



Photo: M. Hairan/ Creative Commons

Summer Report

How much more can our national parks take?

More cuts in store unless Congress changes course

From the jagged peaks of Grand Teton National Park, to the black bears of the Great Smoky Mountains, to the sawgrass marshes of the Everglades, America's national parks, contain some of the most beautiful sights in the country. And with summer upon us, many families are planning trips to their favorite park to hike, bike, camp, and get a glimpse of wildlife.

Last year, there were more than 281 million recreational visits to our national parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite. But in March, Congress slashed funding for our parks and the programs that keep our parks protected from development and pollution.

A Park Service warning

In a memo released by the National Parks Service earlier this year, the agency warned that these cuts would result in reduced hours of operation, fewer services, and in some cases, even closure. What's more, projects to protect our parks and wildlife refuges from drilling, mining and development have been stalled, including a proposal to expand the largest wildlife refuge in New England around the Connecticut River.

"We should be doing everything we can to protect places like Grand Teton and the Great Smoky Mountains," said Mary Rafferty, Environment America's conservation program coordinator. "But if Congress doesn't act now, funding could be slashed even further at the end of the summer, leaving more projects to protect our parks on the chopping block."



Photo: Jeff Gunn

▲ Funding for parks like Grand Teton has declined steeply in recent years. Now Congress wants to cut more.

In March, Environment America and more than 400 other groups, elected officials and businesses released a letter to President Obama calling for full funding to programs that protect our nation's parks from drilling, mining and development. With supporters from the mayor of Carmel, Calif., to the Iowa Farmers Union, the letter demonstrated the tremendous value they place on our nation's public parks.

Environment America's advocacy and action also helped persuade 30 U.S. senators from both sides of the aisle, including Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, to pledge their support for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a key pillar of support for our parks.



Photo: Ally and Jon

News



Environment Oregon delivered 12,000 petitions to U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden in support of a proposal to designate nearly half a million acres around Crater Lake National Park as a federal wilderness area. Read more at: www.EnvironmentOregon.org



Photo: Staff

To our members

I love the summer: going to the beach, hiking in my favorite parks, having a barbeque with neighbors on the back porch. But my favorite part is working with our citizen outreach team.

From Atlanta to Sacramento, passionate folks will be educating the public about stopping fracking, protecting our parks, and getting local, sustainable foods into our schools and communities. Our staff will educate nearly 1 million people and collect tens of thousands of petitions to key decision makers.

The only way to stand up to gas, oil and coal companies, big factory farms, and developers is to bring committed and educated people together. Our staff in blue T-shirts will likely be in your neighborhood doing just that. When you see them—say hello for me!

Margie Alt
Executive Director

Recent action

A new energy frontier: offshore wind

Thanks to our state organizations and allies along the Atlantic Coast, we are likely to begin construction on our country's first-ever offshore wind turbines before the end of the year.

In March, after a two-and-a-half year battle, Environment Maryland helped pass a statewide law that requires utilities to invest in offshore wind. And federally, we mobilized public support for regulators to approve offshore wind farms in places where there would be minimal environmental impacts.

Areas off of six states—Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Virginia—were approved in the last several months. We also expect two more areas off the New York and North Carolina to be approved for offshore wind later this year.

More states nationwide move forward on bag bans

With growing awareness of how plastic pollution is threatening turtles, seabirds, and other ocean wildlife, our campaign to ban plastic bags is gaining momentum. Thanks to our grassroots campaign, a quarter of California's population, and more than 10 million people on the West Coast, now live in communities that have said goodbye to the bag.

Moreover, our campaign is now gaining ground on the Atlantic Coast as well. In April, Environment Massachusetts mobilized its activists to help make Manchester-by-the-Sea the latest Bay State community to ban the bag. And after winning a local ban in Barrington, Environment Rhode Island is building support to make the Ocean State the first state in the nation to adopt a statewide bag ban.



Toward a greener future

Environment America and Environment America Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentAmerica.org.

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Photo: boem.gov

▲ **IN THE ATLANTIC:** Massachusetts, New Jersey and Virginia are among the states racing to build the nation's first offshore wind farm.

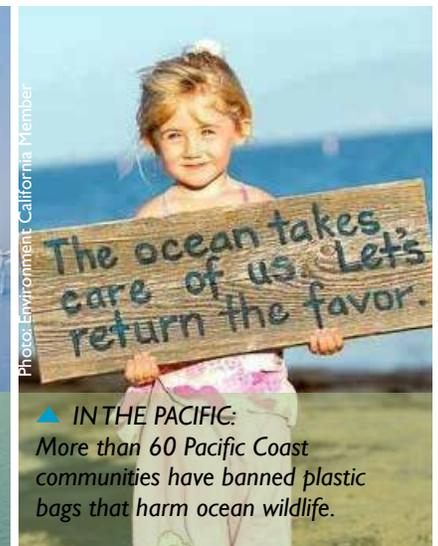


Photo: Environment California Member

▲ **IN THE PACIFIC:** More than 60 Pacific Coast communities have banned plastic bags that harm ocean wildlife.

