

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Fiscal Year 2022*



National Park Service  
Land Resources Program

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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PHOTO: NPS/JERRY MEGENITY

3

PROGRAM  
OVERVIEW



PHOTO: NPS/JERRY MEGENITY

4

FY 2022 YEAR  
IN REVIEW



PHOTO: NPS/JERRY MEGENITY

9

ACQUISITIONS



PHOTO: NPS/JERRY MEGENITY

23

LOOKING  
AHEAD



PHOTO: NPS/LAUREN REID

# LAND RESOURCES

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The National Park Service (NPS) is guided by the Organic Act of 1916 to protect and preserve resources within units of the National Park System while providing for public use and enjoyment of those resources. Today, the National Park System totals more than 85 million acres, yet more than 2.6 million acres of nonfederal lands remain within NPS boundaries. Acquisition of all nonfederal land within a given boundary is not always necessary—and, in some cases, not feasible. However, many of these lands are important for visitor use and preservation of resources and have therefore been identified to be protected in fee or by scenic or conservation easement interest. This work is carried out by the Land Resources Program (Program) and is done in cooperation with States, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners. Land acquisition funding is provided by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and uses zero taxpayer dollars.

In 2020, pursuant to the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), LWCF funding became mandatory at the full authorized level of \$900 million per year. This significant investment has allowed the Program to increase its capacity and efforts in carrying out its mission. This report highlights several of the Program’s accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22). These achievements are made possible by the hard work of the Land Resources Program staff, as well as the support of many critical partners. Thank you for joining the National Park Service in celebrating these successes!

# FY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

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*By the Numbers*

**26**

26 staff hired into new positions across the Program

**35**

Acquisitions made at 35 units

**70**

More than 70 parcels of land acquired

**36,000**

More than 36,000 acres of land protected

**\$97 million**

\$97 million in LWCF funds allocated to the Program

# FY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

## *A Unique Approach: Permission to Fail and Decisiveness as Tools for Success*



PHOTO: NPS

This year, Program leadership published two articles in the Park Planning, Facilities and Lands' internal Leadership News, which have been reproduced for this report. This article, written in celebration of Juneteenth and commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement, details how the Program is learning from past mistakes and bringing about change.

As a leader in the National Park Service (NPS), I always give colleagues permission to fail. What does this mean? Despite traditional negative connotations associated with failure, I view failure as an opportunity to grow and improve. Failure means we think bold and take risks in pursuit of our objectives. Even though we may fail, we learn from our mistakes. This is an opportunity to think outside the box and try other options. Through this process we acquire the requisite knowledge to achieve success.

To achieve success, we must also be decisive. Decisions must be both defensible and actionable. While our knowledge is important in the decision-making process, we cannot allow it to limit our analysis. The easiest way to accomplish this is to think broadly, think big, and always remain open to new ideas and improvements. Even after a decisive action is taken, we must remain open to new options which may ultimately prove to be the best course of action. This is a process of trial and error which requires ownership and flexibility. Implementation of this approach ensures effective decision-making and cultivates the trust of our colleagues.

Learning from failure and decisive action are exemplified by the American Civil Rights (Civil Rights) and Abolitionist Movements. As a country we failed the African American community through slavery and segregation. Abolitionists and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were decisive and bold in their actions to undo the scourges of their time.

As we celebrate Juneteenth, it is important to acknowledge these past mistakes, learn from them, and pay tribute to the brave men and women who decisively brought change. Specifically, at the NPS we are tasked with telling these stories to inform Americans of our past and inform our future. Capturing these stories fulfills Director Sams' Fourth Priority; "Advance equity, inclusion, and access in carrying out the NPS mission."

In furtherance of our mission, the Program is spearheading a partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor, National Park Foundation, and City of Selma to acquire property for a Visitor Center at the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (Trail). The Trail was established by Congress in 1996 to commemorate the events, people, and route of the 1965 Voting Rights March in Alabama. Acquisition of the Visitor Center currently owned by the City of Selma highlights the importance of this site in the Civil Rights Movement. The conveyance of the 0.65-acre Visitor Center is expected to be completed by November 1st and requires effective collaboration among all parties.

