

**SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT
THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

TO

CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT THE NA-
TIONAL PARK SERVICE'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS DEFERRED MAINTEN-
ANCE AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS

JULY 25, 2013



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SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2013

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:40 a.m. in room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Wyden, chairman presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

The CHAIRMAN. The Energy and Natural Resources Committee will come to order.

In 2016, just 3 years from now, the National Park Service is going to celebrate its centennial anniversary. While the creation of our national park system is one of our country's greatest successes, the Park Service faces significant funding challenges in taking care of the more than 400 national parks, monuments, and other sites that Congress and the President have entrusted to its protection.

It now has a deferred maintenance backlog that is estimated at \$11 billion, and it is perhaps higher. The backlog grows each year. Meanwhile, the Park Service, like every other part of the Federal Government, faces significant limitations on the funding that Congress appropriates for the operation and care of our national parks, and it is unlikely that the appropriation levels are going to increase any time soon, certainly not increase to the amount necessary that would fully address the deferred maintenance backlog.

So, given these challenges, Senator Murkowski and I wanted to schedule this hearing so that the committee can explore and consider new ideas to help fund the Park Service for the next century. It really wouldn't be an appropriate parks hearing if you didn't refer at least once to Wallace Stegner's famous quote that "national parks are the best idea we ever had." They certainly continue to be a very popular idea.

Despite the budgetary challenges, Senators of both political parties continue to push for new or expanded national parks in their home States. Already in this Congress, 7 bills calling for studies of new national parks have been referred to this committee; another 7 bills would establish new national parks; and 6 bills would expand the size of existing park areas.

These bills are evidence of the extraordinary popularity of national parks with the American people and the desire to protect new areas and tell new stories that are not adequately represented

in the national parks system. I support many of those efforts. In fact, one of the bills expanding an existing national park area is legislation that I proposed to expand the Oregon Caves National Monument. So I understand the desire and the need that Americans are expressing to protect these very special places.

At the same time, my view is that Congress has to come up with fresh, creative ideas to help the Park Service make concrete, tangible headway with its maintenance backlog to ensure the long-term viability of our parks system. For example, today I'm going to want to explore with witnesses the idea of raising fees for non-U.S. citizens, like many other countries do.

For example, this could apply to back-country camping permits that are very popular. Of course, the argument on behalf of looking at an idea like this is that those are individuals who use our park system. They don't pay taxes to support the parks, and there is a very high volume and an increasing volume of foreign visitors.

We, Senator Murkowski and I, were especially interested in having Dr. Coburn here today, because he has been persistent in advocating for the need to address this deferred maintenance backlog for quite some time. As Dr. Coburn does on so many issues, he makes it clear that you cannot just pretend the problems don't exist. You've got to step up, and you've got to look, as I indicated, at real and creative approaches that we can build bipartisan support for to address these concerns.

He is raising legitimate questions about how the Park Service is going to be able to properly care for our national parks, and how it will ever be able to address this immense funding backlog. So, Senator Murkowski and I thought it was especially appropriate that he lead off the hearing of this morning so we can get his perspective and consider the real issues that he has raised. We thank him, and we will hear from him in just a few minutes.

The last point I wanted to make is that as the Park Service centennial gets closer, we are going to examine all of the creative ideas that have been proposed thus far. Certainly, there ought to be opportunities with national park partners, such as park philanthropic and friends groups, and I would just ask that colleagues on both sides of the aisle who support parks be open to considering some of these new approaches.

For example, our committee recently included \$50 million of dedicated funding in the helium bill to pay for the Federal share of a challenge cost-share agreement for national park deferred maintenance projects. In effect, through the helium legislation, Senator Murkowski and I said, "Here's a chance to meet one of the country's economic needs and, in the years ahead, with a specific timetable, really get the Government out of the helium business." We were able to do that in a bipartisan way.

We'll pay special attention to some of the funding ideas that were proposed by the Bipartisan Policy Center, again an effort to reach across the aisle in a challenging area. We're going to ask some details about that.

While the Park Service is primarily reliant on Federal appropriations to fund deferred maintenance projects, the agency is able to use revenue collected from park entrance and visitor user fees to fund repair, maintenance, and other projects that directly improve

the enjoyment of our visitors. However, the authority to collect and spend fee revenues expires in December 2014, and if that law isn't renewed, the Park Service would lose almost \$180 million annually. So I think it's critical that fee legislation be passed during this Congress so that the Park Service and other land management agencies do not lose that particularly important revenue source.

We're also looking forward to the views of National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis. He's been talking with us about a number of different approaches.

Let me now recognize Senator Murkowski on this matter and particularly thank her again for all of the bipartisan efforts that she has been willing to take on. It's one of the reasons we were able to get 14 bills cleared in the Senate, more than anyone had anticipated at this early date. It wouldn't have happened without Senator Murkowski, and I thank her for her bipartisan approach, and recognize her.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LISA MURKOWSKI, U.S. SENATOR
FROM ALASKA**

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, we've got an opportunity to move another perhaps as many as 14 of these bills. So look forward to moving this process forward. But thank you for this very important hearing this morning. For those of us in Alaska, our parks are pretty special. Not that they are not special in other parts of the country, I think ours are just bigger and they take up more space, and they are a constant reminder of the national treasures that we have.

I thank you, Dr. Coburn, for your interest in this issue, your interest in ensuring that we are on a path toward greater sustainability when it comes to the operation and maintenance of our national parks and our park system.

Mr. Chairman, I do believe that we're taking an important step today with this hearing. In starting this discussion about how we're going to pay down the National Park Service's maintenance backlog, which the Park Service estimates at approximately \$13 billion, now, I'd like to be clear right away. I don't think that this is an issue that should be solved through additional Federal funding.

We all know around here that we're facing very serious fiscal situations, and we've got to be looking at new and, I think, alternative ways to find funding for the park system, and also to really reassess, reevaluate our current funding priorities. One of those areas that I think we need to be looking at is, what is happening within the Land and Water Conservation Fund and this very significant increases that we're seeing there?

Coming from a State where we've got close to 70 percent of our lands that are held by the Federal Government, I always approach requests to purchase additional Federal land with some skepticism, and particularly during tough economic times. So I can't imagine why purchasing more is such a priority. It strikes me as almost counterintuitive that we would be adding more lands to the maintenance list, when the Government already is dealing with such obstacles when it comes to the maintenance of the existing park lands.

I do think that this is an area where we would have potential for an agreement that we could update the statute, making it more relevant to our current reality, both from a public lands policy and a budgetary standpoint. I'd like to work with you, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Coburn, Director Jarvis, on really reforming the LWCS so that this can be a tool that the National Park Service, and other land management agencies, can use to fund deferred maintenance before we buy additional lands to add to the Federal burden.

I appreciate that there are at times some sensitive, time-sensitive acquisitions that need to be made. I'd want to make sure that we have a process to include those. But as a general matter, I think that there is room here for compromise, and I look forward to a discussion on that topic this morning.

The next area that I'd like to bring up is the potential for increased funding and involvement from outside group and the friends groups. One of the major complaints that I hear from friends groups are these bureaucratic obstacles that many of these groups face when they're trying to donate to the National Park Service for specific projects. We need to be looking at this. We need to figure out a way to streamline the process, encourage folks to contribute both their resources and dollars.

Just yesterday, we got a press release from the Park Service out in Wrangell—St. Elias. It is an advertisement, it's a public advertisement for a cleanup event on August 3rd out in the Chitina area. It's basically an invitation to folks in the area to come and help clean up. It's going to consist of burning scrap wood, recycling and picking up trash that's accumulated. Bring your sunglasses, your raincoats, your water bottles. The first 100 volunteers get a free T-shirt and a new water bottle. Lunch is going to be provided. Great!

I think it's fabulous. It gives people real ownership in their parks. I think that that is huge for us. These are exactly the type of volunteer efforts that the Park service should be using and expanding upon, not only to save money, but again to bring locals into their parks for a very positive experience.

I also hear from private CEO's who want to donate funds to the National Park Service and to specific parks, but they feel that their donations are not adequately recognized. I would hope that Director Jarvis can talk about how we can work together to improve the donation and the recognition procedures.

An idea that I'd like to put forward is for donor recognition throughout the national park system. For example, we should have tasteful recognition of private donors who are willing to pay for specific maintenance backlogs projects, perhaps the naming of a room in a visitors' center, the naming of a bench. There are dollars, I think we can bring into the park system, but we need to make it easy. We need to make it worthwhile for these donors.

We just passed through the House and the Senate a measure that would allow for recognition of donors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I think there are some ideas out there that we can look to.

Another thing that I'd like to raise before we turn to Dr. Coburn is, looking at the current recreational fee structure. Some national parks charge entrance fees; others don't. I think we need to look at this fee plan and ensure that there is some equity across the Na-

tional Park Service. I think it's kind of unfair that my constituents in Alaska have to pay to visit some of their parks, but that other folks around the country don't bear that same burden.

For the parks that do not charge an entrance fee, maybe we should look at the idea of charging for parking within those parks. I'm told by the Park Service that if a National Park Service started charging for parking on the National Mall, this is just one example, they could raise an additional \$2 million per year. I don't know that I want to pay more parking here in Washington, D.C., but it's an idea out there. You could put the money back into the maintenance on the Mall.

So again, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that we are at this point. I really do hope that this is the beginning of a very constructive dialog that allows us to address, in a meaningful way, the maintenance backlog of our wonderful national parks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Murkowski, and I think, as usual, you offer up some ideas that certainly ought to be explored. We're going to do that together.

I also want to note, before we go to Dr. Coburn, that we have 3 colleagues who have long, long, long histories of being advocates for the parks: Chairman Udall, of course, chair of our subcommittee, has brought an extraordinary amount of passion and expertise to this cause. We thank him. His ranking member is here, Senator Portman, who also both in terms of his private-sector involvement and service in the Senate, has a long record of supporting the parks. Then it would be fair to say that Senator Alexander is almost "Mr. Parks," because he has consistently advocated for sensible park protection in our country.

So I'm very grateful to colleagues for coming, and I think, I know Senator Udall has to leave fairly early. After Dr. Coburn has given his testimony, I'll make sure that all colleagues who are under the gun will ask questions certainly before I do. So, Dr. Coburn, I think it's pretty clear that your message is getting through, that people understand that this is a very, very serious challenge. You can't pretend to be in denial and say it doesn't exist. So we thank you, and on this issue, nobody has done more to make the point here about how important this challenge is. We welcome your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COBURN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM OKLAHOMA**

Senator COBURN. Thank you. I appreciate being invited before the committee.

In the next month, we'll release the 2013 Parks Report, where we have done an in-depth study on many of our parks, the problems they have, the financing of our parks, where the money goes, and following it all the way down, and list in there some recommendations of things we hope the committee will consider. But I appreciate the opportunity to come before you.

My background, I was born in Wyoming. I love Yellowstone. I love Rocky Mountain National Park. I love the Grand Tetons. I spend a lot of time in that part of the country when I'm not here, and so I'm a critic of what we're doing because I love our parks. My oldest 4 grandkids just spent time at the Grand Canyon and at Yellowstone, enjoying and taking in those magnificent parks.

You know, the National Park Service has \$3 billion, a little bit less than \$3 billion budget, and 401 units, park units, covering 84 million acres of land. But with that budget, they also are responsible for 27,000 historic structures, 2,461 national historic landmarks, 582 natural landmarks, 49 national heritage areas, and 84 million acres of land.

The budget for the parks themselves is only \$1.36 billion. The remaining annual funds of their budget goes toward a multitude of activities, including affiliated areas, grant programs, research centers, administrative expenses, and additional land acquisition.

Congress and multiple administrations have recognized the deferred maintenance problem for years. As a matter of fact, President Bush gave a speech in 2001, and said under his administration we were going to correct that. They did, 1 year. If you look at the graph over here, the deferred maintenance went down, 1 year. Then it has continued to climb ever since.

I would make the point, and I think most commonsense Americans would make the point, before we add additional parks, we ought to be taking care of the parks we have. We ought to privatize what our jewels are. I mean, we all know. I mean we have, Alaska has wonderful jewels. Oregon has. Colorado, the Smoky Mountains, we have wonderful jewels. But we ought to take care of them.

The political process to add a park is driven, one, by recognition, 2, by commerce, because there's always the hope that commerce will follow a park. But I think the mature thinking would have us really look at the priorities of what we have today and want to invest and keep what we have today before we make commitments to lessen what we have today.

A 1997 National Park Service report, based on identified maintenance, rehabilitation, developmental needs, the National Park Service does not have and never has had enough funds and staff to care for all the resources in its custody. Yet, we keep adding things for them to do.

Contributing to the fundamental problem are unrealistic expectations reflected in and furthered by park planning documents, an overwhelming deferred maintenance workload, and a lack of multidisciplinary focus to set and achieve realistic goals in cooperative efforts, recognizing the value of the aspects of separate parks. Since 1997, we've added 26 park units, since 1997.

In April 2013, the present administration said the following: "Because of the age of existing NPS assets, the capital construction backlog of the service continues to rapidly expand beyond the capabilities of the service to keep up with known major repair/rehabilitation needs."

Within the same month of reconfirming that the Park Service doesn't have the resources to take care of what it has, they added 3 new parks and 13,000 acres through the Antiquities Act. Not through us, but through the Antiquities Act. So we're going to make this graph much worse just on what's been done in the last year.

The line item "construction budget" for the National Park Service was \$77 million. That's the lowest level since 1988 in 25 years, last year. As we climb, but their construction budget was at the lowest level in 25 years. Deferred maintenance is 5 times more costly than

routine preventative maintenance. We know that. The Park Service can give us that. We know that's true in other areas. Yet, when we don't have the resources to actually resurface a road, then what happens is we have to rebuild the base on the road. The cost is astronomical.

So all these things are multipliers that are actually hurting this number, actually making it grow higher as we pass on cheaper maintenance that actually would preserve, and then have to go to full replacement.

The top 10 most visited park units in 2012 had deferred maintenance backlog of \$2.6 billion. So 20 percent of the deferred maintenance backlog is in our top 10 most visited parks. In 2012, the 59 national parks representing the crown jewels hosted 65,000,000 visitors. They have, those jewels have \$5 billion of that maintenance.

I can give you some significant examples of deferred maintenance. You'll probably hear that from the director. But I'll just give you one example. At Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia, over the last 5 years, tripping hazards in the park have resulted in 15 tort claims filed, with claims up to \$2 million a year paid out. What I would tell you is that, had we spent a fourth of that each year on maintenance, none of that would have happened. So it's not just the deferred maintenance. It's we're spending money in other areas on lawsuits because of deferred maintenance.

I appreciate what Senator Murkowski said. I think the LWCF fund ought to be reallocated. It's going to continue to grow as our oil and gas offshore continues to grow. Those funds are going to increase. I know we're in competition with other desires for land acquisition. But it seems to me that if we were to take 75 percent of that fund, by changing the requirements of that fund, and put it into park maintenance over the next 10 years to get us caught back up, that in fact, we could meet the obligations that are really expected of the American people, without doing anything else, and actually get caught back up to a place where we're really protecting these national treasures that we have.

The other point I would make is that over the last decade, Congress has appropriated over a half-billion dollars to acquire even more land, while the same period, the cost of the NPS lands has doubled, of just maintaining the National Park Service's situation.

Why don't I stop there? I'll answer any questions you have. I'd make one final point. Of the top 25 most visited national parks in 2011, only 8 have been approved since 1970. In comparison, of the 25 least visited national parks, 20 have been established since 1970. So the priority, not only the fact that we're establishing new parks when we don't have the money to do so, but the priority of what we're establishing in terms of exposure to the American public and visitation is very, very low. So what we're doing is sacrificing our desire for new parks by putting at risk the crown jewels of our national park system.

With that, I'd stop and take any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Senator Coburn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COBURN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Murkowski, and other members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on addressing the National Park System's deferred maintenance backlog.

Millions of families from around the world will visit one or more of our National Parks this summer. While all will be captivated by the jaw-dropping scenery or moved by the historical achievements and tragedies of America's past, many will be inconvenienced by the closures of campgrounds, reduced hours at visitor centers, and piles of trash, unclean restrooms, and delayed repairs at many parks. Such unsightly conditions are being blamed on recent budget reductions, but these problems have been piling up long before sequestration began.

For years, instead of addressing the urgent needs of our premier parks and memorials, Congress and multiple administrations have instead focused on establishing new park units and adding more lands. Every new site added to the National Park Service further divides the \$3 billion park budget, which currently provides for 401 park units covering over 84 million acres of land.¹ We have effectively been sequestering our National Parks for decades with each new park addition. As a result, NPS is now being asked to do more with less.

The consequences of the undisciplined expansion of our National Park System and low-priority spending can be summarized in a single value—the National Park Service's staggering \$11.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog.² The accumulated investment needs to repair National Park assets is the nominal representation of our negligence of "America's Best Idea." The price tag of this backlog has more than doubled over the past decade, not so much due to a lack of funds as much as a lack of priorities.

For decades Administrations from both parties have acknowledged the underfunding for maintenance of existing assets and the deteriorating status of the National Park System. In a 1997 document, *Preserving Historic Structures in the National Park System: A Report to the President*, the National Park Service stated, "Based on identified maintenance, rehabilitation, and development needs, the NPS does not have and never has had enough funds or staff to care for all resources in its custody. Contributing to the fundamental problem are unrealistic expectations reflected in and furthered by park planning documents, an overwhelming deferred maintenance workload, and a lack of multidisciplinary focus to set and achieve realistic goals in cooperative efforts recognizing the value of all aspects of park operations."³ Since 1997, Congress and multiple administrations have compounded this problem, adding 26 more park units despite NPS lacking the ability to maintain its current projects.

In a 2001 speech at Everglades National Park, President George W. Bush declared "Many parks have lacked the resources they need for their basic care and maintenance. My administration will restore and renew America's national parks."⁴ Since that speech, the National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog has more than doubled from \$5.5 billion to \$11.5 billion.

In April 2013, the current administration made a similar public acknowledgement of the problems facing the National Park System. They said: "Because of the age of existing NPS assets, the capital construction backlog of the Service continues to rapidly expand beyond the capabilities of the Service to keep up with known major repair or rehabilitation needs."⁵ Within the same month of reconfirming that the Park Service does not have the capabilities to handle its current obligations, the Administration increased the burden of the backlog by adding three new parks units and 13,000 acres to the already taxed system.

Despite decades of empty promises to fix our parks, Congress has made the steady growth of the deferred maintenance backlog a permanent feature of the National Park System. The line-item construction budget is responsible for funding some of the most critical rehabilitation and replacement of facilities in the National Park System. The funding for this account in FY2012 was \$77 million, its lowest levels

¹"Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2014," National Park Service, 2013; http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY_2014_greenbook.pdf

²Email from National Park Service to the Office of Tom Coburn, January 15, 2013.

³"Preservation Maintenance in the National Parks: A Guide to NPS Options and Policies," National Parks Conservation Association, October 2012; <http://www.npca.org/about-us/center-for-park-research/historic-preservation/Final-HP-report-with-HAVO.pdf>

⁴"The Burgeoning Backlog: A Report on the Maintenance Backlog in America's National Parks," National Parks Conservation Association, May 2004; <http://www.npca.org/assets/pdf/backlog.pdf>

⁵"Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2014," National Park Service, 2013; http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY_2014_greenbook.pdf

since 1988.⁶ The National Park Service directs \$323 million annually towards deferred maintenance work. According to the National Park Service, it takes \$700 million annually just to hold the current backlog steady at \$11.5 billion.⁷ Therefore, we have locked in a \$377 million annual growth rate of the deferred maintenance backlog, surrendering any chance of restoring our National Park System to the quality that the American people deserve.