Stories from the front lines of fracking

Photo: OSHA.gov

Michigan: protecting the Great Lakes

The oil and gas industry's plans to expand drilling in Michigan pose a twin threat to the Great Lakes. First, as many worry about record-low water levels, drilling operators are proposing to withdraw hundreds of millions of gallons of the state's groundwater. Second, toxic fluids and wastewater present a growing threat of leaks and spills. This summer, Environment Michigan is launching a new campaign to halt the spread of dirty drilling in the Great Lakes State.



Photo: Doug Duncan / Creative Commons

Colorado: defending Mesa Verde

In February, a public outcry spurred the Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to put a hold on oil and gas leasing near two treasures, Dinosaur National Monument and Mesa Verde National Park. Our local staff has continued to raise the profile of this issue with a billboard along I-70; and in April, our federal staff met with BLM officials to press for permanent protection.



Photo: penn.dnrc.gov

Pennsylvania: activists defend forest

When PennEnvironment learned that Anadarko Petroleum was mulling plans to frack in Loyalsock State Forest, 50 activists from across the state joined our staff for a 13-mile hike from Loyalsock to Williamsport, with a news crew in tow. At the end of the hike, activists delivered 10,000 petition signatures to Sen. Eugene Yaw, urging him to protect all Pennsylvania's forests from dirty drilling.

New York: fracking kept at bay...again

Over the past nine months, pundits have repeatedly announced the imminent fracking of the state. But time and again, public action has kept Gov. Andrew Cuomo from giving the go-ahead for dirty drilling. In February, Environment New York delivered 25,000 postcards against fracking to decision-makers in Albany. Since then, the governor has retreated from his fast track on fracking, and the General Assembly approved a moratorium bill.



Photo: Flammable spring as seen in the documentary, Triple Divide www.tripledividefilm.org.

Ohio: a dumping ground for fracking

In February, a state investigation found that one drilling operator had illegally dumped an estimated 250,000 gallons of toxic wastewater into the Mahoning River. Environment Ohio is educating the public about this threat. We released a report on drilling damage last fall, and addressed a conference of health experts in Warren in April.



Photo: Helen Slottje

Illinois: a call for fracking moratorium

Last year, Environment Illinois began making the case for a moratorium on dirty drilling—enlisting the support of 37 legislators. This spring, our members and volunteers emailed and called their elected officials to help stop fracking. Later, Environment Illinois coordinated a news conference and lobby day with our allies in Springfield.

Fracking by the numbers:

1 in 3

Frack jobs report using cancer-causing chemicals

320

Leaks or spills where fracking fluid reached groundwater in Colorado

421

Drilling waste pits that leaked into groundwater in New Mexico

3,355

Violations by drilling companies in Pennsylvania from 2008-2011

40,000

Estimated median number of wells drilled if fracking starts in New York

\$1.6 million

Amount Chesapeake Energy agreed to pay three families last summer when their drinking water was contaminated with methane

1.3 billion

Gallons of fracking wastewater created in Pennsylvania in about three years

As these numbers add up, folks across the country are taking action:

100,000

Signatures on PennEnvironment's petition for a drilling moratorium

225,000

People urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo not to proceed with fracking in New York



Download our report on the costs of fracking at: www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/reports/ame/costs-fracking

Photo: Mark Schmerling

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Environment America

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment America. We focus exclusively on protecting air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Moving forward on climate in Washington, D.C.

In February, roughly 40,000 Americans joined Environment America and our allies in D.C., for the "Forward on Climate" rally. Tens of thousands of others across the country gathered at dozens of simultaneous local rallies to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline; put a cap on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants; and expand renewable energy programs.

Earlier this year, President Obama renewed his promise to tackle global warming, by saying, "the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations." And then, in his State of the Union address, he added, "If Congress won't act soon to protect future generations, I will."

Environment America is working to garner the public support the president needs to tackle global warming and cut carbon pollution at the source.



◀ Hundreds gathered at the Forward on Climate rally in Washington, D.C., an event co-sponsored by Environment America

What the president can do on global warming

- Reject Keystone XL pipeline
- Approve carbon limits for new power plants
- Propose carbon limits for old power plants