



TRUSTEES FOR THE PARKS

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2023



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AMERICA'S BEST STORYTELLER GETS EVEN BETTER

Celebrating Two Newly Protected Sites

The National Park Service is America's greatest storyteller.

Many parks tell stories that make us proud, such as Independence National Historical Park and Statue of Liberty National Monument. Other park stories make us pause to reflect on chapters in our nation's history that fell short of its founding ideals, including the recently established Amache National Historic Site in Colorado, where Japanese Americans were unconstitutionally incarcerated during World War II.

Whether uplifting or troubling, they are stories that should be accurately told and preserved so they are not lost to history.

Thanks to the dedication of leading NPCA members like you, our staff and conservation partners, two more uniquely American stories are now being told in the newest additions to the National Park System: the **Blackwell School National Historic Site** in Texas and the **Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument** in Colorado.

A Place of Learning

The Blackwell School National Historic Site is one of the first national park units dedicated to modern day Latino history. The site is small, just a half-acre, but holds great significance because it tells the story of de facto segregation along the U.S.-Mexico frontier border in the early 1900s.

At that time, children of Mexican descent were educated separately from their white peers. This de facto segregation persisted until 1965, when the Marfa, Texas Independent School District built a new elementary school open to all students in the community.

NPCA is proud to have partnered with Blackwell School alumni and their families to protect the school where Mexican American students had to learn in separate and decidedly unequal conditions. The schoolhouse was at risk of being demolished—taking decades of history and generations of students' stories with it.



The landscape of Camp Hale today in the Eagle River Valley of Colorado.



America's Best Storyteller *continued from page 2*

When President Biden signed the Blackwell National Historic Site Act on October 17, 2022, it was a day of celebration for NPCA and our partners in the Blackwell School Alliance who worked together for years to get the legislation passed. The Alliance's founding board member Jessi Silva noted, "Blackwell School is a stepping stone to learn about history. Knowing that our school will live on and be a place of learning and understanding, I am so happy and so grateful."

Honoring Veterans' Sacrifices

When the U.S. Army needed to train soldiers for World War II battles in mountainous regions of Europe, it established Camp Hale high in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Troops of the Army's 10th Mountain Division became skilled in skiing, rock climbing and snowshoeing at Camp Hale.

After the war, this site proved valuable once again as the launch of Colorado's now booming ski and outdoor recreational industry. As of October 12, 2022, the Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument protects the area's history and cultural resources while honoring the sacrifices of veterans who trained there and preserving critical lands, waters and wildlife habitat for all to experience and enjoy.

NPCA worked with local conservation groups and governments, business owners and ranchers to protect this

special place. President Biden heeded our collective voice by using his powers under the Antiquities Act to establish this newest of national monuments.

NPCA Veterans Program Manager Jimi Shaughnessy says, "I along with my veteran comrades know the value our national parks and public lands provide. We put our lives on the line to protect these lands, so to see our stories reflected and now permanently protected here is wonderful."

Nearly every President has utilized the Antiquities Act to protect sites, including the Grand Canyon and Statue of Liberty. In November 2022 President Biden also announced his intent to establish the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument in southern Nevada, preserving some of the most visually stunning, biologically diverse, and culturally significant lands in the entire Mojave Desert. Avi Kwa Ame, the Mojave name for Spirit Mountain and the surrounding landscape, is sacred to twelve tribes, including the 10 Yuman-speaking tribes who pay reverence to Spirit Mountain as the center of their creation.

The establishment of Blackwell School National Historic Site and Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument and Biden's intent to establish Avi Kwa Ame have brought us closer to reaching our goal of ensuring Americans' shared heritage is both protected and inclusive of all American stories. And that is reason for all NPCA members and supporters to celebrate.

President's Perspective

Happy New Year!

You helped make last year a great one for national parks and everyone who loves them. From establishing new national parks that further tell the full story of America, as seen in the cover story, to prompting long overdue action toward combating climate change, your support and involvement in NPCA's work produced amazing results.

I am grateful for your vital leadership role in our park protection efforts and know you will help make this year another banner one for America's national parks.

Our top priorities for 2023 include ensuring funds authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act are used wisely to address the climate crisis, reducing the National Park Service's extensive maintenance and repair backlog and ensuring more important American stories are told through national parks.

In each case you can count on our skilled and experienced staff to maximize the impact of your support. Please see the page six story about NPCA's Alan Spears, Senior Director for Cultural Resources, and Jeff Hunter, Southern Appalachian Director, being recognized as conservation leaders.