These numbers are translated into real life consequences in our beloved National Parks. For example, Grand Canyon National Park has accumulated a \$405 million deferred maintenance backlog.⁸ The backlog of the trails alone total over \$24 million, and “unless management actions are taken in the near future, trails will continue to fall into disrepair and deferred maintenance costs will continue to increase.”⁹

At Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia, “the majority of the park’s walkways were constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1976” and contain many tripping hazards. Over the last 5 years, tripping hazards in the park “have resulted in 15 tort claims filed,” leading to claims ranging from \$200,000 to \$2 million per year.¹⁰

The 60 to 80 year old water system in a portion of Yellowstone National Park loses about 50 to 70 percent of the system’s water through leaks, with reports of leaks as large as “15,000 gallons per day, per joint of pipe.” The existing lines fail to “provide adequate fire protection to the facilities of the historic district,” while “end lines and cross connections can create contamination or restrict disinfection in the drinking water system.”¹¹

Meanwhile, Congress has appropriated \$527.4 million to acquire more land for the National Park Service over the last decade while during that same period the needed repairs on existing property increased by \$5.4 billion.¹² The Land, Water, and Conservation Fund (LWCF) can be used to acquire additional land for the federal government, but cannot be used to maintain or fix existing federal properties. No one builds an addition to their house when the roof is caving in. Nor should their government.

In December 2012, the National Park Service spent \$16 million to acquire 86 acres of land in Grand Teton National Park from the state of Wyoming at a cost of \$186,047 per acre. The National Park Service plans to continue to purchase 1280 acres of land in two installments totaling \$91 million.¹³ The federal government will spend \$107 million in federal land acquisition to add 1,366 acres to the 310,000 acre Grand Teton National Park, expanding the National Park unit by one percent. The funding that will be used could have reduced the park’s \$221.7 million deferred maintenance backlog by nearly 50 percent.¹⁴

The expansion of commitments to the National Park Service and the simultaneous decay of the existing sites is a microcosm of why we are quickly approaching a \$17 trillion national debt. Congress must make a commitment to properly prioritize resources by redirecting funding from low-priority projects. Congress should also seek common sense reforms, such as utilizing LWCF funding for maintenance, creating a more sensible recreational fee policy, and ensuring that federal policies do not discourage contributions from outside sources. Finally, Congress should reevaluate the current National Park System to ensure that our units are held up to the high standard set by the first Director of the National Park Service when he stated, “The national park system as now constituted should not be lowered in standard, dignity, and prestige by the inclusion of areas which express in less than the highest terms the particular class or kind of exhibit which they represent.”

⁶ Email from National Park Service to the Office of Tom Coburn, January 15, 2013.

⁷ Email from National Park Service to the Office of Tom Coburn, January 15, 2013

⁸ Email from National Park Service to the Office of Tom Coburn, April 25, 2013

⁹ “National Park Service Announces Availability of Environmental Assessment for Mule Operations and Stock Use in Grand Canyon National Park,” National Park Service website, accessed July 22, 2012; <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parknews/national-park-service-announces-availability-of-environmental-assessment-for-mule-operations-and-stock-use-in-grand-canyon-national-park.htm>

¹⁰ “Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2014,” National Park Service, 2013; http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY_2014_greenbook.pdf.

¹¹ “Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2014,” National Park Service, 2013; http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/upload/FY_2014_greenbook.pdf.

¹² Carol Hardy Vincent, “Land and Water Conservation Fund: Overview, Funding History, and Issues,” Congressional Research Service, March 5, 2013;

¹³ “National Park Service Buys 86 Acres of Wyoming Lands Surrounded by Grand Teton National Park,” National Parks Traveler, December 30, 2012; <http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/2012/12/national-park-service-buys-86-acres-wyoming-lands-surrounded-grand-teton-national-park22626>

¹⁴ Email from National Park Service to the Office of Tom Coburn, April 25, 2013.

Until Congress and the administration take action to prioritize the maintenance of existing national park obligations, the problem will continue to grow worse. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee and look forward to working together to accomplish these important tasks.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Coburn, thank you.

Do any colleagues have either questions or want to be recognized at this time for a statement on this issue?

If not—

Senator ALEXANDER. Mr. Chairman, before, I don't need to go ahead of anybody. But if it's appropriate, I don't want to question another Senator. But I wouldn't mind having a little colloquy with him about what he said.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator ALEXANDER. But I'll be glad, if he's got time to stay, but I'll be glad to go after Senator Udall or you or Lisa or anybody else.

The CHAIRMAN. Everybody is being so collegial.

Senator Udall, would you like to start?

Senator UDALL. I agree with Senator Alexander. I'm not interested in questioning another Senator. I do think Senator Coburn's research is worth considering.

I do find it interesting that we have not fully funded LWCF at the \$900 million level for many, many years. It's been funded based on what appropriators have wanted to do. So I'm certainly open to taking a creative look at all of this, Senator Coburn, because the parks that you mentioned are America's best idea.

There have been, and I would like to get this in the record in some greater depth, but there have been some cases, for example, where LWCF has had a dual or threefold purpose. In Colorado, the Great Sand Dunes National Park, which I think maybe you visited, maybe you and I can join forces and spend some time there on the ground, since I know you love Colorado and spend a lot of time there.

The creation of that national park, which was a national monument, but we expanded it to a national park, helped a ranching economy in the valley because their water supplies were threatened. It's an example of how LWCF was creatively focused on protecting a way of life and also these marvelous natural landscapes.

I think on a case-by-case basis, I still think LWCF has a very important role when it comes to land acquisition. One other comment you and I can visit about this later, as well, is a lot of the maintenance needs of buildings, roads, bridges, water systems, and the purchase of additional land sometimes that are in holdings to make a national park complete, the land trades and the like is relatively inexpensive and makes the management job of people like Director Jarvis easier. So I may have a disagreement as to the utility of the LWCF when it comes to additional land acquisition at times and in situations where it's merited.

Senator COBURN. But you wouldn't deny the fact that if we don't start catching up, this is going to go into an elliptical curve in terms of the cost. But I'd make the point, for example, we've had a recent purchase at the Grand Teton National Park. The planned purchase, plus the purchase that was made, although it may be totally proper, the amount of money paid for that small expanse would cut the backlog at Grand Teton in half.

So had you not bought the additional land, the backlog maintenance, if you could have used that money for maintenance, which is not a given, you would have cut it in half. So all of a sudden, you know, when we buy land under good intention to expand a park because something is available at a certain time, it is a trade-off against the protection and the maintenance and upkeep of that park.

So I think it has to be balanced. I would just make the point, again, is, as we expand Government ownership of private lands, and we expand parklands at the same time we're not being good stewards of what we already have, the American people ought to be questioning what we're doing and how we're doing it.

We all know it's about priorities here. What I would tell you, it ought to be a priority to fund the maintenance of our parks. It ought to be a priority. Because every year we don't do it markedly increases the cost of trying to catch up the next year. There's \$370 million bucks a year we're falling behind.

Senator UDALL. There's no question. Senator Coburn, it is frustrating to think about the \$900 million allocation, if you will, of LWCF moneys. But I think last year, we actually appropriated something on the order of \$200 million. So you could argue we've left \$700 million in limbo, or we've left those dollars in the hands of the appropriators to be directed to other Federal needs.

Senator COBURN. I agree.

Senator UDALL. So there may be a sweet spot here that we all ought to continue discussing.

Senator COBURN. That fund should grow based on our energy production.

Senator UDALL. Most definitely. I think we had a hearing just recently in the committee, and there were dueling numbers to an extent. But it was somewhere between \$6 and \$8 billion a year generated by offshore royalties.

I think, is that, Mr. Chairman, ranking member? I think that was the number we heard.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Senator UDALL. Yes. So it would be terrific to deploy these moneys to the purposes that previous Congresses thought they should be deployed to.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator Murkowski, then Senator Alexander, and Senator Portman, and Senator Cantwell.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Senator Coburn, thank you for your comments. I for one will look forward, too, to the report that you and your staff have prepared, and appreciate the level of detail that you have given this issue.

In your report and analysis, do you look at the issue of fees as they are applied across the park system? I mentioned in my opening comments that there is a seeming inequity, that in certain areas you have fees, and in certain areas that you don't have fees. Do you look at that at all? Where do you come down on this issue?

Senator COBURN. We have. We also talked about, in the deficit commission, for less than a quarter a visitor, you can add about \$70 million a year to the maintenance budget. That's at 25 cents

a visitor. So, you know, there are all sorts of ways for us to do it. It ought to be consistent.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yes.

Senator COBURN. You know, I think the Park Service struggles with 2 things. One, how do you satisfy the local community in terms of this? Then how do you extract enough resources to help maintain? There's all sorts of things that we can do to bring that up.

As a matter of fact, we're going to have recommendations in this report on how you increase the revenues coming to the park. That will be a part of what we're doing. I think the other thing is to try to match expenses within the Park Service to revenues, rather than, you know, we have a lot of parks that cost 100 bucks per visitors per visit. One Hundred dollars. We ought to be saying, should we be putting resources there or putting resources where we have the highest level of visitors and the highest usage?

Senator MURKOWSKI. I appreciate that. Again, I will look forward, too, to the recommendations that you put forward. I do think that your proposal, that we need to look to LWCF and how we might be able to carve out some of these dollars that are directed to this for our parks and maintenance backlog.

If we're smart, it's not a permanent carve-out. Once we can get on top of your curve here, then you should have some flexibility. Or I would hope that we would build some flexibility to move that elsewhere.

Senator COBURN. Right. You just sunset it.

Senator MURKOWSKI. But thanks for your leadership on this, and we'll work with you on it. Appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Senator Alexander.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Coburn, thanks for coming.

I'd like to make a comment and get your reaction to it. Then if you think there's any sense in it, I'd like to work with you and turn it into some specific proposal that we might actually try to get done.

Senator Udall talked about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I was co-chairman of the commission with his father in 1985 and 1986, under President Reagan, that recommended full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is \$900 million.

Now, that's for land acquisition. It's not for maintenance of quotes. That's the idea of it, is for Federal and State land acquisition. But as Senator Udall said, it only once, I think, or you didn't say this, but only once I think has it been fully funded.

The idea was that the money from offshore drilling would—I mean, if you impinge on the environment a little bit, you take some of that and improve the environment over here. It's a nice balance. Except it's never happened. We did get through, with Senator Domenici's leadership, a little bit of funding on new drilling in the Gulf Coast, and 1/8 of a cent goes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It's not much money.

So we've had a lot of bipartisan support for a long time for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million. But it's never happened. Senator Burr, I believe, has a bill that would make it mandatory funding. We do have this prospect of in-

creased drilling for oil and gas offshore, and there's some opportunity there.

Now, let me localize this problem a little bit and put it into perspective. You have said that about half of this \$11 billion is roads.

Senator COBURN. Yes.

Senator ALEXANDER. It's roads. Now, in Tennessee, here's what we do with roads. We pay for them as we go. In other words, in the 1980s, we had 3 big road programs. We said, "Are we going to borrow money to build them?" We said, "No. We're going to raise the gas tax. We're going to charge the people who use the roads to build the roads." Every single Republican in the legislature voted for that because it was a conservative pay-as-you-go policy.

So we have zero road debt. We have \$900 million that we collect every year in gas taxes. It's one of the lower gas taxes in the country, but it all goes to build roads, and zero of it goes for interest on the debt.

You go to New Jersey, for example, they spend \$900 million on principal and interest. We're spending it on roads. We have the best roads in the country, usually every year 2 or 3 roads. So I think it's ridiculous for us to be borrowing money, and the Federal Government that is so heavily indebted, to build roads in the national parks. We shouldn't be doing that. We should be having user fees of some kind to build the roads, it seems to me.

If you want to get at the maintenance, if the deferred maintenance is \$11 billion and \$5 or \$6 billion of it is roads, why don't we start by figuring out how to develop a way to take care of the roads? Maybe the States, through their user fees, ought to take a share of that. I mean, Tennesseans drive on the Great Smoky Mountains roads, and North Carolinians do, more than anybody else. Or maybe we take a combination of what the 2 of you said and maybe Senator Murkowski said, and maybe in exchange for fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund for 10 years, we do that with a mandatory funding that's derived from oil and gas revenues, which is sort of a user fee, since a lot of that goes to transportation. For at least 10 years, we use that to take care of the roads in the national park. That knocks off half the backlog. That leaves \$5 million to go.

While conservationists might be shocked at the thought because that money is supposed to go to acquiring new lands, Senator Coburn has made the point we shouldn't be doing that when we can't take care of the ones we've got, and you could add to that, we haven't been funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund anyway.

So if we were to say that for a period of time, we take some of this new money and use it for roads, that helps the parks and that gets at your point, and it gets us into a habit in this country of fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which we can do, maybe more with a straight face when we do a better job of taking care of what we've got now.

So my comment, I'd be interested in your reaction. Do you think it's realistic to come up with a proposal that fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund for a period of time, uses some of it for roads and at least get that part of it taken care of, and using new revenues to do it that are derived some way or another from

user fees or from energy exploration, rather than borrowing money by a Federal Government that's broke?

Senator COBURN. You know, your committee is the jurisdiction on the best way to approach that. But what I would say, a couple of things. No. 1, the Federal Government owns 640,000,000 acres of land right now. If you do \$9 billion over the next 10 years of land acquisition, what's that going to be? In other words, at what point does the LCFW stop? In other words, do we buy all the land that's available out there?

So what happens to land that is taken by the Federal Government, in terms of loss on the tax rolls? In other words, there's economic benefit, but there's also an economic loss.

You know, I think one other thing that we ought to look at is, how do we endow our parks? I mean, you know, I can imagine that the Grand Tetons National Park, with the people that live out there and visit that, that if you set up a plan to endow its future and created a recognition of those that were involved in endowing it, that you could create an endowment in the Rocky Mountain National Park, the Grand Teton, and several others around this country, to where you would create an endowment that could never touch the principal, but would be totally dedicated to the maintenance and preservation of those parks, to where this wouldn't even become a question anymore.

Where it would be a question is the parks where people really don't want to go, that don't really match the level of pristine nature that we see. That's been part of our problem, adding parks that don't come to the level of what we intended when we started creating parks.

That's one of the reasons I've been aggressive in trying not to add parks until we take care of it because I think, you know, I can tell you a lot of places in Oklahoma that we'd love to have a park, but it doesn't come up. No, it does not. The economic benefit would be great.

So I'll work with anybody to try to fix this backlog. But I want to fix it permanently. I want us to try to endow. I want us to create the place where we can have people come in and invest in our parks, get some small recognition for it, but create an endowment so over the next 20 years, this isn't a problem.

I think there's a lot of Americans that would like to do that, to participate in the preservation of what are some of our greatest assets in this country.

So I think there's all sorts of ways you get there. I think you ought to use a large portion of appropriated dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help on the backlog, rather than buy more land right now.

Senator ALEXANDER. Mr. Chairman, if I could make just one comment, and then I'll—

The CHAIRMAN. Of course.

Senator ALEXANDER. If there were money in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, I think I'd agree with you. I mean, I think of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park has 2 or 3 times as many visitors every year as any Western park, has nearly 10 million visitors a year. In 2005, \$110 million of the \$180 million in the Smokies was roads.

I'm just suggesting that one way to tackle this is to get roads out of the picture. I mean, let's pay for roads with user fees of one kind or another. Then let's focus on the rest of it with appropriated dollars.

Senator UDALL. Mr. Chairman, could I?

The CHAIRMAN. Very good, yes. Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. I want to thank Senator Alexander for his comments. I want to associate myself with his comments. I want to thank Senator Coburn again for his interest and passion on this question.

I would point out, and Senator Alexander was there at the beginning, you were there at the genesis of this LWCF idea that—of course, LWCF has 4 different missions: urban forests, Stateside funding, Federal funding, and we have to take all of that into account. But I think Senator Alexander is on to an approach that really may have utility in it. It would be a hallmark of this committee if we could move something forward to really get at what we're discussing here today.

So, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Portman was next, Senator Udall's partner.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not going to hesitate to ask my colleague questions, because he answers them so well.

First of all, I think this was a great discussion. I thank the chairman for asking Tom to join us, and then the great input from 2 members who have a lot of experience, and the ranking member, who has got a lot of experience.

I think, you know, this is kind of exciting because there's an opportunity here for us to do the right thing by our parks. I think with Udall as the chair of the subcommittee, having not just experience, but some flexibility here in how you look at this differently, I think that's really important. I'm the ranking member now. We probably don't focus as much as we should here in Congress on this issue because the parks are our treasure, everybody loves them. But we've got to be sure that, as Tom has pointed out, that we deal with this backlog.

I did serve briefly on this National Commission on the Centennial. I got off it when I got into the race for the Senate. I was on it, and I was sometimes the skunk at the picnic, as some will know who are in the group here, because my focus was on this notion of stewardship. I really think we make a mistake in focusing too much on acquisition.

I will tell you, we need to, in my view, have some flexibility on this because you all made a good point. Mark talked about some of these in-holdings where you can't actually, through acquisition, help to make a park more efficient. I will give you a good example of that, Cuyahoga National Park. It's our only big park in Ohio. It's top 10 in the country. It's not the Smokies, where I was on my anniversary last weekend, and the roads were fine.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. That's just getting through the park.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. That's just getting through it. We didn't run into any potholes. We need a few potholes fixed at Cuyahoga, however.

But anyway, it is, I think, one use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But I do think this idea of using it for backlog is really interesting. There is actually some precedence. Mark Udall talked about some of the uses of the fund. I think the fund also, this historic preservation fund, is really for maintenance. So that is some way in which we now use the Land and Water Conservation Fund, not for acquisition, but for actually maintenance of historic sites. These are non-Federal historic sites, as I understand it. We'll hear more about that later, I think, from National Parks and Conservation Association and the National Parks Hospitality Association, as they have put together this report for us that we have in our material.

But my question to you is, one, about that flexibility on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, if we start to fund it, which we should and we will be able to, thanks to the new finds offshore and the new technology on oil and gas. But also, how do you get the private sector more involved? We'll hear something about this later.

When I was at OMB, as you may remember, Tom, we offered a balanced budget in fiscal year 2008, over 5 years, not 10 years, but 5 years. But we increased funding for the parks. There's a little bit of a flat line there when the Congress responded to that. It wasn't a reduction, but at least we flattened it out for awhile. But Congress, frankly, didn't take up the initiative. The initiative was really threefold.

But the most important one I thought was the challenge and the match. So we went to the private sector and said, Why don't you put some money in every year, 100 million bucks into the parks? Then we'll get Congress to pass legislation to match it with 100 million bucks, dollar-for-dollar match." That never happened.

The Chairman was just talking about what was done in connection with this helium legislation and the \$50 million challenge in that legislation. I just think, as you indicated earlier with regard to the Tetons and all the interest in preserving it, and there are friends groups that do a great job and philanthropic groups, and in a sense, they provide somewhat of an endowment. But it should be more connected to, what are the recognized needs of the park on the deferred maintenance, which as you said is 5 times more costly than regular preventive maintenance?

So what do you think about that? Does the Federal Government have a role to play here in providing an incentive for the private sector to step up and maybe with some naming rights, done in a tasteful way, as Senator Murkowski has talked about, but to tap into this love of the parks, this interest in the parks, and frankly, the economic benefits of these parks?

