National Parks are so many things to so many people. Outdoor classrooms, places of healing and respite from our busy and stressful lives, places to challenge our minds and bodies in a natural playground, and places to feel a sense of calm and serenity within the immense diversity and beauty of an expanse of untrammeled wilderness. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, said, “There is nothing so American as our national parks…. The fundamental idea behind the parks…is that the country belongs to the people, for the enrichment of the lives of all of us.”

Great Basin National Park Foundation is contributing to this sacred American ideal. Making certain that whether in good times, or times of unprecedented challenge– our beloved National Park is preserved, enhanced, and protected for present and future generations

With your help, we are safeguarding Great Basin dark skies through research, outreach, and education. We are bringing the Park to youth near and far, increasing access, supporting science education through Parks as classrooms, and inspiring a new generation of National Park stewards. We are safeguarding Great Basin’s pristine land, water, and air through proactive advocacy. And we are improving today’s and tomorrow’s National Park visitor experience through supporting volunteers, interns and new wayside exhibits.

“The Great Basin National Park Foundation is the primary partner, our “friend’s group,” for Great Basin National Park. The park is lucky that our friend’s group is chock full of talented and effective people who help us do the job of preserving and interpreting the incredible Great Basin. Thank you Guardians of Great Basin!”

James Woolsey, Great Basin National Park Superintendent
Great Basin Observatory

With the darkest, clearest, and most stable skies in the contiguous U.S., Great Basin National Park is recognized as one of the best National Parks for gazing at the cosmos. Great Basin National Park Foundation supports Great Basin astronomy programs and the GBO, the only research-grade astronomical observatory located in a National Park. The observatory connects students, the public, and Park visitors to Great Basin dark sky preservation, research, and education. Remote operation made the GBO an even more valuable teaching resource during the pandemic, with students researching double star and black hole systems, and imaging far off galaxies. We also reached new budding astronomers and Great Basin enthusiasts this year through scientist videos, virtual research seminars, and virtual star parties. Learn more at greatbasinobservatory.org

Reach for the Stars

brings Great Basin National Park to students locally, regionally, and nationally. Focused on connecting youth to the Great Basin through science, the Foundation is helping to grow a new generation of devoted National Park friends and public land stewards. Before the pandemic we distributed Star Box teaching kits to elementary schools in gateway Park communities and instructed 30 educators in their use. In the spring we shifted our outreach to virtual, supporting shuttered schools by creating 14 new lesson plans designed for the homeschool, hybrid, or remote learning environment. We also reached 180 youth in virtual visits to Great Basin National Park and 50 educators in a virtual training. Going virtual has broadened our reach. Thanks to a grant from the National Park Trust, our virtual presentations are now able to reach students nationwide.

GBO highlights from 2020

49 GBO researchers
21 research projects
8 virtual presentations
1,150 attendees at virtual events

Photo: Charles Reed, Comet Neowise traveling behind ancient Bristlecone Pine Trees at Great Basin National Park
Visitor Experience, Education, and Advocacy

Great Basin National Park has some of the wildest and most isolated terrain of any unit in the National Park System. From craggy peaks to gentle sagebrush covered foothills, from alpine lakes to intricately connected underground limestone caverns, the vastness, serene wild beauty, and solace of the Park was especially appreciated this year, during a worldwide pandemic. Park management kept visitors and staff safe, and Great Basin National Park Foundation is stepping in to help cover needs arising from the half-million dollar budgetary shortfall due to cave tour and campground fee disruptions. In 2021, we will be supporting three specialized astronomy interns to shore up 2021 interpretive staffing needs. We will continue to support the Bioblitz citizen science inventory and the Astronomy festival, and have created the framework to support new Artist in Residence and Scientist in Residence programs.

We continue to support the Great Basin National Park visitor experience with investments in wayside exhibits, improved access and safety, and operating an educational program, all of which cannot be achieved with limited National Park service budgets. Our mission is to passionately work to enhance, preserve, and interpret the starry night skies, wide-open scenery, cultural heritage, and diverse native ecosystems of Great Basin National Park. Diversity will be considered a priority as we plan, carry out and review our work to ensure the Park and its surroundings remain safeguarded for ecosystem health and the enjoyment of future generations.

If you made a financial or in-kind contribution this year, we thank you! If not, we encourage you to join our passionate group of Great Basin Guardians today!

Learn more at greatbasinfoundation.org

Improved visitor experience, safety & understanding:

- Sculptured bronze relief map of Wheeler Peak Cirque installed at Mather Overlook
- New Bristlecone Trail wayside exhibits to replace outdated and vandalized signs
- Osceola trail kiosk to improve visitor safety and education

Advocating for protection:
Statement made against oil and gas drilling on public lands adjacent to the Park

Photo: Stella Lake below Wheeler Peak, National Park Service
Thank You - 2020 Guardians

Individual Donors

Stellar Guardian, $5,000 - $24,999
Norman C. Pease
Bill and Holly Wilson

Bristlecone Guardian $1,000 - $4,999
Steven Brown
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Gary Donaldson and Kody Wallace
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Photo: Bristlecone Pine Tree, Brian Anderson
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