

**STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ON AN OVERSIGHT HEARING TITLED “EXAMINING  
THE SPENDING, PRIORITIES, AND THE MISSIONS OF THE NATIONAL PARK  
SERVICE AND THE PRESIDENT’S FY 2012 BUDGET PROPOSAL”**

**March 10, 2011**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this oversight hearing on the spending, priorities, and the missions of the National Park Service (NPS) and the President’s FY 2012 budget request. We appreciate your support for our stewardship of our nation’s cherished natural and cultural resources and for the important educational and recreational opportunities we provide for the American people.

**Introduction**

Responding to the need to reduce Federal spending in a difficult economic climate, the FY 2012 budget request for the NPS contains strategic spending increases combined with selected program reductions and eliminations, made only after serious and careful deliberation. The FY 2012 budget proposes total discretionary appropriations of \$2.9 billion and \$394.5 million in mandatory appropriations for total budget authority of \$3.3 billion. This is a net increase of \$137.8 million above the FY 2010 discretionary appropriations and an estimated net decrease of \$13.0 million in mandatory appropriations from FY 2010.

National parks are drivers of economic growth, particularly in gateway communities. They stimulate spending and job creation. Taxpayer investments in national parks result in far more than the obvious recreational and educational dividends. In 2009, park visitors spent \$11.9 billion and supported 247,000 private-sector jobs. The President’s budget will ensure that national parks continue to serve the 285 million visitors who come every year to relax in America’s great outdoors and learn about the people and places that make up America’s story.

The FY 2012 budget request supports continued stewardship of this Nation’s most cherished resources through the Administration’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative – a landmark investment in engaging people, particularly youth, in America’s outdoors and conserving our Nation’s natural and cultural heritage. It also supports the Secretary’s goals of cooperative landscape conservation and engaging America’s youth in the great outdoors.

**Budget Summary**

The FY 2012 budget request reflects the President’s commitment to our national parks with an increase of \$276.6 million over the FY 2010 enacted level, as part of the Administration’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative. A key component of this initiative is bolstering operational funding at park units that need it most. The budget requests an increase of \$39.5 million for park operations at new parks, and to address new responsibilities, improve mission critical operations,

engage youth in employment and educational opportunities, and protect historical assets at parks commemorating the Civil War sesquicentennial.

Further supporting the America's Great Outdoors initiative, the NPS budget request plays a key role in the Administration's proposal to fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs at \$900 million in FY 2012. The NPS request is critical to achieving the goals inherent in the LWCF Act of 1965, which was designed to use revenues generated through the depletion of natural resources for State and Federal land acquisition and the enhancement of lands and waters for recreational and conservation purposes. The request includes \$160.0 million for Federal Land Acquisition, an increase of \$73.7 million from FY 2010, which would be used to leverage other Federal resources, along with those of non-Federal partners, to achieve shared conservation outcome goals in high-priority landscapes. The request also includes \$200.0 million for the State Conservation Grants program, of which \$117.0 million would be targeted to a new competitive matching grants program for States to create and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

The FY 2012 request maintains NPS funding of \$9.9 million for the Secretary's Cooperative Landscape Conservation initiative. This initiative will bring together natural resource professionals at the Federal, State, and local level through real and virtual connections to facilitate the wider sharing of information. These networks of resource professionals will be supported by science centers that translate global scientific understanding of environmental change into solutions at the landscape level. A science-based understanding of these issues and their practical applications will have broad benefits for resource managers that are wrestling with the need to find practical and cost-effective approaches to conservation in the face of economic challenges. With this funding, resource monitoring will increase at more than 150 of the most vulnerable parks in high elevation, high latitude, arid, and coastal areas, such as monitoring for melting permafrost in Alaska and changes in salt marsh salinity along the South Atlantic coast. Additionally, over 500 employees will be trained to incorporate adaptation approaches into resource management.

In order to uphold our stewardship responsibilities and sustain key initiatives, the National Park Service undertook a rigorous review of our ongoing activities and made difficult choices. The proposed budget eliminates funding for Save America's Treasures grants, Preserve America grants, and the Park Partnership Projects program. Further, the request eliminates funding for Statutory Assistance and proposes significant reductions in the NPS Construction and National Heritage Areas programs.

