

## RESEARCH UPDATE

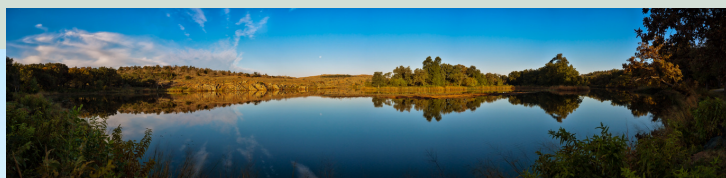
As part of our ongoing needs analysis for diversifying the conservation workforce, an Institute research fellow found an amazing storytelling tool just published by SFI's Project Learning Tree that warrants recognition. We encourage you to read the inspiring stories in *Black Faces in Green Spaces: The Journey of Black Professionals in Green Careers*. It is by far the most innovative recruitment resource that we have encountered.

## FEATURED PARK



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

### Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Oklahoma



**FACT 1:** Herds of plains bison, Rocky Mountain elk, and Texas longhorn cattle that were relocated to the refuge between 1907 and 1927 **remain there today**. Unfortunately, similar attempts to introduce big horn sheep, American pronghorn antelope, and prairie chicken to these originally Comanche lands were unsuccessful.

**FACT 2:** The refuge was the site of the first of many notable federal land tussles following WWII. Citing the need to train on new long-range rocket artillery at Fort Sill, the US Army attempted to leverage the 1955 Defense Appropriations bill to forcibly acquire 10,700 acres of the bordering refuge. Conservation organizations and the Interior Department successfully thwarted the title transfer, although about 3,000 acres were designated as a military buffer zone with restrictions on public access.

Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park [here](#) so our subscribers can learn about it.

# PARK PERKS

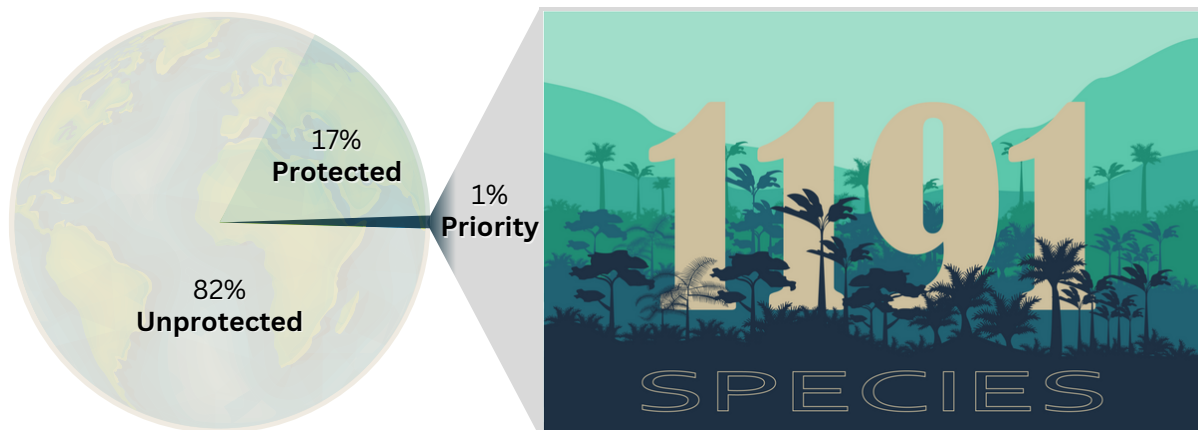


Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

While conservationists often seek to maximize the *quantity* of protected areas, an [article](#) published this year in the journal *Science Advances* reveals just how critical the *quality* of protections can be. While creating habitat maps for 4,946 terrestrial vertebrate species on the IUCN Red List, the authors assessed the overlap of each species' suitable habitat with historical protected areas according to the World Database of Protected Areas.

The authors found that while about 17% of global land area has been formally designated as protected to some extent, more than **278 million hectares** of protected land have been threatened by weakened legal protections. They also discovered that about 70% of the species assessed were either not protected in parks, lived in parks with weakened protections, or were particularly vulnerable to land-use conversion.

## Prioritization of Unprotected Areas



Fortunately, when coupled with strengthened protections for existing parks, even small increases in protected areas can have major impacts. The authors assessed that by improving protections and increasing the park range across *only 1%* of global land area, **1191 vertebrate species** could be safeguarded from extinction through critical habitat preservation. For example, protecting less than 0.02% of Indonesia's land area (33,000 hectares) would provide protection for *53 species* not currently represented in parks.

Why are cottonwoods trending on Instagram?

PLAY  GROUND

they're really poplar

Last week's answer key