In commemoration of Juneteenth and the Civil Rights Movement let us go about our work boldly, decisively, and unafraid to correct failures, even if they are our own.

# FY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

## *Two Years of the Great American Outdoors Act, Full Funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund*

This article, also published in Leadership News, lays out the positive impacts GAOA has afforded the Program so far and provides a glimpse of how it will continue to do so in the future.

This month, we proudly celebrate the two-year anniversary of the passage of the landmark legislation, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). GAOA guarantees \$900 million in annual funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This permanent and mandatory funding is sourced from offshore oil and natural gas royalties and is used to invest in conservation and recreational opportunities across the country.

In the two years since its enactment, GAOA's substantial investment in LWCF has had a significant and positive impact on the Land Resources Program, which manages Federal land acquisitions for the National Park Service (NPS). Having permanent, mandatory funding provides the program with newfound certainty, ultimately allowing the program to carry out its mission successfully and efficiently.

With the increased resources afforded by GAOA, the Land Resources Program has leveraged the LWCF to acquire and conserve land throughout the United States. Lands acquired with GAOA funding provide additional recreational opportunities and permanent preservation of our nation's resources.

Since GAOA's enactment in August 2020, Congress has provided the NPS Land Resources Program \$191 million in funding, including \$102 million for 66 line item projects.

GAOA's great impact is evident in the recent acquisition of 35 acres at Grand Teton National Park (photo 1). Earlier this year, the Park announced the acquisition which permanently protects unmarred, scenic viewshed in the foreground of the Teton Range. The land serves as a corridor for wildlife such as deer, elk, moose, and bears. It will also provide new recreational opportunities for the local community and visitors.

Last year, GAOA funds facilitated the acquisition of 160 acres of land at Dinosaur National Monument (photo 2). This property—the final inholding at the Wild Mountain area—provides habitat for sagebrush, serviceberry, aspen, and native grasses. It also serves as a wildlife corridor for elk and bighorn sheep.

In the FY23 NPS Greenbook, another 17 line item projects totaling \$57.7 million have been identified as recipients of GAOA funding. These projects will further the Land Resources Program's objective of acquiring lands, waters, and interests for natural, cultural, wildlife, and recreation management by NPS. GAOA's lasting impact will ensure the permanent preservation of our beautiful lands and make recreational opportunities available for all Americans.

These amazing accomplishments wouldn't be possible without the support we receive from our internal and external partners. The budget, human resources, and contracting offices, along with the Solicitor's Office, have played vital roles in helping secure resources and administer GAOA funds. Our program's continued success relies heavily on the cooperation and contribution across every program, office, and directorate. We thank them all for their incredible contributions to this critical work.



PHOTO: NPS/JACOB FRANK

# FY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

## *Administrative Accomplishments*

PHOTO: NPS/J. Wei

### **APPRAISAL STREAMLINING**

The Department of the Interior (DOI) established an Appraisal Streamlining Workgroup, through which NPS and other DOI Bureaus have engaged in discussions on how to improve land acquisition appraisal services across DOI.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING: CONTRACTING SERVICES**

Land Resources Division (LRD) established a Service Level Agreement with the NPS Contracting Office to provide additional contracting capacity for regional Lands offices.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING: LWCF TITLE ATTORNEYS**

LRD executed an Interagency Agreement with Fish and Wildlife Service and DOI's Office of the Solicitor to provide additional capacity for issuing title opinions.

### **TRAINING**

This year, work began on the effort to develop formalized training for Program staff. The Land Acquisition Policy and Support team is working with a contractor to develop a series of virtual micro-trainings for staff.

### **EXTERNAL PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW**

LRD entered into a contract with the National Academy of Public Administration, a Congressionally authorized nonprofit, non-partisan organization, to undertake a year-long comprehensive evaluation of the Land Resources

Program. The review will be complete in 2023 and will include actionable recommendations for a more successful program.

### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR NATIONAL TRAILS**

At the end of FY22, the authority to execute land acquisition for National Trails administered by NPS was redelegated from Regional Directors to the Chief of the National Trails Lands Office. While Regional Directors will still be involved in Trail acquisitions, including setting land acquisition priorities, the National Trails Lands Office will provide significant support for carrying out the acquisitions. Coordination between the regional Lands offices and the National Trails Lands Office will ensure effective collaboration moving forward.

### **REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE WORK**

Along with the important duties associated with acquiring land for parks and numerous land management activities, such as the administration of the Right-of-Way Program, the regional Lands offices continuously work to create efficiencies and administrative improvements. This year, the regions collaborated and shared resources to increase efficiencies and streamline processes, fulfilled boundary survey requests, completed right-of-way permits, and created and updated maps. The regions work closely with the Washington Support Office to share improvements and ideas that strengthen the Program.

# FY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

## *New Hires*

In FY22, a renewed emphasis was placed on staffing up the Land Resources Program. Filling staff vacancies across the Program is critical to supporting full and permanent funding authorized by GAOA, preparing for the future, and succession planning. Across the Program this year, staff were welcomed into the following 26 positions:

### **ALASKA REGION**

- Realty Specialists (2)

### **INTERMOUNTAIN REGION**

- Environmental Protection Specialist
- Regional Cartographer

### **MIDWEST REGION**

- Surveyor

### **NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

- Realty Specialist, Right of Way Coordinator
- Surveyor

### **NORTHEAST REGION**

- Realty Specialist

### **SOUTHEAST REGION**

- Administrative Officer
- Realty Specialist
- Surveyor

### **PACIFIC WEST REGION**

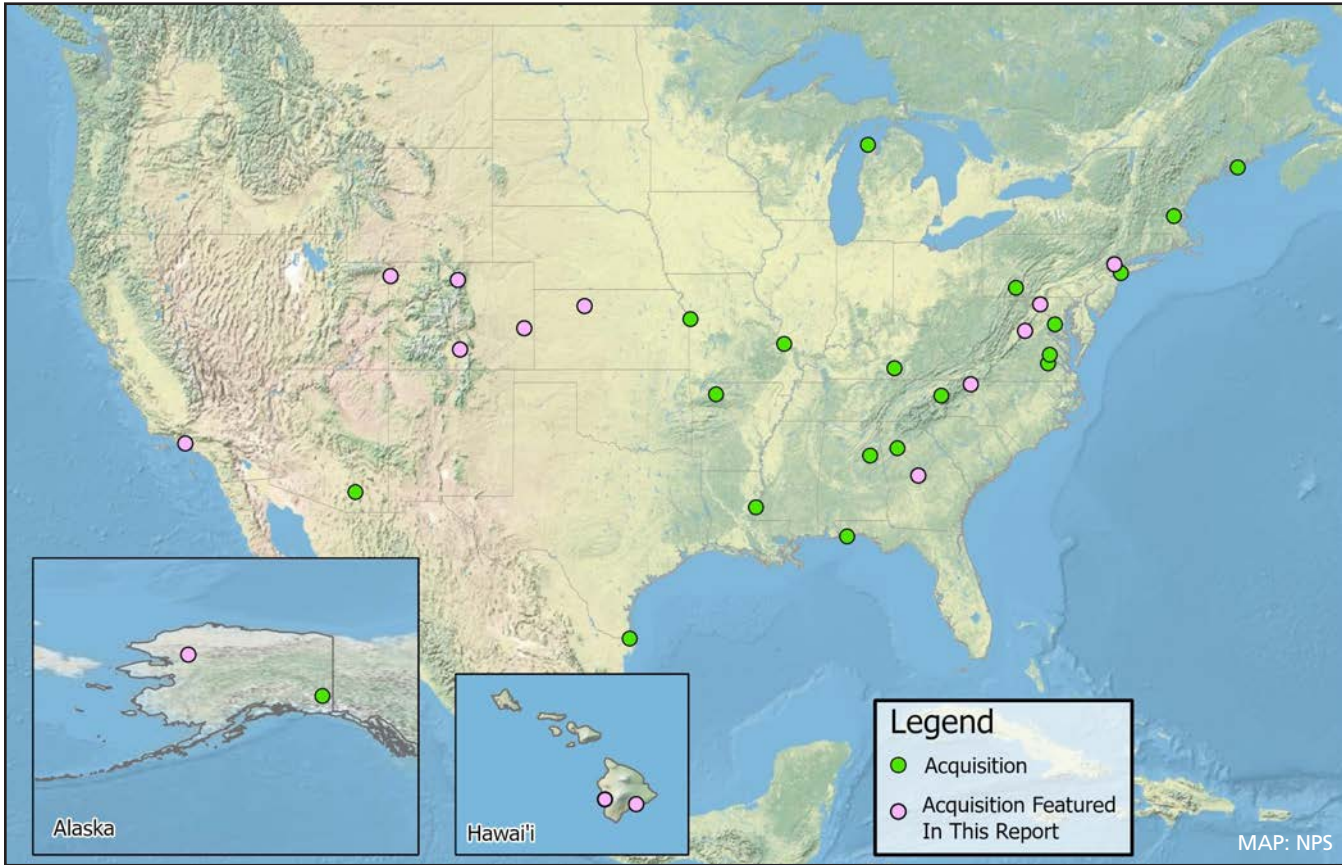
- Realty Officer

### **WASHINGTON SUPPORT OFFICE**

- Chief Cartographer
- Chief of Staff
- Land Acquisition and Support Branch Chief
- Program Analyst
- Realty Management Branch Chief
- Realty Specialists (6)
- Supervisory Cartographer
- Supervisory Realty Specialists (2)



# ACQUISITIONS



In FY22, the Land Resources Program protected more than 36,000 acres of land at 35 NPS units. Acquiring these lands, or an interest in the lands, directly supports the NPS mission of protecting and preserving resources and providing public use and enjoyment. Each of these acquisitions contributes something wonderful to the National Park System—from conserving large landscapes to preserving cultural sites. The projects highlighted on the following pages demonstrate just a few of the incredible accomplishments of the Land Resources Program this year. Following is a list of units at which acquisitions occurred in FY22:

