



Yellowstone became the first national park in 1872, but the National Park Service was not established until 1916. For four decades the nation's parks, reserves, and monuments were supervised at different times by the departments of War, Agriculture, and the Interior. Although the idea of national parks enjoyed broad popular and congressional support by the early twentieth century, there was some resistance to converting reserves and monuments into new national parks. This was partially the result of a lack of coordinated policy and leadership in financing and administering the parks that already existed. Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane's appointment of Stephen Tyng Mather as the first Superintendent of Parks (1915-29) did much to alter the situation. Mather was a leader in the transformation of the poorly managed and underfinanced national parks and monuments into the centrally administered National Park Service. Under his dynamic leadership, Grand Canyon, Acadia, Bryce, Zion, Lassen, Hawaii, and Mount McKinley National Parks were established. He successfully lobbied for enabling legislation that ensured the future creation of other parks, including those that involved purchase from private owners in the eastern United States, such as Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave.

The national parks of today are public resources for recreation, education, scholarship, and the preservation of endangered landscapes, natural communities, and species. They exist in twenty-five states as well as

the Virgin Islands, and include areas as diverse as the "river of grass" that makes up the Everglades, the mountains and valleys of Yosemite, the volcanoes of Hawaii, and the Denali Wilderness of Alaska. Some of them were purchased by private individuals who then generously gave them to the nation; others were taken from the public domain in order to protect them from agricultural or commercial development and exploitation.

US National Parks:

Acadia
 American Samoa
 Arches

 Badlands
 Big Bend
 Biscayne
 Black Canyon of the Gunnison
 Bryce Canyon

 Cabrillo
 Canyonlands
 Capitol Reef
 Carlsbad Caverns
 Channel Islands
 Congaree
 Crater Lake
 Cuyahoga Valley

 Death Valley
 Denali
 Dry Tortugas

 Everglades

 Gates of the Arctic
 Gettysburg National Military Park
 Glacier
 Glacier Bay
 Grand Canyon
 Grand Teton
 Great Basin
 Great Sand Dunes
 Great Smoky Mountains
 Guadalupe Mountains

 Haleakala
 Hawai'i Volcanoes
 Harpers Ferry
 Hot Springs

Isle Royale

 Joshua Tree

 Katmai
 Kenai Fjords
 Kings Canyon
 Kobuk Valley

 Lake Clark
 Lassen Volcanic

 Mammoth Cave
 Mesa Verde
 Mount Rainier

 North Cascades

 Organ Pipe Cactus
 Olympic

 Petrified Forest

 Pinnacles

 Redwood
 Rocky Mountain

 Saguaro
 Sequoia
 Shenandoah

 Theodore Roosevelt

 Valley Forge
 Virgin Islands
 Voyageurs

 Wind Cave
 Wrangell–St. Elias

 Yellowstone
 Yosemite

 Zion



Well, I was going to say that National Parks is a small, but rewarding category, but I notice that Ed Brassard had 5,624 back in 2010, so I guess it's not that small!

As can be seen here, there are some nice oldies in this category, and some nice sets, as well. But, nostalgia, perhaps, might be the biggest draw in this category. Almost everyone has been to at least one national park, and the memories certainly last a lifetime.

And, don't forget that there are covers and boxes from national parks around the world. Canada, right next door, for example, certainly has its contributions to make here. Plus, I know for certain there's a nice cover from the Manu National Park in Peru; boxes from Fuji-Hakone National Park in Japan; Shikotsu-Toya National Park, also in Japan; Mount Cook National Park, in New Zealand; the Virgin Islands National Park, and so on.

