# Newsletter

Week 27, 2023

Park Institute of America

FLASH BACK

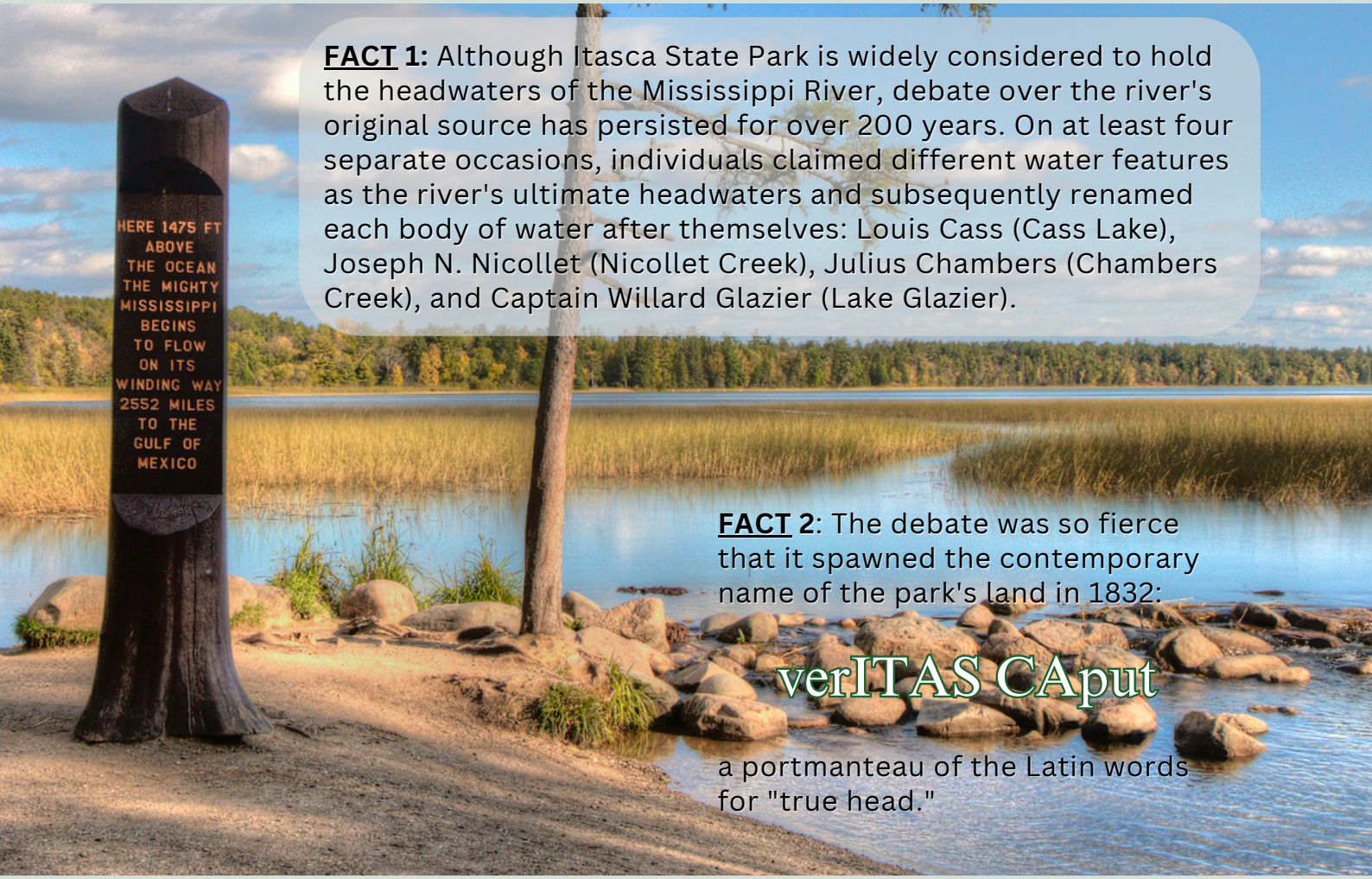
After reading about the Red wolf captive breeding program at Bulls Island, one of our subscribers recalled an incredible story.

When the Category 4 Hurricane Hugo made landfall just north of Charleston, SC in 1989, Bulls Bay received the ***highest storm tide ever recorded*** on the east coast: *20 feet*. Despite this immense flooding, the state's wildlife experts found that, amazingly, **all five** endangered Red wolves living on the island - including four pups - managed to survive.

## FEATURED PARK

Photos and facts of your favorite parks, one issue at a time

**Itasca State Park**
Minnesota




**FACT 1:** Although Itasca State Park is widely considered to hold the headwaters of the Mississippi River, debate over the river's original source has persisted for over 200 years. On at least four separate occasions, individuals claimed different water features as the river's ultimate headwaters and subsequently renamed each body of water after themselves: Louis Cass (Cass Lake), Joseph N. Nicollet (Nicollet Creek), Julius Chambers (Chambers Creek), and Captain Willard Glazier (Lake Glazier).

**FACT 2**: The debate was so fierce that it spawned the contemporary name of the park's land in 1832:

**verITAS CAput**

a portmanteau of the Latin words for "true head."

Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park here so our subscribers can learn about it.

# PARK PERKS

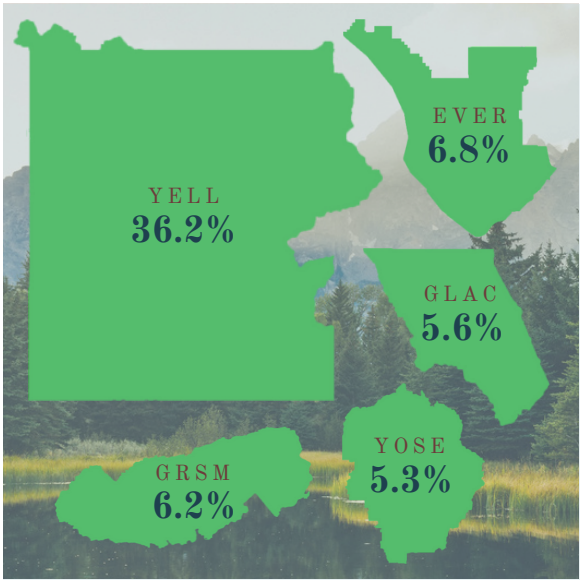
Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

This week, we'll be taking a look at a 2021 article published in the journal *Conservation Science and Practice* describing research in the US national park system. These "living laboratories" have played and continue to play a major role in research, especially the life sciences. Analyzing the Web of Science (WoS) database for research conducted in *59* US national parks, North Carolina State University scholars found **6,965** articles published from 1970-2018. While this number is impressive in itself, the study does not include articles from other databases or non peer-reviewed research, meaning total research output may be significantly larger.

Beyond the sheer number of published articles, another surprising aspect of national park research is its distribution across parks: as of 2018, **only five parks** were responsible for **60%** of research output. The reasons for the dominance of these parks remain unclear. Proximity to research universities does not appear to influence a park's popularity for study, meaning that the research potential of many conveniently located parks may remain untapped. The authors suggest that by diversifying their choice of park study locations, researchers could more quickly improve our understanding of the entire park system and its place in the natural world.

## Research Output by Park

1970-2018 published articles (WoS)




The authors found that US national parks have become increasingly popular research areas, with the vast majority of studies occurring after 1990. They also point to a significant post-2013 decline in research output, something they believe may be a consequence of more limited government investment in basic, as opposed to applied, science. Despite this, these parks remain a *major* source of research, a testament to the importance of preserving them.

**Can you identify this meandering national park?**

PLAY GROUND

Hint: it's a long way down