- Acadia National Park
- Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
- Antietam National Battlefield
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Buffalo National River
- Dinosaur National Monument
- Flight 93 National Memorial
- Fort Washington Park
- Freedom Riders National Monument
- Gateway National Recreation Area
- Grand Teton National Park
- Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
- Gulf Islands National Seashore
- Harry S Truman National Historic Site
- Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park
- Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
- Kobuk Valley National Park
- Lowell National Historical Park
- Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument
- Natchez National Historical Park
- Nicodemus National Historic Site
- Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park
- Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park
- Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park
- Petersburg National Battlefield
- Richmond National Battlefield Park
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- Saguaro National Park
- Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Shenandoah National Park
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
- Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

# ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

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## *Restoring Historical Landscapes*

Antietam National Battlefield, in Sharpsburg, Maryland, commemorates the bloodiest single-day battle in American history. The Battle of Antietam—or Sharpsburg, as it was known in the South—took place over the course of 12 hours on September 17, 1862, and left 23,000 soldiers killed, wounded, or missing. The Battle of Antietam ended the Confederate Army’s first invasion into the North, a key turning point of the Civil War that led Abraham Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. The preservation and protection of the 1862 Battlefield Landscape are critical to the park’s mission to preserve, protect, and interpret the resources associated with the Battle of Antietam and its legacy.

In August 2022, the park achieved the longstanding land protection goal of purchasing almost eight acres from the American Battlefield Trust. This new Federal land is situated at the center of the battlefield, directly across from the park’s visitor center and along the park tour road. The parcel is also adjacent to the historic Dunker Church, one of the most famous churches in American military history. The acquisition of this previously unprotected land will enable the park to restore the landscape, expand interpretive opportunities, and enhance visitor understanding of one of the bloodiest battles in the nation’s history.