Senator COBURN. Yes, I think it has a role. What you need is a champion. You know, we had a champion for parks, Teddy. What you need is a champion that will go out and say, "Look at where we are." Most Americans know that we're kind of in the grips of some pretty tough financial prospects, going forward, in terms of our debt and our long-term obligations. So I can say, yeah, I think you could do a challenge-type grant.

But what you need is a champion, somebody to go out and say, to call on those with wealth in this country and say, "Come help us endow the parks." You know? If we get ahead of the curve, which we never do, but if you think about an endowment, an endowment is doubly saving. It means that you have income coming off the endowment, which you can apply today. But it also means you're not borrowing money against the future. So you're saving because you're performing proper maintenance, one. No. 2 is, you're not paying an interest cost on it.

Senator PORTMAN. All right. Yes.

Senator COBURN. So it's just smart. So I would say if we could develop a champion, a retired Senator, a retired Congressman, a retired Vice President, who would go around the country and rally for the parks to endow the parks so that we could actually put in motion a preservation for what is really a tremendous asset for our country.

But I think the conflict is, everybody wants a park even when it doesn't make any economic sense to have a park. But the whole argument is about economic benefit, and at a time when we can't take care of the very critical resources that we have today.

So like I told Senator Alexander, I'll help do whatever I can. But I want us to get caught up and do it in a way—because it's going to save us a ton of money if we do it on a timely fashion rather than a deferred fashion.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Portman.

I think we've had something like 10 percent of the Senate here now to get into this issue. I want to see what other colleagues would like to make comments.

I think on this side, are there other colleagues that would like to comment or ask questions of Dr. Coburn?

Senator MANCHIN.

Senator MANCHIN. I just applaud Senator Coburn's effort on this bringing it to our attention. But the bottom line is that he's absolutely correct. I don't have the presence of State parks, I mean national parks in my State. But West Virginians use national parks over this country. They are so appreciative to have that opportunity.

So we're all in. We're committed. We'll do whatever we have to do. I agree with you. Someone needs to go out and beat the drum on this.

But the deferred maintenance, just as relevant, when I was Governor, I had every time it was time to build something, you just would refer that to everybody wants a new park in their district. It's good to go home and say, I got a national park."

I had the college system. Everybody wanted to build new buildings. So before I approved any new buildings to be built, I wanted to see what their deferred maintenance was. It was so pathetic that they didn't even, they didn't deserve one more penny for one new building because they hadn't taken care of what they had.

If we continue down this road and can't take care, you can't ask the taxpayers or any of these benefactors, when we're not good stewards.

So I would say, to have a value cap on what our deferred maintenance should—and I'm sorry I came in late. You might have gone over that, Senator. I don't know. Do we know about how much our deferred maintenance is on our national parks? Do we have an idea how much?

Senator COBURN. Yes. It's \$12 billion.

Senator MANCHIN. \$12 billion.

Senator COBURN. For our backlog.

Senator MANCHIN. Just to get—

Senator COBURN. But remember, this is a compounding, growing problem.

Senator MANCHIN. Right.

Senator COBURN. Because every year you don't do preventative maintenance, you get behind the curve. Then pretty soon now, you're replacing a road rather than resurfacing.

Senator MANCHIN. Sure.

Senator COBURN. So, you know, this has kind of flattened a little bit. But it's going to accelerate, especially what we've done to the Park Service this year.

Senator MANCHIN. The type of money we're putting in for maintenance is equal to how much?

Senator COBURN. It's half of what they need. Now, they're running a \$377 million deficit on maintenance every year. So every year, they get further and further behind. The degree of maintenance to catch back up, the cost becomes more complex because you're not doing preventative maintenance, you're doing structural maintenance.

I mean, look. At the Grand Canyon, we're dipping water out of the river sometimes when the water in there to run the toilets, Grand Canyon National Park. Are we proud of that?

[Pause.]

Senator MANCHIN. I'm just, I'm committed. Again, a State that doesn't have an awful lot of structure in our State, we still benefit, all as Americans. I think we have to look at it as a whole, not just as what is good for my State, or do I get a park? I'll vote for this is I get something for it.

This is something that has to be done, and I appreciate and applaud you, sir.

Senator COBURN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Manchin. Certainly, your problem-solving approach is going to be very useful as we try to take this on.

Senator Barrasso is next.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank Senator Coburn for his leadership. I agree completely the Land and Water Conservation Fund really should be used for maintenance backlog, not new acquisitions.

You know, we do have the Grand Teton National Park Foundation founded in 1997. It was a partnership with the Park Service. Actually, it worked to construct the Craig Thomas Visitor Center, which opened after and was dedicated to Craig after his death. So there are partnerships that exist. But I agree, actually, with your comments about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. So thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Any other colleagues who would like to make comments or ask questions with respect to Dr. Coburn?

Senator Heinrich, Senator Baldwin, you would like to pass at this time?

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Very good.

Dr. Coburn, I think you've seen the really extraordinary interest among Senators on both sides. David Brooks is sitting behind me and he is a guru on this whole issue of advocating for the parks. I asked him, "When was the last discussion in the Senate about these kinds of issues, looking at these kinds of questions on how we deal with a very real problem of the backlog?"

Mr. Brooks, who is basically a repository of knowledge about parks, basically said he couldn't even remember when there was a discussion. So it's pretty obvious now that we have this debate underway.

I want to tell you 2 things with respect to substance. First, you and I have talked about this question of trying to make sure you get the money where the need is. Particularly, being more creative about it. I want you to know I'm going to work with you on it particularly with respect to the issue I touched on earlier, because the fee revenue expires in December 2014. So we've got to do it. That would be one place to really look very concretely at one of the ideas that you've had in there. Apparently, there are efforts already underway. There may be more creative ways to do it. So we're going to look at that.

On this endowment issue, you basically had me at hello, because this is an area, I'm convinced, where there just won't be one champion in the United States. There will be a lot of champions. We're going to pursue that very vigorously. I've already begun some of that discussion.

So, thank you. I think you've seen the interest among Senators. We're going to be working very closely with you in the days ahead. OK.

Let's bring up the Honorable Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director of the Park Service.

Mr. Jarvis, as you come up, I also would like to express my thanks to you for the fact that you've worked so closely with the committee. We could not possibly have gotten that Cape Hatteras National Seashore legislation out of the committee without your very valuable counsel. As you know, that went on for years and years. I just want the public to know that I'm particularly interested in some of the efforts that you all have made to really look at technology to resolve some of these conflicts that have just gone on and on.

As we all know, there have been real questions in Cape Hatteras with respect to the turtles and how you could ensure protection for them and also be welcoming to visitors. You all worked very closely with the private sector, with companies in the private sector, to look at approaches, where in effect you could put tags, on these nests so that, through sensors, you could know when the turtles would hatch. You would be in a position to resolve a conflict that

had gone on and on. You could add an additional measure of protection for the turtles, while still do more to welcome visitors to this wonderful treasure that the North Carolina Senators felt so strongly about.

So it's those kind of fresh approaches that we need. Let's see if we can come up with some on this funding issue. We'll put your prepared remarks into the record in their entirety. Why don't you just go ahead and make your comments? I know you're going to get questions from Senators.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks all of the Senators that are here today. I actually really, I come up here a lot. But I have to say that I really appreciate this discussion, because it is critical to the future of the National Park Service.

Congress has charged the National Park Service with protecting America's special places in perpetuity. That is a fundamental responsibility of Congress, then, to provide an annual appropriation commensurate with the responsibilities that it has given us.

We've embraced opportunities to supplement those funding through entrance fees, concession-generated fees, and new models of public—private land management. However, annual appropriations remain the primary means of addressing our deferred maintenance backlog.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2012, the National Park Service faced an \$11.5 billion backlog in deferred maintenance. In order to merely hold the backlog at a steady level of 11.5, we would need to spend nearly \$700 million per year on deferred maintenance. In Fiscal 12, we had \$444 million available for that purpose, which falls significantly short of the necessary \$700 million. So as a result, every park must make very difficult decisions about which facilities to repair and which ones to defer.

Managing this large deficiency with limited resources requires that we concentrate our efforts on correcting the most serious deficiencies in all of our assets. We systematically track asset conditions and maintenance activities, which gives us the ability to identify the most serious deficiencies. The total need to address the high priority non-road facilities is \$4.2, and for roads, it's \$3.3 billion.

We prioritize repairs that are more critical to protecting resources, ensuring the health and safety of our visitors, and provide rewarding visitor experiences. We also require that each maintenance project pass a financial sustainability test, proving that the park will be able to keep the asset in an acceptable condition for the lifespan of the replacement component.

There have been occasions when Congress has provided a one-time boost to the funding of our backlog. The recent example, of course, is the \$750 million the National Park Service received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With those funds, we executed 800 projects at 260 park units, the majority of which addressed deferred maintenance.

We are absolutely open to ideas that supply additional funding, and we appreciate the work of the Bipartisan Policy Center,

MPCA, and the National Park Hospitality Association. Some of these ideas raised by the groups have been around for some time and have been pursued. We're currently reassessing concession fees, promoting the use of leasing authority, engaging our volunteers, and investing in energy-saving cost-cutting technologies.

The Bipartisan Policy Center White Paper includes 2 proposals that have identified new revenue sources and have no net increase to the Federal budget. One is to increase fee revenue, for example, comparative pricing of our annual pass with State annual passes, or using peak pricing models for our highly seasonal parks. The other is to establish a public—private partnership matching fund, with revenue offsets.

Our experience with the \$25 million Centennial Challenge Fund in Fiscal Year 2008, which was talked about here, makes us confident that our donors will respond to a Federal matching fund. Already, partners are stepping up to help us prepare for our second century. Last November, in partnership with the National Park Foundation, we kicked off the first phase of a centennial campaign that will culminate in a strategy for introducing the National Park Service to the next generation.

The repairs to the Washington Monument provide a visible reminder of the effectiveness of public—private partnerships. The NPS received \$7.5 million in appropriated funds for the earthquake repairs, with the understanding that a philanthropist was prepared to match that amount. By working with our partners and our friends, we will be able to reopen the monument in 2015.

A number of the proposals from the White Paper we are already pursuing have practical, legal, and financial limitations. We're exploring them in a manner that is consistent with NPS policies, regulations, and laws. In addition, we are supporting legislation to authorize a commemorative coin celebrating our Centennial in 2016.

The White Paper also identifies some proposals that face significant challenges. One proposal is to increase the Federal gas tax by 1 cent and use the revenues. Our roads represent \$5.7 billion, or 50 percent, of the backlog. Another proposal is to establish an endowment, which we support. There are proposals to develop a model for managing park concessionaires, similar to the model used by the Defense Department in its base exchanges and recreation facilities and to pursue bonding and revolving loans.

I would like to mention, finally, the significant impact of sequestration from the budgetary cuts to the National Park Service and its related bureaus. Sequestration was designed to be inflexible, damaging, and indiscriminate, and it is. It is undermining the work that we need to do on our many fronts. It's increasing our backlogs, eroding our work force, and deferring important work.

To conclude, the National Park Service will continue to pursue new and creative ways to address its funding needs. I want to thank our many partners who are here who have come to us with these ideas. I appreciate the support of Congress to resolve this extraordinary challenge. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jarvis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this oversight hearing to consider supplemental funding options to support the National Park Service's efforts to address deferred maintenance and operational needs.

Today's hearing comes three years and one month to the day before the National Park Service's one hundredth anniversary. I think it is appropriate then that we should look back at the words that Congress used when it decided that certain places were so important—so essential to our national character—that they should be protected not for five, or ten, or even one hundred years, but for all time.

The National Park Service's Organic Act, signed into law on August 25, 1916, states: "The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as National Parks, monuments, and reservations, by such means and measures conform to [their] fundamental purpose to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

These were bold and inspirational words when they were written, and they define the broad mission of the National Park Service. The maintenance of our facilities and roads is an essential part of meeting our mission, but it is only one part among many. Our focus and attention must be directed not only to our existing facilities, but also to visitor education and safety, resource protection, and wildlife management.

Congress charged the National Park Service with protecting these special places in perpetuity, and it is the fundamental responsibility of Congress to provide annual appropriations commensurate with the responsibilities it has given us to manage these special places. We have embraced a number of opportunities to supplement funding through entrance fees, concession generated franchise fees, and new models of public-private land management. However, annual appropriations remain far and away the heart of our operation and are the primary solution for addressing our maintenance backlog. History does not stop, and we must continue to find a way to protect those areas that have already been designated without excluding those stories and places that matter to this and future generations.

A variety of ideas have been proposed regarding ways the National Park Service could raise additional funds. Some of these ideas are realistic, but others are not. Except for the call for large infusions of federal funds via Federal Lands Transportation Program or Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) receipts, many proposals do not come close to stabilizing, let alone paying down the National Park Service maintenance backlog. Additionally, many of these proposals require legislative action or inter-agency coordination, and cannot be implemented by internal NPS policy changes or initiatives alone. In other words, these proposals are not the answer to the maintenance backlog.

Resolving the backlog is the fundamental responsibility of the Federal government. The potential to raise additional funds should not be viewed as a way to supplant federal funding. Appropriated dollars should continue to serve as the primary means of addressing the deferred maintenance backlog. Understanding the backlog, its scope, and its various components is critical to identifying possible ways to address it.

The Deferred Maintenance Backlog

At the end of Fiscal Year 2012, the National Park Service faced an \$11.5 billion backlog of deferred maintenance. This amount grows annually at a far greater rate than the Service is able to pay down. In order to merely hold the backlog at a steady level of \$11.5 billion, the NPS would have to spend nearly \$700 million per year on deferred maintenance projects. To place this figure in perspective, the annual operating budget of the entire National Park Service in Fiscal Year 2012 was \$2.2 billion.

The National Park Service has endured successive years of reduced appropriations, and by necessity, non-operating accounts have borne the biggest brunt of the reductions. In Fiscal Year 2012, the NPS had \$444 million available to address deferred maintenance projects: \$71 million from our repair and rehabilitation account, \$74 million and \$3 million from our construction and housing accounts respectively, \$168 million from the Federal Highways Appropriation for park roads, \$75 million from NPS-collected recreation fees, and \$53 million from park concession franchise fees. Even at \$444 million, the NPS falls far short of the \$700 million needed to keep the deferred maintenance backlog from growing. At these reduced funding lev-

els, every park unit must make difficult decisions to prioritize which facilities are repaired and which projects are deferred.

Managing this large of a deficiency with limited resources requires that we concentrate our efforts on correcting the most serious deficiencies in the most important assets of the NPS. Through the Facility Management Software System (FMSS), the NPS tracks asset conditions and maintenance activities, giving us improved visibility into Service-wide maintenance needs and the ability to identify the most serious deficiencies. The total needed to address the highest priority non-road facilities is \$4.2 billion and for roads is \$3.3 billion. The NPS prioritizes repairs that are most critical to meeting our mission of protecting resources, ensuring the health and safety of our visitors, and providing rewarding visitor experiences. We also require that each maintenance project pass a financial sustainability test to prove that the park will be able to keep the asset in acceptable condition for the lifespan of the replacement component.

There have been occasions when Congress has provided a one-time boost in funding directed towards reducing the backlog. One recent example is the \$750 million NPS received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With those funds, the NPS executed over 800 projects at 260 park units located in 48 states and the District of Columbia, and the majority of these projects addressed deferred maintenance needs. The NPS obligated all of the funds within 18 months and completed all projects within 4 years of receiving the appropriation. These projects restored or extended the life of roads, popular trails, and critical facilities.

Supplemental Funding Proposals

The National Park Service is open, of course, to ideas that could supply added funding and appreciates the work of the Bipartisan Policy Center, the National Park Conservation Association, and the National Park Hospitality Association to help identify and promote a wide range of ideas. Some of these ideas have been around for some time and have been pursued. For example, the Centennial Challenge was a successful matching fund through which the National Park Service was able to utilize the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations request to help us incentivize private donations with a Federal match. We are currently reassessing concession services for the 21st century, promoting the use of leasing authority, engaging our volunteers, and continuing to invest in energy-saving, cost-cutting technologies.

The Bipartisan Policy Center white paper includes two proposals that identify new revenue sources and would have no net increase in the Federal budget deficit:

- Increase fee revenue—There are many ideas presented in the fee proposal, some of which make a lot of sense, such as competitively pricing the NPS annual pass with state park annual passes (i.e., California’s annual state park pass is \$125, while the America the Beautiful pass is only \$80) and looking into peak pricing models for our highly seasonal parks. The NPS collected \$177.7 million in entrance fees in Fiscal Year 2012 and already focuses much of its annual fee revenue on deferred maintenance projects. Of the funds available for projects, the NPS spent, on average, two thirds of its annual fee revenue on deferred maintenance projects from 2010 to 2012.
- Establish a Public-Private Partnership matching fund with revenue offsets—As noted above, the experience with the \$25 million Centennial Challenge fund in Fiscal Year 2008 makes us confident that our donors will respond to a Federal matching fund. Already, partners are stepping up to help us prepare for our second century. This past November, the NPS, in partnership with the congressionally-chartered National Park Foundation, kicked off the first phase of a centennial campaign that will culminate in a strategy for introducing the National Park Service to the next generation of Americans. This work is entirely funded by the National Park Foundation through its development efforts.

The repairs currently underway on the Washington Monument provide a visible reminder of the importance and effectiveness of this kind of public-private partnerships. The NPS received \$7.5 million in appropriated funds for earthquake repairs with the understanding that a private philanthropist was prepared to match the figure with a donation made through one of our partners. By working with our partners and friends, we will be able to reopen the monument to visitors by 2015.

The white paper includes a number of other proposals that we are already pursuing. Many of these proposals have practical, legal, and financial limitations, and we are exploring them in a manner that is consistent with existing National Park Service policies, regulations, and laws. In addition, we are supporting legislation proposed in the white paper to authorize commemorative coins celebrating the NPS centennial.

Finally, the white paper identifies some proposals that face significant practical hurdles or would require major legislative efforts and changes. Such proposals include:

- Penny for the Parks—This proposal would increase the federal gas tax by one cent and use the revenues for park transportation infrastructure. Our roads, highways and bridges represent some \$5.7 billion, or nearly 50% of the maintenance backlog. These transportation infrastructure needs are addressed through Federal Highway Trust Fund allocations to the Federal Lands Transportation Program. Any decision on park roads funding would have to be addressed when the Highway bill comes up for reauthorization.
- NPS Endowment—We support the idea of an endowment. Funding an endowment with non-Federal resources could be done now through our private partners. Funding an endowment with Federal funds would raise a number of issues, including a determination of the appropriate source of funds and related costs.
- Non-Appropriated Fund Instrumentality (NAFI)—The NPS could develop a NAFI-based model for managing concession operations, similar to the model used by the Department of Defense to operate its base exchanges and recreational facilities. NAFIs are organizational and fiscal entities that perform a government function utilizing a base of non-appropriated funds from concession-related revenue. The proposed NAFI would function as a governmental organization that would enjoy greater operating flexibility and access to broader financing options. The concept is interesting, and the NPS is working with subject matter experts to better understand the potential operating structure and legislative requirements this idea would entail.
- Bonds, revolving loans, etc.—The National Park Service cannot issue or guarantee bonds, but if states or local municipalities choose to issue bonds to support NPS-related projects, we would obviously welcome and encourage that support.