In addition to the program reductions the budget includes management savings and efficiencies totaling \$46.2 million, including \$18.4 million that will be realized in 2011. The NPS will realize the remaining savings in 2012 by reducing \$24.8 million in supplies and material, and \$3.0 million in savings for travel and transportation of persons. In proposing the reductions and absorptions requested in the FY 2012 request, we have been careful to protect park operations as much as possible, and we continue to advance innovative approaches to collaboration and cost savings. The consolidation of our workforce management, acquisition, and contracting offices are prime examples of strategies that will, in future years, deliver greater services at less cost.

I would also like to mention the significant progress we have made in responsibly reducing our unobligated balances. Over the past two years, we implemented a number of policy and program changes, including reducing retention percentages at larger fee-collecting parks if their unobligated balances exceeded 35 percent of gross revenue. The result has been a more efficient targeting of funds to where it's needed most for the benefit of park visitors and protecting resources. It has also allowed individual parks more independence in project selection and expedited the approval of small fee projects. The unobligated balance for this program was reduced from \$218 million at the end of FY 2009 to \$86 million on January 1, 2011.

## **Operation of the National Park System**

The FY 2012 budget requests \$2.3 billion for the ONPS, a programmatic increase of \$72.9 million over the 2010 enacted level, but a net increase of \$35.3 million. This includes \$39.5 million for park base increases which would benefit over 100 parks. The funds would be used to sustain and improve the condition of cultural resources; provide for new areas and responsibilities; ensure the continuation and improvement of mission critical operations; engage youth; and work collaboratively with partners. These increases are also a critical component of addressing key goals of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative and connecting the public to the Nation's natural and cultural heritage and treasures. Other major increases improve capacity to perform repair and rehabilitation of park assets (\$7.5 million), consolidate workforce management and acquisition offices (\$6.8 million), increase baseline inventories of park cultural resources (\$4.5 million), enhance cyclic maintenance efforts (\$3.2 million), expand security at park icons (\$1.8 million), facilitate information sharing and resource protection of park cultural resources (\$1.5 million), and address oceans and coastal stewardship (\$1.3 million).

The FY 2012 budget proposes a net increase of \$5.7 million in support of the Secretary's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative, which seeks to foster a life-long stewardship ethic in young people. The NPS is dedicated to engaging America's youth in developing a life-long awareness of, and commitment to, our national parks, and we have proposed this investment in 27 parks as part of park base funding to establish youth programs that provide educational experiences and employment opportunities on a continuous basis. This increase builds upon the \$13.5 million in youth employment and engagement programs that the NPS received in FY 2010 and the \$4.4 million that was provided from recreational fee revenues to youth projects that benefit the visitor experience.

## **Land Acquisition and State Assistance**

The NPS FY 2012 budget proposes funding totaling \$360.0 million for Federal land acquisition and State Conservation grants funded through the LWCF, an increase of \$233.7 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. Of the total amount, \$160.0 million is available for land acquisition projects and administration, including \$10.0 million to provide grants to States and local communities to preserve and protect Civil War battlefield sites outside the national park system through the American Battlefield Protection Program.

Beginning in FY 2011, the Department instituted a coordinated process for prioritizing Federal land acquisition projects among the three Departmental land management bureaus and the U.S.

Forest Service. The cross-bureau criteria emphasize opportunities to jointly conserve important landscapes, especially river and riparian areas, wildlife habitat, urban areas that provide needed recreational opportunities, and those containing important cultural and historical assets.

Additional criteria for these projects include the ability to leverage partner funds, the degree of involvement with other Interior bureaus for the project, and the urgency for project completion. The FY 2012 land acquisition request totals over 98,800 acres of the highest priority landscapes, spanning the country from Alaska and Hawaii to Maine and Florida and the Virgin Islands. As required by law, the proposed tracts are located within authorized park boundaries.

