

Report **Veterans and Public Lands**

Vet Voice Foundation
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About the Vet Voice Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Veterans and military communities have strong connections with our country's public lands.

Our national forests, national monuments, wildlife refuges, and other national public lands provide opportunities for Veterans and our families to go fishing, hiking, camping, and hunting. For many Veterans, time on our nation's public lands is central to their transition to civilian life following our service, offering quiet space for reflecting, healing, and recovery. Many Veterans even find careers in the outdoor industry which is supported by public lands - nearly one-in-five employees of the U.S. Department of the Interior are military Veterans.

Our nation's public lands also allow us to honor brave Americans and continue to tell the complete story of America's history, people, and places. We support policies that ensure the stories and heritage of all Americans are reflected in our system of parks and public lands and that everyone feels welcome and included in the outdoors.

Vet Voice Foundation believes that protecting our public lands is one way that America can give back to Veterans and military families who have paid a high price for our freedom.

This report shines a light on the many benefits that public lands offer for Veterans and military communities, and calls on President Biden and Congress to use any and all tools at their disposal to protect special places around the country for Veteran communities.

– Janessa Goldbeck, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and CEO, Vet Voice Foundation

“As retired senior military leaders, we are well-aware of the special relationship Veterans and military families have with these iconic places. From the heights of Mount Katahdin to the deserts of Joshua Tree, our nation's public lands have long been turned to by Veterans as places of reflection, reunion, and healing. We view protecting and expanding our nation's public lands as an extension of our service to this country and the duty of anyone who thinks themselves a patriot.”¹

– BG Steven Anderson, USA (Ret) Brig.Gen. Ricardo Aponte, USAF (Ret) BGen Stephen Cheney, USMC (Ret) MG Paul Eaton, USA (Ret) BGen Leif Hendrickson, USMC (Ret) RADM Mike Mathis, USN (Ret) MG Gale Pollock, USA (Ret) RADM Mike Smith, USN (Ret) (Vet Voice Foundation letter, 2/22).

¹ Castner Range Letter.” Received by The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr, Vet Voice Foundation, Feb. 2022, <https://vvfnd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Castner-Range-Letter.pdf>.

BENEFITS OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR VETERANS

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Public lands provide opportunities to get outside

Like so many Americans, Veterans and our families count on our national public lands for fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, and other outdoor activities.

The benefits of being outdoors on public lands have long been recognized by the U.S. military. During WWII, the War Department and the National Park Service came together to encourage the use of national parks to improve the morale of American service members, including Camp Greentop in Maryland's Catoctin Mountain Park for U.S. Marines to rehabilitate and rest after Iwo Jima and Okinawa; camps in Alaska's Katmai National Park and Preserve to give airmen from Nakneah and King Salmon Air Bases access to trout fishing; and special overnight permits in Grand Canyon National Park for U.S. Army troops.

Many military bases offer programs such as RECON, which enables military families to participate in a wide variety of outdoor, adventure-based activities. Vet Voice Foundation supports efforts along with federal programs such as the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass, which allow U.S. military members and their families to visit national parks and other federal public lands for free.

World War II Veteran Earl Shaffer became the first person to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail following his service.

"I've always used our nation's public lands as a respite from daily life. As a child, I lived for family camping trips to the mountains or day trips to our state park on the beach. As an Army Veteran, I've seen the life-enhancing impact of natural spaces on myself and my fellow service members. As a mother, I've had the incomparable joy of watching my own daughter grow up among the wide open spaces of America's public lands."²

– Cindy Roper, U.S. Army Veteran (*Albuquerque Journal*, 12/28/20)

² Roper, Cindy. "Public Lands a Tonic for Our Health and NM's Economy." *Albuquerque Journal*, 20 Dec. 2020.

Public lands offer Veterans a place to go for healing and recovery

Some Veterans turn to the outdoors and our public lands to heal from the trauma of war and renew bonds with family members after long deployments.

A large body of research has shown that outdoor recreation can decrease depression, anxiety, and anger and help with mood stability in Veterans.³ In late 2020, Congress passed the Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act which expanded opportunities for Veterans to use public lands and other outdoor spaces for their health & and well-being.

“Mentally, transitioning from the military back to the civilian sector was one of the most challenging journeys I’ve undertaken...In a lot of ways, making a successful transition from war to civilian life is a lot like climbing a very challenging mountain...Whenever I have felt overwhelmed in life or feel off track, taking a trip into the mountains allows me to reflect and process.”⁴

– Jason Knode, U.S. Army Veteran (REI blog, 11/10/20)

“Serving as a combat nurse in Vietnam, I never felt like I was doing enough. The pressure to do more, save more, and heal more never let up. Treating and caring for injured soldiers, rarely older than 18 and 19, left me sorely in need of repair and healing myself. So, after I left the Army, I went west to find peace among nature.

I, and so many others, find that peace in places like Bears Ears. There, no one is asking anything of me. I get to sit in stillness with reverence and reflection. It’s during these moments that I can fully reconnect to my country and myself — where small noises don’t make me jump back to the darkest days of war and trauma, and where I can put my own experiences in perspective with something much greater than myself.”⁵

– Margaret Mitchell, U.S. Army Veteran (Salt Lake Tribune, 4/12/2021)

³ Wheeler, Mark et al. “Outdoor recreational activity experiences improve psychological wellbeing of military Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder: Positive findings from a pilot study and a randomized controlled trial.” PLoS one vol. 15,11 e0241763. 25 Nov. 2020, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0241763

⁴Gritters, Jenni. “A New Bill Could Provide Better Outdoor Recreation Programs for Veterans.” REI.com, 10 Nov. 2020, <https://www.rei.com/blog/news/a-new-bill-could-provide-better-outdoor-recreation-programs-for-Veterans>.

⁵ Mitchell, Margaret. “Veterans like Me Need the Peace of Protected National Monuments.” The Salt Lake Tribune, 12 Apr. 2021, <https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2021/04/12/margaret-mitchell/>.

“Too often, Veterans come back and get shoved into a crowded hospital to undergo physical or mental therapy,...But sometimes the best and simplest thing you can do is to get out and walk in the fresh air, so you’re not surrounded by what reminds you of your suffering.”⁶

– Maddy Toft, U.S. Army Veteran (REI blog, 11/10/20)

“Despite all the programs available for getting Veterans out, we still don’t have enough Veterans connecting to the outdoors across the country...This [new bill] will help to ensure outfitters and institutions that support outdoor connection can best engage and support time outdoors for Veterans—and most importantly support Veterans becoming leaders in the outdoors.”⁷

– Stacy Bare, U.S. Army Veteran (REI blog, 11/10/20)

“Personally, I want to see our public lands protected because of their critical role in my mental and physical health. Access to public lands like Hunter-Frying Pan Wilderness helped me to survive my transition to civilian life.”⁸

– Adam McCabe, U.S. Navy Veteran (Vet Voice Foundation report, 2014)

Many Veterans have a natural love of the outdoors. We fish, hunt, hike and otherwise enjoy our public lands with friends and family members. And getting outdoors is a wonderful way to reintegrate when we return home from war.”⁹

– Jon Soltz, U.S. Army Veteran and Chairman of the Board, Vet Voice Foundation (Vet Voice Foundation report, 2014)

⁶Gritters, Jenni. “A New Bill Could Provide Better Outdoor Recreation Programs for Veterans.” REI.com, 10 Nov. 2020, <https://www.rei.com/blog/news/a-new-bill-could-provide-better-outdoor-recreation-programs-for-Veterans>.

⁷ Gritters, Jenni. “A New Bill Could Provide Better Outdoor Recreation Programs for Veterans.” REI.com, 10 Nov. 2020, <https://www.rei.com/blog/news/a-new-bill-could-provide-better-outdoor-recreation-programs-for-Veterans>.

⁸ Vet Voice Foundation, 2014, America’s National Public Lands Belong To All of US.