Finally, let me mention the significant impact that sequestration and other budgetary cuts are having on the Department of the Interior and its bureaus, from impacts on water, to protection of species, to energy development, to the management of our federal lands and resources. The sequester was designed to be inflexible, damaging, and indiscriminate, and it is. The process put in place by the sequestration undermines the work we need to do on many fronts, and increases infrastructure and other backlogs across all Department of the Interior bureaus. The bureaus are facing funding cuts that were imposed mid-year through such measures as freezing hiring, eliminating seasonal positions, and cutting back on our programs and services. These steps are not sustainable, however, as these actions which are eroding our workforce, shrinking our summer field season, and deferring important work cannot be continued in future years without further severe consequences to our mission.

Conclusion

The NPS will continue to pursue new and creative ways to address its funding needs, and I want to thank those partners who have come to us with ideas on ways we can do things better. We will always remain open to new ideas when they provide us with an opportunity to better meet our mission. I hope that Congress, in turn, will remain committed to providing us the resources to meet this extraordinary mission.

The CHAIRMAN. Director Jarvis, thank you very much.

Because of the number of Senators here, I'm just going to ask one question of Director Jarvis to get us started, and then recognize colleagues.

Director Jarvis, for decades, the Park Service has recommended expanding the Oregon Caves National Monument. One of the primary reasons has been because the existing site is not large enough to protect the site, given the volume of visitors. So in the case of Oregon Caves, not expanding the site could actually increase the cost of maintaining a very unique resource.

My point is that park acquisition and maintenance costs are not always in conflict. Certainly, the Oregon Caves raises that issue.

Adding to the monument might actually hold down the cost of maintaining the site.

So my question to you, Dr. Jarvis, is isn't this part of the thinking that ought to go into this debate? In other words, we're going to explore plenty of ideas. You saw that with a big chunk of the Senate. But wouldn't you say, philosophically, that we ought to try to find ways to intertwine this theory that park maintenance and acquisition, together, can be part of an effective and a cost-effective approach to stewardship?

Mr. JARVIS. I would agree completely with that, Chairman. Oregon Caves is a perfect example where the boundary addition that we have proposed would protect the watershed to the cave itself.

As you know, and as I know, having been responsible for that great park, is that it's an active wet cave. There is a stream that runs through the middle of it. The water for that stream comes from the surrounding lands. We have always been concerned about the water quality that was resulting from the activities on those lands. So by protecting that, adding it to the park, we would actually reduce our concerns for maintaining that water quality that runs through the cave and then through the chateau, as a matter.

Yes, buying lands can save money, particularly in-holdings within our national park, which is predominantly what we're restricted to with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It significantly can reduce our administrative costs in terms of providing access and maintaining critical resources.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator MURKOWSKI.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Director Jarvis, thank you for being here, your leadership of the parks.

I think it is important to recognize that we have seen some innovative things coming out of our parks. I mention what they're doing out in Wrangell-St. Elias just getting the neighbors involved to clean up. I think we need to see more of that. I think that that helps us, again, not only in addressing some of the issues within our parks, but again bringing the local people in and giving them ownership, giving them pride in their parks. That's a good thing.

Another thing that we've got good in Alaska right now, as you know, we have some very huge parks that are very inaccessible. If you happen to have the luxury of owning a floatplane or you can pay to fly into a place like Lake Clark, you've got beautiful opportunities within these parks. But they are very remote and very hard to get to. What you're doing out in Katmai with the webcams that are stationed right at the falls there, so right now, as we speak—and I'll do a little promo for you. But you can go to, I think it's katmaipark.com, and you can watch dozens of bears munching on salmon. It's better than reality TV. I'm telling you.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURKOWSKI. This is the real thing. So it's good, because it brings the parks to people, when we know that far too many of our parks, as wonderful as they are, are very remote. So how we can do that, I think, is good.

You heard the dialog going back and forth between colleagues here and Senator Coburn, and my concern that the Park Service seems to be prioritizing acquisition of land over the maintenance

backlog issues. Can you address really that issue? Why we're seeing the level of land acquisition that we are? I think Senator Coburn's statistics were really quite straightforward and, I think, very compelling. Why we're putting the priority on land acquisition ahead of the maintenance and backlog?

Then at the same time that you address that, the terminology that you used, I think, was "financial sustainability test." Because one of the things that I need to understand is, what evaluation the Park Service goes through as you look to specific land acquisition to make sure that we are not unnecessarily adding to this maintenance backlog, that there is a process that you go through in the evaluation of what these acquisitions might mean.

I fully understand what the Chairman has noted, that there are land acquisitions, specific in-holdings that truly do make it more efficient. But I can't imagine that the bulk of what you're doing with these land acquisitions is these smaller in-holdings. So if you can speak to the priority as opposed to maintenance backlog, and then what analysis goes into a review prior to these land acquisitions?

Mr. JARVIS. OK. Let me just clarify that, you know, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is available to the 4 Federal land management agencies. The National Park Service, amongst those 4, is the only one that is restricted from buying lands outside of our park boundaries. We can do very minor boundary adjustments on the edges, but without your direct authority, we cannot buy lands outside of the park boundaries.

Senator MURKOWSKI. With LWCF?

Mr. JARVIS. With LWCF.

Senator MURKOWSKI. But within your existing budget you use, you use funds to proceed with land acquisition?

Mr. JARVIS. Only LWCF. That's the only money that we use for land acquisition, is the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We do not use any—so we basically had got our funding in specific pockets, and we use the Land and Water Conservation Fund for land acquisition. Then we use our maintenance accounts for maintenance. We're not allowed to move money between those 2. That's basically up to you to have to grant us that kind of authority. We do not have that.

In terms of acquisitions, because we don't get very much money in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we have a very robust priority-setting process that are predominantly toward the, you know, key critical issues like threats to the resource, opportunities for visitor enhancement, hardship cases. We have had one in Montana recently, where an individual was on their deathbed, and they really wanted the park to acquire their property as well. So we go through a very rigorous process to determine what our priorities are.

Right now, we are in the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, and we've had a priority on protecting some key components of our Civil War battlefields. So there's been a strong portion of that as well. The Park Service also allocates the State side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which goes out to the States to protect habitat and provide visitor enjoyment as well.

Now, we also see on our maintenance side, we have an incredibly robust program and in determining our priorities and asset condi-

tions. So you basically take every asset, every building, every road, every trail, every restroom. You go in, you determine its existing condition and its asset priorities. So, how important is this to the visitor experience? Or is this, you know, a Presidential home?

Senator MURKOWSKI. Is that based on the number of visitors? Is that how you place a priority?

Mr. JARVIS. That's part of it, yes. Absolutely that's part of it. But it also might be, you know, Independence Hall is a very important building. So that would be its core to your purpose of the park, as opposed to an old barn in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Senator MURKOWSKI. My time has expired. But you haven't addressed this financial sustainability test that you referenced. How does that work?

Mr. JARVIS. So that means that once we elevate a building, let's say, from a poor condition to a good condition, then we require that the park put the annual maintenance into that building to keep it at that condition. So they have to demonstrate that they're going to make that a priority, make that investment to retain it. Because we do not want to fix a building up, raise its condition to a new level, and then watch it decline.

So what that means is they have to make very, very hard choices about some other buildings that they're going to have to defer the maintenance on. But we just do not want to lose the investment we've made in improving the condition of the facilities we have the money for.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yet, as we noted from Dr. Coburn's chart, we're clearly seeing that erode.

Mr. JARVIS. Yes.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for having this hearing. I got here a little bit late, so I'm not sure I'm correct on this next statement. But I'm not sure I've heard the word "sequester." So while we're having this big discussion, and I think it's an important discussion, I look at this as an immediate impact that my constituents are feeling and our economy is feeling because of the sequester.

So while I'm glad to have this discussion, I look at and say, we have 13 national parks, 3 of them crown jewels. We have visitors producing \$261 million and thousands of jobs across our State. If the sequester continues, it's something like \$153 million impact across the country. We've already had over \$1 million of impacts that we've had to absorb from Mount Rainier since 2010 that are affecting visitor impacts.

When I look at some of these gateway towns that are part of this operation, everything from Port Angeles to Eatonville to the North Cascades, I keep thinking, What's the economic impact of this going to be? Because we don't get a budget deal. I look at the something like 227,000 jobs in Washington State that are related to the outdoor recreation industry.

So for some of my colleagues, this conversation about the future and road maintenance and whatever is one economic question, and certainly one I certainly have a disagreement point on. I'll come to

it in a second. But my immediate question is, What is the economic impact of all of the sequestration having on the economy of a State where national parks and outdoor recreation is a key part of our economy?

So I don't want to lose sight of that, and I hope you would enlighten us on what sequestration is doing now, and what will it do in the future to lessen really an economic impact that will be, is being felt and will continue to be felt? What do you think we can do to help get our colleagues to understand this issue?

The second point is, my colleague, Senator Alexander, and I have been sponsors of the creation of a new park. It's called the B Reactor Park. It's celebrating the achievements of scientific excellence that our country achieved, and preserving that is something between DOE and the Department in creating this. Do I think we should stop creating national parks because somebody thinks the maintenance backlog? No. I want to commemorate what happened at Hanford and various parts of what we've done across the country.

So I'm certainly not going to—oh, sorry. My colleague from New Mexico is here. I certainly am not going to have the attitude that we're not going to do any new park until, you know, the maintenance backlog is caught up.

You know, so I guess I'm just one that believes that our generation's challenge is to be good stewards. These aren't our decisions forever and ever. These are our decisions to be good stewards for the next generation. So I would just hope you would comment on, one, the continuation of the B Reactor Park, and 2, the economic impact that we are seeing from sequestration on our national parks, and what else we can do to help our colleagues illuminate that it really will impact jobs and impact small-town economies across our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Senator Cantwell.

So, let's start with sequestration. The 5 percent cut that we took in March this fiscal year resulted in \$130 million cut to the operations and responsibilities of the National Park Service halfway through the fiscal year, and just as the summer season was beginning in most of our national parks.

So the net result of that on the ground, we had a hiring freeze. We withheld the hiring of 900 permanent positions and 1,000 seasonals. So there was a direct effect. Every park in the system had to take a 5 percent cut. I was not given the authority to take that off the top or take it out of LWCF or any other account. Every account took a 5 percent hit. As you know, every park in the system is lined in the budget.

So there were direct effects. There were late season openings. There were reduced operation hours, fewer rangers, fewer rangers to fight fire, fewer rangers for search and rescue. I was in the Teton this week, talked directly to the rangers. Their visitation is up. Rescues are up. Numbers of seasonals and rangers are down.

In maintenance, specifically, so I gave you the number of \$444 million that is currently available in our operating budget for maintenance. I didn't mention that that was actually reduced to \$416 million by sequestration. So all of our operating accounts that

would be applied to deferred maintenance actually were hit at the 5 percent level as well. So it was about a \$27 million direct hit from sequestration.

You know, my theory on new units are that, you know, history doesn't stop just because you have an economic challenge. The National Park Service has been challenged by and charged by this body for almost 100 years to take care of not only the extraordinary crown jewels, which is the Grand Canyon and the Grand Teton and Yosemite, but historical sites that are representative of the full American experience.

That story is incomplete. The B Reactor is the perfect example of that, that it tells an incredibly important story about this country and its leadership in the development of the atomic bomb and its role in ending World War II. It is the same thing with Harriet Tubman or the story of Fort Monroe in Virginia. Now, what's different about these new sites is, the National Park Service goes into them knowing we have extraordinary economic challenges. So we look for partners.

Certainly with the B Reactor, we have the Department of Energy. We have the communities and others to work with us. We do in and attempt to minimize the direct responsibilities of the National Park Service that would add to our maintenance backlog, but recognize we also want to be a part of these stories that tell the American experience.

Senator CANTWELL. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. But is that annual? Is that annual? I want to just point out, last time I visited the Grand Teton, I was so surprised walking down the street how little English I heard being spoken. That this is, we think of these as our crown jewels. But this is an international tourist area that supposedly generates \$436 million benefit to the local economy.

So these are huge economic resources. So I hope that we will track, as a committee, these gateway communities, the local economic impact as well, of what sequestration is doing. Because I think we have to be very, very smart about getting—you know, not saying we can't live within our means. But as just you pointed out, again, sequestration's impact is across the board and is not giving you the flexibility to do something that might have less impact on those local communities.

So I thank the Chairman. I thank Director Jarvis.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cantwell. You are making a number of exceptionally important points. I think we all recall when another Washington resident, Sally Jewell, was here at the committee. She pointed out that recreation now is a \$646 billion annually boost to the American economy. This is outdoor recreation, close to \$650 billion a year. This is everything from guides to equipment to clothing, the list goes on and on.

So your points are well taken. One of the reasons that I asked about the Oregon Caves is that I think you also touch on another very important point that it's not correct to say that maintenance and acquisition are always mutually exclusive. That in a number of instances, they go hand and hand, and that acquisition may, in fact, actually lower some of the maintenance costs.

Senator CANTWELL. I don't want to—

The CHAIRMAN. So, as usual, you make a number of important points.

Senator CANTWELL. I don't want to delay my colleagues. But I think Director Jarvis will remember this one correctly. A land acquisition on the Carbon River basically allowed us to expand Mount Rainier. But why did we do it? Because it kept getting washed out. So the access and entry point kept getting washed out. We kept coming to Congress, asking for about \$230,000 every 4 or 5 years.

So by doing that land acquisition, we were able to move the entry point to a higher level and solve the problem. So I certainly agree with your point.

The CHAIRMAN. I would also note, by way of doing a little bit of advertising, as well, that Senator Cantwell's bill on the B Reactor is right now part of the hotline underway. It is Senator Cantwell's bill and Chairman Doc Hastings and Senator Alexander and Senator Heinrich. So urge all colleagues on both sides of the aisle to clear this very fine piece of legislation.

All right. Senator Alexander, you're next.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thanks for the plug for the fine piece of legislation.

I'd like to move the discussion from the West to the Eastern United States, where we have—and I'd like to get the director's comments on the 2 areas that we've been talking about. One is the appropriateness of even thinking about the Land and Water Conservation Fund in terms of your backlog, whether that's appropriate or not.

But first, I'd like to talk about roads in the parks. Now, I've always thought, and this goes back a long time, we don't have any business using appropriated dollars to build roads, that roads are to be paid for by user fees. So, what you just told us that \$3.3 billion of your critical backlog is roads, right? \$4.2 of it is other things.

What's your annual budget for roads within the parks?

Mr. JARVIS. We get our roads money from the transportation bill

Senator ALEXANDER. So all your roads money comes through the transportation bill?

Mr. JARVIS. Federal highways, Federal Land Highway Program. So the roads inside national parks, most of them, are Federal highways. So there is a separate appropriation at about \$168 million a year, map 21 out of the transportation bill, that comes to the National Park Service.

Senator ALEXANDER. So you're not using other appropriated dollars to build or maintain roads in the park?

Mr. JARVIS. That's correct.

Senator ALEXANDER. You're just using the Federal transportation dollars?

Mr. JARVIS. That's right.

Senator ALEXANDER. Good. That would be correct. So I guess there's not enough, you don't get enough every year through the Federal Transportation Fund in order to maintain your roads properly? That's what you're telling us?

Mr. JARVIS. Exactly.

Senator ALEXANDER. So, take another \$3.3 billion, and you get \$158 million a year?

Mr. JARVIS. 168.

Senator ALEXANDER. \$168 million a year. So that will take about 20 years.

Mr. JARVIS. We won't catch up at that rate. It's true.

Senator ALEXANDER. So, how rapidly do you need to catch up? You wouldn't do all that in 1 or 2 years. You would do it over, if you had the money, you'd do it over a period of time, right?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, we would. But we would like to see a significant increase to that amount of money coming to us.

Senator ALEXANDER. Yes. But one way to approach this backlog that we talk about is to get rid of the roads part of the problem, right? I mean, I know in the Smokies in 2005, that was 110 of the \$180 million critical deferred maintenance were roads.

Mr. JARVIS. Roads are a critical visitor access asset that need to be maintained.

Senator ALEXANDER. Yes. It would be true in the Great Smoky Mountains that a disproportionate number of the visitors to the park are North Carolina and Tennessee residents. Is that also true in other parks? What I'm getting at, is it appropriate to expect the States to help pay for part of these roads through their road programs?

Mr. JARVIS. I really can't speak to whether or not that's a State responsibility. I know throughout the country, our infrastructure is challenged. The drop of the Skagit River bridge was a perfect example of the many eroding bridges and roads across our country. I really don't know whether we could saddle the States with this additional responsibility.

I believe, frankly, that the roads inside national parks are a Federal responsibility and should be appropriately funded through the Federal transportation program.

Senator ALEXANDER. OK. Now, let me ask you about the discussion we had here, you heard some of it, about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. As I hear you and as I remember the law, the Land and Water Conservation Fund doesn't have much of anything to do with maintenance of national parks today. Right?

Mr. JARVIS. That's correct.

Senator ALEXANDER. So if we were to try to put the two together, that would be a new way of thinking for a lot of people in the conservation movement and other places, right?

Mr. JARVIS. It would.

Senator ALEXANDER. However, it's also true that the conservation community for a long time has wanted to find a way to have fully funded Land and Water Conservation Fund. If the Congress were to decide that a priority for us nationally were to fully fund that, and for a shorter period of time use the money to catch up on maintenance in national parks, what would be your comment on that?

Mr. JARVIS. If I may, for a moment, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a revenue source. I mean, it's from the Outer Continental Shelf, oil leasing. So, and there are many, many billions of dollars—

Senator ALEXANDER. Except it's not really, because it goes into the general pot and it's not, it never goes directly into the Land and Water Conservation Fund, except for that—

Mr. JARVIS. That's correct. It has to be reappropriated.

Senator ALEXANDER. Except for that 1/8 of a cent that Senator Domenici got.

Mr. JARVIS. But the point is, though, and you were one of the principals in the early days with the LWCF, but I want to make the point, though, it is not a tax on the American people. It's a revenue source from the Outer Continental Shelf. Oil goes into the Treasury and then needs to be reappropriated.

I want to also make a pitch here for the Historic Preservation Fund, which is another component that comes from that same source. The concept behind this was that you were taking a public asset, and you wanted to give something back to the American people for that. That's the fundamental purpose, concept behind the LWCF and HPF.

Senator ALEXANDER. Right.

Mr. JARVIS. I think that this would have to be well debated if you're going to switch that concept that this funding that has been traditionally used for either historic preservation funding or land acquisition to suddenly go to maintenance.

Senator ALEXANDER. Fair point.

I do think, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Murkowski, that there's something there that we can discuss. Senator, I was going to say I think there's something there. The Land and Water Conservation Fund and national park maintenance have never really been in the same caboose. Those are 2 different thoughts.

But I do think it's worth thinking about that we haven't had a way to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and we've been trying for 40 years. We've got it on the books that it's supposed to come out of the oil and gas drilling, but it doesn't. It goes right into the general pot, and then we appropriate some money.

So, maybe listening to Senator Coburn's call for a focus on deferred maintenance and Senator Udall's and yours that traditional support for Land and Water Conservation Fund and the upcoming celebration of the park, maybe there's some way to do 2 things at once here.

I would just urge today that we think about it. We keep in mind that such a big part of this is road funding. We ought not to be breaking out backs to find other appropriated dollars to pay to build roads in parks. I mean, that ought to be part of the roads system.

So those are my thoughts about it. I very much thank you for having this hearing. It's very helpful.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Alexander. Consistently, because of your interest in the parks, we get these issues up for debate. That's exactly the point of this morning's exercise. I very much appreciate all the time you've spent today.

