



JULY-DECEMBER 2023

During the second half of 2023, the U.S. National Park Service undertook many exciting international conservation projects. Following are summaries of notable cooperation between NPS staff and international counterparts between **July and December 2023**. Follow us on social media for these and many other NPS international activities - <https://www.facebook.com/NPSInternationalAffairs>

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WORLD HERITAGE

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks Added to World Heritage List

The United States celebrated the inscription of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites at its 45th session in Saudi Arabia in early September 2023. The listing, which includes five locations managed by the National Park Service's Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and three managed by the Ohio History Connection, were built by Native Americans between 1,600 and 2,000 years ago. They are complex masterpieces of landscape architecture and are exceptional among ancient monuments worldwide in their enormous scale, geometric precision and astronomical alignments. Hopewell is the 25th designation in the U.S. to be recognized as a World Heritage Site. Throughout the effort, the NPS Office of International Affairs, which manages the US World Heritage Program, provided guidance and oversight to ensure a high-quality nomination document and a smooth path to inscription.

For more information: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-applauds-designation-ancient-earthworks-ohio-nations-25th-world>

NPS Contact: Stephen Morris; stephen_morris@nps.gov



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

North American Protected Areas Committee Signs New Agreement

The Executive Committee of the North American Inter-governmental Committee on Cooperation for Protected Areas (NAPA), which includes the NPS as well as other U.S. federal agencies, signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding in November 2023 outlining a framework for continued cooperation and coordination among the United States, Canada and Mexico to guide collaborative management, sustainable and responsible use, protection, conservation, and presentation of protected areas across our shared continent.

For more information: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-signs-agreement-mexico-canada-continue-trilateral-collaboration>

NPS contact: Jon Putnam; jonathan_putnam@nps.gov



NPS Director Sams addresses attendees at the NAPA meeting

NPS Supports Public Diplomacy in Pakistan

At the request of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad for an expert in national park management to visit Pakistan, the NPS Office of International Affairs recruited Jody Lyle, Management Assistant at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The park, which is located adjacent to Los Angeles, has many operational and geographic similarities with Margallah Hills National Park, located immediately adjacent to Islamabad. Sponsored by State Department's U.S. Speaker Program, Lyle participated in 13 different events, including eight formal presentations, engaging with Pakistani government officials, civil society leaders, private sector representatives, and students to discuss conservation, sustainable parks management, and wildlife protection. Lyle liaised extensively with the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), the entity that manages Margallah Hills National Park, providing targeted expertise to bolster IWMB's operations, research, and community outreach. Lyle also met with students at several local universities, raising the profile of conservation as a career field, especially among Pakistani women (*below*).

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad highlighted Lyle's visit to advance conservation goals by shining a spotlight on Margallah Hills National Park, which sets the standard for professional conservation in Pakistan and models best practices which provincial and regional officials can emulate.

For more information: [Women's role in nature conservation, national park service gaining pace in US: Lyle \(app.com.pk\)](https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/women-s-role-in-nature-conservation-national-park-service-gaining-pace-in-us)

NPS Contact: Jody Lyle; jody_lyle@nps.gov



NPS Assesses Climate Impacts at Portuguese World Heritage Site

From September through November 2023, Barbara Judy, Branch Manager, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Stewardship in the NPS Southeast Region, participated in an Embassy Science Fellowship sponsored by the US Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. Her fellowship project was geared towards providing technical support for an assessment of climate change impacts and mitigation strategies at the iconic Tower of Belém and Jerónimos Monastery, two 16th-century historic structures that are Lisbon’s leading tourist attractions and, together, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The project provided a highly visible and deeply meaningful way to highlight U.S. science diplomacy, while allowing for exchange between heritage site managers in the U.S. and Portugal. The fellowship culminated in a presentation to representatives of Portuguese government, academicians, and local and national media regarding the analysis of how changing natural systems are impacting the monuments.