Likewise, I find it reassuring to know you are a key part of our organization and steadfast steward of national parks and I thank you for your continued support.

I encourage you to frequently check our website, npca.org, for updates on conservation successes you help make possible all year long and take action on park issues at npca.org/advocacy.

Here's to 2023 being filled with memorable park visits and more momentous park victories.

With gratitude,



Theresa Pierno
NPCA President & CEO



MARCH 29
2023

SALUTE TO THE PARKS



HONORING

Molly Hennessy-Fiske | National Staff Writer, The Washington Post

Mo Rocca | CBS Sunday Morning Correspondent, Host of *The Henry Ford's Innovation Nation* and Host of *Mobituaries*

David Vela | Former Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of the Director, National Park Service

More details and tickets available at npca.org/sttp

SAVE
THE
DATE

DATE:
Wednesday
March 29, 2023

LOCATION: National Building Museum
401 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001
OR watch the program virtually



Joshua trees at Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument

© Matthew Dillon

BETTER PROTECTION FOR FOSSILS

More than 280 national park sites are known to contain fossils spanning nearly two billion years of geological history. The impacts of climate change are leading to the discovery of fossils in additional parks as glaciers melt, coastlines erode, and rivers and lakes dry up.

Fossils help expand scientific understanding of the earliest life forms. They are also an important part of Indigenous cultures. These are just two of the most compelling reasons to protect fossils against theft, accidental harm and intentional destruction.

Once a fossil is lost through theft or negligence, its scientific and cultural value can never be recovered. That is why NPCA welcomed a new federal rule that went into effect last September with improved protections for fossils on public lands managed by National Park Service staff and other land managers in the Department of the Interior.

The rule, advocated by NPCA for more than 20 years, strengthens existing environmental regulations, warns of the criminal and civil penalties for the illegal collection of fossils, and congressionally mandates park staff to inventory and monitor the safety and condition of fossils.

Park staff now have clearer guidelines and enforcement measures to deter people from stealing these specimens as well as a mandate to inventory fossils in their care so they know where these resources exist and how to keep them in good condition.

Stealing History

Humans are one of the worst threats to fossils on public lands. The National Park Service documents hundreds of incidents each year of people stealing or attempting to steal history. Whether for profit or because someone doesn't realize the fossil they slip in their pocket is federal property, such thefts result in incalculable losses to nationally significant specimens across the country.

Several national parks were established specifically to protect fossils. Tule Springs Fossil Bed National Monument in Nevada, for example, contains paleontological resources dating back to the Ice Age. Waco Mammoth National Monument in Texas preserves the fossils of 24 Columbian mammoths. And fossilized footprints in New Mexico's White Sands National Park revealed that humans had been living in North America for at least 10,000 years longer than first thought.

NPCA Senior Manager of Conservation Programs, Christa Cherava, welcomed the new rule because, "Fossils are irreplaceable and have taught us so much about the pre-history of our country and our planet. Strengthened protections for fossils will advance scientific discoveries and ensure important culture resources are respected and preserved."

WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION FOR NPCA LEADERS

You would have a hard time finding two people more devoted to their work or better at it than Alan Spears and Jeff Hunter.

Alan is NPCA's Senior Director for Cultural Resources. Jeff is the Southern Appalachian Director in our Southeast Office. Both are also recent recipients of well-deserved recognition from organizations that know conservation excellence when they see it.



Alan Spears, center, accepts the Robert G. Stanton Award from the Clemson University Institute for Parks.

© Clemson University Institute for Parks

Alan Spears, who is a driving force for protecting many chapters in our nation's diverse history, has been honored with the Robert G. Stanton Award from the Clemson University Institute for Parks. The award is named for the first African-American Director of the National Park Service and recognizes Alan's sustained achievements in protecting America's historic and cultural resources.

Among his many achievements, Alan was instrumental in NPCA's campaigns to establish the Fort Monroe, Pullman, and Birmingham Civil Rights National Monuments, which help to tell the story of the African American experience in the United States. Upon receiving the Robert G. Stanton Award, Alan expressed gratitude for Mr. Stanton who, "set standards of commitment and excellence in the service of public lands that I have done my best to follow. National parks protect invaluable American history that we cannot bear to lose. In turn, our job is to protect them."

