

NATIONAL PARKS IN PERIL THE THREATS OF CLIMATE DISRUPTION



At stake are the resources and values that make our national parks the special places that Americans love.

the
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CLIMATE
Organization



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To read the full report on the impacts of global warming on national parks, visit www.nrdc.org/policy or www.rockymountainclimate.org

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Human disruption of the climate is the greatest threat ever to our national parks.

Our national parks are already being affected by a changing climate. In Yosemite National Park, trees of all types and ages are dying more often, and both forests and mammals are moving upslope to stay ahead of higher temperatures. Yellowstone National Park is losing its whitebark pines and their nuts, a food so important to grizzly bears that fewer whitebark nuts before hibernation mean lower birth rates. Summers there now are sometimes hot enough to kill trout, which are coldwater fish. Rocky Mountain National Park is losing its mature lodgepole pines, and Mesa Verde National Park has lost most of its piñon pines.

If we continue heedlessly adding heat-trapping pollution to the atmosphere, we could lose whole national parks for the first time. Nearly all of Everglades, Biscayne, and Dry Tortugas national parks and Ellis Island National Monument are barely above the current sea level and could be lost to rising seas. Glacier National Park could lose all its glaciers. Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument could lose all its coral reefs, Joshua Tree National Park all its Joshua trees, Saguaro National Park all its saguaros.

In *National Parks in Peril*, the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization and Natural Resources Defense Council identify the 25 national parks most at risk to a changed climate and the many threats they face. These are some of America's most spectacular places, set aside to be enjoyed by Americans for all time. The challenge of this generation is to preserve them for future generations, by removing the threats an altered climate poses to these and other national parks. Congress and the National Park Service need to take action now, and they need our support.

25 National Parks Most at Peril from

	Loss of Ice & Snow	Loss of Water	Higher Seas & Stronger Storms	More Downpours & Floods	Loss of Plant Communities
Acadia NP, ME					
Assateague Island NS, MD/VA					
Bandelier NM, NM					
Biscayne NP, FL					
Cape Hatteras NS, NC					
Colonial NHP, VA					
Denali NP&P, AK					
Dry Tortugas NP, FL					
Ellis Island NM, NY/NJ					
Everglades NP, FL					
Glacier NP, MT					
Great Smoky Mts NP, TN/NC					
Indiana Dunes NL, IN					
Joshua Tree NP, CA					
Lake Mead NRA, NV/AZ					
Mesa Verde NP, CO					
Mount Rainier NP, WA					
Padre Island NS, TX					
Rocky Mountain NP, CO					
Saguaro NP, AZ					
Theodore Roosevelt NP, ND					
Virgin Islands NP/Virgin Islands Coral Reef NM, VI					
Yellowstone NP, WY/MT/ID					
Yosemite NP, CA					
Zion NP, UT					

Legend:

NP = National Park

NM = National Monument

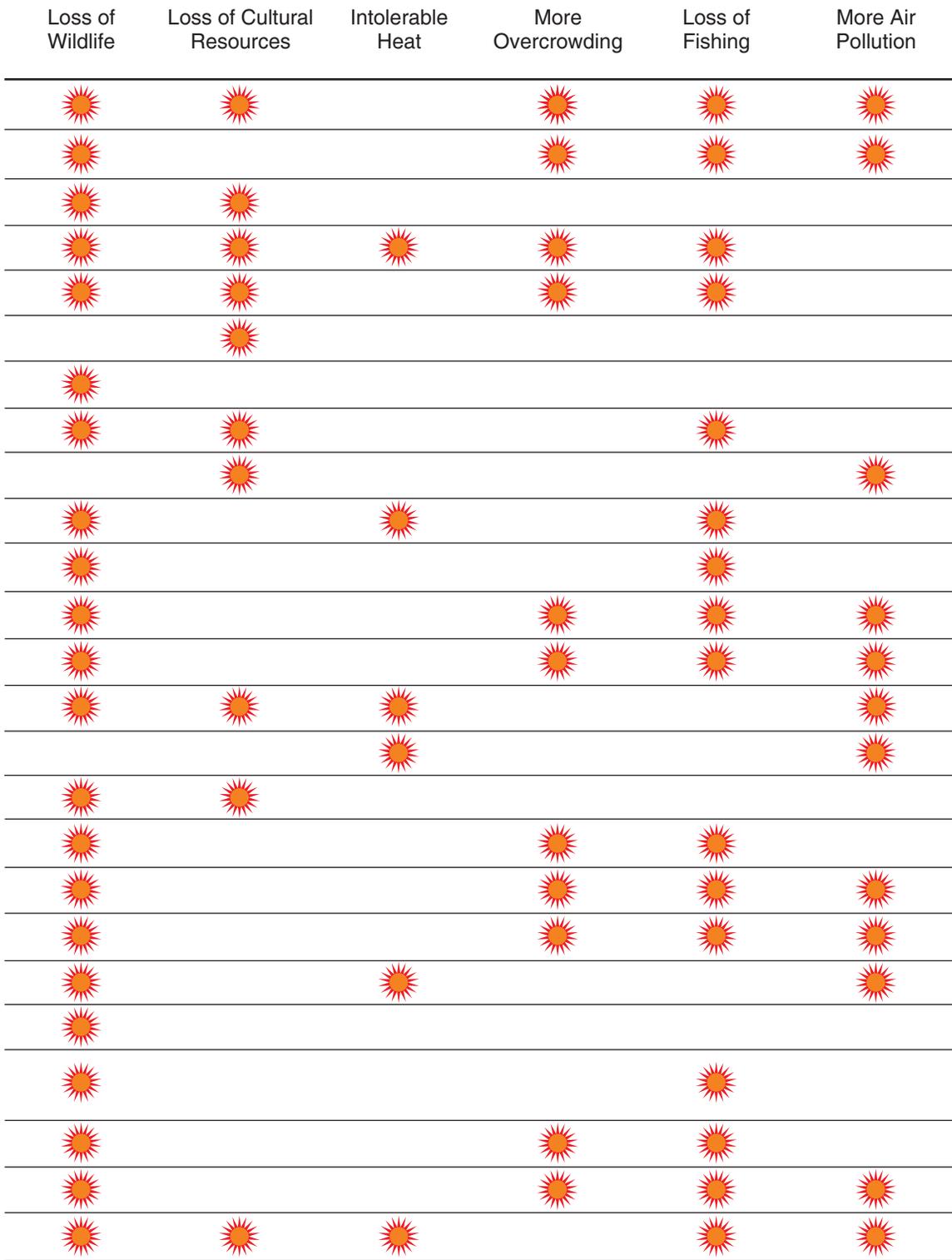
NS = National Seashore

NHP = National Historical Park

NP&P = National Park and Preserve

NL = National Lakeshore

Climate Disruption and the Risks They Face



NRA = National Recreation Area

The risks of a changed climate dwarf all previous threats to our national parks. New actions to face these new risks must also be on an unprecedented scale.

How much we continue to change the climate will determine what happens to our national parks. If we continue with high emissions of heat-trapping gases, our nation could be 7° to 11° hotter by the end of the century—and our parks would be drastically changed. We need to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution at least 20% below current levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. That would begin to stabilize our climate and minimize impacts in national parks, other ecosystems, and elsewhere.

Reducing heat-trapping gases will take actions by all of us, from Congress and federal agencies to state and local governments, and from the private sector to families and individuals. The National Park Service can help lead the way. With 275 million visits a year to our national parks, the NPS has a unique opportunity to demonstrate how reducing emissions can save money as well as our environment—and to present that information to park visitors, inspiring them to take and support similar action elsewhere.

We also need bold, visionary actions to protect our national parks in the face of whatever climate changes we end up causing. We need new and expanded parks to protect wildlife and other resources, because current park boundaries will not do that in a changed world. We need to preserve migration corridors between parks and other protected areas so that species have a chance to move and survive. We need expanded research to identify and monitor risks to park resources, and stronger management to protect them. We need increased funding for the national parks so all these challenges can be met.

Congress and the National Park Service need our support in taking these actions. It is up to all of us to head off the threat climate disruption poses to our national parks—and make America's best idea even better.



“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.”

— Wallace Stegner