For more information: [How climate change, Portuguese monuments and the Department of State are interrelated \(heraldnews.com\)](https://www.heraldnews.com)

NPS contact: Barbara Judy; Barbara_judy@nps.gov



Ranger Represents NPS at Sondrio Environmental Film Festival

Kerstin Burlingame, Interpretation and Education Park Ranger at Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, represented the National Park Service at the 2023 Sondrio Festival in Italy in November. She, along with five others, comprised the International Panel of Judges and chose the top nature films for regional prizes. Kerstin also represented the NPS at local schools, facilitating conversations with over 1,700 students about the role of parks world-wide and within local communities.

The Sondrio Festival is an international film festival focused on environmental documentaries made in nature parks and protected areas worldwide and has been held every November since 1987 in Sondrio, Italy. For almost four decades, festival organizers have invited an NPS representative to participate on its film jury and visit with local students in the Valtellina area. For more information: [Sondrio Festival](https://www.sondriofestival.it)

NPS contact: Kerstin Burlingame @ kerstin_burlingame@nps.gov



NPS and ARCUS Convene Beringia Days Symposium

A Beringia Days Symposium coordinated by the NPS Shared Beringian Heritage Program and the Arctic Research Consortium of the US was convened in Anchorage, Alaska in late October. Beringia Days 2023 brought together NPS staff, cooperative agreement associates, indigenous peoples of the Beringian geographic region, researchers and partners to share results of recent SBHP-supported projects and discuss areas of concern for future collaborations.

Russian indigenous academics described their research into the indigenous perspective of non-native explorers who visited the Chukotkan coast 140 years ago while NGO's discussed training that they provided to Russian indigenous communities. Among other vital topics discussed were research into toxic algal blooms that impact coastal fisheries populations across the northern Pacific Ocean and food security of native villagers using ice cellars in permafrost that is less secure amidst a warming arctic climate.

For more information: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/beringia/index.htm>

NPS contact: Jeanette Koelsch, at jeanette_koelsch@nps.gov



NPS Shared Beringian Heritage Area Program Manager

Jeanette Koelsch welcomes participants

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NPS Superintendents Assess Saudi Protected Areas

At the request of the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, the NPS Office of International Affairs recruited NPS park superintendents Lynne Dominy (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore) and Scott Tucker (Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore) to undertake a technical assistance assessment in Saudi Arabia.

This came in response to requests from the Saudi National Center for Wildlife (NCW) for site visits to two of their Protected Areas and management training for 34 NCW managers, as well as at the request of the Royal Commission for AlUla for visits and management recommendations at eleven different sites and programs across AlUla. After their assessment, both Saudi Arabian protected areas requested follow-up recommendations on a wide range of park management topics.

NPS Contact: David Krewson;
david_krewson@nps.gov



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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

South Africa & NPS Collaborate on Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change adaptation in parks and other protected areas is an urgent but challenging new task for many managers. Working together and sharing knowledge, tools, and insights is essential. Staff from the NPS Climate Change Response Program and South African National Parks (SANParks) collaborated to design and conduct workshops on climate change adaptation processes that are suitable for South African parks. Week-long workshops were planned in early 2023, including during a May 2023 visit by several SANParks climate change program staff, and conducted in July 2023.

The first workshop, which focused on coastal parks, was held in Table Mountain National Park and also included Garden Route National Park. The second, focused on interior savanna and desert ecosystems, was held in Kruger National Park and included Augrabies Falls National Park. In each workshop, park staff and partners from diverse organizations (provincial, municipal, NGO, private sector) worked through a scenario-based process to identify key climate change vulnerabilities and management responses. Outputs from these workshops will inform climate change adaptation planning that has been mandated by the SANParks governing board – specifically at least two of the four participating parks are expected to produce and begin to implement broad climate change-informed resource stewardship by the end of 2023.

NPS contact: Gregor Schuurman;

gregor_schuurman@nps.gov



NPS Planners Develop Sustainable Tourism Plans for Palau

The Sustainable Tourism Pilot Project, a collaboration between the Republic of Palau and the US National Park Service central planning office, the Denver Service Center Planning Division (DSC), is a collection of elements of foundation planning and visitor use management planning. The recently completed plan was developed over a series of work sessions with a team in the United States and in Palau. The goals and outcomes of this plan were developed collaboratively to ensure consistent and shared management of the reserve's resources and provide opportunities for visitors to have meaningful, authentic, and educational experiences.



