Happy 100th Birthday,
National Park Service!

- In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the law creating our official National Park Service.
- America’s first national park is Yellowstone, created by law in 1872 by Ulysses S. Grant.
- National parks cover 84 million+ acres; ranging in size from 0.02 - 13.2 million acres.
- Park visitors number 300 million annually.
- The longest cave system in the world is at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky.
- American Samoa’s national park is the only national park located south of the equator.

Further Reading

From the stunning seascapes of Acadia to the hot, dry desert of Death Valley, America’s national parks are home to hundreds of species of wild mammals. Captured in vivid photographs, both the mammals and the parks are revealed in this book written by two leading experts.

Frequently Asked Questions – National Park Service
https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/faqs.htm


This book bears witness to the grandeur of our parks and to the need for a renewed sense of appreciation and individual responsibility for their care. Frome discusses park politics, conflicts between use and preservation, and impacts of commercialization. He proposes a dedicated return to the true spirit in which the parks were established, in the manner of John Muir. He advocates maintaining these lands as wild sanctuaries, places where we can find inspiration, solitude, silence, balance, and simplicity, reminding us why we must preserve our national treasures and why we need to connect with the deeper values they hold.


Roughly 150 breathtaking images are exquisitely reproduced in this book. There are notable portraits of El Captain, Half Dome, Cathedral Rocks, Royal Arches, and other distinctive rock formations that frame the valley; grand views in all seasons and all states of weather; intimate details of nature from the Valley floor; the waterfalls—Bridalveil, Yosemite, Vernal, Nevada; studies of trees, from the giants of the Mariposa Grove to the exquisite white blossoms of the dogwood. The photographs have been selected and sequenced by Peter Galassi, former Chief Curator of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. His abundantly illustrated introduction sets Adams’s pictures within the rich history of imagery of Yosemite.

Grusin’s study investigates how the establishment of national parks participated in the production of American national identity after the Civil War. The creation of America’s national parks is usually seen as an uncomplicated act of environmental preservation. Grusin argues, instead, that parks must be understood as complex cultural technologies for the reproduction of nature as landscape art. He explores the origins of America’s three major parks - Yosemite, Yellowstone and Grand Canyon - in relation to other forms of landscape representation in the late nineteenth century. He examines such forms as photography, painting, and mapping, plus a wide range of travel narratives, scientific and nature writing, and fiction. Grusin shows that while establishing a national park does involve preserving an area of land as a 'natural' rather than economic asset, a ranch or mine for instance, it also transforms the landscape into a culturally constructed object called 'nature'.


Kaufman revisits the subject of activism of women citizens in preserving national parks and how far the promise of the inclusion of career women in the Park Service hierarchy has progressed. She discovered the staff in a national park can no longer fulfill the Park Service mission without outside support. Both this new reality and the acceptance of women as leaders have affected Park Service culture, making it more collaborative, more inclusive, less paternalistic, and more open to partnerships.


This book casts light on the complicated relationship between the National Park Service and its policy goals of wilderness preservation and recreation. By examining the overlapping and sometimes contradictory responsibilities of the park service and the national wilderness preservation system, John C. Miles finds the National Park Service still struggling to deal with an idea that lies at the core of its mission and yet complicates that mission, nearly one hundred years into its existence. The National Park Service's ambivalence about wilderness is traced from its beginning to the turn of the twenty-first century. The Service is charged with managing more wilderness acreage than any government agency in the world and, in its early years, frequently favored development over preservation. The public has perceived national parks as permanently protected wilderness resources, but in reality this public confidence rests on shaky ground. Miles shows how changing conceptions of wilderness affected park management over the years, with a focus on the tension between the goals of providing recreational spaces for the American people and leaving lands pristine and undeveloped for future generations.