



FAQs on the State of the Parks

Last updated, 3/31/25. Note that the federal landscape continues to change rapidly. We will give updates as we can.

What is happening at the National Park Service right now?

A series of Executive Orders by President Donald Trump has destabilized the National Park Service, including:

- A freeze on all federal hiring, including the majority of positions at the National Park Service that support the busy summer season.
- A rescinding of federal job offers that had not yet reached their start date, leaving hundreds of vacant National Park Service jobs on continued vacancy.
- The “fork in the road” buyout offer to go on immediate administrative leave through the end of the fiscal year, then retire, resulting in about 700 voluntary resignations across the National Park Service.
 - A subsequent buyout offer of \$25,000 to leave federal service for at least five years if employees leave by May 31. It is unclear how many NPS employees took this second buyout, which was offered through March 26.
- The erasure of transgender individuals from the Stonewall National Monument website.
- The illegal termination of 1,000 National Park Service employees on a standard probationary period for new jobs and promotions.
 - Several lawsuits have put a temporary restraining order on this practice, and judges have ordered that employees be reinstated. As of March 31, many of those employees were reinstated, but some have been put on immediate administrative leave in anticipation to further reductions in workforce (see below). Some have received backpay for the time they were temporarily terminated.
 - The two month absence of those staff members has put significant delays on hiring, projects, and other important operational tasks at National Parks across the country
- The impoundment of Congressionally-appropriated funding, including, but not limited to programs related to climate change, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The Challenge Cost Share program, a program that leveraged funding with community partners, and has typically funded small projects for the benefit of education, recreation, and restoration, was canceled outright. The Fund has

received Challenge Cost Share funding in the past and had an application pending in the 2025 cycle.

- A reduction of all park credit cards to a balance of \$1. These purchase cards are used for everyday park functionality, such as toilet paper purchases, basic utility bills, and food and supplies for in-park field work.
- The scheduled cancellation of 32 leases that are critical for National Park infrastructure, including visitor centers, law enforcement offices, and archives of historic artifacts. Of the Fund's 32 partner parks, El Malpais National Monument's visitor center and two administrative buildings for Channel Islands National Park associated with law enforcement and natural resources management are slated to be closed.
- A planned reduction in force (RIF) of approximately 30% of NPS positions later this year. Agency Reorganization Plans were requested by March 13, though actions remain to be seen.

Prior to these Executive Orders, the National Park Service was already at an all-time low for ratio of staff members to visitors.

How are parks responding?

- Park staff are tirelessly working to protect America's cultural and natural resources for all visitors, as best they are able.
- Parks across the country have reduced visitor center hours and programming.
- Some parks will rely heavily on volunteers, while others are already cutting volunteer programs because they cannot fill the volunteer management positions.
- One large park has put out a call for local community Search and Rescue volunteers because park staff will not be able to handle as many calls on their own.

What is the Fund's role in the parks?

Since 2014, we have provided private funding for inspirational projects that enhance the visitor experience. In this era of severely reduced staffing, projects like films, educational signs, exhibits, junior ranger booklets are critical, efficient, and impactful. Our organization is built on strong relationships with National Park Service staff and we strive to be a bright light in the darkness. We are standing by to see how else we can support them during these challenging times.

Will Fund projects be affected?

This remains to be seen. We are in close contact with park staff about how these actions are affecting both their work and our grant-funded projects. We know that park staffing is likely to be shuffled to support day-to-day operations. Many of our projects are run through expert contractors who have years of experience working

in National Parks, so some of our projects will continue ahead without overly taxing park staff.

How can I support the parks, the Fund, and the National Park Service in this moment?

- [Contact your elected officials](#) and let them know of the importance of National Parks to you and how the cuts to park staff and funding will impact you.
- Visit responsibly. Plan ahead and practice [Leave No Trace principles](#).
- [Volunteer](#). Visitor center volunteers, campground hosts, and other day-to-day operational support needs are likely to be in great demand.
- Support the parks. The Fund's work is more important than ever. [Consider a contribution today](#).