

**STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL
LANDS OF THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE
FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

March 17, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on the 2016 President's budget request for the National Park Service (NPS).

NPS Centennial

In 2016, the NPS will celebrate 100 years as the steward of the Nation's most cherished natural and cultural resources. The NPS is actively preparing for its second century of operations, and working hard to inspire the next generation of park stewards to experience and value their public lands. Our efforts will draw new visitors, especially millennials and young families, to experience the national parks; we're already seeing this growth, as 2014 visitation grew to 292 million, from 273 million in 2013. These visits do more than provide inspirational, educational and recreational opportunities; in 2013, they drove \$26.5 billion in economic impact, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs in communities around the country.

In addition to our signature Centennial plan, *A Call to Action*, the NPS, in partnership with the National Park Foundation, is preparing to launch a campaign to engage the next generation and a new audience in the life-enhancing and sometimes life-changing experiences to be had at national parks. The NPS is also working with the Foundation to leverage the interest of major corporate partners in engaging with this once in a lifetime anniversary. Finally, to support additional deferred maintenance and other visitor service projects, and only after extensive public engagement efforts, parks are now able to propose changes to their fees. This, in turn, could provide additional support for deferred maintenance projects.

Americans love and are rightly proud of their national parks, but too often they're greeted by facilities in disrepair instead of a seasonal ranger ready to answer their questions. The \$35 million supported by this Committee in the FY 2015 enacted appropriation is already helping the parks get ready; the 2016 budget includes the remaining investments needed for this historic opportunity. The details are discussed below, but to summarize, with full funding for fixed costs and seasonal health insurance, the Centennial initiative request would restore and maintain all highest priority non-transportation assets to good condition over ten years, return seasonal ranger staffing levels to their 2010 peak, support coordination of a growing volunteer force, engage more than 1 million elementary school students, and leverage private sector funds with Federal appropriations in an innovative partnership program to accomplish signature projects at national parks.

2016 Budget Summary

The 2016 budget supports continued stewardship of resources of national significance and the provision of enriching experiences and enjoyment for all visitors. Preparing for a second century of park operations is a key component of the budget. The President's budget will ensure 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.

The 2016 President's budget request proposes total current appropriations of \$3.0 billion for the NPS. This is a net increase of \$432.9 million above 2015 enacted current appropriations. The request fully funds \$26.7 million in fixed costs and includes a net program increase of \$408.4 million. The budget proposes targeted increases totaling \$420.3 million to fund essential programs and emerging operational needs, including \$326.3 million in current funds to celebrate the Centennial and prepare for our second century. The budget also includes \$12.0 million in reductions in external programs and heritage partnership programs.

The request also includes an estimated \$1.2 billion in mandatory appropriations, a net increase of \$654.1 million. The funds would reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on high priority assets, enhance the NPS' capacity to leverage public/private partnerships, and support land acquisition and grants to state and local governments for recreation. In total, the NPS request includes budget authority of \$4.2 billion.

The highlight of the 2016 budget request is the Centennial initiative, supported by current and mandatory funds. The current request includes a \$326.3 million increase to invest in the second century of the NPS. Of this increase, \$242.8 million will address the deferred maintenance backlog, together with the mandatory proposal discussed below, this will provide the NPS the resources to restore and maintain all 6,735 highest priority non-transportation assets in good condition over the next ten years. Other key increases will ensure NPS operations are prepared for the Centennial; including \$13.5 million to support new parks and critical responsibilities, \$11.5 million to transport more than one million students from Title I elementary schools in urban areas to nearby national parks and \$8.5 million to support park-level youth engagement coordinators to support the President's Every Kid in a Park initiative, \$8.0 million to restore seasonal capacity at parks, and \$2.0 million to support coordination of more than 600,000 volunteers. Additionally, the request includes an increase of \$40.0 million for Centennial Challenge projects and partnerships, leveraging Federal funds with partner donations for signature projects and programs at national parks.

