

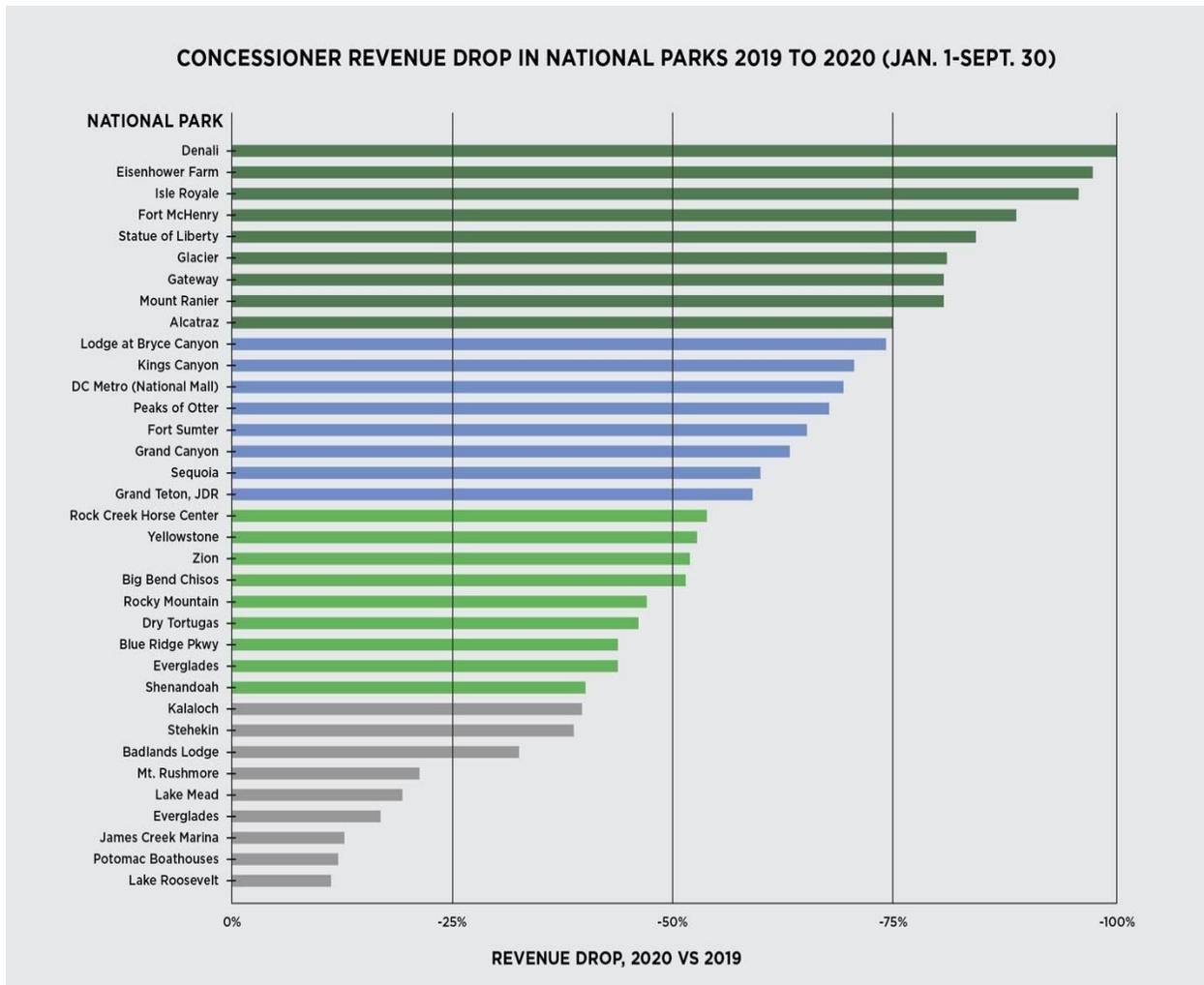


## New Survey Reveals Continued Impacts of COVID-19 on National Park Enjoyment

**Washington, D.C. (October 26, 2020)** – Protecting the health of park visitors and those serving them during visits continues to come at a substantial cost. While there are some encouraging signs of public interest in visiting parks, coronavirus safety measures are resulting in diminished support for these park visitors and major economic disruption for key public lands partners and the people they employ.

Concessioners in national parks provide park visitors with food and beverages, transportation, lodging, guide and outfitter services, as well as retail outlets that offer groceries, outdoor equipment, Native American art and more. Prior to the pandemic, concessioners employed nearly 25,000 seasonal and year-round employees in parks and provided \$135 million annually to the National Park Service (NPS) in franchise fees.

NPHA’s latest survey of more than 40 concession operations showed an average decline in January-September revenues of nearly 60 percent. New data shows that nearly half of reporting concessioners (19 of 41) continue to report revenue declines of more than 60 percent. Eight more reported declines of between 50 and 60 percent, and six reported declines of between 40 and 50 percent. No concessioner reported a decline of less than 11 percent.



Concessions operations reporting the greatest declines included large lodging operations and major transportation providers. The declines resulted from compliance with CDC and other health code guidelines on social distancing (impacting dining and passenger capacities on ferries), virtual cessation of international and group tourism in March 2020, and the inability to open operations because of staffing losses associated with in-park employee housing restrictions. Unfortunately, problems in international and long-haul travel, employee housing, and food and beverage operations are expected to persist in 2021, and the U.S. Travel Association predicts that the number of US domestic leisure person-trips in 2019 (1.858 billion) will not be reached again until 2023.

National park concessioner employment, typically reaching 25,000 during peak season, dropped in 2020 by an estimated 70 percent. Concessioner payments to NPS in franchise fees and to local and state governments in tourism taxes are estimated to have declined by roughly 60 percent. For NPS alone, that constitutes a likely decline for 2020 of over \$50,000,000 as many of the hardest-hit concessions are high franchise fee rate contracts.

Seasonality is a major factor in park visitor services, further complicating the economic health of many NPHA members who will see limited income over the 2020-2021 winter season.

NPHA will continue to track the historic impacts of this virus on visitor safety and enjoyment and on the status of park partners foundational to the public lands experience. More information is available at [www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org)

**About the National Park Hospitality Association:**

*The National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) – is the national trade association of the businesses that provide lodging, food services, gifts and souvenirs, equipment rentals, transportation, and other visitor services in the National Park System. Concessioners have played an important role in creating lasting national park memories for more than 125 years. Concessioners operate in more than 100 national park units with combined sales exceeding \$1.6 billion annually and \$150+ million in franchise and related fees paid to the National Park Service each year. The in-park concessioner workforce of some 25,000 persons assists visitors an estimated 100 million times annually. Information on national park concessioners is at [www.parkpartners.org](http://www.parkpartners.org).*