Senator Heinrich is next.

Senator HEINRICH. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Senator Alexander for kind of making clear what the issues are here and understanding the problem and the relevance between the problem and what I've heard as some proposed solution. Because I don't think

a moratorium on the Land and Water Conservation Fund is going to do anything to get at the biggest driver of the backlog at the National Park Service in terms of maintenance when you have 50 percent of that backlog tied up in transportation needs.

We're inadequately funding our transportation needs through the appropriate method of basically user fees and the gas tax. We're not meeting that need every year, not just in the Park Service. We're not meeting that infrastructure need nationwide when it comes to our roads and bridges and our interstate highways.

That seems to me to be a very relevant part of this conversation. So I certainly don't support a moratorium on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But it does seem to me that we need to begin to address this issue of the backlog at our national parks in terms of maintenance. I think we need to attack that head-on where the biggest drivers of that are.

I do want to ask Director Jarvis, I think it's very important that we're now seeing our visitor fees plowed back into Park Service budget itself. That's something that could expire, I think, next year. That's a critical way that we can address some of the challenges at the Park Service. I think it's important that we reauthorize that.

I want to just ask your general views on how we make sure that our parks, which are one of the most affordable recreation and vacation opportunities for American families. Most of us grew up on our summer vacations going to some of those parks. How do we make sure that, in trying to address these challenges, we don't price that park experience outside of the reach of working families?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you for that question, Senator. I agree with you 100 percent.

We currently collect about \$170 million in recreation fees, that's insurance, campground, and special-use fees, and about another \$60 to \$70 million in concession franchise fees. So you're looking at about \$250 million annual fees coming into the National Park Service.

Frankly, we have always tried to keep the fees as a component of our overarching budget program. But we never wanted to get to the point where we were pricing our national parks to the point that you are excluding any component of the American public. There is an expectation, I want to be clear about that, by the American public that their tax dollars are the principal source for maintaining the national parks.

We do have the great advantage from the fee legislation that we do retain 100 percent of the fees, and they are your fee dollars at work directly back in the parks. We make that very, very visible to the American public. The vast majority of it goes into maintenance backlog. It pays for everything from upgrading water treatment plants to improving trails and restrooms and facilities.

So it is a delicate balance between how much you charge to gain entrance to the national parks and making sure the public understands that their dollars are coming right back to serve them.

Senator HEINRICH. Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank Senator Cantwell for bringing up the Manhattan proposed park. I think that's something that I've heard consistently over and over again from the community of Los Alamos and the surrounding commu-

nities, how important that is to their history. I think that Director Jarvis will find a very willing partner in those communities to make sure that we do a good job of stewarding that resource and making sure it has, make sure the Park Service has the resources they need and the support in the community to create that new park unit.

I want to thank Senator Cantwell, who's left, but, for bringing up the issue of just how important these recreation jobs are. In New Mexico, it is not inconsequential to have 68,000 jobs tied directly to outdoor recreation. Certainly, the impact of Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque, places like Bandolier, next to Bandolier National Monument next to Los Alamos. These are major draws to people from across the country and around the world that come to New Mexico and drive our local economy.

The CHAIRMAN. We're very glad you're on the committee, Senator Heinrich. One of the areas that we're going to focus on is this question of the economic multiplier associated with outdoor recreation.

I talked about the numbers in terms of trying to offer a big figure. When you're talking about \$646 billion, you tend to get people's attention. But when you're out in the rural West, in particular, and you see what this means in everything from, you know, gas stations to motels to people who sell equipment, and guides and the like, it really is extraordinary.

So we're glad you're on this committee, and to have you particularly hammering away at the value of outdoor recreation is especially important. We thank you.

Senator Baldwin.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll accept that invitation to continue on that same theme for a moment. We talk about the economic impact and the impact on jobs of some of the larger and premiere parks. I represent a State with 2 national park units and a scenic trail. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a park unit, and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is a park unit.

The economic impact of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is estimated to be a little over \$4 million, in excess of \$12 million added economic value for the Apostle Islands, where I vacation every August if I can.

The CHAIRMAN. You're going to get that vacation in this August.

Senator BALDWIN. I have it marked on the calendar when I arrive in the Apostle Islands.

Throughout Wisconsin, we also value the Ice Age Trail. I've hiked quite a few of those stretches. I actually want to actually focus in on that Ice Age National Scenic Trail. We've talked a little bit about how to create incentives for private investment to help with our maintenance backlog. But it was mostly focused on private investment of dollars. I'd like to dig a little deeper into private investment of volunteer hours.

Let me just tell you a little bit about the experience of the Ice Age Trail. My constituents put in about 70,000 hours of volunteer work maintaining the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in calendar year 2012. It didn't go unnoticed. The Ice Age Trail Alliance was the recipient of the Director's Service Award last year.

But in speaking with volunteers and staff on the trail, they mentioned that sequestration has really constrained the ability of the Trail Alliance to provide even some of the most basic tools that one would use, as a volunteer, to maintain and expand the trails, axe handles, shovels, work gloves, trail markers, basic things like that.

Now, we know that sequestration was never intended to occur; it has. But it seems to me that in this environment, we have to think creatively and increase the efficiency of these Federal funds. When you can leverage this type of volunteer activity, you know, we want to do everything we can to incent that and not erect barriers to that.

How can we leverage our public investments to continue this type of incredible volunteer effort and expand it beyond the example of the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you for that question, Senator. The National Park Service could not do what it does without the extraordinary support of our volunteers. The latest numbers I have from Fiscal 2011 is, we had 229,000 volunteers in the national park system, working with us. They contributed 6,000,800 work hours. If you calculate that against, you know, standard pay rates, that's \$145 million contribution to the work of the national park system.

Now, volunteers require supervision. They require care and feeding and supply. That comes from the appropriated side of our organization, in order to really allow our volunteers to be the most effective as they can be. So it's critical that we have the base funding for our volunteer program.

We have volunteer coordinators. In some cases, the volunteer coordinators are volunteers. But it's best done when the work can be organized by career staff. There are maintenance employees that help design the trail work and can supervise a crew on the ground, ensure that they are working with proper safety equipment. They get orientation. They drink their water and take care of themselves and, you know, the Band-aids are available for them, all of those things.

So that, the base funding for our maintenance trail work, particularly our long-distance trails like Ice Age, is critical to effect the ability of our volunteer work force to go out and get this work done.

Senator BALDWIN. I'd just make 2 other quick comments and observations about this one. I think it's especially important, especially during tough economic times, that we pay close attention to these outdoor recreational opportunities that our, again, not necessarily just the big crown jewels in the park system, but with those that are close by. Families that are strapped can't afford the long-distance vacations that they might at other times economically. Yet the capacity to go and enjoy with family these opportunities locally are crucial.

Then, the other comment I would make, especially given the fact that I've picked on the example of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, is how important continuing with the land acquisition is, even in tough times. Because it's a trail that's not finished yet. You can't start at one end and, you know, yet hike all the way through it. It's in different strips.

We need to complete it and have a commitment to doing so. That has to be ongoing before some of those lands are developed in other ways and we can't get them back.

Mr. JARVIS. If I may make a comment?

The CHAIRMAN. Of course.

Mr. JARVIS. I want to echo the Senator's comment about local assets for families and communities. Almost across the land, every one of those local assets was somehow enhanced through the State side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We often forget about that, that generally running at about \$40 million or so to \$50 million, this is a direct grant program to local parks, to State parks, to city parks, to State fish and game agencies to provide access, to provide boat docks for boat launching, to provide swimming areas and outdoor recreationsites.

It's critical to the overarching American infrastructure of parks that provide opportunities. So we should never forget about that side of the LWCF.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Does that complete your question, Senator Baldwin? OK. Thank you.

Just one question on the endowment front, Director Jarvis. I think you could see that a number of Senators are very interested in this. Dr. Coburn talked about the idea that there be a champion for the cause of parks. I think you can see there are going to be multiple champions of this kind of cause, and they are going to be on both sides of the aisle.

I've been especially interested in following the work that you're doing on endowments. I've talked, as you know, with David Rubenstein, who's been working with you on the Washington Monument. One of the witnesses on the next panel, David MacDonald, from the Friends of Acadia, is also, I believe, going to talk a bit about the endowment that they manage and coordinate with you all at the Park Service to fund maintenance of the historic carriage roads at Acadia National Park.

My question to you is, as we get into this, what id your take on how to generate the most appeal with respect to endowments? From the seat of my pants, it makes more sense to look perhaps at maintenance projects at individual parks, rather than to try to establish a large nationwide endowment. But that may well not be the way, you know, to proceed. Do you have a judgment on that?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir, I do. Let me talk about this for a moment. You know, the National Park Service is an institution with a perpetuity mission, but we live on an annual appropriation. If you look at other organizations around this country that have a perpetuity mission, whether it's a major university or a major museum, Smithsonian, they all have endowments. The National Park Service does not. So, I identified as one of my centennial goals was to develop an endowment for the national park system.

The Second Century Commission, which Senator Portman mentioned and served on, at the close of that group, and that was Sandra Day O'Connor, Howard Baker, Bennett Johnston, extraordinary individuals, all citizens who volunteered their time to think about the second century of the national park system, said if there was one thing of all of their recommendations that they felt that would make the greatest impact over the long term, it was an en-

dowment. That would be benefiting this agency and its mission 100 years from now, because it would grow.

So, how do we do that? We have engaged our partners such as the Friends of Acadia, but more largely, the National Park Foundation, to figure this out. How can we do this? So there are 2 components. One was, on Monday of this week, the National Park Foundation Board and I interviewed 3 organizations that could develop a capital campaign with an endowment component to that. So we will, through the foundation, not appropriated dollars, the foundation through philanthropic dollars, be hiring a company, a firm to provide counseling services for the development of a major capital campaign for the centennial for 2016.

We are also in the next 2 months, I will be meeting with the foundation with 10 corporate sectors to look for large corporate sponsorship for the National Park Service, the automobile industry, the travel industry, the hotel industry, looking for relationships with us for the centennial campaign as well, to build public awareness, to build philanthropy.

I think that the American public, they may only pay 80 bucks for an annual pass, and they could have 10—20 national park experiences, but they want to give back. Right now, we have not created that opportunity for them to make a donation specifically to an endowment to the national parks.

Now, I also agree that at the individual park level, an endowment can be created as well. I think that there are people that love the National Park Service, but they really love Yosemite or Acadia. They want to give directly to that. So, as we have been developing these public—private relationships and potential donations, we are also seeking to include an endowment for a specific thing, such as the Carriage Trails or one of the major developments at Yosemite through the Yosemite Fund. So we're now including that in each of our donation agreements as we build this.

I do believe, though, that it would be enhanced if there were some Federal matching component that would—the work we have done indicates that there would be more willingness, as we did with the Washington Monument, if there's a Federal component to this endowment. We would love to work with you to figure out how that can be built.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Director. As you heard earlier in the discussion of the Helium Bill, we're trying to start, philosophically, this kind of challenge approach. I think that there will always be questions of sort of how you get started and, in effect, I guess the technical lingo would be sort of funding the corpus.

But suffice it to say the basic proposition, I think that you're advancing in terms of trying to use this challenge concept and attracting others makes a lot of sense.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tying in with the concept of the endowment, recognizing that people do want to give back, not only with a direct donation to the parks or their own particular park, but also recognizing that some would be willing to donate land. You mentioned in your response to some of my questions that when you are looking at land acquisition, one of the things that is part of the prioritization is an issue of hardship, if

you have somebody dying and they want to provide their land to the parks.

As we think about land acquisition, perhaps in terms of mandating, and I don't know if we want to mandate, but have a process where you could certainly provide for land donations. But also, for future exchanges, for future land acquisitions, to provide for some form of an exchange. So as we are thinking about those ideas and how we can reduce costs and yet still continue to add to the treasures that we have, I think we need to recognize that there are other ways to acquire land rather than just the Federal dollars coming from the Treasury. I think we need to look to that.

Director Jarvis, we do have one more panel, and I know that the Chairman has a hard stop here in about a half an hour. I wanted to ask you about the situation in Gustavus with the expiring concession contract there with Aramark. We've been working to try to find a resolve to this. Their contract runs out at the end of this year. The prospectus that you put out didn't attract anybody. We're hoping to find some kind of temporary extension. In the meantime, the people of Gustavus are notably anxious and stressed. If the concession doesn't move forward, you really do have a situation where the town's economy is threatened. It kind of speaks a little bit to what Senator Cantwell mentioned with her smaller communities.

But I'd like to talk to you about where we are with this. I don't know. I think we need to look at whether or not this might be a situation where facilities need to be sold by the Park Service. If you can't make it work through these concession contracts, if we're not getting anybody that is interested, it does make you wonder whether or not the best option here might be to sell the lodge there in Glacier Bay National Park to a private entity.

We see that up in Denali with the private lodges, up there in Kantishna. In terms of visitor experience and based on the quality of the facility, I think there is clear and marked difference there.

So I would like to talk to you about that. I would also like the opportunity to discuss in more detail with you a situation that has recently arisen. Mr. Chairman, this is a little bit outside the scope of today's hearing. But it is a critically important issue to us in my State.

As you know, I sent a letter to you dated July 12th about the Park Service's new policy requiring that seafood that is sold by its vendors and concessionaires have to be certified by this non-governmental third party. They have to be certified as sustainable. Everything that I can tell is that this policy was developed without consultation, with NOAA, which is the Federal agency that is tasked with the responsibility of managing our nation's fisheries sustainably. The NGO's that you're relying on here, in my view, have a troubling record of meddling with at least Alaska fishermen's fisheries management. We've got some real concerns about this.

So I read yesterday, I thought it was pretty good news, that this was in a seafood online site. I read that the Park Service is going to be pulling back on this and meeting with NOAA. So then when we called your offices to confirm whether or not this was true, we're told that, no, not necessarily, in fact, that they may be an in-

accurate statement that the National Park Service spokesman made yesterday. So I'm trying to figure out what's really going on here. But you need to understand that the implications for not only the State of Alaska, that has a very strong, well-managed sustainable fisheries, is really quite concerned about the implications of this policy.

It is something that I have asked to speak with you directly on. We can save ourselves both from that conversation is you just give me the assurance that you've pulled back and the Park Service is not going to go down this road. So if you care to comment on that, I would certainly appreciate it.

Mr. JARVIS. don't know how much time you want to take in this hearing. But I'd be glad to come by your office and talk in detail about this.

I'm not pulling our national healthy food sustainability standards over this issue, because this is implying and was developed over a year-long consultation process.

Senator MURKOWSKI. With who?

Mr. JARVIS. With the concessionaires, with every one of the concessionaires, the food service providers—

Senator MURKOWSKI. Was NOAA involved with this?

Mr. JARVIS. I do not know whether NOAA was involved. But let me just clarify.

Senator MURKOWSKI. NOAA is the agency that makes the determination in terms of what's sustainable within the contract from—

Mr. JARVIS. These are guidelines.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I understand that.

Mr. JARVIS. That's not a policy. That's not a law. It's not a regulation. It's a guideline. It's a recommendation to our concessionaires that they use sustainable. Now—

Senator MURKOWSKI. But you're saying that they need to have a certain label that is applied by some NGO's from based out of London that says that this—this is the label that you have to have on your fish. If you don't have this, then, concessionaires, you shouldn't be using it.

Mr. JARVIS. It's a guideline.

Senator MURKOWSKI. What kind of a message do you think that that sends?

Mr. JARVIS. We drew from the industry standards for guidelines for sustainable foods.

Senator MURKOWSKI. What industry standards?

Mr. JARVIS. As I said, I'd be glad to come by to your office and get into this.

Senator MURKOWSKI. OK. We need to have a further discussion about this, because you're giving me the very clear impression that, in fact, your spokesman—

Mr. JARVIS. He was incorrect.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Kathy Cupper, spokesperson for the National Park Service, was incorrect?

Mr. JARVIS. That's correct.

Senator MURKOWSKI. That you're not pulling back on this?

Mr. JARVIS. What I am willing to do is to change the guideline so it includes Alaska wild-caught fish. I think that's the simple fix here.

The guidelines were drawn broadly to give some guidance to our concessionaires to—we want a park visit to be a healthy experience. The food was the key component.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I agree. I don't have a problem with that.

Mr. JARVIS. You have extraordinary food in Alaska. I mean, I lived up there; I know.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yes. Yes.

Mr. JARVIS. I lived on the Copper River. Senator Murkowski: Yes. We want that Copper River seafood sold in your parks.

Mr. JARVIS. So I want that Copper River salmon in those concessions. So this is a simple change to the guideline. It's not a withdrawal of our guideline, to include this.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I think we need to have further discussion about this, because what I'm concerned about is that the Park Service and HHS doesn't understand that when you go with one certification, again a certification by an NGO that is an internationally based entity coming in and saying that this is the label that you have to have, what that does to the Alaska fisheries, as you well know, is limits their ability to market the healthiest, best and—oh, by the way—most sustainable fishery that is out there.

Mr. JARVIS. Agreed.

Senator MURKOWSKI. So, we need to make sure that we're not cross purposes on this, because it's too important to my State and, quite honestly, when we're talking about healthy sustainable fisheries, I will take second fiddle to nobody on this issue. So I want to make sure that we're not locking ourselves in to a standard here that is simply not the right standard.

Mr. JARVIS. Right.

Senator MURKOWSKI. So if we can set aside some time, hopefully before we go on break next recess, in August, I would appreciate it.

Mr. JARVIS. You had a second question. That was Gustavus?

Senator MURKOWSKI. Gustavus, yes. We'll visit it at that, too.

Mr. JARVIS. All right.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Director, you've been very patient, as always. Again, thank you for your past cooperation. I think you could see there are a lot of Senators; this doesn't often happen on a busy day when everybody is looking toward the wrap-up for the summer work period. I think it shows the level of interest among colleagues, and also the bipartisanship. So we thank you.

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Our next panel, Mr. Gerard Gabrys, President and Chief Executive Officer, Guest Services, Inc., Fairfax, Virginia; Mr. David MacDonald, President, Friends of Acadia, Bar Harbor, Maine; Mr. Craig D. Obey, Vice President of Government Affairs for the National Park Conservation Service; and Mr. Dan Puskar, Executive Director of the Association of Partners for Public Lands in Wheaton, Maryland.

Thank you all very much. As you could tell, there's been really an extraordinary level of interest among Senators. So we are very much behind at this point. We'd like to get some questions in.

We will make your prepared remarks a part of the hearing record in their entirety. I know that there is a near biological com-

pulsion to just read every single word on the piece of paper. If you all can somehow resist all that and just speak to us for about 5 minutes or so, that would be great, and we will have some questions.

So let's begin with you, Mr. Gabrys.

STATEMENT OF GERARD GABRYS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GUEST SERVICES INC., THE NATIONAL PARK HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION, FAIRFAX, VA

Mr. GABRYS. Mr. Chairman and committee members, I'm Gerry Gabrys. I'm here on behalf of the National Park Hospitality Association, whose members collectively have about 25,000 employees throughout National Park Service facilities, and who make franchise fee payments to the National Park Service of about \$100 million annually.

I'm also Chief Executive Officer of Guest Services, Incorporated, who operates a variety of hospitality businesses around the country, including beautiful Mount Rainier National Park and the national parks of the National Capital Region here in Washington, DC.

We've been in business for about 100 years, and we're proud to have been partners with the National Park Service for about 50 of those years. We applaud the action of this committee. Mr. Chairman, you indicated that it's been a long time since there's been a debate about this subject. We want to pledge our support in any way that we can help.

