

**STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES OF THE HOUSE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET
REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

April 12, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on the 2014 President's budget request for the National Park Service (NPS).

Introduction

The 2014 President's budget request proposes total discretionary appropriations of \$2.6 billion for the NPS. This is a net increase of \$56.6 million above 2012 enacted discretionary appropriations. The request fully funds \$30.5 million in fixed costs and includes a net program increase of \$26.1 million. The budget proposes targeted increases totaling \$66.3 million to fund essential programs and emerging operational needs. Reflecting the President's call for fiscal discipline and sustainability, the budget also includes \$40.3 million in reductions in park and program operations, construction, heritage partnership programs, and state conservation grants. The request also includes an estimated \$479.1 million in mandatory appropriations, a net increase of \$59.4 million, the majority of the increase resulting from new proposals to fund land acquisition and grants to state and local governments for recreation from mandatory authority. In total, the request includes budget authority of \$3.1 billion.

The 2014 budget supports continued stewardship of the Nation's most cherished resources through the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative. Through partnerships with

States and others, America's Great Outdoors is a landmark investment in engaging people in the outdoors and expanding opportunities for recreation and conservation of our Nation's natural and cultural heritage. The NPS will continue to carry on its stewardship of these resources of national significance and to provide enriching experiences and enjoyment for all visitors.

Sustaining funding for park operations is a key component of this initiative. We recognize the value the 401 national parks provide all Americans – as places of introspection and recreation, and as economic engines that create jobs and help our gateway communities thrive. A new economic impact report was recently released which shows visitor spending in national parks in 2011 generated more than \$30 billion of sales which supported more than 252,000 jobs in the U.S. economy. The President's budget will ensure that national parks continue to serve the visitors who come every year to relax and recreate in America's great outdoors and learn about the people and places that make up America's story. In 2012, nearly 287 million visitors came to our national parks.

In addition to this important initiative, the NPS has begun a strategic approach to prepare for our Centennial year in 2016. The National Park Service's "*A Call to Action*" is a recommitment to the exemplary stewardship and public enjoyment of our national parks, calling upon NPS employees and partners to commit to 39 actions that advance the Service toward a shared vision for strengthening our parks through 2016 and into our second century. With one year under our belt, three actions have been completed and three new actions have been added. The 2014 budget supports "*A Call to Action*" as the guiding strategy for creating a more relevant service for the next century.

Budget Summary

The 2014 President's Budget requests increases and maintains funding for various programs that support the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative. The Operation of the National Park System, which is a key component to America's Great Outdoors initiative and funds the operations of our 401 parks and related programs, is proposed to be funded at \$2.3 billion, \$48.4 million over 2012 enacted.

A total of \$100.4 million is requested for Land Acquisition and State Assistance within discretionary appropriations, a net decrease of \$1.5 million from 2012 enacted. This funding is critical to achieving the goals inherent in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965. The budget includes \$60.4 million for Federal land acquisition and administration, a programmatic increase of \$3.4 million compared to 2012 enacted. Of this total, \$32.4 million will be used to acquire high-priority lands from willing sellers within national parks, and leverage other Federal resources, along with those of non-Federal partners, to achieve shared conservation outcome goals through acquisitions in high-priority landscapes. Within funding for Federal land acquisition \$9.0 million is maintained for matching grants to states and local entities to acquire civil war battlefield sites outside of the national park system. The budget also includes \$40.0 million for the State Conservation Grants program and its administration.

The budget proposal includes \$10.0 million in discretionary appropriations to reinvigorate the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program to provide direct Federal assistance to eligible urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities, as well as encourage systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance

of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. The majority of the increase supports competitive grants.

In addition, the Administration also is proposing mandatory funding authority for LWCF programs through a separate legislative proposal. Mandatory funding will increase financial certainty needed to build local and community partnerships in conservation and optimize valuable investments by leveraging other Federal and non-Federal funds. This proposal would provide an additional \$55.2 million for NPS LWCF programs; including \$30.2 million for Federal land acquisition, \$20.0 million for LWCF State Conservation grants; and \$5.0 million in Urban Park and Recreation Recovery grants.

The budget sustains funding for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program at the 2012 level, which will help communities promote their own vision of livability, sustainability, and responsibility and assist partners in successfully utilizing the array of resources and tools available through Federal agencies and nongovernmental groups. The RTCA helps promote the values of health, conservation, and enjoyment of our Nation's resources with a valuable return on investment through on-the-ground projects, such as river restoration and the creation of walking and biking trails. Funding also is sustained for American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance Grants, which assist partners with the preservation of non-Federal historic battlefields at the local level. The budget proposes a \$3.0 million increase for the Historic Preservation Fund, which supports Historic Preservation Offices in States, Territories, and tribal lands for the preservation of historically and culturally significant sites and other responsibilities defined under the National Historic Preservation Act. The \$3.0 million increase

will fund a new, competitive grant program targeted toward communities that are currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places. These grants will be used to conduct the surveying, community engagement, and other pre-nomination activities to ensure that the National Register of Historic Places is representative of the full spectrum of the Nation's cultural heritage.