⁹ Vet Voice Foundation, 2014, America’s National Public Lands Belong To All of US.

Public lands support the outdoor recreation industry which employs many Veterans

Veterans often face challenges when they try to enter the civilian workforce. The outdoor recreation industry is a good fit for many of these Veterans and public lands are critical to the economic stability of the outdoor industry.

“There’s a natural connection to the outdoors because even [vets] who are coming from desk jobs have all gone through ‘basic training’ in the military.”¹⁰

– Jeff Davis, U.S. Air Force Veteran (*The Outdoorist*, 1/26/22)

“Like many Americans my age, I spent a lot of my youth outdoors. Growing up in the wide-open spaces of Texas, I learned basic nature skills as a Boy Scout, and spent many nights outside catching fireflies with my siblings.

Still, I’d argue that my outdoor life really began when I fell in love with and married my wife. My father-in-law and his father before served in the U.S. Forest Service, and my interest in the profession undoubtedly helped cement their favor. Since then, all three of us have served in the Lolo National Forest in Montana, and public lands and parks have given my family more than vacations and priceless memories — they have given us financial stability and a deep sense of pride and tradition.”¹¹

– Marc Gonzalez, U.S. Navy Veteran (*Colorado Sun*, 12/19/20)

Veteran-Owned Outdoor Recreation Businesses¹²


Adventure Not War Adventures
Accessed Airborne Outfitters
Alpha Outpost

Goodworld
GoRuck
Heavy Cover

¹⁰ Davis, Kelly. “OUTDOOR RETAILER INDUSTRY LUNCH: STATE OF THE OUTDOOR MARKET.” *The Outdoorist*, 26 Jan. 2022, <https://outdoorindustry.org/article/outdoor-retailer-industry-lunch-recording-state-of-the-outdoor-market/>.

¹¹ Gonzalez, Marc. “This Colorado Vet Is Counting on Hickenlooper to Defend Colorado’s Outdoor Treasures.” *The Colorado Sun*, 19 Dec. 2020, Opinion: This Colorado vet is counting on Hickenlooper to defend Colorado’s outdoor treasures (coloradosun.com).

¹² Career Toolkit Military Veterans & The Outdoor Industry. https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Capstone_VetToolkit_7-19_smallestfilesize.pdf.



Backwater Paddle Company
Bushcraft Outfitters
Combat Flip Flops
Feather Raft
Freeman Gear to Go

Kota Longboards
Kryptek
Liberty Bottle Works
Outdoor Equipped
Red Oxx

HONOR OUR VETERANS AND OUR MILITARY HERITAGE

Our nation's public lands provide opportunities to honor our Veterans and our military heritage. Places such as the Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania share the stories of brave Americans who gave their lives for their country.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Created by Congress in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) plays an important role in protecting some of our country's most valuable public lands and supporting sites that honor Veterans such as Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park (Buffalo, NY), War Memorial Park (Bristol, VA), Veterans Memorial State Forest (Benzie, MI), and Aberdeen Veterans/Holgate Parks (Brown, SD).

LWCF grants are also used to support the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program which promotes the preservation and interpretation of these important places.

Antiquities Act

The Antiquities Act allows the president to protect America's natural areas and historical sites as national monuments so we can share these places with future generations.

The Antiquities Act was passed by Congress in 1906 and signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt, a military Veteran. Presidents throughout history have used it to protect places of historic military significance, including President Lincoln's cottage in Washington, D.C., where he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation. President George W. Bush used the Antiquities Act to designate the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument.

Eighteen presidents have used the Antiquities Act to protect or expand national monuments that honor military contributions, including:

The **Mojave Trails National Monument** was home to a desert camp used by General George S. Patton to train his troops in WWII for combat on the sands of North Africa

Fort Ord National Monument served as a training site for soldiers from World War I through the Vietnam War.

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument houses the Deming Bombing Targets which helped Army Air Corps train pilots during World War II.

Places that Honor Veterans on America's Public Lands include:

World War II Memorial
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Korean War Veterans Memorial
African American Civil War Memorial

Gettysburg National Military Park
U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial
Antietam National Battlefield
World War II Valor in the Pacific National

TELL THE COMPLETE STORY OF OUR NATION'S HISTORY, PEOPLE, AND LAND

Our nation's public lands provide opportunities to tell a more complete story of America's history, people, and places. Currently, less than a quarter of the country's national parks are devoted to recognizing the histories of minority or underrepresented groups.¹³

The Amache National Historic Site

Congress recently designated the Granada Relocation Center, a World War II Japanese incarceration site located on the plains of southeastern Colorado, as the Amache National Historic Site as part of our country's National Park System.

In February 1942, the President of the United States issued an executive order that sent more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent to 10 relocation camps, including Camp Amache. More than 7,500 Japanese-Americans were detained at Amache, in cramped quarters surrounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers.¹⁴

Despite their treatment, over a thousand Japanese Americans held at Camp Amache volunteered to fight during World War II; 31 were killed and one earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹⁵

"This is all of our history. If you're an American, it's part of your history...Whether you're Japanese American, whether you live in Colorado, whether you live across the country in another state, this is all of our history and all of us should know that." ¹⁶

– Deb Haaland, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (KRCC, 2/20/22)

¹³ Pierre, Natalie. "1908 Springfield Race Riot National Monument Act Reintroduced by Democratic Senators." State Journal-Register, 9 Feb. 2021, <https://www.sj-r.com/story/news/2021/02/09/1908-springfield-race-riot-national-monument-act-reintroduced-illinois-senators/4448820001/>.

¹⁴ Chen, Shawna. "Camp That Imprisoned 7,000 Japanese Americans Could Soon Be National Historic Site." Axios.com, 19 Feb. 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/02/19/japanese-american-incarceration-amache>.

¹⁵ "Amache.org." Amacheorg, <https://amache.org/historical-summary/>.

¹⁶ Lewis, Shanna. "On 80th Anniversary, Camp Amache Families Remembered and Honored by Sect. of Interior Deb Haaland." KRCC, 20 Feb. 2022, <https://www.cpr.org/2022/02/20/camp-amache-recognized-as-historic-site-on-the-80-year-anniversary-by-white-house-sec-of-interior-deb-haaland-visits-the-world-war-ii-prison/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThis%20is%20all%20of%20our,of%20us%20should%20know%20that.%E2%80%9D>.

The Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument

The Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument preserves and interprets the history and legacies of Colonel Charles Young and the famed Buffalo Soldiers of the U.S. Army.

National Park Service: The History of Buffalo Soldiers

"African Americans served in the U.S. Military during the Civil War and continued to serve afterwards...

In 1866, Congress established six all-black regiments (consolidated to four shortly after) to help rebuild the country after the Civil War and to fight on the Western frontier during the 'Indian Wars.' It was from one of these regiments, the 10th Cavalry, that the nickname Buffalo Soldier was born. American Plains Indians who fought against these soldiers referred to the black cavalry troops as "buffalo soldiers" because of their dark, curly hair, which resembled a buffalo's coat and because of their fierce nature of fighting. The nickname soon became synonymous with all African-American regiments formed in 1866.

In addition to their military duties, the Buffalo Soldiers also served as some of the first caretakers of the national parks. Between 1891 and 1913, the U.S. Army served as the official administrator of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks...

The Buffalo Soldier regiments went on to serve the U.S. Army with distinction and honor for nearly the next five decades. With the disbandment of the 27th Cavalry on December 12, 1951, the last of the storied Buffalo Soldiers regiments came to an end."¹⁷

"The creation of the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument finally paid tribute to contributions of Colonel Charles Young, the highest ranking African-American commanding officer in the United States Army from 1894 until 1922, and the first African-American superintendent of a national park. We need to continue to honor the many diverse military heroes that have served our country."¹⁸

– Steve Dunwoody, U.S. Air Force Veteran (Vet Voice Foundation Report, 2017)

¹⁷ "Buffalo Soldiers." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, <https://www.nps.gov/chyo/learn/historyculture/buffalo-soldiers.htm>.

