



## Publication Review

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## Fire and Active Conservation in National Parks

Abella, S.R. 2015. *Conserving America's national parks*. CreateSpace, Charleston, SC. 200 pp.  
<https://sites.google.com/site/conservingnationalparks/>

A 2015 publication titled "Conserving America's National Parks" provides a review of active conservation projects unfolding in U.S. national parks. The publication corresponds with the 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service. The book was nation-wide, and included the Mojave Desert parks.

The Mojave Desert contains 25% of the land area of national parks in the lower 48 states. The largest (Death Valley), third (Mojave Preserve), fourth (Lake Mead NRA), and tenth (Joshua Tree) largest parks occur in the Mojave Desert.

Partly corresponding with pervasive invasion of non-native grasses, fire activity has increased. Over 140,000 acres of national park land in the Mojave Desert burned in the last 20 years. This has created challenges for conserving fundamental park resources, such as Joshua trees as the namesake of Joshua Tree National Park.

The publication presents several examples of fire management in parks, such as: surveying 2,000 miles of roadsides and trails for non-native plants in the eastern Mojave Desert, reconstructing past climate and vegetation conditions during the Medieval Warm Period around Death Valley as a baseline for management, and conserving desert tortoises under changing habitat conditions.

Examples of other fire management projects in parks outside the Mojave covered in the publication include the first prescribed burns in

### Management Implications

- Carefully planned non-native plant control, restoration, and fire reintroduction projects have frequently produced conservation benefits relative to no action in degraded or threatened national park ecosystems
- Publications that are designed to be engaging for citizens, policymakers, and other stakeholders can benefit managers by fostering support for active conservation management

the Everglades, increasing tundra fires in Alaskan parks, chaparral fires in the Santa Monica Mountains, and the 1988 Yellowstone fires.

The publication did not receive any funding and was prepared through Natural Resource Conservation LLC. The publication is available at cost, including discounts for bulk orders for education, conservation, and agency offices.