Operation of the National Park System

The 2014 budget proposes \$2.3 billion for the Operation of the National Park System, an increase of \$48.4 million from 2012. The request for operations funds increased fixed costs of \$28.9 million and \$40.0 million in targeted program increases. These increases are partially offset with \$20.6 million in program reductions to park operations and programs.

An increase of \$6.0 million will support the Department's Cooperative Landscape Conservation initiative. This increase has two components, \$5.0 million for Climate Change Adaptive Management tools, and \$1.0 million for work on biological carbon sequestration. Other strategic increases proposed related to resource stewardship include \$5.2 million to control invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels. An increase of \$5.0 million is requested to competitively fund the highest priority natural resource project needs at parks, and \$3.0 million would be used to combat white-nose syndrome in bats and help preserve important cave habitats and bat populations. Resource management and science needs at parks such as management of native bison populations and preservation of natural resources including the Merced River at Yosemite National Park would be addressed with an increase of \$2.1 million. Expansion of ocean and coastal stewardship activities would be accomplished with an increase of \$1.3 million.

An increase of \$1.2 million would ensure a science-based response to proposed energy development adjacent to parks, and \$750,000 will fund NPS participation in inter-agency AGO projects to demonstrate ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation. Dark night skies would be further protected and restored with an increase of \$700,000, and an additional \$653,000 will fund wilderness stewardship activities. An additional \$500,000 is requested for Alaska mapping activities. Cultural resource stewardship is supported through a \$2.1 million request to develop a geographic information system to better manage cultural and historic sites.

Increases proposed also include those which will provide for enhancement of visitor experiences and protection of visitors and resources, including \$920,000 to provide educational and interpretive opportunities for visitors with visual or hearing impairments by creating accessible exhibits and brochures. Accessibility of NPS infrastructure will be improved with an increase of \$2.0 million, of which a portion will also focus on energy and water efficiency. Youth engagement and employment opportunities will be increased with an additional \$1.0 million request. An increase of \$600,000 for U.S. Park Police operations will provide additional patrols and administrative support at national icons in Washington, D.C. and New York City.

Additionally, the budget funds priority emerging needs such as \$2.0 million to enhance internal controls and improve financial and programmatic accountability throughout the national park system. An increase of \$1.6 million will support implementation of the Financial and Business Management System, and an increase of \$762,000 will fund fee and rate increases for water and sewer service provided by the District of Columbia at national park sites in the District of Columbia. Lastly, \$2.1 million is requested to fund operational needs at new or recently expanded national park units and critical new responsibilities across the park system.

Of the reductions, park base operations are reduced by \$18.4 million. These reductions would be applied in a manner to minimize the impact on the visitor experience and park resources. This reduction would have impacts on the level of services provided to visitors and the level of operational maintenance parks are able to achieve; however, by ensuring flexibility in the implementation of reductions, park managers would be able to develop measures that minimize the impact of these reductions on park visitors to ensure their safety and that of our employees and the protection of park resources. All specific reductions in budgetary resources and the areas of reduction would be determined based on a park's mission, goals, and operational realities.

Land Acquisition and State Assistance

The 2014 budget proposes \$100.4 million for discretionary Federal Land Acquisition and State Conservation Grants, a net decrease of \$1.5 million from the 2012 enacted level. This includes a programmatic increase of \$3.4 million for Federal Land Acquisition and a programmatic reduction of \$5.2 million for State Assistance. Fixed cost increases for the total account are \$246,000.

Of the total amount, \$60.4 million is proposed to be available for Federal land acquisition projects and administration, including \$9.0 million to provide grants to states and communities to preserve and protect threatened Civil War battlefield sites outside the national park system through American Battlefield Protection Program land acquisition grants. This amount also included \$32.4 million for NPS Federal land acquisition projects. The 2014 land acquisition project request totals over 10,900 acres of the highest priority acquisitions. As required by law, the proposed tracts are located within authorized park boundaries.

The budget also proposes \$40.0 million for State Conservation Grants and administration. Of this total, \$36.4 million is proposed for State Conservation Grants, to be apportioned to the states in accordance with the long-standing formula.

Additionally, a proposal to fund a portion of NPS land acquisition and recreation grants from the LWCF as a mandatory appropriation would provide an additional \$30.2 million to the NPS for Federal land acquisition projects, and an additional \$20.0 million for the State Conservation Grants program. The new authority will provide a level of stability to address the significant acreage that has been identified as endangered or important to the NPS mission, and will allow States to better plan their efforts from year to year. Funding will target an additional 5,727 acres in two parks and seven trails and will support an additional 150 grants to states.

Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery

The 2014 budget requests \$10.0 million to reinvigorate the Urban Parks and Recreation Fund, to be appropriated from the LWCF. The budget requests \$9.5 million for matching grants to improve existing recreational opportunities in urban communities which will fund 15 to 18 projects in urban cities and counties that represent the most physically and economically distressed communities nationwide. The remaining \$500,000 will be provided for administration of the program.

Additionally, the proposal to fund a portion of NPS land acquisition and recreation grants from the LWCF as a mandatory appropriation will provide an additional \$5.0 million for UPARR

grants. Another 10 to 12 projects will be funded from the mandatory funds, and the permanent appropriation will allow for consistent funding and long-term planning for grant recipients.

National Recreation and Preservation

The National Recreation and Preservation appropriation funds programs that support local and community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. The 2014 budget includes \$52.0 million, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$547,000 and a programmatic reduction of \$8.4 million for National Heritage Areas (NHAs), for a net change of \$7.8 million below 2012. The proposed reduction supports the directive in the 2010 Interior Appropriations Act for the more established NHAs to work toward becoming more self-sufficient, yet still promotes the long-term sustainability of NHAs and the continued importance of Federal seed money for less mature areas.

The budget sustains funding for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, which assists and empowers communities to protect their own special places and enhance local outdoor recreation opportunities; and American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance Grants, which provide grants to assist partners with the preservation of threatened historic battlefields not on NPS lands. Both programs are key components of the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Historic Preservation Fund

The Historic Preservation Fund appropriation supports Historic Preservation Offices in States, Territories, and tribal lands for the preservation of historically and culturally significant sites and to carry out other responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act. For 2014, the budget requests \$58.9 million, an increase of \$3.0 million compared to 2012. The \$3.0 million

increase will fund a new, competitive grant program targeted toward communities that are currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places. The grant funds will be used by recipients to survey and nominate properties associated with communities currently underrepresented in the national Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks. Funding will allow the NPS to increase the number of minority and underrepresented properties listed on the National Register by an estimated 300 per year. The request also provides \$46.9 million for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories, and nearly \$9.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to Tribes.

Construction

The budget proposes \$160.0 million for Construction, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$878,000 and a net programmatic increase of \$3.7 million, for a total change of \$4.6 million above 2012 levels.

Line item construction is requested at \$83.1 million, \$5.3 million above 2012. The request includes only the highest priority construction projects to address critical life, health, safety, resource protection, and emergency needs, and does not propose funding any new facility construction. The request funds 11 projects including Everglades ecosystem restoration through the Tamiami Trail bridging project at Everglades National Park, and critical new repair projects at parks such as Independence, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone National Parks. Consistent with the Administration's Campaign to Cut Waste, the budget proposes funding for demolition and removal of unoccupied, excess structures at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Additionally, the budget includes reductions of \$760,000 to the Housing Improvement Program, \$228,000 to Equipment Replacement, \$440,000 to Construction

Planning, \$2.4 million to Management Planning, and \$1.8 million to Construction Program Management and Operations.

Performance Integration

In 2012, NPS set out to maintain its all-time high visitor satisfaction level of 97 percent, which we successfully accomplished. For FY 2014, NPS expects to maintain this overall level of visitor satisfaction, but due to park operations cuts, visitor satisfaction among visitors served by facilitated programs will drop to 95 percent from its current level of 96 percent. However, it will remain our top priority to ensure visitors have a safe, satisfying, and enjoyable experience in our Nation's parks. In formulating the 2014 budget request, the NPS used a variety of tools to incorporate performance results and other information into the decision-making process. These tools include the Budget Cost Projection Module, the Business Planning Initiative, and the NPS Scorecard, as well as continued program evaluations. These tools are used to develop a more consistent approach to integrating budget and performance across the NPS, as well as to support further accountability for budget performance integration at all levels of the organization. Given the far-reaching responsibilities of the NPS, we must support the efforts of the entire Federal government to regain a balanced budget while strategically focusing our efforts and resources on those functions critical to the protection of resources, visitors, and employees, and on the experience at the core of every visit.

Promoting Efficient Spending

In keeping with the spirit of the Administration's commitment to cutting waste in Federal Government spending, the Department continues to pursue an aggressive agenda to reduce administrative costs. Several years ago, NPS began a servicewide process of strategically

prioritizing those mission-critical items essential to each and every park and program. The NPS will continue to exercise strict controls on travel costs and devise strategic alternatives to travel, optimize the number of IT devices, limit the publication and printing of hard copy documents by offering publications in electronic form, increase executive fleet efficiencies, and limit extraneous promotional items. The FY 2014 budget reflects the priorities of the NPS as the primary agency promoting both conservation and recreation for every citizen and visitor to enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my summary of the 2014 budget request for the National Park Service. We would be pleased to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.