¹⁸ Vet Voice Foundation, 2017, Vet Voice Foundation Public Lands Position Paper

Stonewall National Monument

The Stonewall Inn, a bar located in Greenwich Village, New York City, “was the scene of an uprising against police repression that led to a key turning point in the struggle for the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans.”¹⁹

“The rainbow is a part of nature and you have to be in the right place to see it...It’s beautiful, all of the colors, even the colors you can’t see. That really fit us as a people because we are all of the colors. Our sexuality is all of the colors. We are all the genders, races, and ages.”²⁰

– Gilbert Baker, U.S. Army Veteran and creator of the LGBTQIA Pride Flag
(MilSpouseFest, 2017)

Celebrating Diversity in Public Lands Leadership: First Native American Cabinet Member and National Park Service Director

The Vet Voice Foundation celebrated the historic confirmations of Deb Haaland, a member of New Mexico's Laguna Pueblo and the daughter of two Veterans, as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and Charles F. Sams, a U.S. Navy Veteran and former Deputy Executive Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, as Director of the National Park Service.

¹⁹ “Stonewall National Monument (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, <https://www.nps.gov/places/stonewall-national-monument.htm>.

²⁰ Here’s the Surprising Military Connection to the Rainbow Flag.” MilSpouseFest, 4 Apr. 2017, <https://milspousefest.com/heres-surprising-military-connection-rainbow-flag/J>.

SNAPSHOTS: PLACES THAT NEED PROTECTION

Protecting our public lands is one way that America can give back to Veteran and military families who have paid a high price for our freedom.

This section highlights places around the country that have strong connections to Veterans and military communities and need permanent protection by the President and Congress.

- Castner Range
- Avi Kwa Ame
- Camp Hale
- 1908 Springfield Race Riot
- Black Wall Street
- Badger-Two Medicine
- Fort Monroe
- Grand Canyon
- Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion

Castner Range

TEXAS

The Franklin Mountains in West Texas provide a natural oasis for the city of El Paso full of golden poppies and Southwestern barrel cactus. Most of this mountainous area is protected within the Franklin Mountains State Park. However, more than 7000 acres in one rugged desert area are not protected as a result of the land's past use as an U.S. Army artillery range.

This area, known as Castner Range, has remained under military control since artillery range training ended in 1966 with no public access due to safety concerns around remaining live munitions.²¹

For over 50 years, a wide range of community stakeholders have advocated for long term protection of the Castner Range. Since 2014 Castner Range community efforts have been focused on national monument designation in order to protect its unique cultural, historical, and natural resources from numerous development proposals.

In 2017, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act which featured a provision barring the construction of new roads or buildings on the land. It was a first step towards protecting this area, but more protections are needed. In 2021, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar introduced legislation to designate Castner Range as a national monument. It is time to permanently protect this special region.

President Biden: Use the Antiquities Act to designate the Castner Range National Monument.

Honor Our Military History

Between 1926 and 1966, the U.S. Army used Castner Range for the live firing of small arms, assault weapons and field, anti-tank guns, and air-defense artillery. In 1939, most of the Castner area was purchased by the Department of Defense.²²

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Castner Range is surrounded by Franklin Mountains State Park which offers the families stationed at Fort Bliss plenty of opportunities to hike, bike, camp, and rock climb.

²¹ Oko, Dan. "Protecting the Castner Range." Texas Monthly, 23 Jan. 2018, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/protecting-castner-range/>.

²² Oko, Dan. "Protecting the Castner Range." Texas Monthly, 23 Jan. 2018, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/protecting-castner-range/>.

Tell the Complete Story of This Land

Castner Range houses a wide range of archaeological and historical resources, found at sites such as the White Rock Shelter area, the Indian Springs Canyon, and the Fusselman Canyon Petroglyph Site.²³ The area is the ancestral home of the Comanche and Apache people.²⁴

“Ensuring we permanently protect the irreplaceable landscape, history, and cultural sites at Castner Range for future generations is a civic and patriotic undertaking.”²⁵

– Major General (Ret) Paul Eaton, U.S. Army (Politico, 2/10/22)

Using the Antiquities Act to designate Castner Range National Monument “would ensure military and cultural heritage sites, endangered species, scientific and environmental wonders, and an awe-inspiring landscape, are permanently protected. Moreover, a national monument designation of Castner Range by President Biden would benefit marginalized communities, specifically indigenous and Latino peoples. These communities have been paramount to our military’s success, but disproportionately bear the brunt of climate impacts and traditionally have less access to nature.”²⁶

– Brigadier General Steven Anderson, U.S. Army (Ret) Brigadier General Ricardo Aponte, U.S. Air Force (Ret) Brigadier General Stephen Cheney, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret) Major General Paul Eaton, U.S. Army (Ret) Brigadier General Leif Hendrickson, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret) Rear Admiral Mike Mathis, U.S. Navy (Ret) Major General Gale Pollock, U.S. Army (Ret) Rear Admiral Mike Smith, U.S. Navy (Ret) (Vet Voice Foundation letter, 2/22).

²³ Castner Range National Monument, <https://castnerrangenationalmonument.org/>.

²⁴ Jackson, Anthony. “Report: El Paso’s Duranguito, Castner Range among Latino Heritage Sites Needing Protection.” El Paso Times, 13 July 2021, <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/local/el-paso/2021/07/13/latino-heritage-group-protect-duranguito-castner-range-el-paso/7944094002/>.

²⁵ “FIRST IN NATSEC DAILY — FLAG OFFICERS WANT CASTNER RANGE DESIGNATED A NATIONAL MONUMENT.” Politico, 10 Feb. 2022, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2022/02/10/putin-delaying-national-security-strategy-00007916>.

²⁶ “Castner Range Letter.” Received by The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr, Vet Voice Foundation, Feb. 2022, <https://vvfnd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Castner-Range-Letter.pdf>.

Castner Range: A Love Story

"In 1995 the Army told me, 'Ackerman, we're sending you to Fort Bliss.' My mind raced as I thought, 'That's in the desert, right? I don't think I'm going to like El Paso.'

But when I arrived and found a city built around its very own mountain range, clasping the rugged Franklins close to its heart, one look was all it took. I fell and fell hard. From that moment on I couldn't get enough of the place. I spent many off-duty hours exploring the Franklin Mountains and began learning some of the history of how most of the land came to be preserved as a state park.

When I retired from the Army in 2007, time freed up for me to join the efforts of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, people who had been working for years to secure the future of the largest chunk of mountain remaining unprotected outside the park boundary: Castner Range.

You don't have to be a hard-core hiker or naturalist to love Castner Range."²⁷

– *Judy Ackerman, U.S. Army Veteran (El Paso Times, 7/23/16).*

²⁷ Ackerman, Judy. "Add Your Voice of Support for Castner Range." El Paso Times, 26 July 2016, <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/opinion/2016/07/23/ackerman-add-voice-support-castner-range/87491672/>.

Avi Kwa Ame

NEVADA

Avi Kwa Ame is the Mojave name for Spirit Mountain and the lands surrounding it in southern Nevada. This area of the Mojave Desert is home to mountain peaks, canyons, natural springs, grasslands, and Joshua tree forests. It is a sacred place for numerous tribes and has been designated a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Register of Historic Places.²⁸

A coalition of tribes, local residents, conservation and recreation groups, and others has been working to have the area designated as the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument to permanently protect these treasured lands from development.²⁹

Because of its connection to Native peoples – a group who has the highest per-capita representation of any group in the U.S. Armed Forces – Avi Kwa Ame is also a special place to Veterans.³⁰

Avi Kwa Ame is a wonderland of cultural, historical, and natural treasures. It also faces climate and development threats and is in need of permanent protection.

President Biden: Use the Antiquities Act to designate the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument.

