

Don Barger founded the National Parks Conservation Association's Southeast Regional Office in 1992. His work in the region since that time contributed to a groundswell of public attention to the issue of air pollution at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Don shepherded a "lands unsuitable for mining" petition filed jointly by NPCA and the City of Middlesboro, KY that resulted in protection of the Fern Lake watershed adjacent to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. In another watershed nearby, Don was successful in helping to stop a proposal for a water supply dam upstream from the Obed Wild and Scenic River, forcing local utility districts into regional planning, and creating an ongoing Eastern Streams program that has set important precedents at the Buffalo National River and elsewhere. He also played integral roles in stopping a mountainside mining operation next to the Roan Highlands in North Carolina and in brokering an agreement to end forever the threat of the North Shore Road within Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Don was recognized by both the National Park Service and the Trust for Public Land for his role in assuring the renovation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta and was commended on the Congressional Record for his efforts to preserve Cumberland Island National Seashore.

Before joining NPCA, Don directed the Citizens' Mining Project for the Environmental Policy Institute in Washington and worked as a community organizer in the coalfields of East Tennessee. Don holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.