DSC's recently completed efforts were specifically focused on Ngardok Nature Reserve, Palau's only Ramsar Wetland Site of International Significance.. Lake Ngardok, the largest and most biologically diverse freshwater lake in Palau and the largest natural freshwater lake in Micronesia, was also a focus. The lake is integral to the local community in Melekeok state for flood control and maintenance of water quality; functions as the main water supply for Melekeok state; and in times of drought, supplements the water supply for other states in Palau.

The NPS team is working on phase II of the Sustainable Tourism project work in Palau with the Ngarmeduu Conservation Area. The Community Use Plan is being developed in collaboration with the Palau under a three-state partnership Ngeremlengui, Ngatpang and Aimeliik in addition to the in-country coordinators.

For more information: [National Park Service - Planning \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/planning)

NPS contact: Chris Church; chris_church@nps.gov

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NPS Archeologists Support Japanese World Heritage Site

At the request of a Japanese professor at Hokkaido University, the NPS Office of International Affairs was asked to recruit experts in the interpretation of archeological sites to attend a symposium about Jomon Prehistoric Sites of Northern Japan, which was designated a World Heritage Site in 2021. NPS archeologists Sharlot Hart and Bret Ruby traveled to Hokkaido and delivered presentations on cultural heritage tourism and protected area management.

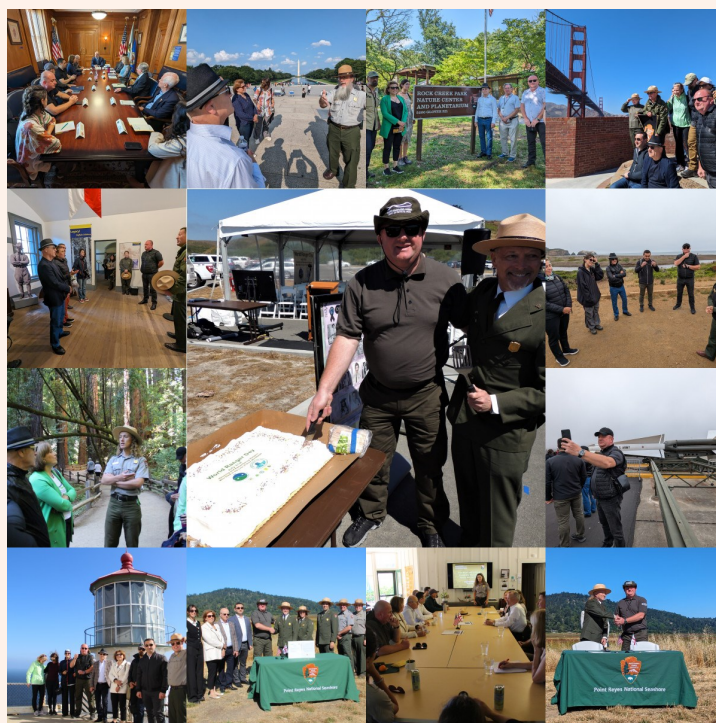


Hokkaido University also sought NPS expertise in designing heritage tourism and connecting with descendant communities for these archeological sites. Hart's expertise is unique in being related both to archeology and interpretation as well as connecting descendant communities to cultural heritage sites in her normal duties. Ruby is the Director of Resource Stewardship at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and was a primary contributor to the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks nomination to the World Heritage List which was inscribed in 2023.

NPS contact: Sharlot Hart / Bret Ruby;
sharlot_hart@nps.gov / bret_ruby@nps.gov

Point Reyes Hosts Georgian Sister Park for World Ranger Day

DOI's International Technical Assistance Program, working with the USAID-Tbilisi Mission and the NPS Office of International Affairs, arranged meetings for a delegation led by the Georgian Deputy Environment Minister in Washington, DC and California with US Interior Department officials. The impetus for the visit was an invitation by Point Reyes National Seashore to host their sister park, Kolkheti National Park, to attend the 2023 World Ranger Day ceremony. Interior Deputy Secretary Beaudreau welcomed the delegation and discussed accomplishments of US-Georgian collaboration over the past four years.