Outdoor Recreation Jobs

Nevada's protected public lands support a thriving outdoor recreation economy that generates \$12.6 billion annually and provides 87,000 jobs.³¹

²⁸ Q & A." Honor Spirit Mountain, <https://honorspiritmountain.org/>.

²⁹ "Honor Avi Kwa Ame." Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/HonorAviKwaAme/>.

³⁰ Schilling, V. (2018, September 13). By the Numbers: A Look at Native Enlistment During the Major Wars. Indian Country Today. Retrieved from <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/by-the-numbers-a-look-at-native-enlistment-during-the-major-wars?redir=1>.

³¹ Hamby, Rachael. Western Resource Advocates, 2019, Looking Beyond the Gaming Industry: Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Potential, <https://westernresourceadvocates.org/blog/looking-beyond-the-gaming-industry-nevadas-outdoor-recreation-potential/>.

“For some of these small towns that are looking to diversify their economy, this is a great way to really lean into that’... noting those cities would become gateway communities to a new monument.”³²

– Paul Selberg, Executive Director, Nevada Conservation League (Greenwire, 10/19/21)

“I’ve visited the region of the proposed monument many times, and last week, I had the opportunity to go on a flight tour to get an aerial view of the area...This experience gave me a better understanding of the geography and beauty of this national treasure, as well as the cultural significance and tourism potential for the region.”³³

– U.S. Representative Susie Lee (NV) (Greenwire, 10/19/21)

“I’ve seen and felt the impact of public lands on myself, my family and my fellow Veterans — an impact that cannot be replicated with rock climbing walls or history books. Frankly, we don’t need more high rises or drilling on precious public lands, we need to protect our natural treasures for future generations.”³⁴

– Eileen Bonner, U.S. Air Force Veteran (Las Vegas Sun, 3/27/20)

Tell the Full Story of Our Country

The area is considered sacred by the Yuman-speaking tribes which include the Mojave, Hualapai, Yavapai, Havasupai, Quechan, Maricopa, Pai Pai, Halchidhoma, Cocopah, and Kumeyaay. The area is tied to their creation, cosmology, and well-being. Spirit Mountain is also a sacred site to the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute.³⁵

³² Yachnin, Jennifer. “Nevada Dilemma: Renewable Energy or National Monument?” Greenwire, 19 Nov. 2021, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/nevada-dilemma-renewable-energy-or-national-monument/>.

³³ Yachnin, Jennifer. “Nevada Dilemma: Renewable Energy or National Monument?” Greenwire, 19 Nov. 2021, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/nevada-dilemma-renewable-energy-or-national-monument/>.

³⁴ Bonner, Eileen. “Primary Source to Protect the Outdoors May at Last Achieve Full Funding.” Las Vegas Sun, 27 Mar. 2020, <https://m.lasvegassun.com/news/2020/mar/27/primary-source-to-protect-the-outdoors-may-at-last/>.

³⁵ “Q & A.” Honor Spirit Mountain, <https://honorspiritmountain.org/>.

“We’re hopeful President Biden will proactively use his authority via the Antiquities Act to designate places like Avi Kwa Ame and Caster Range as national monuments. We remain ready to do everything in our power to...see our nation’s treasured public lands are around and safeguarded for generations to come.”³⁶

– *Mary Kaszynski, Director of Government Relations, Vet Voice Foundation (Vet Voice Foundation press release, 12/20/21)*

“This area holds the footprint of our ancestors, and past, present, and future generations... Every time we turn around, there’s a proposal to put in a wind farm or a solar project that would wipe this landscape out.”³⁷

– *Nora McDowell, a former chairperson of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe (Greenwire, 10/19/21)*

³⁶ “Vet Voice Foundation Statement on the Biden Administration’s Release of the America the Beautiful Initiative Progress Report.” Vet Voice Foundation, 20 Dec. 2021, <https://vvfnd.org/press-releases/vet-voice-foundation-statement-on-the-biden-administrations-release-of-the-america-the-beautiful-initiative-progress-report/>.

³⁷ Yachnin, Jennifer. “Nevada Dilemma: Renewable Energy or National Monument?” Greenwire, 19 Nov. 2021, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/nevada-dilemma-renewable-energy-or-national-monument/>.

Camp Hale

COLORADO

For years, Coloradans have been working to protect more than 400,000 acres of some of the most scenic public lands and popular outdoor recreation spots in Colorado most notably under a bill titled the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Economy Act (CORE Act).

A major provision of the bill was establishing protections for Camp Hale, an Army training center in the Rocky Mountains near Vail, Colorado. Increased visitorship and population growth in Colorado, as well as increased pressure from oil and gas companies increases the urgency for protecting this military heritage site and beautiful landscape..

The CORE Act has passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives multiple times and has passed out of committee in the Senate. However, Congressional gridlock and dysfunction limit the pathways to passage through the Senate for the CORE Act and calls are growing for President Biden to protect Camp Hale.

Spotlight on Camp Hale

Camp Hale, an Army training center in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, was created to help soldiers learn mountain and winter warfare skills during World War II.³⁸ The camp's location – a large flat valley surrounded by steep hillsides – made it an ideal place for learning to ski, rock climb and survive in cold weather.³⁹

The camp was the original training ground for the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division whose soldiers are famous for leading the U.S. to victory in World War II and returning home to help start the outdoor recreation industry.

In 1966, the Forest Service regained control of Camp Hale lands after the camp had been deactivated. It is time to preserve the area's rich military history, secure existing recreational opportunities, and protect natural resources.

President Biden: Designate Camp Hale as a National Monument.

Honor Our Veterans and Military Heritage

Although the 10th Mountain Division is what made Camp Hale famous, the area was

³⁸ "Camp Hale National Historic Site." White River National Forest - Camp Hale National Historic Site, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/whiteriver/recarea/?recid=41331>.

³⁹ "Camp Hale Lodge History." Nova Guides, <https://www.novaguides.com/camp-hale-lodge/camp-hale-history/>.

also used for mountain and winter warfare training by the 38th Regimental Combat Team, the 99th Infantry Battalion, soldiers from Fort Carson, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) from 1942 through 1965.⁴⁰

Veterans' Contribution to the Launch of the Outdoor Recreation Industry

After World War II ended, Veterans from the 10th Mountain Division returned to Colorado and played a large role in launching the ski industry and resorts such as Vail, Breckenridge, and Steamboat. These Veterans also worked to find ways to make sure that skiing infrastructure was not hurting the environment around it.⁴¹

"[10th Mountain Division Veterans] built the legacy that we're living now...They're the foundation of the Veteran legacy in the outdoor initiatives. They came back from war and built all these ski resorts and worked on Veteran-related and public land issues. And now it's up to us to carry that forward."⁴²

– *Dustin Kisling, U.S. Navy Veteran and Executive Director of Veteran Outdoor Advocacy Group (Rocky Mountain PBS, 11/11/20)*

The Wilderness Society: Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting

"Sometime around 1940, an avid skier named Charles Minot 'Minnie' Dole took an interest in clashes between Finnish and Soviet troops happening half a world away, on the heavily forested Karelian Isthmus. Despite being outnumbered and outgunned, he observed, the Fins were holding their own—largely because they were familiar with the taiga environment and well prepared to maneuver within it. Wearing snow-like camouflage and often traveling on skis or ice skates, they held off the Red Army for weeks, picking off thousands of enemy soldiers before the vastly better-equipped Russians finally overwhelmed them from all sides and forced a surrender.

Dole and several prominent skiers decided the U.S. military needed a fighting force similarly suited to fight on mountainous terrain and in harsh winter conditions. They made their case to U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, and in late 1941, the 1st Battalion of the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment was

⁴⁰ "Camp Hale Lodge History." Nova Guides, <https://www.novaguides.com/camp-hale-lodge/camp-hale-history/>.

⁴¹ "Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting." The Wilderness Society, 9 Nov. 2019, <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/colorados-camp-hale-recognizes-military-history-wild-setting>.

