



Code Red in our National Parks

Ozone pollution exceedances at three year high Congress must not stop EPA rules that will cut ozone pollution

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In 2011 America's National Parks have already had more than 234 exceedances of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) ozone air pollution standard – more than in any of the past three years. These “Code Red” and “Code Orange” ozone days, so-named for the serious threat they pose to healthy breathing, are mounting even as the U.S. House of Representatives advances legislation to stop EPA from reducing ozone pollution to safer levels. For the sake of our national parks, their visitors, and communities around the country suffering from unhealthy air pollution, Congress must reject these dirty air proposals.

- **National Park ozone exceedances on the rise.** From April through August 2011 there were [222 exceedances of EPA's health-based ozone air pollution standard in national parks](#) with ozone monitors. In addition, based on preliminary NPS data posted on [AirNow](#), there have been [more than a dozen additional exceedances](#) of the ozone standard in national parks in the first ten days of September 2011. That compares with 223 national park ozone exceedances in all of [2010](#) and 196 in all of [2009](#). There are still two months remaining in the ozone season, which ends in October, assuring that in 2011 national parks will have many more unhealthy ozone exceedances than in any of the past three years.
- **Ozone is a serious threat to healthy breathing and healthy ecosystems.** According to the [American Lung Association](#), ozone is “the most widespread pollutant in the U.S. [and] also one of the most dangerous.” Ozone attacks lung tissue, and exposure has been shown to shorten lives. More immediate effects include shortness of breath; chest pain when inhaling; wheezing and coughing; asthma attacks; and increased susceptibility to respiratory and pulmonary problems. Even healthy adults are urged to [limit outdoor exercise](#) on ozone red alert days, a serious problem for the millions of Americans who visit our national parks to hike, bike, paddle, and enjoy other outdoor exercise. Children, older adults, and people with existing respiratory problems are at even greater risk. Ozone also has detrimental effects on vegetation and ecosystems. [Ozone also makes sensitive plants more susceptible to diseases and damage](#). Ozone inhibits plant growth and crop yields, and may impair biodiversity. According to EPA, in the United States alone, ozone damage is responsible for approximately \$500 million in reduced crop production each year.

- **Legislation seeks to keep EPA from lowering pollution that causes ozone.** Two bills in the U.S. House of Representatives would halt EPA efforts to lower emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), the main chemical ingredient of ozone pollution.
 1. ***Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation Act of 2011* ([H.R. 2401](#)):** The “TRAIN” Act targets EPA’s cross-state air pollution rule ([CSAPR](#)) for utility plants. EPA’s rule seeks to lower ozone and soot pollution in the eastern half of the U.S. by cutting power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. While the “TRAIN” Act purports to delay these rules by up to a year so that additional analyses can be done, the Act makes an indefinite delay possible. Thorough and careful analyses of CSAPR to date – including multiple public comment opportunities, Regulatory Impact Analyses, and OMB review – have already found that CSAPR is affordable, achievable, and that its benefits significantly outweigh costs. [EPA’s analysis](#) shows that by 2014 CSAPR will annually prevent thousands of premature deaths, heart attacks, emergency room visits, cases of aggravated asthma and acute bronchitis, and other breathing problems, saving \$280 billion in annual health benefits at a cost of \$800 million, the projected amount to be spent annually in enforcing this rule in 2014.
 2. ***“Regional Haze” rider on the House Interior-EPA appropriations bill* ([Rick Berg, R-ND](#)):** The proposed Berg amendment targets EPA’s program to improve visibility at America’s most scenic national parks and wilderness areas, like the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Great Smoky Mountains national parks. Nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions are a leading contributor to poor visibility (haze) as well as ozone pollution. The Berg amendment would keep EPA from doing its job to ensure that adequate reductions in haze-causing pollution, including NO_x, are required when state plans fail to protect parks and people. The Berg amendment would prevent EPA from implementing a federal haze cleanup plan for states that either fail to satisfy the mandates of the [Regional Haze Rule](#) or that require EPA’s assistance to comply with the rule. It would also prevent EPA from writing haze cleanup plans covering tribal lands, home to some of the largest and most polluting coal-fired power plants in the West, including the biggest polluters of the Grand Canyon. The Berg amendment would therefore likely result in higher ozone pollution and more Code Red days in many national parks.
- ***National Parks, their visitors, staff, and surrounding communities deserve cleaner air.*** Visitors to national parks expect and deserve clean air. Clean air is among the most important values identified in survey responses by park visitors throughout the U.S.
 - In a March 2008 Hart Research Associates survey, likely voters identified “reducing air pollution in parks” as among their top priorities for the national parks.
 - In a [June 2010 Hart Research Associates poll](#) of likely voters, 80% of respondents agreed that we need to make sure park air is free of pollution.