The mandatory proposal for the Centennial initiative includes funding of \$300.0 million annually for three years to support Second Century Infrastructure Investment deferred maintenance projects, as well as \$100.0 million annually for three years to provide the Federal match to accomplish Centennial Challenge signature projects at many more park units. NPS would also have the opportunity to compete for funding through the proposed \$100.0 million Public Lands Centennial Fund, a multi-agency program proposed to be managed by the Department and awarded competitively to the NPS, as well as to Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

In addition to the Centennial initiative, the 2016 budget proposes \$50.0 million for a Civil Rights initiative to commemorate the Civil Rights Movement, which has inspired many groups in America and around the world to continue to pursue progress for civil rights. Included within the proposed increases is \$6.0 million to support park cultural resource and education projects; park operations funding of \$1.5 million to address critical needs at park sites associated with

civil rights; \$30.0 million in competitive grants and \$2.5 million in grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to document, interpret, and preserve the stories and sites of the Civil Rights Movement; and \$10.0 million in Construction funds to complete projects at units within the national park system associated with civil rights, such as rehabilitating historic buildings at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site in Georgia.

Finally, the budget proposes \$4.7 million for projects and activities that are part of the NPS Cultural Resource Challenge, which focuses on the stewardship of America's cultural heritage and builds on key programs to meet the needs and challenges confronting NPS and its partners in the 21st century. Included within the Cultural Resource Challenge is \$3.0 million in park project funds to complete cultural resources baseline documentation to support informed resource management decisions; \$0.7 million to digitize National Register of Historic Places records, improving access to information and reducing the risk of resource damage and loss; and \$1.0 million to provide increased funding for grants to Tribes, reflecting the increasing number of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Operation of the National Park System

The Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) appropriation funds the operations of our 405 parks and related programs. The 2016 budget proposes ONPS funding at \$2.5 billion, \$239.4 million over 2015 enacted.

The request for operations fully funds fixed costs of \$25.3 million and \$213.4 million in net program increases. These increases are not offset with reductions to park operations.

In addition to the Centennial initiative, Civil Rights initiative, and Cultural Resource Challenge current proposals previously discussed, \$16.3 million is requested to provide Federal employee health benefits to newly eligible employees, in compliance with the Office of Personnel Management's 2014 decision expanding availability of Federal Employee Health Benefits coverage for certain employees on temporary appointments and seasonal schedules and allowing for the same government contribution as for full-time permanent employees during the period of coverage. The request reflects the amount necessary to fund this new requirement in FY 2016.

Additionally, an increase of \$1.3 million would support ocean and coastal resource stewardship, and \$1.2 million would support coordinated, science-based response to proposed energy development near park lands. The budget includes requests of \$3.5 million to implement climate change adaptation projects at parks, and \$10.0 million to support challenge cost share climate change resiliency projects conducted with non-Federal partners at parks. Finally, the operations account includes a reduction of \$2.2 million for the elimination of the National Capital Performing Arts Program.

Centennial Challenge

The 2016 budget proposes an additional \$40.0 million for this matching program, for a total proposed current funding level of \$50.0 million. Funding would provide the Federal match to leverage partner donations at least one to one for signature projects and programs at national parks in celebration and support of the 100th anniversary. This program is further bolstered by the Administration's mandatory proposal to fund an additional \$100.0 million a year for three

years. In 2008 and 2010, the NPS leveraged private donations more than one to one, with some projects leveraging a three to one match.

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 2016 budget includes \$54.2 million, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$506,000, a transfer of \$650,000 to the ONPS account, an increase of \$703,000 for digitization of the National Register of Historic Places, an increase of \$260,000 to support the Federal Lands to Parks program, and a reduction of \$9.7 million for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) commissions and grants, a net change of \$8.9 million below 2015 enacted.

