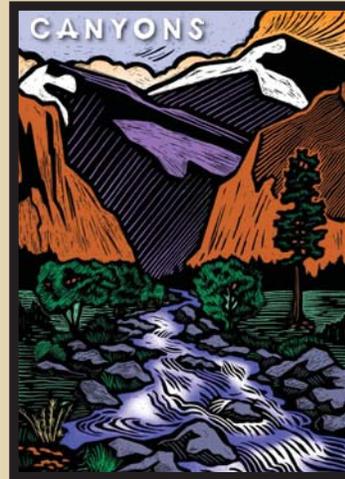




Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks & Sequoia National Forest/Giant Sequoia National Monument



Three years of celebrations

This year, many spectacular areas are celebrating a 50th anniversary. Since 1964, lands in 44 states have been designated wild by law. This includes over 96% of these two parks, which is *also* protected as wilderness.

Wilderness areas protect many values: wildlife habitat, natural ecosystems, ancient and historic sites, waterways, and scenic beauty. They give us a protected, wild laboratory in which to study. They offer primitive recreation and solitude, challenge and self-reliance. In these landscapes, nature calls the shots.

Next year we celebrate three more anniversaries in these two national parks: the 125th birthday of Sequoia, the 75th year of Kings Canyon, and one more....

How can two parks have three anniversaries? A bit of history: Two weeks after Congress designated Sequoia National Park on September 25, 1890, they passed another

bill. That law not only created Yosemite National Park, but called out General Grant Grove as a small but stunning national park in its own right. It, too, turns 125 in 2015.

However, in 1940, Congress swept General Grant National Park into the boundary of a new national park—the glorious Kings Canyon

— which turns 75 next year.

Come 2016, we celebrate the entire park system that gives us such amazing places to see and explore. Created in 1916, the National Park Service will be 100 years old.

Special programs and events are planned for 2015 and 2016. Join us in celebrating national parks!



High in the park wilderness, a pika harvests food for winter. This guinea-pig-sized cousin of the rabbit stores grasses in little "haystacks" in its tunnels. Rather than hibernating, pikas stay active all winter under the snow. Photo courtesy of Isaac Chellman

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