PHOTO: NPS

# BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

## *Protecting Trails with Partners*

PHOTO: RUSTY PAINTER

Often, the Land Resources Program teams up with nonprofit partner organizations to facilitate stewardship and protection of important natural and cultural resources across the United States. One such critical partner is the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC), which collaborates with NPS to protect land along the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. In May



PHOTO: RUSTY PAINTER

2022, CTNC made a generous donation of approximately 282 acres representing nearly \$1.5 million worth of real estate that is now permanently protected by the parkway. This donation encompasses a decade of conservation work by CTNC. This acquisition protects beautiful views and safeguards critical ecosystems for bears, deer, elk, flying squirrels, bobcats, and other sensitive species. In addition, this land encompasses the headwaters of the Yadkin River and Honeycutt Creek. Preserving this land and protecting it from incompatible development ensures the health of these ecosystems while providing beautiful views along the parkway.

The protection of these resources would not be possible without partners like CTNC. Partner organizations collaborate with NPS, local land trusts, local communities, and private landowners to conserve land. When necessary, partner organizations acquire threatened land and hold it until a transfer to NPS can be completed. Often, these natural, undisturbed lands are best protected through the rapid action taken by partners. NPS partners play a critical role in the conservation of public lands for generations to come.

CTNC is extremely proud of our 26-year relationship with the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service. Our team is grateful for the leadership, commitment, and dedication of our nonprofit and government agency partners who help us protect the integrity of this unique park that's vital to the ecological and economic health of Western North Carolina.

**-Rusty Painter, Land Protection Director, CTNC**





# DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT

*Conserving Large Landscapes*

PHOTO: NPS

Dinosaur National Monument offers so much to explore: fossils from the Late Jurassic; incredible geologic settings; mountain, desert, river, and canyon landscapes; and petroglyph and pictograph sites. The National Monument is made up of diverse landscapes from past and present environments rich in both natural and cultural resources. While the park is most well-known for its palaeontologic landscapes, it is also home to gorgeous sagebrush flats, mountains, and woodlands. Nearly 400 different kinds of animals live among these landscapes, from side-blotched lizards to mountain lions. The Wild Mountain area, which straddles Colorado and Utah on the northwest side of the park, is one of these incredible, diverse landscapes.

In November 2021, NPS purchased the last remaining private inholding in the Wild Mountain area. The Wild Mountain area provides a habitat for sagebrush, serviceberry, aspen, and native grasses. The area also serves as a wildlife corridor for elk and iconic bighorn sheep. Acquiring the final inholding in the area makes it more efficient for the park to manage the land, connects important wildlife habitats and corridors, and ensures the protection of the entire Wild Mountain area and its resources.

# GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

## *Preserving Large Landscapes*

In 1999, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the Medano-Zapata Ranch, which contains more than 12,000 acres within the boundaries of Great Sand Dunes, and developed a plan to transfer some of the land to NPS. In 2000, the passage of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act transitioned Great Sand Dunes from a National Monument to a National Park and Preserve and more than quadrupled its size. Since then, TNC has worked closely with NPS to manage the land and eventually transfer it to the park. This year, as a result of this 20+ year partnership, NPS and TNC announced the transfer of over 9,000 acres of the Medano Ranch.

The land acquired at Great Sand Dunes contains springs and wetlands that are vital to supporting a rich diversity of life at the park. The Medano Ranch land also contains sand sheets and salt flats that are key contributing factors to the formation and maintenance of the dune system. This acquisition allows the land to be managed more holistically as one large, connected landscape and provides protection of these marvelous natural resources. TNC plans to transfer the remaining +3,000 acres to NPS in the future.