Jeff Hunter is NPCA's eyes and ears in Western North Carolina. Working from Asheville, Jeff has led efforts

to protect iconic national parks including Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Jeff was named the 2022 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. Jeff serves as the facilitator for Safe Passage: The I-40 Pigeon River Gorge Wildlife Crossing Project, a public-private collaboration between federal, state, tribal and non-governmental organizations seeking to improve landscape connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions near Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

NPCA Southeast Regional Director Emily Jones says of Jeff, "Anyone who knows him is not one bit surprised to see him receive this prestigious award. Jeff leaves it all out on the line for our national parks and the wildlife that roam our region."

"There is no greater honor than being recognized by the people you work beside on a regular basis," said Jeff. "We all do our part to protect our national parks and iconic wildlife for generations to come."

We are proud — and fortunate — to have Alan and Jeff on the NPCA team, and we offer them both sincere congratulations on their latest honors!



Jeff Hunter

© NPCA

CELEBRATING PLACES AND STORIES WITHIN NATURE

Through a new video series in partnership with Nature Valley, NPCA is celebrating and bringing awareness to the historical and cultural heritage of our Hispanic and Latino communities — while improving access to nature by preserving public lands and national park sites.

This new series will feature three videos highlighting profound park experiences by national park advocates, starting with Josie Gutierrez. She discovered San Antonio Missions National Historical Park through her love of running, but her connection quickly deepened, and she's now working to share her love of the outdoors and public lands with her family and her community.

Josie's story serves as an example of how park access allows people to connect to nature through recreation, while also providing a space to find peace and relaxation in the outdoors. Also revealed in the video is an art piece created by Cristina Noriega, a painter and muralist born and raised in San Antonio, commissioned to embody Josie's experience at the San Antonio Missions.

“Our national parks tell the stories of America,” said Theresa Pierno, president and CEO of National Parks Conservation Association. “They teach us about our history, our culture and the power of place. By sharing these powerful first-person stories, as we have done in this video series, we hope to introduce more people to America's national parks and the richness of the experiences people have within these protected places.”

To view the first video in the series and learn more about NPCA and Nature Valley's partnership and its impact, visit www.npca.org/naturevalley. The second video in the series was released on February 16th and features Blackwell School National Historic Site.

You can read more of Josie's story on our blog at www.npca.org/naturevalleyblog.

Inset: Park advocate Josie Gutierrez at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (TX) © Media Bar

Below: Painter Cristina Noriega created an artistic representation of Josie Gutierrez's story at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. © Media Bar



caption

© credit



Crater Lake National Park (OR)

© Demerzel21 | Dreamstime.com

NPCA RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF USA'S TOP WORKPLACES



"Truly, our greatest asset is our people."
— Theresa Pierno, President and CEO

This award celebrates nationally recognized companies that make the world a better place to work together by prioritizing a people-centered culture and giving employees a voice.

Read more about this exciting recognition on our website at npca.org.



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NPCA TRAVEL COLLECTION 2023

Our unique small-group tours are designed to give you exclusive experiences within the parks and special behind-the-scenes access to National Park Service staff, NPCA partners and other local specialists. Our goal is to offer NPCA members premium itineraries in educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks.

Ancient Forests of the Olympic Peninsula (June 20-26, 2023)

Adventure through pristine beaches, crystal-blue lakes and ancient rain forests in Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

Bears, Whales and Glaciers: Lake Clark and Kenai Fjords National Parks (July 15-22, 2023)

Join the waitlist! Visit two of Alaska's most stunning National Parks — Kenai Fjords and Lake Clark — and visit prime habitats to seek whales and bears, among other charismatic Alaskan wildlife in some of North America's wildest places.

Acadia to Katahdin: Exploring Maine's Waterways, Woodlands and Wabanaki Cultural Heritage (September 23-29, 2023)

Uncover the beauty of Acadia National Park and the unmarred wilderness of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

The National Parks of Hawai'i (October 14-22, 2023) *with Optional Guided Trip Extension (October 22-24, 2023)*

Join the waitlist! Experience the cultural and natural beauty of the remote and scenic Hawaiian Islands on a curated tour through all eight national park units.

Wild California Escape: Channel Islands National Park (Small Ship Cruise: November 4-8, 2023)

Embark on an unprecedented five-day expedition into wildness and wellness in the beautifully isolated Channel Islands.

Acadia National Park (ME)

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MATHER LEGACY SOCIETY

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PARTNERS FOR THE PARKS

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