⁴² Hernandez, Eric. "Veterans Advocate for Healing Power of Great Outdoors." Rocky Mountain PBS, 11 Nov. 2020, <https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/rocky-mountain-pbs/Veterans-outdoors/>.

activated. To populate the new unit, officials pulled from the ranks of skilled skiers, mountaineers and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts ...

The 87th initially trained near Mt. Rainier in Washington, but in 1942, a new, larger facility was built in Colorado's Pando Valley with access to 12,000-foot mountains and lands that included an artillery range and parade grounds. In 1943, the 10th Infantry Division was established as the Army's light-infantry alpine combat arm, encompassing the 87th and several other units, and assigned to train at the brand-new Camp Hale.

While Dole's idea of ski-ready troops was originally meant to address fears of a German invasion from the north, the training received by the 10th Mountain Division at Camp Hale ultimately paid dividends in Italy's North Apennine mountain range, where U.S. forces brought Hitler's army to its knees."⁴³

"It was in the mountains of Colorado that American soldiers received the training that allowed them to defeat Germans in the Northern Italian Alps and lead our nation to victory during World War II."⁴⁴

– U.S. Representative Joe Neguse (CO) (*Summit Daily*, 12/2/21)

Spending time at Camp Hale is "almost [like] going through your family history book and trying to find out 'who were your predecessors?' I gave the 10th Mountain Division 10 years of my life...So to be at this campsite where everything started is just soul food."⁴⁵

– Dennis Sedlyar, U.S. Army Veteran (*The Wilderness Society blog*, 11/8/19)

"To be able to come back where there was so much bonding and camaraderie, and so many people who came together for something bigger than themselves

⁴³ "Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting." The Wilderness Society, 9 Nov. 2019, <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/colorados-camp-hale-recognizes-military-history-wild-setting>.

⁴⁴ LaConte, John. "CORE Act Is Again in the Home Stretch, but a Path to the Finish Line Is Getting Blurry." *Summit Daily*, 2 Dec. 2021, <https://www.summitdaily.com/news/core-act-is-again-in-the-home-stretch-but-a-path-to-the-finish-line-is-getting-blurry/>.

⁴⁵ "Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting." The Wilderness Society, 9 Nov. 2019, <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/colorados-camp-hale-recognizes-military-history-wild-setting>.

... [it] reminds me of what I'm capable of doing."⁴⁶

– Mike Marinkovich, U.S. Army Veteran (*The Wilderness Society blog*, 11/8/19)

"Bradley Noone, a 10th Mountain Division Veteran whose service brought him to Afghanistan, recalls that the landscape furnished a place for quiet reflection after he returned stateside and found he had 'a lot of trouble reintegrating back into civilian life.' 'I came to the outdoors. I went hiking. I went camping. I found love in whitewater...And I've come to use Camp Hale to heal my mind, to give me a place to stay fit, to be happy and to live in the moment.'"⁴⁷

(*The Wilderness Society blog*, 11/8/19)

"My natural instinct was to get outdoors [when I returned from Iraq]...The outdoors became this massive healing thing for me. Without it, I don't think I would have survived... [At Camp Hale], I (can) kind of sit in reflection and I see where (I am) in the lineage of warfare coming out of this country. More than any other place, Camp Hale has that connection."⁴⁸

– Garrett Reppenhagen, U.S. Army Veteran (*Aspen Times*, 5/27/19)

Honoring the Memory of Sgt. Harry Poschman

According to Pitkin County Commissioner Greg Poschman, his father, Sgt. Harry Poschman, "was an avid skier and early member of the 10th Mountain Division, who arrived at Camp Hale soon after it was established in 1942. 'His job was to teach the generals on down to privates how to ski...He loved it.'

Sgt. Poschman shipped out in 1943 and participated in "horrendous, epic and terrifying" battles in Italy, particularly the 1945 fight for Mount Belvedere in the Apennine Mountains...He said, 'If I survive this, then I just want to ski.'

⁴⁶ "Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting." The Wilderness Society, 9 Nov. 2019, <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/colorados-camp-hale-recognizes-military-history-wild-setting>.

⁴⁷ "Colorado's Camp Hale Recognizes Military History in Wild Setting." The Wilderness Society, 9 Nov. 2019, <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/colorados-camp-hale-recognizes-military-history-wild-setting>.

⁴⁸ Auslander, Jason. "Efforts to Preserve Camp Hale 'Important' to Veterans, Public." The Aspen Times, 27 May 2019, <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/efforts-to-preserve-camp-hale-important-to-veterans-public/>.

As it turned out — like other members of the 10th Mountain Division — he did, and he did. Harry Poschman came to Aspen in 1947, signed on as a laborer and helped build the original Lift 1A and clear ski trails on Aspen Mountain’s west side...

In participating in the growing outdoor recreation business, Harry Poschman took his modest place in a 10th Mountain Division legacy that includes the first executive director of the Sierra Club, the founder of the National Outdoor Leadership School and men who started several American ski areas including Arapahoe Basin and Vail. Famed Aspen architect Fritz Benedict, also a 10th Mountain Veteran, was instrumental in founding the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association.”⁴⁹ (Aspen Times, 5/27/19)

⁴⁹ Auslander, Jason. “Efforts to Preserve Camp Hale ‘Important’ to Veterans, Public.” The Aspen Times, 27 May 2019, <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/efforts-to-preserve-camp-hale-important-to-Veterans-public/>.

1908 Springfield Race Riot

ILLINOIS

In 1908 a racially-motivated mob of white residents in Springfield, Illinois launched a brutal assault on the local Black community. During the riot, several thousand white citizens murdered at least six Black Americans, burned Black homes and stores, and attacked hundreds of residents. The Illinois state militia was called in to stop the violence.⁵⁰

In the aftermath of the riot, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was founded in February 1909.

There have been many calls to establish the site as a national monument, including a bipartisan bill introduced by the two U.S. Senators and a U.S. Representative from Illinois which would have established the site as a national monument to be managed by the U.S. National Park Service⁵¹ and calls from Senators and local leaders to President Biden to designate the site under the Antiquities Act.⁵²

“The 1908 Springfield Race Riot site is of extraordinary cultural and historical importance to our state and to this country...By designating this area a national monument, we will help ensure that the painful lessons learned here will not be lost for the generations of Americans to come. Making our national parks better reflect our nation's people and history is long overdue, and it's time we properly recognize this site.”⁵³

– U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, U.S. Army Veteran and former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (Official Senate press release, 2/8/21)

⁵⁰ “Springfield Race Riot.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/event/Springfield-Race-Riot>.

⁵¹ Pierre, Natalie. “1908 Springfield Race Riot National Monument Act Reintroduced by Democratic Senators.” State Journal-Register, 9 Feb. 2021, <https://www.sj-r.com/story/news/2021/02/09/1908-springfield-race-riot-national-monument-act-reintroduced-illinois-senators/4448820001/>.

⁵² “DUCKWORTH, DURBIN CALL ON PRESIDENT-ELECT BIDEN TO ESTABLISH 1908 SPRINGFIELD RACE RIOT NATIONAL MONUMENT” U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, 14 Jan. 2021, <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/duckworth-durbin-call-on-president-elect-biden-to-establish-1908-springfield-race-riot-national-monument>

⁵³ “DUCKWORTH, DURBIN RE-INTRODUCE BILL TO ESTABLISH 1908 SPRINGFIELD RACE RIOT SITE AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT.” U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, 8 Feb. 2021, <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/-duckworth-durbin-re-introduce-bill-to-establish-1908-springfield-race-riot-site-as-a-national-monument>.