PHOTO: NPS/ MACKENZIE REED



PHOTO: TONYA SUMMERLIN

In tandem with our partner, The Nature Conservancy, it has been outstanding to have acquired these parcels of land for the purposes of important water rights, archaeological sites, and sand sheet and sabkha areas that contribute to the formation of the dune field. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with TNC and the fantastic staff at Great Sand Dunes National Park over the years. Seeing the viewshed and the amazing legacy of the land that has been acquired instills such an amazing feeling of providing for the public for years to come. -**Heather Horton, Realty Specialist, NPS Intermountain Region**



# HAWAI'I VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

## *Protecting Cultural Landscapes*



PHOTO: NPS

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is located on the southern end of the Island of Hawai'i, the southernmost island of the Hawaiian Archipelago. The park extends from sea level to the summit of Mauna Loa, the largest volcano in the world, and encompasses the summits and rift zones of both Mauna Loa and Kīlauea. Because of its distinct volcanic topography, the park is home to some of the most unique geologic, biologic, and cultural landscapes on the planet. In addition to the remarkable natural resources, Hawai'i Volcanoes is also rich in cultural resources. The entire park landscape and all its inhabitants and features are sacred to Native Hawaiians, for whom some traditional cultural practices depend on the natural, unaltered mountain summits. The park also includes Native Wahi Kapu, sacred places, and Wahi Pana, celebrated places.

This summer, NPS acquired Kahuku-Pōhue, or Pōhue Bay, from partner organization Trust for Public Land (TPL), making the 16,451 acres part of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Prior to the transfer, Pōhue Bay had been the subject of several resort development proposals, which would have been incompatible with the preservation of the area. Pōhue Bay is home to many well-preserved and significant Hawaiian cultural sites, including a large abrader quarry, lava tubes, a burial site, mauka-makai (mountain to sea) trails, fishing shrines, remains of coastal villages, and petroglyphs. The Pōhue coastline is also a critical habitat for endangered species, including Hawaiian hawksbill turtles and Hawaiian monk seals.

Park staff will consult with local experts and residents to understand the various cultural sites and develop a plan for their conservation. This substantial acquisition ensures the protection of an incredibly precious and significant landscape for generations.

# KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

## *Conserving Wildlife Habitat and Native Subsistence Resources*

In Northwest Alaska, Kobuk Valley National Park was created to maintain the environmental integrity of the natural features of the Kobuk and Salmon Rivers and the surrounding boreal forests in their natural states. In addition, Kobuk Valley protects migration routes for the Arctic caribou herd; protects habitat for and population of fish, caribou, moose, black and grizzly bears, wolves, and waterfowl; protects the viability of subsistence resources for local residents; and, in cooperation with Native Alaskans, protects and interprets archaeological sites associated with Native cultures.

In FY22, 160 acres of pristine wetlands and boreal forest inside Kobuk Valley were brought into NPS ownership. This acquisition contains over 2,000 feet of river frontage on the Kobuk River and nearly 2,000 feet on the Salmon River. The area is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including caribou, moose, bears, salmon, and waterfowl. The Kobuk River Valley is also rich in important Native archaeological sites. This acquisition places the entire length of the shoreline of the Wild and Scenic Salmon River under NPS management, protects important wildlife habitat, and opens the 160-acre parcel to vital subsistence activities for local rural residents, who are predominantly Native Alaskans.





PHOTO: NPS

# NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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## *Interpreting Historic Sites*

At the end of the post-Civil War Reconstruction era, formerly enslaved African Americans left Kentucky to experience freedom in the “Promised Land” of Kansas. Today, Nicodemus, KS is the oldest and only remaining Black settlement west of the Mississippi River. Nicodemus National Historic Site represents the involvement of African Americans in the westward expansion and settlement of the Great Plains. Nicodemus is symbolic of the pioneer spirit of African Americans who dared to leave the only region they were familiar with to seek personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and capabilities. The National Historic Site was established to preserve, protect, and interpret the remaining structures and locations that represent the history of Nicodemus. It also serves to interpret the historical role Nicodemus played in the Reconstruction period in the context of the westward expansion of the U.S.

In September 2022, NPS acquired approximately one acre of land that will be home to the park’s Visitor Services site. This site will provide educational and interpretive services to visitors. The Visitor Services site will be the central hub for information about the park, educational opportunities, accommodations, and interpretive history. This land acquisition is essential to carrying out Nicodemus’ mission.





