

# 2024 Park Partners Report

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE OF PARKS

Chance James, NPF

## Impact

National parks experienced unprecedented public interest over the past two years. The national park partner community, composed of 450+ organizations across the country, helped parks engage the public, create lifelong memories for visitors, and launch groundbreaking new initiatives to expand park offerings.

**\$500 MILLION**

in estimated collective support to national parks in 2023

**62%**

of partners expect to grow their staff, and organizations on average expect to increase their support to national parks by 12% in 2024

**TWO-THIRDS**

of partners provide education and nearly half support historic restoration

## How partners support parks

- Engaging Indigenous artists in programming
- Creating new partnerships to preserve historic sites
- Protecting vast expanses of land
- Creating affordable housing
- And more



Note: Estimates of support to national parks for the 188 organizations with available data in both 2021 and 2023, by organization category. The \$500 million highlighted above includes all 306 organizations for which we had data in 2023.

## Upcoming partner initiatives

Partners prepare to launch bold initiatives in 2024 and beyond, with partners focusing in the following areas:

### 21st century visitor experience

Improving access and usability, restoring structures, and modernizing visitation

**EXAMPLE:** Friends of Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens (Washington, D.C.) will enhance language inclusivity, making the park accessible to a more diverse audience.

### Inspiring future park stewards

Educating and welcoming youth to our national parks

**EXAMPLE:** Friends of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (GA) have collaboratively designed a grant to allow fourth graders to study the Monarch Butterfly at the Rosalynn Smith Carter Childhood Garden.

### Telling the history of America

Inclusive storytelling, educating the public about our heritage

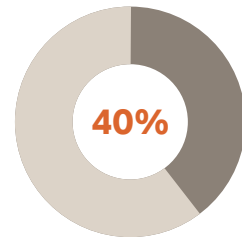
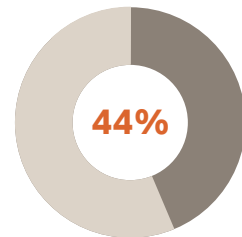
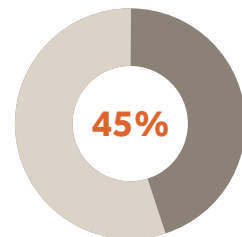
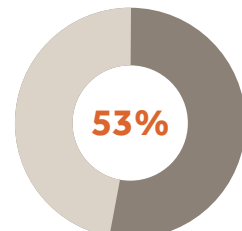
**EXAMPLE:** National Park Partners - Chickamauga - Chattanooga - Moccasin Bend (TN) will collaborate with the National Trail of Tears Association to honor Indigenous history during October events.

### Conservation and climate resiliency

Adapting to climate change and protecting land, species, and habitat

**EXAMPLE:** National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation (MN) will decarbonize park buildings and infrastructure, aiming to set a precedent for sustainable park management and climate resiliency.

PERCENT OF PARK PARTNERS FOCUSED ON EACH INITIATIVE



## Recommendations

### What we heard from partners

Partners of all sizes continue to request support

Partners desire innovative ways to provide impact

A lack of NPS staff capacity has become the greatest challenge

### Our recommendations for the community:

#### Help partners grow and fundraise more, together

- **Augment financial resources for national parks** through the collective campaign.
- **Facilitate regional collaboration on fundraising and other priorities.**
- **Provide targeted capacity-building support** based on partners' unique needs.
- **Establish an "opt-in" initiative to diversify boards and leadership.** For example, partners can commit to "30 by 30" to increase the representation of people of color in boards and leadership to 30% by 2030.

#### Experiment with new roles for park partners

- **Pilot non-traditional partner functions to nimbly address park needs.** Park partners and Superintendents can work together to identify novel opportunities for support.
- **Explore embedding park partner staff in parks** to facilitate collaboration.

#### Support NPS capacity and relationships with philanthropic partners

- **Support filling open park positions.** Park partners can elevate open positions within NPS in areas that need it most.
- **Prioritize housing projects,** especially in areas with high costs of living. Affordable housing can increase park capacity.
- **Enhance fundraising policy** through revisions to DO-21 and its reference manual.
- **Create joint training and learning opportunities for park partners and NPS.** NPF could fund training hosted by the Friends Alliance for new park Superintendents and partner executive directors.

This is a companion to the full 2024 Park Partners Report

[nationalparks.org/uploads/2024\\_ParkPartnersReport.pdf](https://nationalparks.org/uploads/2024_ParkPartnersReport.pdf)