As you indicated, there's a lot of information in my written report that I won't talk about here regarding the deferred maintenance backlog, the importance and benefits of increasing visitation to our national parks, and the marketing and outreach efforts that NPHA has joined in in connection with the 2016 National Park Service Centennial.

The message I do want to emphasize today, though, is concessionaires can play a significantly increased role in addressing this search for supplemental funding that the National Park Service is engaged in. The amount that concessionaires invest in facilities and pay in franchise fees could be significantly increased. We could do a few things to accomplish that. We need to increase the length of contract terms. We need to look at expanding services available to our visitors. We need to look at expanding the hours of operation in facilities, where appropriate.

Longer contract terms give concessionaires the ability to have an opportunity to recover their investment and to make more payments toward decreasing that big backlog of deferred maintenance that we've heard about. It wasn't long ago that national park contracts were typically 25 or 30 years in length. Forest Service contracts with concessionaires normally run 40-plus years. Yet the most recent contracts issued by the National Park Service are only about 15 years.

In addition to helping increase investment and franchise fees, extending the length of contracts would help reduce the millions of dollars spent annually by both concessionaires in the National Park Service in preparing bids, reviewing bids, and going through that whole process. We just went through that with Mount Rainier.

We spent over a half-a-million dollars preparing a bid. I'm sure all the other 4 or 5 or 6 concessionaires spent a similar amount. Park Service spent a significant amount. We could really devote that money toward this backlog.

We also need to recognize that times are changing, and we have to do everything we can to get visitors into our parks. We need to look at providing wi-fi and cell phone service in developed park areas, to provide ample parking, even if there needs to be a payment for it, as was suggested earlier. We need additional campgrounds and a wide array of recreational activities.

Increasing activities, as opposed to decreasing them, as proposed in the Merced River Plan, would significantly go a long way in terms of extending the amount that concessionaires could pay in investment and franchise fees, as would extending the hours, where appropriate. Places that come to mind are the Statue of Liberty and Alcatraz.

We can also look at ways that concessionaires can help the National Park Service pay some of their expenses. We could help with taking over some of the responsibilities for collection of entrance fees and maybe providing some of the interpretive services. Certainly, improvements could be made in the current guest donation program. I agree with your comments earlier, Senator Murkowski, about it's so important to recognize contributions from people. People want to support this program. But we need to recognize their efforts.

In my written report, there's a lot of detailed information on all of these topics. So I would say, although we're faced with a daunting task, we have a great opportunity. We have a tremendous leader of the National Park Service in Jon Jarvis, and he and his team should be commended for looking at ways to explore new financial models.

I've been around the Park Service and concession industry for a long time, and I can tell you that the spirit of cooperation and partnership is at the highest level it has ever been in recent times. Concessionaires do what they do at national parks because of our love of parks, and we want to help protect parks for this generation and all future generations.

We always look to support adopting healthy food standards and strict sustainability standards, an example of which is the 2 facilities built by Guest Services on the Mall, which include geothermal heating and cooling systems.

In closing, I'd simply say, as you look for ways to solve this problem, don't overlook the concessionaires. We want to stand there shoulder to shoulder with the Park Service and other friends groups in helping us solve this deferred maintenance backlog. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gabrys follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GERARD GABRYS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GUEST SERVICES INC., THE NATIONAL PARK HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION, FAIRFAX, VA

Mr. Chairman and Members, I am Gerry Gabrys and I appear today on behalf of the National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA). NPHA is the national trade association of businesses that provide lodging, food services, gifts and souvenirs, equipment rentals, transportation and other visitor services in national parks. I serve on the NPHA Board of Directors and its Executive Committee. NPHA mem-

bers deliver great park experiences to tens of millions annually. Our staffs drive the jammer buses on the Going to the Sun Highway in Glacier-and add stories about the construction of that amazing road. They bake the famed popovers at Jordan Pond House in Acadia. They operate the High Sierra Camps in Yosemite and Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. And our waiters and waitresses always find time to help families take treasured pictures while dining at the edge of the Grand Canyon or on the banks of the Potomac River. The first Director of the National Park Service, Stephen T. Mather, was a strong proponent of our industry, explaining, "Scenery is a hollow enjoyment to the tourist who sets out in the morning after an indigestible breakfast and a fitful night's sleep on an impossible bed."

I am also the CEO of Guest Services Inc., which operates a variety of hospitality businesses across the nation, including food, retail and recreation services in the National Park Service's National Capital Region, and food and lodging in Mount Rainier National Park and at the North Cascades Lodge at Stehekin.

NPHA applauds the action of this Committee to consider ways to provide adequate funding for park protection and visitor programs of the National Park Service. Our national parks are a wonderful shared legacy. They should provide outstanding memories and experiences for all Americans long into the future, as they have for many of us, but today's federal budgetary travails make new financial strategies essential to achieving that goal.

Concessioners have played a key role in making park visits memorable since the 1870's. We now serve some 100 million park visitors annually in approximately 160 park units. NPHA members have a combined workforce of nearly 25,000 persons-mostly front-line, visitor contact jobs, and provide in excess of \$1 billion in goods and services to visitors annually. Franchise payments from concessioners to NPS now approach \$100 million annually; that is about equal to the funds raised annually by the National Park Foundation and all members of the Friends Alliance combined. In addition, annual concessioner marketing and promotion efforts total more than \$10 million, and are coordinated with the marketing and promotion efforts of state and park gateway communities that equal that amount.

Concessioners are committed to meeting America's needs - needs for healthier lifestyles, for better and lifelong educational opportunities, for strong local and regional economies that can sustain and protect our parks and for connecting all Americans across differences in regions, ages, income and ethnicity.

Unfortunately, the portion of Americans visiting national parks has been declining for several decades. Even as the US population has grown by 30% since the late 1980's, and the number of park units has grown to 401, the number of park visitors has declined-a decline actually masked in part by increases in international visitors.

Especially disconcerting is a decline in visits by younger Americans who are choosing video screens over time enjoying active outdoor fun in America's treasured landscapes. A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation indicated that, on average, America's youth now spend 7.5 hours each day watching a screen or monitor. No wonder the nation's youth are increasingly obese and at risk of Type II diabetes due to poor nutrition and a lack of exercise!

Connecting all Americans to their parks is an important goal with numerous benefits - including improved health, more widespread public appreciation for the environment, economic stability for many gateway communities and a better understanding of our nation's history. To achieve this connection, the National Park Service and its partners-including concessioner-need to undertake new outreach and marketing efforts.

Recently, NPHA joined with other leading park community organizations to host the first-ever America's Summit on National Parks-a remarkable gathering of conservation, recreation, tourism, health, education and historic preservation interests. We then joined in a survey of Americans to better understand sentiments of the public toward parks-and found remarkable consistency in support for our parks across political, geographic, demographic and age groupings-and an equally remarkable willingness to make personal commitments to support our parks. Information on our findings is attached to my testimony.

We have continued to work with organizations to address long-term needs of our national parks, including co-sponsorship of a very important gathering in March of this year hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center and featuring prominent national leaders associated with both political parties. Most importantly, we led the development of a collection of white papers, compiled into a document entitled Sustainable Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks, for that meeting. The white papers covered these topics:

Enhancing Park Experiences Through Fees
Penny for Parks and the Great Outdoors

Park Legacy Partnership Fund: A Public Private Partnership
 Expanded Visitor Services Through Concessioners
 National Park Endowment
 Expanding Use of Historic Tax Credits
 Expansion of Guest Donation Efforts
 Expanded Cooperation with Destination Marketing Organizations
 Conservation Service Corps
 Non-Appropriated Fund Instrumentalities
 Park Zone Taxes
 Energy Savings and Utilities
 Bonds, Revolving Loans and More
 Increases in Volunteerism
 Commemorative Coins/Stamps
 Special Fundraising Events

A copy of our paper is submitted as an attachment* to this testimony.

This Committee has already begun action on one of the topics addressed at that session by identifying a possible source of matching funds for what we labeled the Park Legacy Partnership Fund and we express our appreciation for this.

We must address the long list of restoration and maintenance needs affecting virtually every NPS unit and totaling an estimated \$11 billion-a problem that has persisted for years and is growing. The agency centennial in 2016 should be a catalyst for action.

NPHA wishes to commend Director Jon Jarvis and other NPS leaders for encouraging and exploring new financial models for the National Park Service. In addition to participating actively in the Summit and the Bipartisan Policy Center program in March, the Director has assembled an internal team to review our ideas and others. The Director has also clearly indicated that developed portions of national parks can and should allow visitors to utilize cell phones and to connect to the Internet - services which concessioners anticipate providing in ways that will generate revenues to cover all costs and produce additional franchise fees paid to the NPS. The agency has also established a working group to look at possible additional visitor services to be provided in parks, and to overcome some barriers to introducing appropriate new services.

We support action on many of the topics raised, but I would like to address one of the papers from the Bipartisan Policy Center's March session of special relevance to the concessions community: Expanded Visitor Services Through Concessioners.

The visitor services we provide in national parks are often inhibited by NPS policies which limit visitor experiences and reduce our payments, called franchise fees, to the agency. The buildings we operate, including lodges, are federally-owned-even though most were originally built with private capital. They are historic in almost every case, and expensive to maintain and operate. They constitute a significant portion of the backlog of deferred maintenance reported by the National Park Service-in excess of a billion dollars. For example, the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite needs some \$60 million in investment immediately according to the agency. Private capital can be attracted to reduce the need for federal appropriations-but doing so would require adequate contract terms and use of the Leasehold Surrender Interest provisions of the 1998 park concessions act. Until very recently, NPS declined to utilize the 20-year contract terms authorized by that statute.

By contrast, 60% of our nation's downhill skiing activity is provided at largely world-class facilities under agreements between business partners and the Forest Service that extend 40 years or more. All investments are made by the private sector. Similar-length terms for park concessions contracts would produce the needed investment in our lodges and other structures and open the door to another tool: historic investment tax credits.

We would also note the leading role this Committee played in passage of legislation urging the Forest Service to facilitate the addition of non-winter recreational opportunities at ski areas - and urge consideration of similar encouragement for expanding appropriate in-park services. Parks should not add activities that are inappropriate or unrelated to parks. We do urge expansion of bike and kayak rentals and tours, of guided wildlife photo trips, of rentable tents and cabins in park campgrounds. These services would make park visits more memorable and enjoyable - and help fund park operations. And we certainly feel it is vital to not eliminate current, valued visitor services, as a recent draft plan for Yosemite operations in the Merced River corridor suggested. Our comments on that plan are attached.

*All attachments have been retained in committee files.

We are confident that increases in visitor services, including lengthening operating hours at units like Alcatraz and Statue of Liberty, adding appropriate services and allowing dynamic pricing of services, could increase franchise fees to the NPS by 50% within three years.

Let me share an example of the opportunities which exist to benefit both visitors and NPS. Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida adopted a General Management Plan (GMP) in 2001 that establishes a daily visitation cap of 330 persons. The park is in mid-ocean, 90 miles from Key West, and visitors can only arrive in one of three ways: by the high-speed ferry operated by the park concessioner; by seaplane; or by private vessel. The General Management Plan (GMP) specifies limits for each mode, including 150 via the high speed ferry. For a variety of reasons, visitor arrivals via seaplanes and private vessels are dramatically under quota and the park now hosts far fewer than the authorized 330 guests per day. Yet the concessioner must turn away 50 or more potential ferry passengers per day, despite having a vessel rated by the Coast Guard to safely transport 250. Thousands of potential visitors lose the chance to see this marvelous park, and the park is losing revenues in entrance fees and franchise fees roughly equal to the funding drop due to sequestration this year.

Conversion of certain NPS functions to concessioner operations, including entrance fee collection in some parks, could further reduce NPS expenses. More campground operations by concessioners can add new, net revenue of more than \$50 million annually, again also within three years.

There has been a significant drop in overnight stays in national park campgrounds, and especially in RV-associated stays which have declined from more than 4 million overnights in the 1980s to about 2 million overnights currently. RV ownership during this period has grown dramatically, now reaching 8.5% of all US households and 11% of the households headed by 35-50 year-olds, prime years for families with children. Private sector campground use has grown appreciably during this period and private campgrounds have adapted to today's campers. NPS campgrounds need to be upgraded to include sites with utility hook-ups, WiFi, dumpstations and other features that will better serve 21st Century campground users.

There are other important opportunities for concessioner support of national parks. We now invite guests staying in national park lodges to contribute a dollar per night under the Guest Donation Program. This program will generate approximately \$1 million in donations in 2013 at approximately 12 park units. It can be rapidly restructured and expanded with a goal of collecting at least \$10 million annually by 2016, sustained indefinitely, while at the same time better connecting visitors to the national parks, the National Park Foundation and local friends and advocacy organizations.

In order for the Guest Donation Program to flourish, however, concessioners need more information about the benefits from the donations to pass on to visitors. Guests are required to be offered the chance to "opt out" of the contribution, and with little information to pass on to guests by concessioner employees about how their visits were aided by prior contributions or how their donations will be used, the incentive for donations drops and "opting out" increases. The status of concessioners as "prohibited sources" for direct project support under Director's Order 21 has an adverse impact on concessioners, since they cannot directly aid park projects receiving guest contributions. Once a visitor has made a contribution under the program, they should be thanked and invited to connect with parks in a more robust fashion as a volunteer, advocate and philanthropist. Yet NPS concerns about privacy have limited these efforts. And proposals to solicit a national sponsor offering to match guest contributions have run into concerns over conflicts with provisions of Director's Order 21.

Concessioners are committed to the long-term future of our national parks and are excited by the focus on this future created by the upcoming centennial of the National Park Service in 2016. In addition to feeling a deep connection to the parks in which we operate, without parks, we are out of business. We are proud to develop and implement state-of-the-art environmental practices that reduce energy and water use and generation of waste and support sustainable agriculture. We are delighted to partner with NPS on Healthy Parks and Healthy People, including providing and promoting good food choices. We assume risks that many in the hospitality industry feel are too large—from fires to government shutdowns to falling rocks and more—because we see our work not just as a business but as a commitment to what some call our Nation's best idea. We feel the challenges facing the national parks and the National Park Service are great, but solvable through partnership efforts of NPS, the National Park Foundation, friends and cooperating organizations and concessioners.

We thank you for the attention you are giving to this important issue and pledge our active engagement and support.

The CHAIRMAN. First rule in the Senate. Never pass up people who want to stand shoulder to shoulder with you.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Obey, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF CRAIG D. OBEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION**

Mr. OBEY. Thank you, Chairman Wyden, Senator Murkowski. I'm Craig Obey. I'm Senior Vice President for Government Affairs with the National Parks Conservation Association.

[Pause.]

Mr. OBEY. It's a privilege to be here today. We're just thrilled that you're holding this hearing on this important topic. I also want to acknowledge the leadership of Director Jarvis and thank Senator Coburn for his interest in these issues. I think it's going to take all of us working to really solve what is a problem that we didn't get into overnight.

The NPCA has been around since 1919. We are the leading independent private-citizen voice for protecting our national parks.

I just want to say a few things. You have my written remarks for the record. First, we know that the national parks are tremendous economic assets; that's been discussed here today. For every dollar invested in them, they return 10. That's, on average sum, vastly more than that. 240,000 private-sector jobs every year. We are not taking care of the investment we have in our national parks.

I do want to thank you for your leadership on the Helium Stewardship Act. That's an important step, obviously a small one. But we're going to need to take many different kinds of steps here to deal with this issue. So, thank you for that.

It's clear that appropriated funding isn't doing the job. That's why NCPA partnered with the National Park Hospitality Association and the Bipartisan Policy Center to explore a series of potential ideas for how to address the park funding challenges for the Park Service.

That was not about finding any silver bullet solution. It was about getting the conversation started, looking for creative ways to fix this issue. It's something that has been talked about for many, many years, GAO reports going back to the 1990s. But nothing has ever really been done. So, we're grateful for the attention here.

Just a few things I will highlight. Senator Portman referenced the centennial challenge effort by the Bush administration. That was something that NPCA strongly supported. We thought that the partnership idea was absolutely right on, and coupled with a commitment to dealing with the core operating needs of the Park System. The 3 legs to the stool that the Senator referenced were, No. 1, restoring park operations funding, which is even more critical in the aftermath of the sequester; 2, the commitment of \$100 million per year that was anticipated, and then to be matched.

We have developed a proposal based on the lessons learned from that endeavor. There were some appropriated funds that essentially served as a pilot project, in a sense, and taught us a lot about

what might work and what won't. That's something that we think holds some promise.

I would say that what we're suggesting, there's been a lot of talk about the Land and Water Conservation Fund here this morning. The fact is there are many receipts from OCS and on-shore that are not assigned, if you will. We also talked about the fact that, the committee talked about the fact that there is—the money for the Land and Water Conservation Fund has not been appropriated. In fact, there's \$18 billion on paper in a Treasury account that's never been appropriated.

So we think we should look to those kinds of sources to augment the funds for the parks.

You've talked about the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, the fee authority which we desperately need to reauthorize or we're looking at a second sequester, in effect, for the parks.

Then there is the transportation bill. As Senator Alexander rightly observed, there's a user fee related to that that people pay into nationally. Parks are a Federal responsibility. They don't have independent taxing authority like the States. So it's solely the responsibility of the Federal Government to be funding those. Right now, it's \$240 million per year total. Not all that goes for roads; some goes for transit and the like.

But the Park Service says they need \$500 million per year to deal with the problem and get the roads to where they need to be in order to keep maintaining them as they should.

So those are a few items that we're focused on, as well as the endowment idea that the commission talked about that you spoke about with Senator Coburn.

Finally, I just want to reiterate what you already know, which is the tremendous support that the national parks have across the country. These are some of the most amazing places, tremendous natural cathedrals, tremendously important historical sites that we preserve as a nation. What we preserve tells a lot about who we are as a nation.

So we thank you for your attention on this. We're confident, based on the polling that we've done with people like Geoff Garin and Whit Ayers and others that the American people will strongly support thoughtful action by this committee and by this Congress to address these issues. So thank you very much for the opportunity today and for focusing on this issue, and I look forward to any questions if there is time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Obey follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CRAIG D. OBEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Murkowski and members of the committee, I am Craig Obey, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). On behalf of our approximately 800,000 members and supporters across the country, I thank you for inviting me to testify today at this important hearing. Founded in 1919, NPCA is the leading, independent, private citizen voice in support of promoting, protecting and enhancing America's national parks for present and future generations.

We appreciate your attention to the fiscal needs of our national parks, including your focus on the National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog, which is now \$11.5 billion and growing; half of this is roads and bridges. Approximately \$4.5 billion of that is needed to address systems the National Park Service defines as

critical in both the roads and facilities categories. These are projects critical to health and safety and to essential resource protection. Examples are roof repair, replacing pavement to improve safety, and bridge repair. The Park Service has indicated that the gap between what it receives and needs in order to keep the backlog from growing is between \$250 million and \$350 million. Actually reducing the backlog would require even more.

There is a parallel and related operations problem, with the National Park Service receiving an estimated \$600 million less than it needs to most effectively operate the parks every year. As the parks are bled of essential operating funds, they are less able to serve the public and provide the cyclic maintenance and other basic protection necessary to maintain park resources.

Years of underinvestment in maintaining and replacing important assets, which continues today, have compounded a situation that is unsustainable. As the Centennial of the National Park Service and System approaches in 2016, now is the time to reinvest in our national parks, through both traditional and creative new approaches.