# OCMULGEE MOUNDS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

*Protecting Cultural Landscapes*

PHOTO: NPS

At Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park in Macon, GA, a recent acquisition doubled the size of the park. A 951-acre property adjacent to the park was under threat of industrial development until 2021, when the Open Space Institute negotiated a deal to purchase the land. 906 of the 951 acres were transferred to NPS this year, and the remaining 45 acres will be transferred to another partner, Ocmulgee Land Trust, to hold while wetland restoration occurs. Those 45 acres will subsequently be donated to NPS.

Ocmulgee is home to some of the most significant prehistoric Indigenous mounds in North America and was the largest single archaeological excavation in American history, producing more than two million artifacts in the 1930s. The mounds featured at the park are one of America's most important cultural landscapes, built by the Muskogean people around 900 CE. The newly acquired land is located within the Ocmulgee Old Fields, also known as the Macon Reserve, a place sacred to Muskogean people. This land was retained by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation from 1805 until 1826 when the Muskogean people were forcibly removed from their ancestral home and relocated to present-day Oklahoma. This acquisition protects the ancestral lands of the Muscogee Nation and upholds NPS's duty to preserve culturally significant land.

# PATERSON GREAT FALLS NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

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## *Appreciating American History*

The City of Paterson, NJ was established in 1792 as America's first planned industrial city, centered around the Great Falls of the Passaic River. Paterson is the site Alexander Hamilton selected to implement his vision of American economic independence and transformation from an agrarian society based on slavery into a global economy based on freedom. Here, Hamilton's



vision was realized using a hydropower system from the Passaic to power nearby mills that produced diverse products. Today, visitors can appreciate the natural beauty of the oasis of the Great Falls and learn about the historical importance of Paterson at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.

This year, NPS acquired more than three acres at

Overlook Park from the City of Paterson, NJ. Overlook Park is an urban park that provides a scenic view of the Great Falls, including an amphitheater on an embankment that faces the Falls. The park's future visitor center will be located on a portion of this land. In addition to Overlook Park, NPS also acquired a historic preservation easement over a hydroelectric generating station at the base of the Falls. The hydroelectric powerhouse was built in 1914 and still operates today. This acquisition strongly supports the park's mission to preserve the historic Paterson area that had a profound role in America's successful transition to economic independence.

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

*Protecting Iconic Scenery*



PHOTO: NPS/JERRY MEGENITY

In September, Rocky Mountain National Park hosted a celebration with an unlikely special guest: former Astronaut Vance Brand. Brand was born and raised in nearby Longmont, CO, and attended the University of Colorado. Brand's camping, hiking, and climbing adventures at Rocky Mountain in his youth inspired his love and appreciation for the natural beauty of the land. Brand went on to become a Marine Corps officer, aviator, test pilot, aeronautical engineer, and astronaut. He served as a command module pilot for the first U.S.-Soviet joint spaceflight in 1975 and commander of three Space Shuttle missions.

In 1967, Brand purchased land along the eastern boundary of the park. In 2019, Brand and his family donated 40 acres of land to the partner organization Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Because the land was outside the existing park boundary, Congress had to authorize the inclusion of the 40 acres into the boundary, which happened in 2021. This year, the land was officially donated to the park and celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony in the summer. Acquisition of this land allows the park to provide additional protection of its high-elevation ecosystem and provides a natural scenic buffer between private lands and popular trails nearby.

# SAND CREEK MASSACRE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

## *Preserving Sacred Land*



PHOTO: NPS/TERI JOBE

The Sand Creek Massacre, one of the most significant events in American history, represents a major turning point in the relationship between American Indian tribes and the U.S. Federal Government. On November 29, 1864, U.S. soldiers attacked Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians camped along the Sand Creek in Colorado territory, killing more than 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people, composed mostly of women, children, and the elderly. The site of this event is considered sacred to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Northern Arapaho Tribe, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Today, the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site has been established to preserve the land where the massacre took place, as well as lands critical to the historic cultural landscape. Acquisition from willing sellers within the boundaries of the Sand Creek site continues in an effort to preserve, memorialize, commemorate, and interpret the events of the Sand Creek Massacre.

