John Muir
Father of Our National Park System

John Muir was one of America’s most famous naturalists. He has often been called the “Father of Our National Parks.” He was also an inventor, a rancher, a writer, and explorer.

Muir was born in Scotland in 1838 and came to the U.S. at the age of 11. As a boy in Wisconsin, he roamed the woods whenever he could find time. As an adult, Muir would explore much of the country on foot.

In 1867, Muir walked one thousand miles from Indianapolis to the Gulf of Mexico. In 1868, he walked across the San Joaquin Valley and into the Sierra Nevada mountains for the first time.

Over the years, Muir would travel to Alaska, Australia, South America, Africa, and Europe.

In 1890, largely because of John Muir’s efforts, an act of Congress created Yosemite National Park. Muir was also personally involved in the creation of Sequoia, Mount Rainier, Petrified Forest and Grand Canyon National Parks.

His writings convinced many people of the need to protect wilderness. He also led trips into the wilderness to show why it was worth protecting. In 1903, he took a famous trip with President Teddy Roosevelt.

Muir founded the Sierra Club in 1892 to protect the wild places and the mountains that he had grown to love.

National Park Resources

Sierra Club and the National Parks
Learn about the Sierra Club’s work to protect our national parks through our interactive map. Get tips for visiting the parks and more!

www.sierraclub.org/parks

National Park Service
Find detailed information on each national park, learn about upcoming events and more.

www.nps.gov

John Muir Exhibit Website
The Sierra Club hosts the John Muir Exhibit website, which is the most comprehensive resource about John Muir on the Internet.

www.johnmuir.info

The National Parks: America’s Best Idea
Watch clips of Ken Burns documentary on the history of our national parks and use additional online resources on the PBS website.

www.pbs.org/nationalparks