NPCA supports EPA’s efforts to clean up ozone and other pollution in our national parks, including the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule and Regional Haze Rule. NPCA opposes efforts by Congress to weaken or delay these important national park protections.

“With unhealthy ozone pollution on the rise in our national parks, this is no time for Congress to weaken and delay efforts by EPA to clean up our air,” said Mark Wenzler, NPCA Vice President for Climate & Air Quality Programs. “National park visitors value clean and clear air and should not have to worry about having an asthma attack while hiking in American treasures like the Grand Canyon and Great Smoky Mountains national parks.”

National Park Service Map of 2011 Ozone Exceedances in National Parks (April-August)

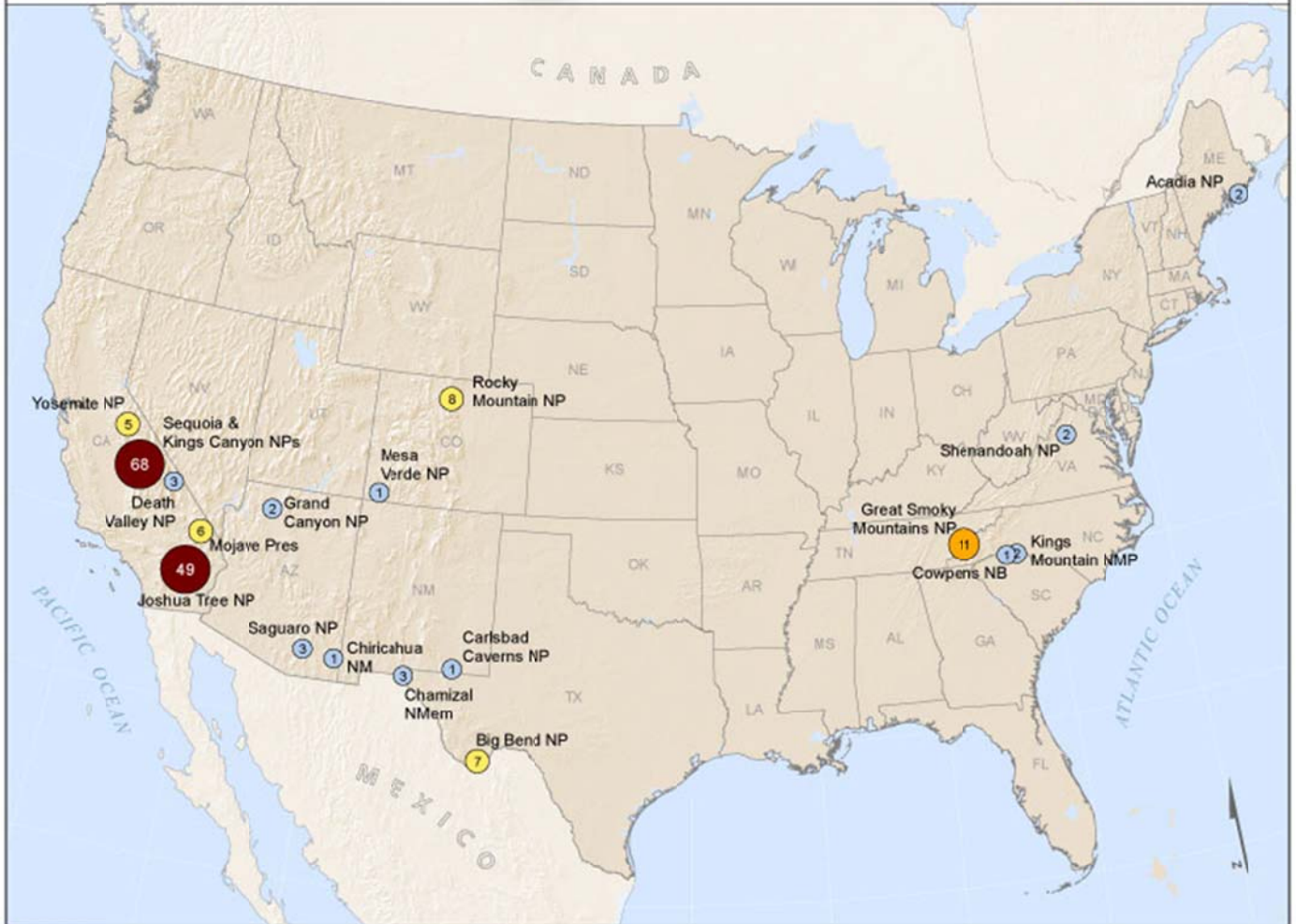
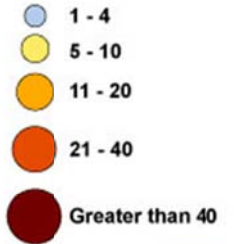
National Park Ozone Exceedances (August 2011)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The National Park Service monitors ozone levels at its parks each year from April through October. Since the EPA made the ozone standards more stringent in April 2008 - lowered from 85 parts per billion (ppb) to 75 ppb - many more parks have been added to the exceedance list. This map shows total number of days with ozone exceedances. Ozone is not monitored at Hawaiian national parks.