The budget provides \$10.2 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, which assists communities in implementing their own vision of livability, sustainability, and responsibility, and assists 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. The budget also sustains funding for American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance (ABPPA) grants at \$1.2 million, which provide grants to partners for the preservation of threatened historic battlefields not on NPS lands. Both the RTCA and ABPPA 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 2016, the budget requests \$89.9 million, an increase of \$33.5 million from 2015 enacted. The request provides \$46.9 million for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories, level with 2015 enacted; an increase of \$1.0 million to Grants-in-Aid to Tribes for a total of nearly \$10.0 million; an increase of \$2.5 million for Grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); and an increase of \$30.0 million to Competitive Grants for a total of \$30.5 million. The newly proposed Grants to HBCUs would support preserving the sites and stories of the Civil Rights Movement, as discussed above, as would \$30.0 million of the competitive grants. The remaining \$0.5 million of the competitive grants would support grants to underrepresented communities, as established in 2014.

Construction

The budget proposes \$251.0 million for Construction, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$710,000 and a net programmatic increase of \$111.9 million, for a total change of \$112.6 million above 2015 levels.

The \$111.9 million in targeted increases supports the Centennial initiative. Line Item Construction is funded at \$153.3 million, a \$91.7 million increase from 2015 enacted, providing funding to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on the highest priority non-transportation assets. Complementary increases of \$9.3 million for Construction Planning, \$4.6 million for

Denver Service Center operations, and \$6.4 million for Regional Facility Project Support would ensure capacity and ability to implement the proposed projects. Of the increases noted above, \$10.0 million of the proposed funding will also support the Civil Rights initiative, completing high priority projects at NPS sites related to the Civil Rights Movement, including facilities at the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail.

As discussed above, the Centennial initiative's proposed efforts on deferred maintenance—current and mandatory—would allow NPS to ensure all 6,735 highest priority non-transportation assets are restored and maintained in good condition over 10 years.

Land Acquisition and State Assistance

The budget proposes full funding for programs funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, totaling \$900.0 million in current and mandatory funding for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture in FY 2016, and proposes to permanently authorize \$900.0 million in annual mandatory funding beginning in FY 2017. For NPS, the 2016 budget proposes \$117.5 million for current Federal Land Acquisition and State Conservation Grants, a net increase of \$18.5 million from the 2015 enacted level. Of the total amount, \$64.3 million is proposed for Federal Land Acquisition projects and administration, a programmatic increase of \$13.3 million compared to 2015 enacted. This includes increases of \$11.3 million for high-priority land acquisition projects and \$2.0 million for projects to support recreational access to public lands. A total of \$53.2 million is proposed for State Conservation Grants and administration, a programmatic increase of \$5.0 million compared to 2015 enacted. This is comprised of a \$3.0 million increase for traditional State Conservation Grants and a \$2.0 million increase for Competitive State Conservation Grants.

Mandatory Proposals

As noted above, the budget proposes \$100.0 million annually for three years for Centennial Challenge projects (in addition to the proposed \$50.0 million in current funds), and \$300.0 million annually for three years for Second Century Infrastructure Investment (in addition to the proposed current infrastructure increases in the ONPS and Construction accounts).

Additionally, the budget includes a proposal for mandatory LWCF funding, of which \$178.7 million is proposed for the NPS in 2016. Of this amount, \$106.7 million is for Federal Land Acquisition and \$47.0 million is for State Conservation Grants. The remaining \$25.0 million would provide funds to re-establish the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) grants program, providing competitive grants to rehabilitate and improve existing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in urban communities. Program efforts would align with the America's Great Outdoors goal of creating and enhancing a new generation of safe, clean, and accessible urban parks and community green spaces. Projects would focus on connecting and engaging communities, especially young people, to their neighborhood parks and would include objectives to directly engage underserved populations, renewing an emphasis on improving recreation services to inner-city minority and low-to-moderate income populations and communities.

Planning and Performance Integration

In formulating the 2016 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. The 2016 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 2016 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.