We were pleased in March of this year to partner with the National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) and the Bipartisan Policy Center to explore 16 concepts that could provide additional non-appropriated funding to support the park service. These concepts, which represent the ideas of white paper authors and not necessarily the institutional positions of the sponsoring organizations, have been provided for the record. They are attempts to foster creative dialog about ways to create a multi-faceted approach to addressing the parks' fiscal woes.

NPCA is particularly interested in those options that have the potential to provide significant additional resources for our national parks, especially those that leverage expenditures of federal dollars in order to maximize the potential for partnerships with non-federal sources of funds. The examples I explore in my testimony include a Park Legacy Partnership that matches private and public dollars, providing a "Penny for Parks" from any enhanced investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure, establishing a national parks endowment, enhancing the use of volunteer service and stipend-supported community service work in the parks, and reauthorizing and improving entrance and recreational fee authorities.

Our National Investment in National Parks

It is worth taking a moment to consider why the subject of today's hearing is so important. Starting with Yellowstone and then, nearly 100 years ago with the creation of the National Park Service, our nation has invested in a National Park System that is beloved here at home and the envy of many throughout the world. Our National Park System encompasses magnificent natural cathedrals like Denali, Zion and Crater Lake; hallowed ground like Gettysburg and Fort Sumter; tremendous scientific accomplishments by innovators like Thomas Edison; triumphs, tragedies and moral challenges we have faced as a nation, from Fort Monroe to Minidoka to the Trail of Tears; and tremendous urban recreational assets across the nation, from Gateway to Cuyahoga Valley to Golden Gate.

These are all places judged, with almost universal public support, to be nationally significant and important to protect for our children and grandchildren-as well as ourselves. Collectively, after a century of investment, our parks have become economic assets and job producers for local communities, many of them in rural locations, and for our national recreation and tourism economies. For example, in 2011, visitors spent over \$50.2 million in the towns of Grand Junction and Montrose surrounding Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area in Colorado, which support almost 700 area jobs. These places are educational assets, provide extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation, contribute to public health, and support basic community infrastructure. Our national parks are investments worth preserving.

Yet, for decades now, successive congresses and administrations have put park resources at risk through underinvestment. Any homeowner knows that failing to maintain the roof or replace it in a timely manner has a cumulative effect, putting the entire structure in jeopardy. When needed investments are not made in roads or bridges, they deteriorate or collapse. Our national parks, representing a century of commitment and investment by this nation, are no different. Whether the subject is funding to maintain trails or visitor centers, to replace sewage treatment plants, or to maintain or replace roads or bridges, the problem is compounded with every year of insufficient investment.

Although our current level of national investments is not sufficient, the national investments we have made in our parks over a century are significant, and have come in times of war and peace as well as economic prosperity and challenge. The achievements and investments during the Great Depression through the Civilian

Conservation Corps are well known: millions of trees planted, roads, bridges, trails and other facilities constructed; hundreds of national and state parks created; and a legacy left that continues to benefit millions of visitors and hundreds of communities. More than 50 years ago, the Eisenhower administration launched Mission 66, its commitment of \$1 billion in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the National Park System, as part of a vision influenced by the development of the interstate highway system. The \$1 billion initiative that President Eisenhower launched and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson continued is worth more than \$7 billion in today's dollars.

Those cumulative investments have produced assets with enormous value—both psychic and economic. Collectively, our National Park System comprises assets worth nearly \$200 billion. That figure shows the enormous financial investment that we have made over the years, which we should be protecting. The Blue Ridge Parkway alone has a total asset value estimated at more than \$5 billion. When basic preventive maintenance is not conducted, that asset and local economies are put at risk. The park's backlog exceeds \$400 million, about 75% of which is road-related. The staff available for maintenance activities has been reduced to 40 from 80. The lack of sufficient maintenance staff makes it increasingly difficult for the parkway to maintain the drainages, road shoulders, and other structures necessary to prevent landslides from occurring and keep the parkway and its trails in good repair. Recently, a landslide occurred north of Asheville, North Carolina that likely will close that portion of the parkway for months, at significant cost to nearby communities, and with a repair cost that is likely to amount to millions of dollars.

And, of course, despite their economic benefits, we preserve our national parks because they have value far beyond economics. Polling NPCA and NPHA jointly commissioned with Hart Research Associates and Northstar Opinion Research indicates that public attitudes about our national parks are unique as compared to virtually any other topic. Ninety-five percent of voters—including 98% of Democrats, 91% of Republicans, and 93% of Independents—believe the protection of our national parks is an appropriate role for the federal government. And when provided with context about the National Park Service budget, 92 percent indicate park funding should not be cut. The polling experts indicated that national parks are unique in their bipartisan support and in the potential for public support for bipartisan action. In addition, the National Association of Counties and the US Conference of Mayors have both recently passed resolutions in support of national park funding.

Partnership Opportunities

The 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service is an opportunity for Congress to come together to help reverse the declining funding for our national parks. In an era when the electorate and Congress are divided on so many issues, we are hopeful that when it comes to our nation's treasures—so deeply loved by the American people across the political spectrum—Congress can find a way to work together in a bipartisan fashion to support “America's best idea.”

Preserving our national parks for future generations and protecting our national investment in them requires a new dedication to the parks' core funding as well as creative additions to the mix that can leverage federal investments. National park operations funding is down 13% in today's dollars from where it was only three years ago, and the construction budget has declined by nearly 70% over the last decade in today's dollars. Current budget rules, unless changed, likely will result in further reductions. The annual appropriations process, although an important part of the solution, should be complemented with some new sources of revenue. These innovations could augment the traditional funding our parks receive and preserve our long-term investment in them.

Action this committee has already taken in the aftermath of the damaging budget sequester buoys our hopes. We greatly appreciate Chairman Wyden's and Ranking Member Murkowski's recent agreement to include national park partnership funding in the Helium Stewardship Act, which would direct \$50 million in revenue generated in that bill towards the needs of our national parks, to be matched from non-federal sources. As Chairman Wyden acknowledged, these funds are a small first step in addressing the need. However, this type of partnership holds promise as part of a diverse, multi-faced approach to address park funding needs in partnership with the American people.

Varieties of potential partnerships exist and should be explored. NPCA strongly supported one such partnership when it was proposed by the George W. Bush administration, which recognized the extraordinary opportunity and imperative presented by the upcoming centennial. The Bush administration came to recognize the fundamental need to provide the core operating resources the parks needed and proposed an additional \$100 million per year. It also saw the opportunity for partner-

ships and proposed a Centennial Challenge—an anticipated 10-year effort to leverage private dollars with federal investments. The Department of the Interior received pledges exceeding \$300 million from non-federal parties when it announced the program, demonstrating the significant public interest in such a partnership. The downpayment on the program, which stalled upon the change in administration, yielded approximately \$79 million—including \$35 million in federal commitments that leveraged \$44 million from nonfederal sources. This investment—far short of the proposed \$2 billion, 10-year partnership-supported projects in the areas of stewardship, environmental leadership, recreational experience, education and professional excellence. Examples of completed projects under the Challenge include:

a. Point Reyes National Seashore, California: Improved trail and extended access to the Abbotts Lagoon and North Beach areas to reduce trail impacts to surrounding wetland and endangered native Sonoma shortawn foxtail plant habitat while accommodating better visitor access to reduce erosion. Total cost: \$100,000; partner pledge: 50%.

b. Boston National Historical Park, Massachusetts: Completed critically-needed restoration of wooden cupola section of the Old State House, replaced outdated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, and provided handicap accessibility to the building. Total cost: \$1,409,200; partner pledge 50%.

c. Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Idaho: Install a colorized cement walkway and amphitheater area at the Oregon Trail Overlook to accommodate visitors. Total cost: \$39,627; partner pledge 51%.

During its brief existence, the Challenge effectively served as a pilot project that yielded lessons for what could be strong new partnership opportunities leading up to and beyond the centennial.

Matching federal and non-federal dollars.—As one possible new partnership approach, Peter Kiefhaber and I drafted a white paper for the Bipartisan Policy Center symposium proposing a new Park Legacy Partnership Fund that would provide for both core infrastructure needs where matching might be difficult, and for matching to leverage significant non-federal funds with a federal investment. Our paper builds on the lessons learned from the Centennial Challenge and proposes a modified partnership construct going forward. If one's goal is to address the backlog, a matching partnership can provide a partial, not complete, solution. The ongoing restoration of the National Mall and the Washington Monument provides examples of how private money can be leveraged. At the same time, however, repairs to the sewage treatment infrastructure at Yellowstone are less likely to yield significant matching and will likely require a stronger federal commitment. We suggest that the Legacy Partnership be designed to accommodate both scenarios.

Fee authorities.—Another partnership approach involves fees. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which allows national parks to retain the fees they collect in order to fund maintenance and other needed projects, yields nearly \$200 million per year across the National Park System. It is scheduled to expire effective December 2014.

Unless FLREA is reauthorized soon, our national parks stand to lose every penny they collect in entrance and recreation fees. This amount is roughly equivalent to the size of the damaging sequester and more than the park service's annual construction budget in recent years. We are pleased that the House Natural Resources Committee has begun hearings on this issue, and encourage this committee to do the same. We also support the administration's request for a short-term extension of FLREA while the authorizing committees work to enact a reauthorization bill. In addition to preserving this critical source of revenue by reauthorizing or replacing FLREA, there are a variety of ways that fee revenue might be enhanced, from fees charged for group tours to adjustments to the senior pass or differential charges for international visitors.

Long-term endowment.—An endowment for our national parks is another long-discussed partnership concept recommended by the National Parks Second Century Commission. We would like to see an endowment authorized before the centennial so it can benefit from the attention the centennial brings and grow to provide meaningful support for parks within the decade. However, we also recognize that the endowment issue is complicated and that it will likely take some time to build the corpus of the endowment to a level required to make it effective.

An endowment should be created for the long-term, not necessarily as a solution to the backlog. We believe there are other solutions with more short-term impact on the backlog, while an endowment could be particularly well-suited to address other traditionally underfunded needs, such as critically-needed investments in science, education and interpretation, and resource protection. We suggest that the Congress direct the National Park Service to design an endowment, including an as-

assessment of its feasibility, with the goal of launching the endowment by January 2016.

A Penny for Parks Transportation.—Approximately half of the National Park Service's backlog is attributable to transportation infrastructure, some of which is an integral part of the basic national highway infrastructure system. While the Park Service provides for some transportation needs through its operations account, the most significant source of relevant revenue is the \$240 million our parks receive every year from the transportation bill. "Penny for Parks" would be a partnership with the American people to dedicate one cent from any adjustment to the federal gas tax index towards addressing the transportation infrastructure in national parks and other public lands.

The Park Service estimates that approximately 40 percent of its 9,450 miles of park roads are in poor to fair condition, based upon Federal Highway Administration standards. This is a vast improvement over the truly sorry state of park roads in 2008 when 90 percent were rated in poor to fair condition. Thanks to an infusion of \$318 million from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the NPS was able to make some short-term fixes to preserve pavement. More intensive and costly rehabilitation, however, will be required in the near future.

Forty-two national park bridges have been rated as structurally deficient by Federal Highway Administration engineers using National Bridge Inventory standards. This includes the Memorial Bridge between Virginia and Washington, DC, that serves as a major commuter artery for thousands daily. The cost to rehabilitate the bridge is estimated to be between \$125 million and \$240 million, depending on if it is reduced to a basic bridge or if its current grand architectural design is preserved.

Using the Federal Highway Administration's Sound Asset Management Analysis System, the NPS has estimated that it will need \$770 million annually over six years to bring its roads, bridges and transit systems into optimal condition that minimizes maintenance costs. As Congress begins its work to reauthorize MAP- 21, now scheduled to expire in October 2014, it should stop treating national parks and public lands as incidental or secondary assets, but rather as the core federal assets that they are, including significant transportation systems that serve states, communities, and park visitors. How Congress and the Administration will choose to fund a reauthorization is an open question. But NPCA believes Congress should devote a user fee equivalent to a penny per gallon from the gas tax for our national parks. The park transportation infrastructure backlog could be reduced within approximately six years to a level that can be addressed through annual DOT surface transportation appropriations and NPS cyclical maintenance.

Service work.—We support the Veterans Conservation Corps Act of 2013, which would help our veterans transition to civilian life by employing them in a variety of sectors, including conservation, resource management, and historic preservation projects on public lands. This bill, which proposes \$600 million for FY14 to FY18, could contribute to addressing the backlog of projects in national parks and other public lands, while providing important opportunities for veterans. Unemployment for post-9/11 veterans remains high at nearly 7.2% overall, and approaching nearly 9 percent for female vets. At the same time, unemployment for young Americans under the age of 25 remains at about 16 percent. The National Park Service has seen significant savings from the use of conservation corps for various tasks. Given the ability of such strategies to stretch scarce dollars, we believe that more should be done to foster them among veterans, young Americans, and the many older Americans who are interested in deploying the skills they learned through a lifetime of work on behalf of our national parks.

Historic leasing.—Although the subject was not examined in depth in the white papers used for the Bipartisan Policy Center discussion, historic leasing is another area worth greater attention. In instances where the National Park Service determines that it does not need to use particular historic buildings for interpretive programs, exhibits, or administrative means, historic leasing can provide a means to assure the long term care of historic structures while also taking their required maintenance off of the backlog.

Park Service Backlog Investments

A part of the growth in the deferred maintenance backlog has resulted from the sharp decline in the park service construction budget, with that account declining in today's dollars by nearly 70% over the last decade. An account that in FY03 had \$406 million in today's dollars offers only \$120 million in FY13, an amount that is insufficient to support the highest priority projects. Because this is a central account in addressing the \$687 million per year needed to keep the backlog from growing, the impact of these reductions is substantial.

The cuts in FY13 went deeper than the sequester, with deep cuts to the construction budget as well as a damaging cut to park operations. The park operating budget is critical to ensure the protection of our national treasures and the enjoyment of the visiting public, providing for the seasonal rangers and maintenance staff critical to the day-to-day maintenance of our parks. With 1,900 fewer staff in parks this summer as a result of the sequester, we expect even greater challenges in keeping up with the deferred maintenance backlog. The Repair and Rehabilitation Program directs funds to high priority mission critical and mission-dependent assets but requires an investment in park operations including the staff to do the work.

The Cyclic Maintenance Program allows for preventative maintenance work that ensures resources can be maintained in good or fair condition. Absent funding to maintain resources, degradation occurs, and problems are compounded. Investments in cyclic maintenance are fiscally responsible by preventing the long-term cost increases that can accompany substantial disrepair. It has not been helpful that the administration has been requesting decreases in the Facility Operations and Maintenance budget subactivity that funds these important programs.

The impact of natural disasters is also adversely affecting the maintenance backlog. For example, two years ago, parks absorbed \$37 million in damages stemming from Hurricane Irene and other natural disasters. Road and other facility closures from these events compromise local commerce when people are unable to visit areas of parks, and requiring parks to absorb such costs strains already stretched budgets. We were deeply grateful for the investment Congress ultimately provided after Hurricane Sandy, which among other things recently led to the reopening of the Statue of Liberty on Independence Day. But disasters will continue to occur, and as was the case with Sandy and Irene, the National Park Service will need assistance to address resulting damage or will otherwise have to forego even more maintenance and operational activity. One particularly important issue for this committee is how to address funding for wildland fires, which over the last four years, have averaged \$700 million in the Wildland Fire Account and \$76 million in the FLAME Wildfire Suppression Reserve Fund. This has the potential to further reduce other accounts in the Interior appropriations bill.

The National Park Service has been working to do "more with less" for some time. Consequently, they continue to enhance efficiencies wherever possible, in order to use their funds wisely. We therefore found it appropriate for them to include in their Call to Action centennial planning document an action item calling for correcting deferred maintenance deficiencies in the top 25% of facilities most important to the visitor experience and resource protection. We were also pleased to see the focus in A Call to Action on ensuring that NPS employees receive the training they need to run efficient, effective national parks and on improving the cooperative agreements process. Additionally, since FY11, the park service has saved more than \$46 million through management efficiencies and administrative cost savings including savings in supplies and materials, travel reductions, consolidation of IT services, strategic sourcing reductions and implementation of energy efficiency retrofits.

Federal Budget Considerations

The continuing budget impasse within Congress and with the administration is leading to death-by-a-thousand-cuts for our national parks. This must be resolved if our nation's nationally-significant natural, historic and cultural places are to recover and serve the public for the next hundred years and beyond. Sequester cuts affecting maintenance have, for example, postponed maintenance on trails and roads at Golden Gate, delayed boat repairs at Assateague, eliminated maintenance positions at Olympic and other parks, and produced other impacts that threaten the visiting experience and the economies of gateway communities. Without a significant deal on the budget, it is difficult to see how either the everyday operational or long-term backlog-related needs of the parks get sufficiently addressed.

Today, the National Park Service budget is 1/15th of one percent of the federal budget. In 1981, it was 1/7th of one percent. In that interval we have halved the share of federal revenue spent on National Parks. Our national parks are not causing our deficits. Rather, they are investments in our future. We cannot meaningfully address the deficit by cutting funds for national parks or the other nondefense domestic funding that comprises only 16% of the federal budget pie.

As Congress and the Administration work to address these very important fiscal issues, they should be investing in things that produce jobs and help our economy, and enhance our quality of life. National parks are such investments. The national parks are core contributors to a \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy and provide more than \$30 billion in direct economic benefit annually, as well as more than a quarter of a million jobs. They are also magnets that attract tourists from the rest

of the world. The Administration's 2012 National Travel and Tourism Strategy notes that: "Park rangers are among America's most recognizable and beloved public figures." The strategy also observes that: "Overseas travelers to the United States who visit national parks or tribal lands tend to stay longer in the United States, to visit more destinations within the country, and are more likely to be repeat visitors to the United States. As the manager of many of these destinations, the Federal government is in a unique position to reach these high-value customers."

National Park Service sites accounted for a third of the top 25 domestic travel destinations listed by Forbes. As this nation strives to restore jobs, great opportunities lie in marketing our national parks to attract more international visitors to invest in our recovering economy. This system of popular and inspiring lands defines America and is a proven economic generator. The \$30 billion in annual spending our parks produce compares to the annual revenue of some of the top hundred Fortune 500 companies including Google and American Express. Our national parks are clearly economic assets to communities around the country.

This economic benefit is coming with a comparably small investment that is nowhere close to commensurate with what Second Century Commissioner Linda Bilmes has called the parks' footprint on the American mind. Yet, we know there are ten dollars generated in economic activity for each dollar invested in the National Park System.

We look forward to working with you to identify funding concepts that can augment-but do not replace-appropriated funding. We urge Congress and the Administration to identify ways to work together to support supplemental funding that can have purchase in a divided government and provide meaningful financial reform. And we want to be sure that the federal government provides its share of the investments so that private philanthropists and other national park constituents can be motivated by our government doing its share.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. MacDonald, welcome, and I've commented to Senator Collins and Senator Snowe over the years in the past, and Senator King, of course, is new, how similar in many respects Bar Harbor is to parts of Oregon. So we welcome you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID MACDONALD, PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF ACADIA, BAR HARBOR, ME

Mr. MACDONALD. I appreciate it. I appreciate the chance to be here. I did come down from Bar Harbor last night. It felt like everyone else in the world was coming to Acadia and I was going the other way.

The CHAIRMAN. But most of them are still going to Oregon.