This year, NPS acquired 3,478 acres within the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. In addition to providing an intact viewshed of the site, the land also contains significant archaeological remains from the massacre, including evidence of the village where Cheyenne and Arapaho families were camped. This acquisition—which protects more than half the land within the boundary of the Historic Site—was done in consultation with the associated Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and facilitated by NPS partner, The Conservation Fund. In October 2022, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and NPS Director Chuck Sams, along with other NPS staff, leaders from the Northern Arapaho Tribe, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, and other community partners met at Sand Creek National Historic Site to dedicate this land protection and commemorate such a milestone.

# SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

*Enhancing Recreational Access*



PHOTO: JUSTIN YEE

When Congress established Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 1978, it was created to preserve the natural scenic setting, and its public health value as an airshed for the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Along with preserving those values, it was to meet the recreational and educational needs of the public. Efforts at Santa Monica Mountains continue to support this mission, including this year's acquisition of four parcels totaling 45 acres adjacent to the popular Backbone Trail. The land protects the viewshed of the Sandstone Peak and Circle X Ranch areas, the highest point of the Backbone Trail.

The land encompasses the confluence of three drainages and their steep upland slopes and rocky outcrop habitat. Additionally, this land is home to chaparral habitat, a biome shaped by a Mediterranean climate, found in only five places around the world. Acquiring this land furthers the preservation of this unique ecosystem and makes for more enjoyable recreational experiences for the adjacent metropolitan communities.

This acquisition preserves a sense of wildness along the Backbone Trail, one of the marquee trail experiences in Southern California. The land reflects the biodiversity of the Santa Monica Mountains including chaparral-covered hills and oak tree-lined drainages.

Despite complex title issues and impacts of the 2018 Woolsey Fire, the region and park team collaborated over several years to complete this acquisition. -Justin Yee, *Outdoor Recreation Planner*,  
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area





# SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

## *Conserving Wildlife Habitat*

PHOTO: NPS

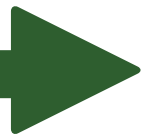
Along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah National Park spans more than 197,000 acres, including nearly 80,000 acres of designated wilderness. Shenandoah boasts an expansive system of hiking trails with over 500 miles of trails, including 101 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Throughout the park, visitors encounter shimmering waterfalls, mountain peaks, scenic overlooks, large rock outcrops, and the beauty of the Appalachians—all less than 75 miles from Washington, D.C. The critical, unique ecosystems protected at Shenandoah are home to approximately 2,100 species of flora and fauna and preserve the ecological integrity of other natural resource systems from the Appalachians to the Chesapeake Bay.

In FY22, NPS partner Shenandoah National Park Trust assisted with the acquisition of more than 960 acres at the park. The acquisition of this contiguous and relatively undisturbed land will assist in the conservation of tributaries to the Shenandoah River and the protection of woodland and forested habitats. The cold-water tributaries support brook trout and other headwater fisheries. The wooded lands provide habitat for black bears, migratory birds, and bats, among other wildlife. This large acquisition is invaluable in its contribution to wildlife conservation, forest health, environmental quality, and accessible recreation on public lands.



PHOTO: NPS

# LOOKING AHEAD



The Land Resources Program is proud to celebrate the conclusion of another successful year! Many accomplishments were made in FY22, but our work continues. Looking ahead to FY23, many more challenges and successes are expected. The Program is looking forward to the many opportunities expected next year. In FY23, the Program is expected to receive approximately \$66 million in appropriated LWCF funds for federal land acquisition projects. Additionally, as this is a willing seller program, it is anticipated that several other priority projects will be carried out with funding from National Line Item accounts. Along with acquisitions, the Program will continue its administrative efforts, including hiring, training, and programmatic review and improvement, among other programmatic advances. The Land Resources team is grateful for this year's accomplishments and looks forward to celebrating more in the future!