



The Institute thanks all of those who honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by contributing to service projects around the United States. A Census Bureau article published last week illustrates just how this National Day of Service has helped increase volunteerism and civic engagement in every region of the country.

FEATURED PARK



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

Reelfoot Lake State Park Tennessee

FACT 1: Reelfoot Lake was created by a series of massive earthquakes - the **strongest** ever recorded in the Eastern US - that struck the region in winter of 1811-1812. The earthquakes were so powerful that the adjacent Mississippi River **flowed backwards** for a short period, overflowing its southern banks and flooding the forest that is now Reelfoot Lake.



FACT 2: Reelfoot is Tennessee's **largest** natural lake, yet its average depth is only **5.5 feet**. With its blend of marshland, cypress swamp, and bottomland hardwood forest habitat, the lake is considered one of the best bird watching areas in the state. Over 200 bird species have been seen in the area, including bald eagles, gulls, ospreys, and even white pelicans.



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

Artificial lighting is inescapable in the modern world, and the light pollution it creates is increasingly difficult to avoid or ignore. The preservation of *natural* darkness, however, may be one of the most overlooked of all park benefits. While the negative impacts of light pollution on parks' organisms, ecosystems, and visitors are well-established, we review an [article](#) this week that examines the prevalence of light pollution in some of the most popular US national parks and considers ways to *mitigate* these impacts. Published in 2018 by the USDA's Northern Research Station, the paper describes six principles of sustainable outdoor lighting informed by light pollution research in park systems and historic landscapes around the world.

Sustainable Park Lighting Principles



Minimize Light Used

Perform a task-based assessment of lighting needs and ensure minimum lighting used per task



Light Only *If* Needed

Consider non-lighting options for mitigating risk in hazard areas (reflective surfaces, open sight lines, etc.)



Light Only *Where* Needed

Increase the precision of lighting systems to illuminate only intended areas



Light Only *When* Needed

Disable or dim lighting when no longer needed, and/or when natural light is available



Use Warmest Tones Possible

Choose warm light tones to reduce human and environmental impacts



Use Most Efficient Lights Possible

Invest savings from energy efficiency towards non-lighting alternatives

By outlining this series of especially effective mitigation approaches, the article provides a clear basis for national park policy towards light pollution. In addition to its value for park managers, the article can serve as a template for light pollution control efforts in almost any outdoor setting.

PLAY GROUND

How are good carbon markets rewarded?

they get all the credit



Conservation Data & Communication Fellowship

Applications are still being accepted for this 2024 fellowship experience. Learn more [here](#) about supporting NPCA's Conservation Science team and their priority 30x30 landscapes.