Black Wall Street

OKLAHOMA

In the early twentieth century, the African American community in Tulsa, Oklahoma created a thriving business hub in the Greenwood District which was known as “Black Wall Street.” In 1921, a horrific wave of racial violence, later called the Tulsa Race Massacre, destroyed the community, and resulted in over 300 deaths.⁵⁴

“The mere fact that Black Veterans returned from World War I as decorated heroes stirred up particular and virulent anger among Tulsa’s white population.”⁵⁵

(NBC News Select, 5/20/21)

“The psychological dynamic of the era was that you had Black men who would have risked their lives for the country...And in many cases they were treated much better on foreign soil.”⁵⁶

– *Hannibal B. Johnson, historian (NBC News Select, 5/20/21)*

The Current Black Wall Street Memorial

The current Black Wall Street Memorial was unveiled by the Tulsa Community Remembrance Coalition in May 2021:

“The Memorial will pay homage to the victims who were murdered, hung, beat, shot, stabbed, burned, thrown into mass graves, dumped in the river and left to be forgotten. Our beloved ancestors never received a proper burial and have yet to be acknowledged or memorialized in an official capacity. Their blood still speaks, crying out from the soil saying ‘Remember Me.’”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Fain, Kimberly. “The Devastation of Black Wall Street.” JSTOR Daily, 5 July 2017, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-devastation-of-black-wall-street/>.

⁵⁵ Gandhi, Lakshmi. “Tulsa Race Massacre: Fact Checking Myths and Misconceptions.” NBC News Select, 30 May 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/select/news/tulsa-race-massacre-fact-check-ncna1269045>.

⁵⁶ Gandhi, Lakshmi. “Tulsa Race Massacre: Fact Checking Myths and Misconceptions.” NBC News Select, 30 May 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/select/news/tulsa-race-massacre-fact-check-ncna1269045>.

⁵⁷ Black Wall Street Memorial. “Coming Soon.” Black Wall Street Memorial, <https://blackwallstreetmemorial.com/bws-memorial>.

**U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough:
On the Tulsa Massacre, we remember (June 1, 2021)**

“Yesterday marked the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre, one of the most tragic domestic terrorism instances visited upon the Black community.


On May 31st 1921, the Black neighborhood of Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma – dubbed ‘the Black Wall Street’ because of the concentration of wealth and successful Black-owned businesses – was razed to the ground over the course of 48 horrific hours. Ten thousand Black Tulsa residents were left homeless. Death toll estimates range from 39 to 300 dead. The devastation was so thorough that the massacre is now considered one of the worst instances of racial violence in American history.

Sadly, our nation treated the Tulsa Massacre the same as so much of our country’s sordid history of racism – as a painful memory better left in the wastebin of forgotten past, as just one more insignificant footnote. For 80 years, Tulsa officials did not produce an accounting of the tragedy. If not for enterprising Black historians committed to telling the true story of the Black experience in America, the destruction of Black Wall Street may well have been lost to history. But today, we remember.

We remember the lives that were lost and the community that was shattered over those fateful 48 hours. We remember the complicity of government officials who either ignored what was happening or fueled the violence. We remember that Greenwood was likely to have been bombed from the air by civilian and police airplanes, making it the first American city to have ever experienced such an assault.

We must also remember that the incident began over the Memorial Day weekend, on the national day of remembrance that traces its roots, in part, to 1865 when 10,000 freed slaves held a ceremony to commemorate the 257 Union Soldiers who died while held as prisoners of war in Charleston, South Carolina.

A number of Black Veterans tried to stop the Tulsa Massacre from happening, but they were powerless against the racist rage that consumed the city. They were the same Black Veterans who had lived through the “Red Summer” of 1919, in which thousands of Black people were murdered across the country in response to the attempts by Black Veterans to be treated equally after serving in World War I. Just like the other Black Veterans that came before and after them, they had to fight for the same freedoms at home as they did in battlefields overseas, often at great cost.



So today, we remember Tulsa and the bitter struggle of Black Veterans to be treated with honor and dignity. We remember because the success of our department's mission to serve all Veterans and the endurance of our nation depends on knowing, acknowledging, and learning from our history."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ McDonough, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Denis. "Secretary McDonough: On the Tulsa Massacre, We Remember." VAntage Point, 1 June 2021, <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/89643/secretary-mcdonough-tulsa-massacre-remember/>.

Badger-Two Medicine

MONTANA

The Badger-Two Medicine is a 130,000-acre region in the Lewis and Clark National Forest located at the intersection of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. It is part of the headwaters of the Missouri River and is named after two rivers in the area Badger Creek and the Two Medicine. It is a sacred area for the Blackfeet Nation.

Since the early 1980s, the area has been the center of a battle over oil and gas leases. Native American leaders, local landowners, sportsmen and women, conservationists, Montana elected officials, and many others have fought against irresponsible energy development in court and in Congress to try to protect the area.

The area needs permanent protection.

President Biden: Please protect the Badger-Two Medicine from oil and gas development immediately.

Montana has the second largest percentage of Veteran residents of any state in the U.S. One out of ten residents served in the military.⁵⁹

"Today, Native Americans serve in the U.S. military at the highest rate per capita of any ethnic or cultural population, and Montana is home to more than 6,000 tribal Veterans, many of them Blackfeet. As a Pikuni (or Blackfeet) warrior and Veteran of the United States Marines, it is my duty and obligation to protect my country and lands, as well as to uphold the tribe's traditions and culture while safeguarding its natural resources for future generations.

...Blackfeet Veterans have served this great country to protect our rights as Americans; including our sacred rights to pray, gather medicine, gather foods, and heal from trauma and PTSD in an undisturbed and undeveloped place like the Badger-Two Medicine."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Hubbard, Kaia. "These States Have the Highest Percentage of Veterans." US. News and World Report, 10 Nov. 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/where-Veterans-live?slide=10>.

⁶⁰ Desrosier, Jesse. "Blackfeet Veterans Seek Zinke's Aid on Badger-Two Medicine Leases." Montana Standard, 11 Nov. 2018, https://mtstandard.com/opinion/columnists/guest-view-blackfeet-Veterans-seek-zinkes-aid-on-badger-two-medicine-leases/article_85ac53ca-64e5-5451-9dac-8573f68cbf4c.html.

– Jesse Desrosier, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran (Montana Standard, 11/11/18)

“That place is considered sacred to us and other tribes. That place is where our creation story started. Kind of like Christianity...the Garden of Eden. We have a creation story and where we came from happened in the Badger-Two Medicine area.

For thousands of years, members have gone in there to collect resources and do stuff [that is] spiritual. They still have cultural ceremonies out there. Every year, people still go out there just to enjoy it or the spiritual aspect of it.”⁶¹

– Jonas Rides At The Door, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and member of the Blackfeet Tribe (Vet Voice Foundation podcast, 12/4/20)

“I believe I fought for this country...for the people and the land.”⁶²

– Jonas Rides At The Door, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and member of the Blackfeet Tribe (Vet Voice Foundation podcast, 12/4/20)

⁶¹ Jonas Rides At The Door. “Jonas: Blackfeet Nation & Badger-Two Medicine.” Vet Voice Foundation, 4 Dec. 2020, <https://www.audible.com/pd/Jonas-Blackfeet-Nation-Badger-Two-Medicine-Podcast/B08PH6CVLB>.

⁶² Jonas Rides At The Door. “Jonas: Blackfeet Nation & Badger-Two Medicine.” Vet Voice Foundation, 4 Dec. 2020, <https://www.audible.com/pd/Jonas-Blackfeet-Nation-Badger-Two-Medicine-Podcast/B08PH6CVLB>.

Fort Monroe National Monument

VIRGINIA

Fort Monroe, located at the intersection of the Chesapeake Bay and the Hampton Roads River, is the site of an Army base that was active from 1781 until 2011. According to the National Park Service, Fort Monroe has “a diverse history spanning the American story from American Indian presence, Captain John Smith's journeys, first arrival of enslaved Africans in English North America, a safe haven for freedom seekers during the American Civil War, and a bastion of defense for the Chesapeake Bay through the 21st Century.”⁶³

In 2011, President Obama designated the area as the Fort Monroe National Monument which increased public access to the Chesapeake Bay and the John Smith Chesapeake Trail, and honors Fort Monroe's long history.

