



Around The Parks: Dark Skies, Open Trails, Bear Pins, And Mussel-Sniffing Dogs

By [Rebecca Latson](#) - June 12th, 2021

With summer just around the corner, the National Park System is busy and there's all sorts of park news. Here's some of the latest.

A Hearty Congratulations

Congratulations to [Florissant Fossil Beds](#) in Colorado for recently being awarded certification as an International Dark Sky Park. This certification recognizes the exceptional quality of the park's night skies and provides added opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through astronomy-based interpretive programming. "We are pleased to be able to provide opportunities for the public to experience the wonders that dark skies provide. The Monument is uniquely located. It is within a reasonable driving distance of a large urban area, yet far enough away and tucked behind some mountains that block urban light pollution," said Therese Johnson, park superintendent.

Congratulations to Ranger Meaghan Johnson, who was recently selected as the chief of resource management and science for the national parks of eastern North Carolina. Johnson will manage the natural and cultural resource and research programs for [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#), [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#), [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#), [Moore's Creek National Battlefield](#) and [Wright Brothers National Memorial](#).



The winning design for Katmai National Park's "bear school" bear pin / National Park Service

Congratulations to Alaska artist Ecola Collier, winning designer of the 2021 Brooks Camp Bear Pin Design Competition. This pin is awarded to [Katmai National Park](#) visitors upon completion of the mandatory bear safety training session (aka “bear school”).

Go Take A Hike

Now that the Dog Fire at [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#) is in monitor status and all fire support resources have been released, all park trails and backcountry campsites are open as of Friday, June 11, 2021 at 8:00 AM. The Pine Springs and Dog Canyon campgrounds remain open. Campgrounds, backcountry camping and parking remain on a first-come, first-served basis. Plan to arrive early, remain flexible with your itinerary, anticipate crowds and check our NPS website for additional vacation trips on how to [Plan Your Vacation Like a Park Ranger \(U.S. National Park Service\)\(nps.gov\)](#).

Uēkahuna, the awe-inspiring cliff top at the summit of Kīlauea volcano in [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#), has reopened to the public. A half-mile of Crater Rim Drive and Crater Rim Trail west of Kīlauea Overlook to the Uēkahuna bluff parking lot have also reopened, and public restrooms near the former Jaggar Museum site and a half-mile section of trail connecting Nāmakanipaio Campground to Uēkahuna, have also reopened.

Ranger Programs and Activities

[Gettysburg National Military Park](#) is pleased to announce Ranger walks, talks, and hikes will resume beginning Saturday, June 12. These interpretive programs will offer visitors a chance to learn about the people and places that made history during the Battle of Gettysburg. Hike the fields of Pickett's Charge, explore the rocky summit of Little Round Top, reflect on the words of the Gettysburg Address, and much more. There are a host of new and exciting offerings that will appeal to first time and repeat visitors alike. For more information and links to the summer ranger program schedule, as well as the July 1-3 Battle Anniversary, [click here](#).

Fort Union National Monument announces its annual Fort Union Days event to be held on Saturday and Sunday, **June 19-20, 2021**. The event weekend is **FREE** to the public and runs from **9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday**, and **9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Sunday**. This year, programs and activities will include cannon firing demonstrations and a 19th-century military encampment. Rangers in historic period dress will be offering programs and Fort tours throughout the day. Visitors are welcome to wander the ground of the Fort and learn more about life in the 19th century. There will also be interactive children's activities at the kids table, including a mock soldiers' drill with wooden muskets. Food is not available on site, but picnicking is always welcome. **[Click here](#)** for a schedule of events.

Hey Jr. Rangers! Feel like doing a little fishing? In partnership with Friends of Canaveral, **FWC Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network** and a grant from the National Park Foundation, **Canaveral National Seashore** will host a free summer Jr. Angler program through June and July. This is an opportunity for youths age 8-18 to learn the art and skill of surf fishing. Youths will learn about knot tying, appropriate tackle, safe fishing practices, and gain valuable hands-on experience from a team of local college-age environmental students who are committed to sharing their skills in a fun, outdoor atmosphere. All gear will be provided.

Surf fishing clinics will be scheduled for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays through the months of June and July from 10:00AM - noon. Reservations are required and parents/guardians must remain on the beach for the duration of the program. This program is free; however, all participants are responsible for bringing their own sun protection, hats, sunglasses, snacks, and beverages. Program is weather dependent and could be canceled due to unfavorable conditions.

For more information or to make reservations, please call the Apollo Beach Visitor Center at 386-428-3384 Ext 0.

Going To The Dogs



Darby, the mussel-sniffing dog, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area / National Park Service

Darby, the zebra mussel conservation dog, and her friends have returned to [Lake Meredith National Recreation Area](#) through June 13, 2021. Darby, her owner and trainer Laura Speightl, a contract worker with Working Dogs for Conservation, and Darby's fellow furry friends Raine and Tony are working conservation dogs with a job detecting non-native Zebra Mussels on watercraft

Lake Meredith has escaped the infestation of Zebra Mussels to date and none were found during the last inspection earlier this year. Zebra Mussels will accumulate quickly on

every solid object in and around a lake and eventually clog up piping infrastructure and obstruct the delivery of drinking water to communities. Zebra Mussels first started infesting the Great Lakes area in the Midwest and have made their way south to parts of Texas and Oklahoma.

- [Florissant Fossil Beds](#)
- [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#)
- [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#)
- [Moore's Creek National Battlefield](#)
- [Wright Brothers National Memorial](#)
- [Katmai National Park](#)
- [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)