Point Reyes National Seashore and Georgia's Kolkheti National Park renewed their sister park relationship and then both parks joined the 2023 World Ranger Day commemoration ceremony at the visitor center in Point Reyes named after one of its rangers who was killed in the line of duty 50 years ago, Ken Patrick. Deputy Minister Nozadze addressed the assembled participants to express his gratitude for courage of all ranger staff who risk their lives to protect our national natural resources.

For more information: [Sister-Park Relationship: Point Reyes National Seashore and Kolkheti National Park \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

NPS contact: Rudy D'Alessandro;
rudy_dalessandro@nps.gov



BILATERAL RELATIONS

NPS Hosts Parks Canada Delegation

As one of the first collaborations following the signing in August of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the NPS and Parks Canada, the NPS Office of International Affairs organized a series of meetings with NPS leadership in Washington for a delegation of Parks Canada senior officials in November 2023.



A wide range of topics were covered during these sessions focusing on Parks Canada's approach to 'visitor experience,' enhancing accessibility for visitors and staff, visitor safety, fees and revenue, employee development, and others. The visit included a field trip to Anacostia Park and the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in DC, managed by National Capital Parks East. Parks Canada is one of NPS's most important international partners.

NPS contact: Jon Putnam; jonathan_putnam@nps.gov

Petrified Forest National Park Partners with Argentine Protected Areas

In August and November 2023, Petrified Forest National Park established sister park relationships with two protected areas in Argentina, Ischigualasto Provincial Park and Talampaya National Park which together are a UNESCO World Heritage site. Although the parks are located in different countries, they each preserve and protect a rich diversity of wildlife, geological wonders, Triassic fossils, cultural history, and spectacularly beautiful scenery for current and future generations.

For more information: <https://www.nps.gov/pefo/learn/news/talampaya-sister.htm> and <https://www.nps.gov/pefo/learn/news/sister-parks.htm>

NPS contact: Sarah Hervé; sarah_herve@nps.gov

Parks Canada and NPS Collaborate on Submerged Resources

Members of Parks Canada's Underwater Archaeology Team and from the U.S. National Parks Service Submerged Resources Center resumed collaborative archaeological fieldwork at the site of HMS *Erebus*, which disappeared over 170 years ago while searching for a Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Inuit people living along the path of their travels were the last to see them alive. Over time, Inuit traditional knowledge combined with new knowledge and modern technology, led to the discovery of the wreck sites of HMS *Erebus* in 2014.



The purpose of the trip was to assist Parks Canada in underwater digital photography and video acquisition as well as deliver 3D models of archeological excavations. The historic nature of HMS *Erebus* required comprehensive and high-quality coverage of all activities – from underwater excavation to topside logistics and artifact documentation. Imaging of the excavations transitioned from a passive documentation of existing work to active 3D renders of features of the site to plan and execute progressive phases of the ship excavation.

NPS contact: Brett Seymour; brett_seymour@nps.gov



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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Catoctin Mountain Visits German Sister Park

During mid-September, Catoctin Mountain Park Superintendent Rick Slade journeyed to Black Forest National Park (Nationalpark Schwarzwald) in the state of Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany, to reciprocate and build on a 2018 visit to Catoctin Mountain Park by leaders of the Black Forest, which culminated in the signing of a Sister Park Arrangement between the two parks.

During his visit, Superintendent Slade met with senior park leaders and numerous program managers to discuss a variety of park management initiatives and challenges, exploring many similarities (and some key differences) in the situations at the Black Forest and Catoctin. The similarities point to opportunities for future collaborative work between the National Park Service and Black Forest National Park, while the differences provide fruitful ground for examining how our respective legal and policy frameworks shape our work. For more information: [Exchange with American partners \(nationalpark-schwarzwald.de\)](http://nationalpark-schwarzwald.de)

NPS Contact: Rick Slade; rick_slade@nps.gov



Crater Lake Renews Sister Park with China's Wuyishan

Since 2016, Crater Lake National Park has supported the State of Oregon's Sister State/Sister Province relationship with the Province of Fujian in southeast China through an active relationship with Fujian's Wuyishan, which was designated as one of China's first five National Parks in 2021.