In 2015, the state of Virginia transferred 40 acres of state land within Fort Monroe to the National Park Service, but the land has been subject to political in-fighting. It is critical to protect this entire area now and in the future.

President Biden: Use the Antiquities Act to expand the Fort Monroe National Monument.

National Park Service:

Women of Fort Monroe: Army Women in World War II

“Women have played an important role in the history of Fort Monroe over the years, but World War II was especially important as it was the first time in US Army history that women were officially allowed to serve in the Army, instead of simply as auxiliaries or ‘with’ the Army, but not in it. This affected the status of both Army nurses and members of the Army Women's Corps stationed at Fort Monroe. Women had unofficially filled many roles in the army for years. During World War I they were allowed official roles outside of the realm of nursing for the first time. However, in WWI the women serving with the Army, both as nurses and in other roles, still were not officially members of the military, and therefore did not receive benefits such as equal rank, pay, or Veteran's benefits.

This all changed during WWII. The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was established by Congress in 1942 as an auxiliary unit to the army, but in 1943 a new law was passed dropping the “Auxiliary” and women for the first time

⁶³ “Fort Monroe National Monument (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, <https://www.nps.gov/fomr/index.htm>.

became full members of the army as part of the Women's Army Corps in September 1943."⁶⁴

Fort Monroe was known as "Freedom's Fortress," because it was a safe haven for enslaved people seeking freedom during the American Civil War. General Benjamin Butler issued the Fort Monroe Doctrine that declared any slaves reaching the fort as contraband of war were to be made free men.⁶⁵

"With its rich history, Fort Monroe is unlike any other national monument. It's uniquely positioned to tell some of our nation's most significant stories on a compact and highly accessible site in the middle of an urban area."⁶⁶

– U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, Member, Armed Services Committee, and the father of a U.S. Marine Corps Officer and Senator Mark Warner, Chair of the Select Committee on Intelligence (Official Senate press release, 7/30/19)

⁶⁴ "History & Culture." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, <https://www.nps.gov/fomr/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.

⁶⁵ "Fort Monroe Army Base in Hampton, VA." Military Bases, 11 Oct. 2017, <https://militarybases.com/virginia/fort-monroe/>.

⁶⁶ "Warner, Kaine Introduce Legislation to Expand and Protect Fort Monroe National Monument." Senator Mark Warner, 30 July 2019, <https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/7/warner-kaine-introduce-legislation-to-expand-and-protect-fort-monroe-national-monument#:~:text=Jul%2030%202019,coastline%20along%20the%20Chesapeake%20Bay>.

Grand Canyon

ARIZONA

The Grand Canyon is the world's seventh-ranked natural wonder in the world.⁶⁷ Located in northern Arizona, it is one of the wildest and best-known regions in the West, attracting around 6 million visitors every year and contributing \$1.2 billion to local economies.

The area holds spiritual and cultural importance to tribes in the region, including the Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, Colorado River Indian, Pueblo of Zuni, and Navajo Nation.

⁶⁸

Contamination from uranium mining threatens all of this. A current ban on uranium mining in and around the Grand Canyon is only temporary and can be overturned by any President. Uranium mining has likely already contaminated at least one creek inside the Grand Canyon and threatens to contaminate more of its complex groundwater systems.

Tribes in the area say the expansion of uranium mining around the Grand Canyon is the greatest risk to religious, cultural, and traditional land use by Native people in the areas, often keeping tribes from visiting sacred places

Studies have shown the devastating impact on Uranium mining on the Navajo people. 85 percent of Navajo homes are currently contaminated with uranium, and over 500 mine sites remain in need of cleanup, while cancer rates doubled from the 1970s to 1990s in the Navajo nation.

Current legislation, the Grand Canyon Protection Act, would make a temporary ban on new mining claims on about 1 million acres of public lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park permanent, protecting the Grand Canyon forever.

President Biden: Protect the Grand Canyon from uranium mining.

⁶⁷ Levy, Cynthia. "10 Best National Parks To Visit In The USA." The Travel, 23 Mar. 2022, <https://www.thetravel.com/10-best-national-parks-in-usa/>

⁶⁸ Associated Tribes - Grand Canyon National Park (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)

“Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is. You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is keep it for your children, your children’s children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see.”⁶⁹

– *President Teddy Roosevelt, U.S. Army Veteran (National Park Foundation)*

“To Veterans like me, the restorative mental and physical health benefits gained through time spent in places such as the Grand Canyon cannot be replaced. Uranium mining around Grand Canyon will cause irreversible damage to the natural environment, preventing Veterans from finding the healing they need after returning from the battlefield.”⁷⁰

– *Brian Stultz, U.S. Army Veteran (Wild Arizona statement, 2019)*

“Veterans have dodged chemicals and inoculations of all kinds during our careers. When we recreate, we want to be able to do that in beautiful and wild lands like the Grand Canyon. It is a travesty of great proportion that the people of the lands around the Grand Canyon are still suffering from uranium contamination. This moratorium on uranium mining in and around the Grand Canyon should be passed and signed to further protect vital national resources, for the freedom of all peoples to come and see this great Canyon. They have a right to do so at will and to do so safely.”⁷¹

– *Jeff Glessing, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran (Wild Arizona statement, 2019)*

“Uranium mining in lands adjacent to the Grand Canyon will inevitably damage and disrupt the ecosystem of the most iconic land feature of the United States. As a Veteran I cherish the land my brothers and sisters have fought and died for. These lands, resources, and wildlife therein need to be respected, protected, and preserved for future generations of Americans.”⁷²

⁶⁹ “Grand Canyon National Park.” National Park Foundation, https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/explore-parks/grand-canyon-national-park?qclid=CjwKCAjwloCSBhAeEiwA3hVo_UWwRGSWMw9lwifr5a5Xl42ZAps13EiCL5h7rYMy1tIHVQ-cl1pQLXxoC9RsQAvD_BwE.

⁷⁰ “Statement on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act of 2019.” 2019, <http://www.azwild.org/eNews/documents/wild-arizona-grand-canyon-centennial-protection-act-press-statement.pdf>.

⁷¹ “Statement on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act of 2019.” 2019, <http://www.azwild.org/eNews/documents/wild-arizona-grand-canyon-centennial-protection-act-press-statement.pdf>.

⁷² “Statement on the Grand Canyon Centennial Protection Act of 2019.” 2019, <http://www.azwild.org/eNews/documents/wild-arizona-grand-canyon-centennial-protection-act-press-statement.pdf>.

– Jeff Drey, U.S. Army Veteran (Wild Arizona statement, 2019)

Desert Destinations: Grand Canyon National Park
Airman 1st Class Caleb Worpel, Luke Air Force Base, AZ

“When I first joined the Air Force, I knew I wanted to travel. Wherever my duties took me around the globe, was fine with me. I was craving adventure and new experiences. When I learned of my assignment to Luke Air Force Base, my mind instantly was drawn to one of the most iconic and precious American landscapes in the world - the Grand Canyon.

Having been stationed at Luke for over a year, I had yet to make the four hour trip north to witness the acres of sweeping canyons, mountains and majestic views I kept hearing so much about.

One day, I was scrolling through social media when I came across an advertisement from the 56th Force Support Squadron Outdoor Recreation Facebook page offering 12 military affiliated personnel a one-day trip to the Grand Canyon. I inquired more about the opportunity and ultimately decided to purchase a ticket which included transportation to and from Grand Canyon National Park. We were scheduled to embark on Jan. 27 at 6 a.m.

The night prior to the excursion, I packed my camera gear, water bottle, snacks and made sure I had plenty of warm clothes to wear in northern Arizona. I wasn't sure what to expect and that was fine. I knew I would be surrounded by fellow Thunderbolts, and we would all make the most of the experience.

