Preparing Nevada Parks for the Future

Photo: Joshua Trees, Death Valley National Park

National parks are experiencing more record-setting floods, fires, droughts and disease each year. Irreplaceable objects of cultural significance are at risk of disappearing, and the natural world, which draws millions of visitors who contribute significantly to local economies, is changing.

Work has begun to help parks prepare for the impacts from climate change they cannot avoid. The Inflation Reduction Act is one important source of funding that helps parks plan for hotter temperatures and extreme storms. Currently 100% of the park service's IRA funds have been planned, scheduled and announced across 78 projects. However, nearly twice as many projects were proposed than could be funded with the park service's IRA funding.

These investments support parks and secure the natural heritage of these treasured landscapes for future park visitors. They leverage collaborative approaches through partnerships with youth, conservation organizations and Indigenous communities and work to foster community engagement while ensuring these resources exist for future generations.

Implement Invasive Plant Management in Priority Landscapes to Increase Ecosystem Resiliency & Health

NV NPS Sites: *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument*
Project Type: *Restoration-Invasive Species*
Investment: *$9.9M*

Invasive species pose a significant national threat, and the problem continues to be exacerbated by climate change. Increased wildfires and extreme weather events create favorable conditions for spreading invasive plants, disrupting, and forever changing delicate ecosystems forever. Without invasive plant management, these treasured places could be overgrown and recreation in these regions could change forever. This project plans to leverage the National Park Service's Invasive Plant Management Team to focus on site preparations to combat invasive species when climate change impacts occur. This includes creating early detection and rapid response strategies, invasive plant treatments, and ecosystem restoration projects. This project addresses the escalating threat of invasive species by reducing infested areas, eradicating new infestations, and treating priority landscapes. This project is essential for biodiversity preservation and ensuring resilient ecosystems are in place for future generations.

Assess Climate Change Effects on Colorado River National Parks to Inform River Management Planning

NV NPS Sites: *Lake Mead National Recreation Area*
Project Type: *Resilience-Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments*
Investment: *$2.5M*

The Colorado River has witnessed unprecedented declines in water flow in recent years with projections indicating further reductions in future years. These risks have prompted the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to reevaluate dam operations post-2026 to reevaluate dam operations directly impacting the rivers and reservoirs in multiple parks. This project, in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and university researchers, will utilize advanced modeling techniques to assess the effects on water quality, vegetation, wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities, while exploring management strategies to mitigate these impacts. The insights gained will inform long-term planning for both the NPS and BOR, supporting the preservation of ecological health in the Colorado River and its associated parks.

Guide Efforts to Sustain Joshua Trees Across the Mojave in Face of Climate-driven Vulnerabilities

NV NPS Sites: *Death Valley National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area*
Project Type: *Resilience-Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments*
Investment: *$469K*

Joshua trees are increasingly imperiled and are predicted to lose much of their suitable habitat this century. Prolonged droughts, extreme rainfall events, and wildfires threaten Joshua tree livelihoods and futures. In Mojave National Preserve alone, 1.3 million Joshua trees burned in the 2020 Dome Fires. This project will develop a risk assessment and vulnerability framework to address climate impacts and work to preserve and protect Joshua trees. Through utilizing legacy plots and creating models the National Park Service the best methods to uplift and revitalize Joshua Trees. Additionally, nursery-raised seedlings will support repopulation of areas impacted by wildfires.

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