Number of Ozone Exceedance Days



Produced by NPS Air Resources Division
Denver, Colorado, September 2011
Albers Equal Area Conic Projection NAD 1983



National Park Service table of ozone 2011 exceedances in national parks (April-August)

National Park	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	2011 Season Ozone Exceedances		
								Total Count	Max 8-hr O3 (ppb)	4 th highest max. 8-hr O3 (ppb)
Acadia– Cadillac Mountain	0	0	1	1	0	–	–	2	92	74
Big Bend– K-Bar Ranch Road	4	0	3	0	0	–	–	7	86	80
Carlsbad Caverns– Maintenance Area	0	1	0	0	0	–	–	1	76	70
Chamizal– State Monitor	0	0	2	0	1	–	–	3	82	70
Chiricahua– Entrance Station	0	0	0	0	1	–	–	1	76	75
Cowpens– State Monitor	0	0	1	0	0	–	–	1	77	68
Death Valley– Park Village	0	0	3	0	0	–	–	3	79	75
Grand Canyon– The Abyss	0	2	0	0	0	–	–	2	78	74
Great Smoky Mountains– Cades Cove	0	0	0	1	0	–	–	1	98	68
Great Smoky Mountains– Clingman's Dome	0	0	2	0	0	–	–	2	86	73
Great Smoky Mountains– Cove Mountain	0	0	6	1	0	–	–	7	86	78

National Park	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	2011 Season Ozone Exceedances		
								Total Count	Max 8-hr O3 (ppb)	4 th highest max. 8-hr O3 (ppb)
Great Smoky Mountains–Look Rock	0	0	5	3	3	–	–	11	87	83
Great Smoky Mountains–Purchase Knob	0	0	1	0	0	–	–	1	77	67
Joshua Tree–Black Rock	3	8	12	12	14	–	–	49	104	91
Joshua Tree–Cottonwood Canyon	0	1	1	3	0	–	–	5	78	76
Joshua Tree–Pinto Wells	0	1	3	0	0	–	–	4	78	76
Kings Mountain–Brown's Mountain	0	0	2	0	0	–	–	2	88	73
Mammoth Cave–Houchin Meadow	0	0	0	0	0	–	–	0	73	71
Mesa Verde–Resource Management Area	0	0	0	1	0	–	–	1	78	70
Mojave–Kelso Mountains	0	2	4	0	0	–	–	6	80	78
Pinnacles–SW of East Entrance Stn.	0	0	0	0	0	–	–	0	73	66
Rocky Mountain–Long's Peak	0	2	2	3	1	–	–	8	80	77

National Park	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	2011 Season Ozone Exceedances			
								Total Count	Max 8-hr O3 (ppb)	4 th highest max. 8-hr O3 (ppb)	
Saguaro–Pima County	0	1	0	2	0	–	–	3	80	75	
Sequoia and Kings Canyon– Ash Mountain	0	2	15	22	29	–	–	68	103	98	
Sequoia and Kings Canyon– Lower Kaweah	0	0	7	10	10	–	–	27	84	81	
Shenandoah–Big Meadows	0	0	0	2	0	–	–	2	76	72	
Yosemite–Turtleback Dome	0	0	2	2	1	–	–	5	80	77	
Total									222		