The morning came, and the 12 of us loaded the bus. There were four active-duty Airmen including myself, a dependent, six retirees and Mike, our bus driver. For most of us, it was our first time experiencing the Grand Canyon, however there was a small bunch who were going for their second, third, fourth, or even fifth time. This group described the Grand Canyon as a spiritual experience you felt in your soul each time that you visit. I wondered what that felt like.

During the four hour bus ride, everyone nodded off to sleep. Not me! I was far too excited for what was to come. Luckily, the bus came equipped with a small television that played DVDs. This eased my excitement. I sat with my coffee, watched two outdated movies and saw the sunrise through the bus windows during the voyage north. After what seemed like an eternity, we made it. Signs popped up along the side of the road advertising the beauty to come. My eyes were peeled on the surrounding landscape looking for any sign of the canyon.

Slowly, my companions awoke from their traveling slumber and began to get as excited as I was. Conversations echoed throughout the bus of what section of the canyon people were going to see first and what popular attractions they wanted to visit. We found a parking lot to unload in and after a short safety briefing from Mike, we were let loose to explore the park.

A series of complimentary buses intertwined their way through the park allowing visitors to make their way to the most popular sights in a short amount of time. I referenced a visitor's map at the nearest bus stop I could find and boarded the first bus headed to the rim of the canyon.

The bus twisted and turned through the park before reaching a trailhead to Mather Point, a south rim viewing point. I exited the bus and hastily made the half-mile hike towards the rim. Before I knew it, there it was in front of me. Like a painting hanging on a wall, the Grand Canyon sat in all its majesty blanketed in purple, red and pink colors. My jaw dropped. Cliffs and valleys filled with shadows of deep colors and crisp details engulfed every inch of the canyon. Wherever my eyes wandered, a new feature appeared in the terrain.

I sat down on a bench and gazed at the national treasure in front of me. The depth and magnitude of the Grand Canyon stretched far beyond any words I could put on paper or capture in a photograph. Like a natural history book dating back thousands of years, Grand Canyon National Park is a vital part of our American heritage and culture. It serves as a reminder of our predecessors who worked so hard to establish the land we live on today. Like them, we as Airmen are focusing on the culture of our organization, spreading American values and ideas, and protecting the land so many warriors before us fought and paid the ultimate sacrifice for.

My mind wandered for what felt like hours. I started to realize how small of an experience this would be in the grand scheme of my Air Force career. Where else would I be stationed? What other wonders of the world would I have the opportunity to see?

At that very moment, I felt grateful for what I had and the life which lay ahead of me – all thanks to Grand Canyon National Park."⁷³

⁷³ Worpel, Caleb. "Desert Destinations: Grand Canyon National Park." Luke Air Force Base, 1 Feb. 2018, <https://www.luke.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1430270/desert-destinations-grand-canyon-national-park/>.

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

CALIFORNIA

In 2015, President Obama designated the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in a region north of Sacramento and the Bay Area in California. This landscape is home to multiple natural, historical, and cultural resources and offers a range of recreation opportunities for visitors, including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, fishing, mountain biking, and horseback riding.⁷⁴

Many Native American tribes have inhabited this area, including the Yuki, Nomlaki, Patwin, Pomo, Huchnom, Wappo, Lake Miwok and Wintum tribes.⁷⁵

The monument is located about an hour away from Travis Air Force Base, providing opportunities for the thousands of people who live and work on the base to relax and recreate outdoors.

A number of bills have been introduced in Congress to expand this national monument in order to protect it from development, create more recreation opportunities and honor Indigenous cultures. It is time to act now to expand protection for this special place.

President Biden: Support the Expansion of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act “proposes to expand the current national monument to include an adjacent federally-owned land parcel in Lake County known as the ‘Walker Ridge’ tract—to be renamed ‘Condor Ridge’ (‘Molok Luyuk’ in the Patwin language).⁷⁶

BREAKOUT QUOTE:

“Service to country runs deep in my blood and I have paid my dues. Let’s make sure that Veterans returning from war have the best opportunities available to

⁷⁴ “Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.” US Forest Service, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/berryessa-snow-mountain-national-monument>.

⁷⁵ “Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.” US Forest Service, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/berryessa-snow-mountain-national-monument>.

⁷⁶ Meader, Kristine. “Meet the Monuments: Berryessa Snow Mountain: This Peaceful Sanctuary Should Be Expanded.” Environment America, 1 Apr. 2022, <https://environmentamerica.org/blogs/environment-america-blog/ame/meet-monuments-berryessa-snow-mountain>.

heal. Let's ensure that Berryessa Snow Mountain is preserved for Veterans, and for all Americans to enjoy. America's defenders deserve nothing less."⁷⁷

– *Michael Seaman, U.S. Navy Veteran (Davis Enterprise, 3/7/14)*

"My 'Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act' also ensures that federally recognized tribes are consulted throughout the process to ensure Native American voices play an active role in protecting public lands."⁷⁸

– *U.S. Representative John Garamendi (CA), (Lake County News, 3/4/22)*

"With our long history in this area, we have a unique perspective on how this land should be managed, and we are willing to apply our historical practices with modern technologies to ensure that Molok Luyuk is preserved and healthy, a place for all to enjoy."⁷⁹

– *Yocha Dehe Tribal Chairman Anthony Roberts, (Lake County News, 3/4/22)*

"California has some of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world—and it is our duty to preserve these pristine outdoor spaces and rare natural habitats to combat the climate crisis and benefit future generations."⁸⁰

– *U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (CA), (Official Senate press release, 4/13/22)*

⁷⁷ Seaman, Michael. "Veterans Unite to Protect Public Lands." The Davis Enterprise, 7 Mar. 2014, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/forum/opinion-columns/Veterans-voice-on-berryessa-snow-mountain/>.

⁷⁸ "Garamendi, Tribal Chair Testify before House Subcommittee on Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act." Lake County News, 4 Mar. 2022, <https://www.lakeconews.com/news/71881-garamendi-tribal-chair-testify-before-house-subcommittee-on-berryessa-snow-mountain-national-monument-expansion-act>.

⁷⁹ "Garamendi, Tribal Chair Testify before House Subcommittee on Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act." Lake County News, 4 Mar. 2022, <https://www.lakeconews.com/news/71881-garamendi-tribal-chair-testify-before-house-subcommittee-on-berryessa-snow-mountain-national-monument-expansion-act>.

⁸⁰ "Feinstein, Padilla Introduce Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act." Senator Dianne Feinstein, 13 Apr. 2022, <https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=CE8CC4BB-0625-48DC-A565-AA0332530920>.

“Back in 2016, I worked to designate the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Monument...Earlier this year, I was proud to join Rep. Garamendi to expand this designation and protect more of our pristine public lands. The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument is crucial for protecting the biodiversity of the land and boosting our economy through recreational opportunities.”⁸¹

– U.S. Representative Mike Thompson (CA), (Official Senate press release, 4/13/22)

⁸¹ “Feinstein, Padilla Introduce Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act.” Senator Dianne Feinstein, 13 Apr. 2022, <https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=CE8CC4BB-0625-48DC-A565-AA0332530920>.

VET VOICE FOUNDATION

Founded in 2009, Vet Voice Foundation is a Veteran-led 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with more than 1.5 million members. VV Foundation empowers Veterans and military families by providing education, training, and tools to shape policy and engage in civic processes, harnessing the energy and drive of those who have served our country to create new civic leaders nationwide.

Since VV Foundation's inception, Veterans and military family members have been critical voices advocating for policies that contribute to a safer and more equitable world - including ending the "forever wars" in the Middle East, strengthening democratic systems here at home, fighting disinformation from malicious actors, tackling the climate crisis, ensuring all Americans have the freedoms that we swore an oath to protect and defend - including the right to vote, organize at work, and to access health care - and protecting public lands.

Vet Voice Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, for charitable and educational purposes.

For more information, please visit www.vvfnd.org or contact us at info@vetvoicefoundation.org.

