

We are thrilled to join our partnered organizations and communities in celebrating this week's establishment of the country's 425th national park:

Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument

FEATURED PARK



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

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum Pennsylvania

FACT 1: Established in 1972 as the Tinicum National Environment Center, this protected area in Philadelphia's southern corner is the country's **first** urban refuge.

FACT 2: Although the refuge contains the state's **largest** remaining freshwater tidal marsh, Tinicum Marsh is only a *trace* of its pre-colonial condition and size. The refuge and community have faced a seemingly endless cascade of pollution, urban development, and environmental injustices. The impacts of dredging fill, river diking, oil spills, solid waste landfills, airport runway expansion, and interstate highway encroachment are still being encountered today.

PHOTO CREDIT: FOHR

FACT 3: Protections have assisted the marsh's recovery, which provides a critical habitat and migratory stopover for egrets, herons, rails, wrens, and, very fittingly for the country's one-time capital, *bald eagles*.

PHOTO CREDIT: EFNC

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

PARK PERKS



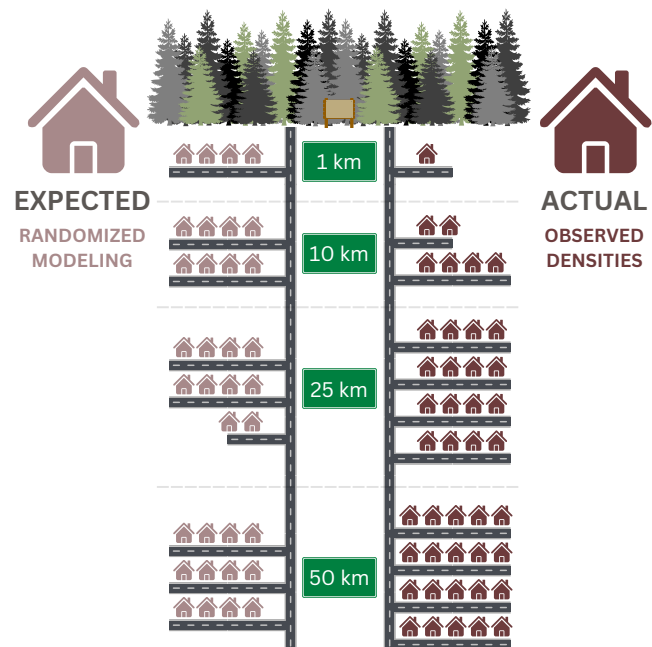
Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

While strictly protected areas are intended to *limit* the extent of development, a 2020 study published in *Conservation Science and Practice* suggests that, in the absence of other land use restrictions, they often incentivize it. Using existing land use datasets, the authors assessed the change in housing density and impervious surface coverage within 50km of 6,644 US parks from 1990-2010. After comparing actual protected areas to a randomized map more evenly distributing park coverage, they then analyzed the relationship between proximity to parks and development.

The study suggests that areas within 50km of protected areas have had generally higher rates of housing density increase and impervious area increase, but these effects vary depending on *distance*. Among the most highly-protected areas (GAP I), the greatest growth in housing density occurred 10-50km from boundaries, while only minor growth was observed at 1 km. On average, these peripheral areas experienced a 72% increase in housing density and a 16% increase in impervious surface coverage from 1990-2010. Across parks of all protection statuses, observed housing density at 10km was **five times greater than expected**.

Development Near Parks

Areas with highest protection status (GAP I)



Protected areas are often believed to be forever safeguarded from development, but the authors argue that recent housing expansion should not be ignored: **near-park effects** such as habitat fragmentation, noise pollution, and groundwater depletion can significantly harm protected area ecosystems. Park managers must work with gateway residents and officials to analyze and mitigate the impacts of park-adjacent housing development.

Can you identify this jagged national park?

PLAY  GROUND

Hint: the outline even *looks* like a fossil