In late 2023 the two parks renewed their sister park relationship, reflecting on the many lessons learned in park management shared through various exchanges between the parks, including staff from each park visiting their sister park and working with their private sector partners to promote tourism to each site, as well as bringing Oregon State University and Fujian University to facilitate shared research on natural resource preservation and climate change adaptation at both parks.

NPS Contact: Craig Ackerman; craig_ackerman@nps.gov

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Yosemite Hosts Japanese Rangers for Park Interpretation Seminar

Yosemite National Park hosted our most recent seminar for Japanese park interpretation professionals, through our Japan-U.S. Interpretation Training Seminar. This seminar's theme was *New Approaches to Park Interpretation*.



Japanese participation for this year's seminar included five university professors who work closely with the Ministry of Environment, a current federal park ranger, a tree doctor and cultural heritage museum staff. Staff at Yosemite worked with the NPS Office of International Affairs to arrange meetings with site managers at several ranger stations, especially to demonstrate the contributions of Asian Americans in the development and management of the park.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/294691300592801>

NPS Contact: Rudy D'Alessandro;
rudy_dalessandro@nps.gov

NPS International Has a YouTube Channel!

Over the past several years, we have hosted a number of webinars on a broad array of cultural heritage and park management topics.



Over time, we have begun to record some of these webinars and have now set up a channel on YouTube to include these webinars as well as greetings between our staff and others.

For more information: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTm1xXVfBQQfY34pJHV_5nw

NPS contact: Rudy D'Alessandro;
rudy_dalessandro@nps.gov



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT US PARKS

Chilean Volunteer Receives National Hartzog Volunteer Award

In August, Josefina Pohlhammer Aliaga, from Chile, became the first international volunteer to be recognized nationally for her service. She was selected to receive a 2022 Youth Impact Innovation Hertzog National Award for her outstanding contributions to [Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park](#). As an international volunteer, Josefina had more challenges than American volunteers as she had to obtain a visa, prepare for her arrival in the US, and adjust to a new culture.



During her four-month program, Josefina became a valued interpreter giving canal boat tours at the Great Falls section of the park. She also became an expert animal caretaker and handled the canal boat mules with ease. Additionally, she educated visitors about hazards in the park and about the unique, fragile natural resources in heavily visited areas. Josefina was able to communicate these important messages to Spanish speaking visitors. As one of 100 individuals who participate annually in the NPS [International Volunteer Program](#), Josefina was truly a great representative of them.

For more information:

<https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=97CB3DD7-40C7-4388-BC0B-7C478452E8B1&fbclid=IwAR0A8X-jmnMCRNSUd3L3-P6DfkPwgQ-vbSXpEOn1SoxBLRd7UxUn86IBDwA>

NPS contact: Linda Bennet at Linda_Bennett@nps.gov.

Mexican Volunteers Connect Sister Parks on the Southwest Border

In September 2023, Alondra Galdean and Keren Esquire, university students from Mexico, completed their 6-week internships in ecological restoration with [Saguaro National Park](#) and the Southeastern Arizona Group (Coronado National and Chiricahua National Monuments and Fort Bowie National Historic Site). Earlier in the summer, they had worked at Saguaro's Sister Park, [Bavispe Flora and Fauna Protection Area](#), just across the border. These two parks contain unique environments called "sky islands"- isolated mountain ranges surrounded by lowland desert and grasslands. Alondra and Keren shared what they did in Bavispe with NPS staff while contributing to natural resources field work in the Arizona parks.



During their internships, Alondra and Keren learned new skills and assisted the US parks in a variety of ways collecting native seeds, planting native plants, and monitoring and removing invasive plants. Alondra and Keren also trained in interpretation, gave environmental education programs, and created interpretive media for the parks. Additionally, the two women became great park ambassadors to the local communities during outreach programs. Providing opportunities for international interns and volunteers, like Alondra and Keren, helps NPS share its conservation work with our international neighbors to better protect our shared natural resources.

For more information see: <https://www.nps.gov/sub.../internationalcooperation/ivip.htm>

NPS contact: Linda Bennet at Linda_Bennett@nps.gov.