



## Preventing the Defunding and Dismantling of our National Park System

America's national parks represent more than a century of bipartisan commitment to preserving our nation's most significant natural, historical and cultural treasures. National parks are a symbol of America's heritage and global leadership in conservation. But these places have come under attack in recent months. The largest proposed budget cut in NPS history, combined with massive staff reductions and plans to transfer national park units to states and private interests, threatens the future of these places and everything they were created to protect.

Across the country, millions visit national parks, monuments, seashores, battlefields and historic sites to connect with stories that define America, from the Revolution and Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement and the Wright Brothers' first flight. These aren't just regional stories; they are shared American stories. For generations, we've believed certain places are so special they must be preserved forever, and for all to experience. Any move to strip these unique natural and historic sites from the National Park Service is a betrayal to the American people.

### What's Happening

- **Funding Cuts:** The President's FY26 budget proposal includes a \$900 million cut to NPS operations, which would be the largest cut in Park Service's 109-year history. Cuts of this magnitude could [shutter at least 350 national parks sites](#) across the country – more than 75% of our Park System – that protect our nation's irreplaceable history and culture and inspire and educate millions of people every year.
- **Transferring Units:** The [President's FY26 budget](#) also proposes transferring national park sites, including many historic sites, to individual states' control. However, Congress designated nearly all of these sites over the past century, and the administration cannot unilaterally hand them over.
- **Attacks on National Monuments:** In February 2025, Interior Secretary Burgum [called for a review](#) of all monuments, mirroring efforts from the Trump administration's first term. The Justice Department has since released an [opinion](#) claiming the president has the authority to rescind or abolish national monuments—reversing 77 years of established precedent. While the Trump administration has openly sought to roll back protections for monuments, a [2017 legal analysis](#) concluded that the president has no power to unilaterally abolish a national monument under the 1906 Antiquities Act.

### Why it Matters

- **Economic Impact:** America's National Park System contributes over [\\$55 billion](#) to the nation's economy and supports more than 415,000 jobs annually. Attempting to unravel and dismantle our national parks would be devastating for local economies that rely on tourist dollars.



- **Public Support:** Americans deeply value their national parks, as reflected by the millions who explore them each year – more than 331 million visits in 2024 alone. Polling consistently shows that Americans [overwhelmingly oppose](#) budget or staffing cuts to parks.
- **Less Access:** Shifting park management to less-resourced entities could mean higher fees, reduced access, and fewer educational and preservation services. Most states and local agencies simply don't have the funding or staff to match the Park Service's standards.
- **Resource Risk:** Without NPS protections, sacred Indigenous sites, battlefields and historic landmarks could be sold, developed or altered, leading to the permanent loss of America's most meaningful places.
- **Unmatched Expertise:** The National Park Service includes our country's greatest storytellers. Park Service staff protect our history at battlefields, historic homes and museums and bring unmatched skills in conservation, education and emergency response. Their mission-driven work protects parks in ways no other agency can.

### Case Examples

- **Designating a new national park unit is a rigorous, often years-long process that requires careful study and community input.** Recently-designated sites like Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument, Amache National Historical Site, and Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park were designated after Special Resource Studies confirmed their national significance. These studies are in-depth and time-intensive, involving public engagement, local collaboration, and thorough research.
- **More than two thirds of our national park sites are dedicated to protecting and telling American history.** Without continued federal protection, we risk losing places like the Roosevelt National Historic Site, where President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill planned strategy during WWII; Ford's Theatre, where President Lincoln was assassinated; and Appomattox Courthouse, where the Civil War effectively ended. Turning these sites over to states could lead to reduced protections, underfunding or even commercial development and threaten to erase irreplaceable pieces of America's story.

### Call to Action

Congress must take decisive action to safeguard the future of America's National Park System. It must affirm its sole authority over park designations, transfers and funding decisions, as well as ensure the public has a voice in any proposed changes to park management.

Lawmakers should reject harmful personnel policies that have drained national park staffing capacity and immediately restore resources needed to protect and operate these treasured places. As Congress considers the FY26 budget and the administration's proposals for federal agencies, it is critical to prevent short-sighted decisions that threaten to deauthorize, transfer or defund the National Park System.