

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memo

March 13, 2015

To: Natural Resource Committee Members

From: Erica Rhoad and Terry Camp, Republican Staff, x6-7736
Federal Lands Subcommittee

Hearing: Oversight Hearing titled “*Examining the Spending Priorities and Mission of the National Park Service in the President’s FY2016 Budget Proposal*”

The subcommittee hearing will take place on **Tuesday, March 17 at 9:30 A.M. in Room 1334 Longworth House Office Building**. This hearing will focus on reviewing the National Park Service’s (NPS) spending priorities in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget request.

The NPS is responsible for management of all U.S. national parks, many national monuments, and other conservation and historical properties. NPS manages 405 units, which encompasses 84.5 million acres across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.¹ NPS also manages 23 national scenic trails, and 60 wild and scenic rivers.² NPS employed over 23,000 individual full time and part time employees in 2014.³

The President’s total FY2016 discretionary request for NPS is \$3.05 billion, an increase of \$433 million from FY2015 enacted.⁴ The budget requests an additional \$1.2 billion in new mandatory spending. This would provide an increase of 471 FTE for a total of 21,635 FTE, of which 17,844 would be funded from discretionary funds.⁵

During this hearing, the Subcommittee will focus on the rationale behind the budget priorities outlined in the President’s request.

Main Messages

- With our national debt currently exceeding *\$18 trillion*, the Obama Administration’s budget for the Department of the Interior, which includes \$3 billion for the NPS, continues a disappointing trend of runaway federal spending.
- The NPS budget request seeks millions of new taxpayer dollars to add new lands to the federal estate, despite a deferred maintenance backlog estimated at \$11.5 billion (of which \$5.9 billion represents non-transportation assets).⁶

¹ Page BH-76, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.

² Page Overview-1, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

³ Page BH-76, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.

⁴ Page Overview-4, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

⁵ Page Overview-4, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

⁶ Page Overview-4, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

- The Administration continues to push for hundreds of millions of dollars for mandatory funding of NPS programs and land acquisition through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Invited Witness

Jonathan B. Jarvis

Director, National Park Service

Budget Highlights

- **Land Acquisition & State Assistance** – Requests \$296.2 million for land acquisition and state assistance, comprised of \$117.5 million in discretionary funding and \$178.7 million in mandatory LWCF funding.⁷ With this funding NPS would acquire 41,343 acres of land.⁸ The NPS is requesting an increase in funding for land acquisition despite the NPS facing an estimated deferred maintenance backlog of \$11.5 billion (of which \$5.9 billion represents non-transportation assets).
- **Operation of the National Park System** – Requests \$2.5 billion for the operation of national parks, an increase of \$240 million from FY15 enacted.⁹ This includes an increase of \$174 million for the “Centennial Initiative,” to support an expected influx of visitors during the 2016 Centennial celebrations and to support a “second century of preserving the parks”.
- **Centennial Challenge**– Requests \$150 million in combined discretionary (\$50 million) and mandatory (\$100 million) funding for the Centennial Challenge. The budget requests an additional \$100 million each year for three years for “centennial projects”.¹⁰
- **Historic Preservation Fund** – Requests \$89.9 million, an increase of \$34 million over FY15 enacted. The request also includes an increase of \$30 million to support competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve sites and stories related to the Civil Rights movement.¹¹
- **Construction**–Requests \$551 million in combined discretionary (\$251 million) and mandatory (\$300 million) funding for construction projects and deferred maintenance, an increase of \$512 million from FY15 enacted.¹²

⁷ Page Overview-48, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

⁸ Page LASA-18, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.

⁹ Page BH-77, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.

¹⁰ Page M-CENT-Chall-I, *Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification – National Park Service*, February 2015.

¹¹ Page BH-78, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.

¹² Page BH-78, *Fiscal Year 2016 Bureau Highlights – National Park Service*, February 2015.