



INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

# Preparing Utah Parks for the Future

Photo: Tamarisk Beetles,  
Dinosaur National Monument, UT

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.

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## Determine the Vulnerability of Park Water Supplies to Climate Change

**UT NPS Sites:** Bryce Canyon National Park, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Zion National Park

**Project Type:** Resilience-Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments

**Investment:** \$2.1M

National parks in arid regions face challenges balancing water usage between human needs and ecosystem preservation. With the added stress of climate change, which brings more frequent droughts and shifting precipitation patterns, the NPS has turned to research and innovation to protect these resources. Support from IRA funding has allowed the launch of the "Water for People" and "Water for Ecosystems" initiatives that focus on addressing groundwater vulnerability, improving water supply security, and ensuring that parks' ecological integrity is maintained for future generations. Water for People focuses on implementing adaptation strategies to improve water conservation, reduce leaks, increase water storage, and explore more resilient water sources in partnership with Colorado State University and the DOI's Office of the Solicitor. In collaboration with the University of Nevada-Reno Desert Research Institute, Water for Ecosystems will develop a geospatial database and assess climate change impacts to identify restoration opportunities and monitor vulnerable ecosystems. These projects help ensure that future generations of visitors can enjoy the parks while maintaining the environment's health.

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## Enhance Operational Capacity to Further National Park Service Bison Conservation Efforts

**UT NPS Sites:** Capitol Reef National Park

**Project Type:** Restoration-Bison Conservation

**Investment:** \$3.4M

America's National Mammal, the bison, serves as ecological and cultural significance to the landscape and has been at risk of near extinction. Park visitors love seeing bison and they are critical for park ecosystems and cultural ties. Yet, at one point, with a population of around roughly 30 million, bison were hunted to only several hundred. This project is a critical investment in restoring bison populations across North America, spearheaded by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior's Bison Working Group. This project will develop a metapopulation management system to connect isolated bison herds, engage in national tribal consultations to produce a Shared Stewardship Strategy and establish a central database for genetic sample archiving. This initiative works to advance wild and healthy bison herds, genetic conservation, shared stewardship, and ecological and cultural restoration.

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## Manage Invasive Plants and Re-Seed Degraded Lands to Maintain Healthy Rangelands in Intermountain Region Park Units

**UT NPS Sites:** Capitol Reef National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

**Project Type:** Resilience-Enhance Resiliency of NPS Ecosystems

**Investment:** \$2.6M

Western rangelands are incredibly vulnerable to climate change impacts due to increased temperatures, resulting in soil moisture loss and forage production. As a result, rangelands are declining in the Southwest and Northern Great Plains, causing a reduction in livestock grazing allotments which support farmers and ranchers. This project represents a vital investment in the ecological health and resilience of the Intermountain Region's National Parks. Through this initiative, the National Park Service will conduct comprehensive rangeland assets, monitor vegetation and forage conditions, restore rangeland infrastructure and grazing allotments, and add staff to support these efforts across seven parks in the Intermountain Region.

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