

The National Parks Conservation Association

What is the National Parks Conservation Association?

We are an independent, nonpartisan voice working to address major threats facing the National Park System. NPCA was established in 1919, just three years after the National Park Service. Stephen Mather, the first director of the Park Service, was one of our founders. He felt very strongly that the national parks would need an independent voice—outside the political system—to ensure these places remained unimpaired for future generations. Today, we have more than 340,000 members and supporters, and 24 regional and field offices around the country. Our Mission: To Protect and Enhance America’s National Park System for present and future generations.

What does NPCA do?

NPCA works to address major threats facing the National Park System by gathering the information we need through our two centers, Center for Park Management and Center for State of the Parks, by keeping our eyes and ears to the ground in ten regional and 14 field offices, and by developing relationships on Capitol Hill and in the administration to counter legislation or policies that would adversely affect the parks. We also pursue solutions in the courts when other avenues fail us.

What is the difference between NPCA, the National Park Service, and the National Park Foundation?

NPCA is the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing the National Park System, the largest and most diverse park system in the world. It is the only independent, membership organization dedicated to protecting the park system. NPCA and its thousands of members and supporters are committed to preserving our nation’s natural, cultural, and historical heritage.

The National Park Service was created by an Act of Congress in 1916 to preserve the natural and cultural resources and values of the [National Park System](#) for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. An agency of the Department of the Interior, the Park Service manages 391 sites, including national parks, monuments, battlefields, seashores, and preserves.

The National Park Foundation was chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1967 and is the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service. Through private funding and corporate partnerships, the Park Foundation provides grants for park programs and projects. The Secretary of the Interior serves as chairman of the board, and the director of the National Park Service serves as secretary to the board.