

US adopts plan to phase out single-use plastics at national parks

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The US government on Thursday announced plans to phase out single-

use plastics on public lands, including the country's famous national parks, by 2032.

"Plastic waste is a priority environmental problem," said a statement from the Interior Department, the agency that oversees federally managed lands.

Much of the single-use [plastic waste](#) generated in federally run national parks, [wildlife refuges](#) and conservation lands comes from [water bottles](#), bags or utensils, all of which are being targeted in the phaseout.

"Plastics, including unnecessary and easily substituted single-use plastic products, are devastating fish and wildlife around the world," the Interior Department said, noting that "less than 10 percent of the plastic that has ever been produced has been recycled, and recycling rates are not increasing."

The Interior Department move stems from a 2022 initiative from Secretary Deb Haaland, which aimed at phasing out [single-use plastics](#) within a decade.

On Thursday, the department announced that "all bureaus and offices have finalized sustainable procurement plans."

"Interior facilities across the nation, including national parks... have made progress with key efforts" so far including installing water bottle filling stations, increasing recycling and working with concession operators to reduce the amount of plastic bottles, bags and utensils available, the statement said.

Christy Leavitt, campaign director for the environmental organization Oceana, praised the move, while also calling on the government to speed up the implementation of the phaseout.

The plans finalized Thursday "will be updated in 2024, to include stepdown targets and additional details on where and how single-use plastics will be eliminated," the Interior Department said.

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