

The Importance of Supporting National Parks

Every day in the United States, approximately one million people call in sick to work due to unbearable levels of stress. ¹ Millions of trees are chopped down, ² and historical sites crumble to dust under the helpless watch of the National Parks Service (NPS). ³ Support for our national parks could help limit all this. National Parks are necessary institutions in our country that assist in the preservation of our nation's wildlife, provide a variety of crucial health perks to their visitors, and are beneficial to our society as a whole.

For over a century, the NPS has safeguarded our country's precious natural wonders and resources ⁴. Roughly 3.4% of the U.S.'s territory is managed by the NPS, ⁵ and for the most part, such territories are scarce of human interference, development, or construction. That being the case, they generate immense amounts of oxygen from their unrestrained vegetation ⁶ and many are considered dark sky zones due to the absence of light pollution. ⁷ Additionally, many people seek refuge in national parks' wilderness; individuals such as the eminent vagabond Christopher McCandless found nature to be an escape from the burdens and confines of society. On top of that, national parks provide homes for a multitude of animals, and 400 of those species are endangered. ⁸ The NPS also protects their lands from corporations interested in environment-harming practices such as deforestation or hydraulic fracturing. Thus the NPS plays a critical role in the conservation of valuable wildlife and resources.

The vast, undeveloped expanses that national parks provide give their attendees a plethora of positive physical and psychological benefits. According to the National Parks Association of New South Wales, engaging with natural environments reduces unfavorable emotions such as stress, anger, frustration, and aggression. ⁹ Being outside also helps creativity. In the words of a study conducted by Plos One and referenced by Business Insider, "people immersed in nature for four days boosted their performance on a creative problem-solving test by 50%." ¹⁰ Physical perks induced by time surrounded by

nature include reduced likelihoods of type two diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death, preterm birth, high blood pressure, myopia, cancer, and fatigue, along with boosting your immune system. ¹¹ All in all, our national parks provide a therapeutic oasis for health and recovery that is valuable to our citizens.

National parks better the lives of many citizens through their varying attributes. The existence of national parks generates thousands of jobs; currently, there are 20,000 individuals employed by the NPS. ¹² Furthermore, our national monuments are managed by the NPS, and caring for these sites is imperative to the preservation of our nation's history and culture. The NPS also hosts a variety of programs geared towards children to educate them about wildlife and the preservation of nature, hoping that they'll grow up to be environmentally conscious and in favor of national parks. ¹³ So far, they've educated over 100,000 students with their Ticket to Ride program, ¹⁴ and their collection of alternate curriculums ensures that number will increase in the future.

As a whole, national parks generate roughly \$32 billion annually, bringing in more cash than massive businesses such as McDonalds and Nintendo. ¹⁵ However, this money only makes up 1% of the entire government's \$3.8 trillion dollar annual revenue, ¹⁶ making the seemingly colossal total quite insignificant in the grand scheme of things. The NPS needs funding in order to finally clear out their \$11 billion backlog of park maintenance, ¹⁷ and with the way our current president views them, it doesn't look like they'll be getting the resources anytime soon. National parks are important. What can you do to protect them?

1. ["Workplace Stress"](#) - The American Institute of Stress
2. ["How many trees are cut down every year?"](#) - The Understory, 2017
3. ["Top 10 Issues Facing National Parks"](#) - National Geographic, 2010
4. ["Quick History of the National Parks Service"](#) - National Parks Service
5. [National Parks Service](#) - AllGov
6. ["Tree and Rain Forest Facts"](#) - Growing Air Foundation
7. ["Celebrate Dark Skies at These 18 National Parks"](#) - National Parks Conservation Association, 2018
8. ["Endangered Species"](#) - National Parks Reservations, 2016
9. ["Why Are National Parks Important?"](#) - National Parks Association of New South Wales,
12. ["About Us"](#) - National Parks Service
13. ["Programs that Inspire"](#) - National Parks Service
14. ["Ticket to Ride"](#) - National Parks Service
15. ["National Park Visitation Generated \\$32 Billion for National Economy in 2015"](#) - National Parks Conservation Association, 2016; ["McDonalds"](#) - Wikipedia; ["Nintendo's net sales from fiscal 2008 to 2018"](#) - Statista
16. ["Policy Basics: Where Do Federal Tax Revenues Come From?"](#) - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2018
17. ["What Is Deferred Maintenance?"](#) - National Parks Service