCA does to protect national parks. Meeting with members of Congress, Senators and their staff allows us to make a personal case, and a face-to-face demonstration, as to why these places are so important to protect. Thank you to everyone who joined us!



If you're interested in joining us at a future Lobby Day, email us at northeast@npca.org.

Right: NPCA staff members Cal Goodin, Timothy Leonard, and Todd Martin joined on Capitol Hill by Board member Jennifer Costley and NextGen Council Member Qwynne Lackey ©NPCA



JOIN NPCA!

Become a member of National Parks Conservation Association and help protect and enhance your national parks. Follow the link to the right.



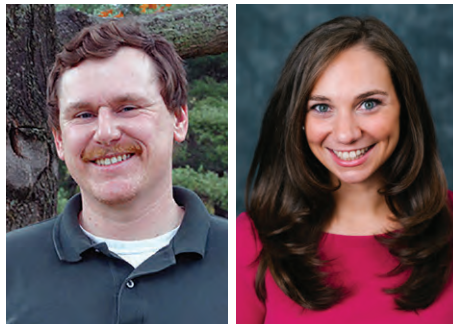
Left: Morristown National Historical Park, NJ ©George Oze | Alamy

Cover: Cape Cod National Seashore, MA ©Mira | Alamy

MEET THE NEW NORTHEAST STAFF

Todd Martin and Krista Vaisman

NPCA's Northeast office is thrilled to welcome Todd Martin as our new Northeast Senior Program Manager. As a life-long Mainer with a deep appreciation and connection to the pine tree state, Todd has more than a decade of environmental advocacy experience. Todd's work at NPCA, focusing on protecting national park lands, waters and wildlife and strengthening relationships with partners and tribal leaders in Maine, includes advocating for federal funding and policy, supporting workforce housing and transportation efforts and improving the visitor experience and accessibility at Acadia National Park, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, Roosevelt Campobello International Park, St. Croix Island International Historic Site and along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Prior to joining NPCA,



Todd spent twelve years working for the Natural Resources Council of Maine where he mobilized Mainers statewide to advance conservation, climate, and sustainability policies. When he is not out in national parks, Todd enjoys hiking, camping, bike riding, live music and exploring Maine with his daughter.

Krista Vaisman brings over a decade of fundraising and philanthropy experience to NPCA as Director of Major Gifts. She joins NPCA from the international nonprofit Global Citizen, where she led fundraising efforts as the Senior Director of Global Philanthropy, working closely with major donors, foundations and board members globally to defeat poverty and defend the planet. Her prior experience includes fundraising for national political campaigns, based out of Washington, DC and New York City. Krista graduated magna cum laude from University of Richmond. She lives in Summit, NJ with her husband, daughter and golden retriever, and loves spending time in nature and exploring the national parks that the northeast has to offer.

Left: Todd Martin ©NPCA **Right:** Krista Vaisman ©NPCA

Progress at Acadia, Thanks to Great American Outdoors Act

Maine's Acadia National Park is one of our nation's most visited national parks, welcoming more than 4 million visitors in 2021. But after decades hosting so many park-goers, it became clear that the park's infrastructure (its buildings, roads, and trails) is in major need of attention. Even the park's maintenance building, a cinderblock structure built in 1963, is in disrepair. It was deemed structurally unsound more than a decade ago. In late April, NPCA staff attended a groundbreaking celebration at park headquarters for a new 32,000 square-foot maintenance facility. When completed in the fall of 2024, the new facility will house

repair shops, equipment storage, meeting space and offices for park staff. This project was made possible with nearly \$33 million from the Great American Outdoors Act and will address a long list of deferred maintenance in Acadia.

NPCA's Lauren Cosgrove and Todd Martin joined Acadia National Park Service staff, Deputy Interior Secretary Tommy Beaudreau, Senator Angus King, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and congressional staff from Senator Collins and Congressman Golden's offices at the groundbreaking ceremony. NPCA calls on Congress to reauthorize the Great American Outdoors Act's legacy restoration fund for



an additional five years to ensure our parks can continue to welcome visitors and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation's history.



Left: Acadia National Park, ME ©Pat and Chuck Blackley | Alamy **Top:** New facility rendering ©NPS **Above:** NPCA and NPS staff at Acadia maintenance facility groundbreaking ©NPCA





Federal Legislation We Are Tracking

Each year, NPCA monitors legislation introduced in Congress that affects national parks and public lands. Below are a few of the recent bills we've been tracking.

Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (S.654, H.R. 1395)

This bill reauthorizes the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program, an effort that leverages private investment, regional partnerships, and local knowledge to protect and restore the resources of the Delaware River watershed.

Salem Maritime Redesignation (S.961, H.R. 1647)

This legislation would redesignate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Massachusetts, as the Salem Maritime National Historical Park.

New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act (S.1335, H.R. 2982)

This bill establishes the New York-New Jersey Watershed Restoration Program to coordinate restoration and protection activities between government entities and conservation partners. The bill provides grants and technical assistance for restoration and protection of the watershed.

Plum Island National Monument Designation (H.R. 1584)

This legislation would establish Plum Island National Monument, located at the eastern end of Long Island, New York.

Outdoors for All Act (S.448, H.R. 1065)

This legislation would expand outdoor recreational opportunities in urban and low-income communities across the nation, by codifying the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program in federal law and ensures that funding will go towards the communities without adequate access to local parks.



Top Left: Family canoes along the New York section of the Delaware River ©Philip Scalia | Alamy **Middle Left:** Customs House at Salem Maritime National Historic Site ©Stan Tess | Alamy **Middle Right:** Friendship of Salem at Salem Maritime National Historic Site ©Stan Tess | Alamy **Left:** Iconic American species, like the Great Blue Heron will benefit from provisions contained in the New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act ©James Nesterwitz | Alamy

Big Changes Coming to the People's Beach!

If you are looking to hit Jacob Riis Beach in Queens, NYC this summer, commonly known as the People's Beach, you are in for a surprise. After nearly 50 years, the historic Jacob Riis Bathhouse is finally getting the makeover it deserves.

NPCA advocated for the \$4 million in disaster relief that NPS invested to restore the exterior of the Bathhouse following Hurricane Sandy. That investment paved the way for short-term leases for the last five years, which brought temporary concessions into the first floor of the building. But soon, Riis beach goers will have more options for food, beverage, public programming, event space and overnight accommodations.

Last fall, NPS signed a 60-year lease with CBSK Developers and Brooklyn Bazaar to invest \$50 million to renovate the Bathhouse, making the structure more resilient to the rough surf and high winds of coastal storms while returning the exterior façade and surrounding courtyards back to their historical use. This includes the addition of modern amenities for food, drink and beach concessions on the first floor, with 28 hotel rooms



and a rooftop bar and event space above. The courtyards will be equipped with a pool, lounge areas, locker rooms and a spa.

The Bathhouse construction is expected to be finished and open to the public by summer 2024.

Right: Riis Beach Bathhouse ©Jon Bilous | Alamy

Presidential Budget Proposes Millions for Gateway National Recreation Area Historic Airplane Hangars

When the Biden Administration released its Fiscal 2024 budget proposal in March, it included \$27 million to restore Gateway's historic airplane hangars 3 & 4, at Floyd Bennett Field. NPCA, along with partners, have been advocating for this funding for seven years and are hopeful that the budget will be passed this fall.

Built between 1930-1931, hangars 3 & 4 once housed historic aircraft that iconic aviators Amelia Earhart, Willy Post, Howard Hughes and Charles Lindbergh once flew. The buildings are a cornerstone of Floyd Bennett Field, which served as NYC's first municipal



airport, and the hangars represent living remnants from the America's "golden age of aviation." Before being turned over to the National Park Service in 1972, the hangars were owned and operated by the

Navy as an air station during World War II.

Today, the dilapidated hangars remain an eyesore on Flatbush Avenue, but they're teeming with future potential. For decades, NPCA, park advocates and Brooklyn neighbors have dreamt about the possibilities of turning hangars 3 & 4 into education, science and recreation spaces- free and open to the public. Together with our partners, we are excited that this year's budget request will turn the neighborhood vision for Floyd Bennett Field into a reality.

Left: Hangars 3 & 4 at Floyd Bennett Field, in need of repair ©Ark. Neyman - NV Media | Alamy

SURVEY

Help shape the future of Floyd Bennett Field!

Take an online survey to share your ideas for the future use of hangars 3 & 4. Thanks to the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy for hosting the survey and advocating to restore hangars 3 & 4.





NEW YORK *Gala*

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, October 12, 2023



SAVE THE DATE
National Parks Conservation Association's
New York Gala!

American Museum of Natural History
200 Central Park West • New York, NY

Our national parks mean so much to us and we look forward to celebrating them together. We hope you'll join us on October 12, 2023.

www.npca.org/nycgala

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