The request also provides \$200.0 million, including administrative costs, for State Conservation Grants funded by the LWCF, a net increase of \$160.0 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. Of this total, at least \$78.0 million would be distributed equally to States as required by law, an increase of \$40.8 million over the FY 2010 enacted level. With the remaining funds, the 2012 budget proposes developing a competitive component targeted at community parks and green spaces, landscape-scale conservation, and recreational waterways. These grants would address the public's concern about the lack of open space and outdoor recreational areas in certain urban and other areas that was frequently conveyed during listening sessions for the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

The competitive component would fund "signature projects" that create more outdoor recreational opportunities and conserve open space where access to natural areas has been inhibited or is unavailable; protect, restore, and connect open space and natural landscapes; and provide access to waterways. The projects would be expected to be larger in scale and would likely require and receive greater amounts of funding than has typically been awarded. NPS estimates that 10 to 50 grants could be funded to support acquisition of open spaces and natural areas and development of facilities for outdoor recreation across the Nation. Under the LWCF Act, a single State cannot receive more than 10 percent of total grant funds, so no State would receive more than \$17.9 million under this proposal. Each State would continue to automatically receive an apportionment that would total approximately \$1.5 million. Applications would be evaluated using standard LWCF State grant criteria, as well as new criteria, such as the project's ability to increase and improve recreational access or the use of science and mapping to identify valuable lands for wildlife conservation.

### **National Recreation and Preservation**

The National Recreation and Preservation appropriation funds programs that support local and community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. For FY 2012, \$51.6 million is requested; a net decrease of \$16.9 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. The request includes an increase of \$1.1 million for the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to bolster technical assistance to communities that are working to increase and improve recreational opportunities. As a key component of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative, this increase would help provide an important resource to local communities as they work with States to implement projects funded from the proposed \$200.0 million for the LWCF State Assistance program.

The budget also includes a request of \$2.0 million for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails grants program. This proposal reflects the Administration's continuing commitment to ecosystem restoration, including stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, pursuant to Executive Order 13508. The funds would provide technical and financial assistance for conserving, restoring and interpreting natural, cultural and recreational resources within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As noted above, the budget proposal provides \$19 million in savings by not funding Statutory Assistance earmarks or Preserve America Grants and cutting in half Heritage Partnership Program grants to encourage self-sufficiency among well-established National Heritage Areas while continuing support for newer areas. These reductions are proposed to focus NPS resources on the highest priority needs within parks.

### **Historic Preservation Fund**

The NPS plays a vital role in preserving the Nation's cultural history through a variety of programs that address preservation needs nationwide. The FY 2012 request for the Historic Preservation Fund is \$61.0 million, a decrease of \$18.5 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. The FY 2012 budget provides an increase of \$6.5 million, of which \$3.5 million is for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories and \$3.0 million is for Grants-in-Aid to Tribes. The total budget request for HPF in FY 2012 is \$50.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories and \$11.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to Tribes. These key increases were provided as part of the America's Great Outdoors initiative to support increased State and Tribal National Historic Preservation Act compliance requirements and an expected 25% increase in the number of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices between 2010 and 2012. No funds are requested for the Save America's Treasures grants program in order to focus NPS resources on the highest priority needs within parks.

### **Construction**

The \$152.1 million requested for Construction includes \$70.3 million for line-item construction projects. The line-item request, along with recreation fee revenues and park roads funding will provide substantial resources for protecting and maintaining existing park assets. Funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and previous appropriations has enabled the NPS to make significant gains in addressing outstanding construction projects. The NPS should complete all ARRA-funded construction projects in FY 2012. The request funds 14 projects including continuation of ecosystem restoration at Olympic and Everglades National Parks and critical new projects at Big Cypress National Preserve, the National Mall, and the Flight 93 National Memorial. The budget proposes funding for the highest priority health and safety and mission-critical projects and does not propose funding for new facilities or deferred construction of replacement facilities. It also includes funding for the Great Smoky Mountains North Shore Road settlement agreement.

## **Performance Integration**

In formulating the FY 2012 budget request, the NPS used a variety of tools to incorporate performance results 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 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 remain strategic in our thinking and decision-making.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my summary of the FY 2012 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.