



# Before They're Gone: A Family's Year-Long Quest to Explore America's Most Endangered National Parks

Michael Lanza

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A lifelong backpacker, Michael Lanza knows our national parks like the back of his hand. As a father of two, he hopes to share these special places with his kids. But he has seen firsthand the changes wrought by global warming and understands what lies ahead: melting glaciers, disappearing species, and inundated coastlines. To Lanza, it feels like the house he grew up in is being looted. Painfully aware of the ecological--and spiritual--calamity that global warming will bring to our nation's parks, Lanza is determined to show his children these wonders before they have changed forever.

He takes his nine-year-old son, Nate, and seven-year-old daughter, Alex, on an ambitious journey to see as many climate-threatened wild places as he can fit into a year: backpacking in the Grand Canyon, Glacier, the North Cascades, Mt. Rainier, Rocky Mountain, and along the wild Olympic coast; sea kayaking in Alaska's Glacier Bay; hiking to Yosemite's waterfalls; rock climbing in Joshua Tree National Park; cross-country skiing in Yellowstone; and canoeing in the Everglades.

Through these adventures, Lanza shares the beauty of each place, and shows how his children connect with nature when given "unscripted" time. Ultimately, he writes, this is more their story than his, for whatever comes of our changing world, they are the ones who will live in it.

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