Mr. MACDONALD. It's an honor to be here. My name is David MacDonald. I'm President of Friends of Acadia, which is a private non-for-profit friends group that works in support of the park. We were founded by just a handful of volunteers 26 years ago, and we've grown to now have 3,600 members all over the country and all over the world. The intent really was to create an opportunity for folks to give back to the park they love. That's Acadia.

So the message that I bring to you today from our membership is that Acadia is a natural gem. It's an economic powerhouse in Bar Harbor and the surrounding communities. We must work together to find the appropriate balance between public and private funding for parks.

I also want to convey I recognize the pressures you are under in this Congress and the next. The choices that you have to make, you hear thousands of petitions every month, and you probably can satisfy very few of them. But we speak here, as Craig said, with the American people behind us. Ninety-two percent of folks polled last year support funding for the national parks. They do not want Congress to reduce the operating funding in any way. So in addition

to considering these supplementary strategies, we do petition Congress to come up with short-term and long-term strategies to restore that operating funding that Director Jarvis was talking about.

At the same time, we want to step forward and help you realize those goals that the American people want. Acadia was the first national park created out of private donations of land. It wasn't a designation of existing Federal land. These were donations from families that created the national park. That spirit of private philanthropy continues today through Friends of Acadia.

So, examples from the past you've referenced earlier were the carriage roads campaign. Congress appropriate \$6 million; Friends of Acadia raised \$4 million. We put that money into an endowment in order to spin off the annual income needed to keep up that asset that was restored. That endowment has grown today to over \$5 million, and in the meantime, we've made \$5 million in grants for the upkeep of the roads. So that's a sound strategy.

A decade later, we did it with the hiking trails in Acadia, where this time, the Federal Government put in about \$3 million to \$4 million; the Friends group raised \$90 million. So I can tell that neither one of those efforts would have been successful unless the Government had been coming to the table with real skin in the game, so to speak, a real investment in the project.

Our donors are not inspired to invest if the Government is disinvesting. That fundamental balance must be maintained. We can talk all we want about endowments or the private role, and people are anxious to give. But I call tell you the latest example through the sequester, when those kind of cuts are being made at Acadia, people are not inspired to invest in the park. So there's that balance that really needs to be maintained.

They also wouldn't have contributed, I believe, if the funds had to be donated to the U.S. Treasury. People enjoy the option to give to a private organization that they know and that they trust as a steward of the funds. So having the ability, as we look at the kind of legacy fund or partnerships that Craig is talking about, to have gifts not have to go to the Treasury to be counted to get the Federal, match, I think that's incredibly important to consider as you come up with those ideas.

I also want to speak to the importance of the Federal Lands Recreation Act, the fee collection, FLREA. It must be reauthorized next year. At Acadia, we depend heavily on those entrance fees for the roads, the trails, the buildings. When we talk to people, they are thrilled to pay the fee, believe it or not, because they know that 80 percent of it is staying in Acadia. They're told that, and that makes them feel better about it.

We really think that that needs to be reauthorized and that the Park Service is given authority to experiment with adjusting the fees in parks in locally appropriate ways. I think they need authority to consider raising aspects of that. But I'd like the Park Service to have that flexibility to do it.

So, as you think about private Friends groups, I think they are an incredibly powerful example. We're only one of about 200 around the country, and I think we all believe we should be called

on. We're willing to be called on as a partner as you try to tackle these challenges.

I also want to make sure that all of you feel welcome to come up and visit Acadia. It is one of the most heavily visited parks in the country. It's a very small park compared to the Western parks. But visitors per acre, we're right up there. But it's a terrific place to come in the summer. Friends of Acadia would be glad to give you or your staff a firsthand visit, because 5 minutes of testimony here doesn't do it justice. But I hope—I know time is short, but if you have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

[The prepared statement of Mr. MacDonald follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID MACDONALD, PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF ACADIA, BAR HARBOR, ME

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Murkowski, and other honorable members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to join you here this morning to discuss a topic that is critically important to me and many other residents in the state of Maine: the future of our National Parks.

My name is David MacDonald and I have lived most of my life on Mount Desert Island, Maine, home to Acadia National Park. I currently serve as President and CEO of Friends of Acadia, a private, not-for-profit organization with 3,600 members that has worked in close partnership with the National Park Service since our founding in 1986. Our members love Acadia and are proud to give back to the park through our organization with philanthropic donations, thousands of hours of volunteer work on the trails, and as advocates for Acadia.

Friends of Acadia is one of nearly 200 philanthropies helping the National Park system and we are also an active member in a coalition of similar national park friends groups from around the nation, known as the Friends Alliance. We benefit greatly from the exchange of information and experience with dozens of other friends groups, and as a member of the Friends Alliance steering committee, I hope that my remarks will also reflect the perspective and wisdom of other peers working in partnership with parks around the U.S.

My respectful message to your committee here today—coming from the front lines of the first national park established east of the Mississippi that operates at peak capacity on a beautiful July day like today on the Maine coast—is that Acadia is a conservation gem and economic powerhouse that we must work together to conserve. We must find the appropriate balance between public and private funding so that this park and others around our nation provide inspiration to all Americans in the years and generations to come.

I also want to convey that I certainly do recognize the very challenging decisions that you must make in this Congress and the next, and I appreciate the conflicting pressures on legislation and appropriation that come before you every day. Senator Susan Collins and Senator Angus King are terrific champions of Acadia and our national parks, but also have made all of us at Friends of Acadia aware of the context within which the deliberations and decisions are made in Washington.

You hear thousands of worthy petitions every month. You must decide much—but can satisfy few. With respect, I am here to petition with pride and confidence, because I have a mighty ally: the American people.

Across every geographic, demographic, and political cross-section, Americans want Congress to strongly support our national parks. In a robust, bipartisan survey done last year, 92% of all respondents opposed any reduction in support for our national parks, and 45% called for increased funding. Some 88% of Republican voters supported level or increased funding for national parks. Americans want their national park heritage conserved for their children and grandchildren. On their behalf, we petition Congress to make no more cuts to federal funding for our parks and that you develop a longer-term plan to restore full federal funding for our parks.

As we petition, we also step forward as partners prepared to help achieve what the American people desire. As we approach the centennial of the National Park Service, you and your colleagues in the House should be able to depend on park friends groups and the broader American conservation community as a resourceful, creative and cooperative force.

I am honored to serve a glorious American treasure - Acadia National Park—that provides benefit and enjoyment to millions of residents and visitors each year. Relatively small in size, at only 35,000 acres, Acadia is within a day's drive of major

cities of the northeast and therefore is one of the most heavily used parks in the nation, with more than 2.3 million visitors each year. Acadia was also the first national park created entirely through private donations of land from neighboring landowners, when visionaries such as George B. Dorr and John D. Rockefeller Jr. and dozens of others assembled strategic tracts of land with bold Atlantic coastline, mountain-tops, remote ponds, and pristine woodlands and granted them to the federal government nearly 100 years ago. These founders, other public-spirited volunteers, skilled local workers, and 3,000 poor boys from Maine in the Civilian Conservation Corps all worked tirelessly over the years to create a magnificent network of hiking trails, carriage roads, and motor roads that enrich the park as an historic and cultural treasure. I share this brief Acadia history so you know that there is a very long history of private initiative, philanthropy, community pride and investment, and volunteerism in our park-as these very principles will be essential to our ability to prepare the park for its second century.

They are also the principles upon which Friends of Acadia has based our first twenty five years of partnership with the federal government. In the early 1990's we undertook a public-private partnership to restore Acadia's 45-mile network of gravel carriage roads following decades of government neglect. We worked with Congress to commit \$6 million of federal appropriations while agreeing to raise \$4 million in private contributions that would serve as a permanent endowment held at Friends of Acadia to ensure continued maintenance of the roads over the long-term. Friends of Acadia annually grants funds to Acadia under the terms of a memorandum of understanding regarding the endowment, which has helped spin off a total of nearly \$5 million since its establishment. Since their renovation, Acadia's carriage roads have served as the heart of the park's recreational infrastructure; use by an ever-growing population of walkers, bikers, equestrians, and cross-country skiers has taken off.

More recently, the same public-private partnership has been brought to bear on efforts to address vehicular congestion, air quality, and visitor experience by launching a low-emissions, fare free bus service linking Acadia to the surrounding communities. Friends of Acadia provided the original seed money to pilot the project, and later secured a significant sponsorship agreement with L.L.Bean that has brought more than \$3 million to the operations of the successful bus service that has now carried more than 4 million passengers and removed millions of cars from our area roads.

We have applied the same successful mix of federal and private funds to our work with neighboring landowners and our partners at Maine Coast Heritage Trust in helping Acadia secure key tracts of land to complete its acquisition boundary. Acadia's irregular boundary weaves in and out of nearly a dozen surrounding villages and hundreds of abutting owners. We are often called upon to use FOA funds to pre-acquire properties when Congress and the Park Service are not able to move quickly enough to meet a seller's time-frame. Completing Acadia's boundary has been the top priority of current Superintendent Sheridan Steele, and Friends of Acadia has been willing to assume some risk in these transactions, but as with infrastructure and operations, our donors believe that the federal government has a critical role to play in funding these acquisitions, particularly given the dedicated revenue source in place through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We urge Congress to support full and reliable funding for the LWCF as a fiscally-sound strategy for conserving national parks like Acadia.

All of us at Friends of Acadia are proud of our long history and strong partnership with the Park Service, however we are also firm in our conviction that we, the people of the United States, through our federal government, have a perpetual responsibility to assure the conservation of Acadia unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Private philanthropy has a critical role to play in the future of our parks, but there are limits to that role. Friends of Acadia works hard to add value to our national parks rather than fund core operations, which are ultimately the responsibility of Congress.

In recent months, the federally mandated 5% cut to Acadia's operating budget meant that park motor roads opened a month later than usual, visitor center hours have been shortened, and free ranger led interpretive programs for families have been cut in half this summer. Acadia now has 23 out of 110 permanent staff positions left unfilled, and the park has nearly \$1.4 million less to operate in FY 13 than it did in FY 10. The reality that park operating funds are decreasing now under the sequester creates a disincentive for private donors to contribute to park projects. These cuts do serious damage to the fundamental assets and heritage that our national parks represent. The cuts in federal funds also create a negative ripple effect in the economy of our surrounding communities. The park is estimated to gen-

erate \$186 million in economic activity in our region, supporting approximately 2,970 jobs.

Friends of Acadia is already working with partners at the local, state and federal level to explore options for sustainable, supplementary funding for America's national parks. In March, I participated in a leadership conference convened by the National Parks Conservation Association and the National Park Hospitality Association that put forward sixteen specific proposals for such efforts.

Confident that my colleagues from those leadership associations will give you a full account, I will speak briefly to two key proposals which my team at Friends of Acadia believe hold great promise, and which require Congressional action to advance further.

1. The first proposal is to enhance the park visitor experience through improvements enabled through a stronger fee system. The Federal Lands Recreation Act (FLREA) must be reauthorized, preserving parks' ability to retain a high majority of the fees they collect. People feel a sense of investment when they pay for an experience, and park entrance fees have been a very important source of funds for Acadia to maintain buildings, roads, trails, and more. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA-Title VIII of P.L. 108-447) enables national parks to retain up to 80% of the fees collected and use them for maintenance, interpretation, law enforcement, and to cover the costs of fee collection. At \$20 for seven days or \$40 for a year, the entrance fee at Acadia is a better bargain than taking one's family to the movies. Visitors pay the fees willingly and are pleased to hear that 80% of them are retained at Acadia. It is critical that FLREA be renewed by 2014 with the authorization for the National Park Service to experiment with the fee structure to maximize revenues based on locally-appropriate solutions. Continuation of fee collection is also very important for the future of Acadia's award-winning Island Explorer bus system. Acadia National Park adds a transit fee, seamless to the visitor, during the bus system's operation. This fee generates more than half of the funding needed for bus system operations, so if Acadia's authority to charge an entrance fee were to disappear, the Island Explorer would shrink significantly. At Acadia, nearly 21% of the park's annual budget comes from fee revenue.

2. The second proposal is for a Park Legacy Partnership enabled by public-private cooperation. Versions of this noble concept have been discussed since at least 2007. Now is the time to build upon lessons learned from the past efforts and to create an opportunity for Congress and private partners to design a fund that will inspire private donors to look toward the 2016 Park Service Centennial. In particular, we encourage a program that would be inclusive of a wide array of possible ways to give, and not require that private gifts be made to the Federal Treasury in order to qualify for the federal match. In my conservation career, I have been privileged to receive the wise counsel of some of America's great philanthropic families with a deep commitment to our natural heritage. Under their guidance as volunteer board members or donors, Friends of Acadia has demonstrated that private, non-profit partners should not replace the role of the federal government, but we can provide critical flexibility, innovation, cost effectiveness, and a trusted broker for donors wanting to add to our national parks legacy.

I will close with a final specific example from Acadia that illustrates the power and potential of both the fee collection and the proposed Park Legacy Partnership. In the year 2000, Friends of Acadia successfully completed the Acadia Trails Forever Campaign. Our organization raised \$9 million in private funding to restore and permanently endow the maintenance of Acadia's historic trail system. This was matched by \$4 million in public funds-primarily from revenue collected at Acadia through visitor entrance fees. This campaign went on to be a model for other parks and friends groups around the country. Yet I don't believe that it would have been possible if we had not been able to tell our private donors that the federal government was coming to the table with a significant investment in the project; nor would it have worked if we had told our private donors that their contributions would need to be made directly to the U.S. Treasury. Instead, Friends of Acadia holds the endowment and makes yearly grants to the park for intended uses on the trails under the terms of a memorandum of agreement signed by both parties.

As we approach 2016, it is important to note that Acadia National Park shares that same centennial date with the broader National Park Service. We are certainly prepared and motivated to bring our best thinking and resources to bear to ensure that Acadia's second century is launched with the same level of inspiration and leadership exhibited by the park's founders one hundred years ago.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share testimony with your committee today, and hope that you will not hesitate to let me know if I can assist with follow up questions or suggestions. And in conclusion, I invite each of you to pay us a visit at Acadia along the Maine coast this summer or in the future - my words here today pale in comparison with a first-hand visit, and it would be our pleasure to help you or your staff come on up and enjoy the Acadian experience with us. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Five hours of testimony probably wouldn't do justice—

Mr. MACDONALD. That's correct.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. To the good work you're doing. We thank you. Very helpful.

Mr. Puskar.

STATEMENT OF DAN PUSKAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS FOR PUBLIC LANDS, WHEATON, MD

Mr. PUSKAR. Good morning and thank you. I'm honored to be here as well. My name is Dan Puskar, and I'm the Executive Director of the Association of Partners for Public Lands. The association is made up of 85 member organizations, many of which are the largest friends groups, cooperating associations, foundations, and educational partners of not only the national park system, but also other public lands.

83 percent of our members, however, serve National Park Service sites and are doing a lot of the operational partnering that provides visitor services, that does interpretive programs, that creates educational opportunities. That really does a lot of the work of helping to steward our park visitors.

In fact, many of our member organizations are the ones running the volunteer programs that engage people in the ways that, Senator Murkowski, you so appreciate happening in Alaska right now.

I want to really, in the interest of time, say that I will echo many of the things that my colleagues have said, and instead spend a moment of maybe wrapping together a couple of the things I've been hearing today around how we can really increase funding and services for the national parks through the work of nonprofits. There is a baseline opportunity for creating a legislative framework for really unleashing what friends groups, cooperating associations, and others are doing today. As we think to have more sustainable funding, providing more of a ground floor for them would be helpful.

A few thoughts along those lines. First, there really isn't today legislative recognition of partnerships of the central piece of how the Park Service does its mission, particularly with nonprofits, something that would be valuable, I think. The opportunity for our nonprofits to be able to noncompetitively enter into agreements, long-term lasting agreements with the National Park Service would be incredibly valuable. Member organizations of ours, like the Yosemite Conservancy, which was founded in 1923, have certainly made a mark in improving that park and allowing them to have agreements that regularly last more than 5 years at a time, not only will allow them to make the investments they need, but to attract the kinds of donors that they need to do the wonderful programming that they do.

The National Park Service is given cooperative agreement and challenge cost-share authorities to date. But there are ways in

which those can be strengthened to make sure that we do extend the value of Federal dollars that come to nonprofits to do great public benefits. To that end, thinking about or perhaps rethinking what a public benefit in a park looks like, which may be different than what the Federal Cooperative Agreement and Grants Act envisioned back in 1977, since so much of what happens in parks is truly benefiting the Nation might be worthy of consideration.

I want to echo the sentiments expressed earlier today that there are things we can do to help our nonprofits when it comes to things like donor recognition. We want to take the already-inspired American people and organizations and corporations that want to do more and create the opportunities for them to feel valued by the value they impart.

Certainly, we want to applaud and commend what this committee has already done in creating targeted opportunities to take what these kinds of authorities can do and propel them further. What you've done with the Helium Bill this summer is just one example. But certainly, as we talk about an endowment and the potential for Federal matching funds, the Park Legacy Partnership Fund that has been suggested, all of these would benefit a great deal if we have improved the rules of the road for nonprofits to work with the National Park Service and really unleash what that philanthropy and what those in-kind services can be.

The great thing about the National Park Service and its mission is that there are a lot of nonprofits out there with shared missions that are really engaged in making sure these are the premiere places that all Americans, and our international visitors, can enjoy. So, the Association of Partners for Public Lands would be pleased to work with you to make sure that we can improve those rules of the road, invest in the kinds of strategies that have been already mentioned here, like the reauthorization of FLREA, the championing of certain bills like a commemorative coin, which, while it may seem small, is one further example of what this Congress can do to create those public—private matching opportunities and build awareness of our great national parks. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Puskar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAN PUSKAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS FOR PUBLIC LANDS, WHEATON, MD

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Murkowski and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today alongside my distinguished colleagues. I serve as executive director of the Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL), which has a history since 1977 of cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS). Through its vital network of partnerships, APPL works for the day when all Americans share the joy and inspiration of our natural world and collective heritage.

APPL represents 85 nonprofit member organizations, 83% of which are cooperating associations, friends groups, foundations and educational institutions that have formal partnerships with the national park system. Our members range in scale from the newly created, all volunteer Friends of De Soto National Memorial to Eastern National, a cooperating association partnering with over 150 national parks. Although we support the full breadth of the NPS, our members are primarily "operational partners" with an on-the-ground presence in 335 of the 401 national park units. Our members staff most visitor centers, provide interpretive materials, offer educational programs and give back through grants and other partnerships. Not only do APPL members save federal funds by providing these services, but in 2011 they provided more than \$134 million in aid to the NPS through major projects, grants, programs and services that respond to the agency's priorities.

Our member organizations epitomize the durability and strength of public-private partnerships. The Yosemite Conservancy, for example, was founded in 1923, and the average length of our public lands partnerships is 48 years. Perhaps this is not surprising as philanthropy and partnership have been essential to the creation and resiliency of many national parks, from the land donation of William and Elizabeth Kent to establish Muir Woods National Monument in 1906 to the recent gift by David Rubenstein to help restore the Washington Monument. Examples of the ongoing contributions of our member organizations and allies to the NPS include:

- Alaska Geographic has donated over \$22 million to the NPS and other federal lands since 1959. Alaska Geographic engages youth in science through programs like the Yellow-Billed Loon Media Project, in which Native youth survey breeding sites alongside NPS biologists and share their results with communities affected by a potential endangered species list change.
- The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio annually provides financial support for over 1,000 children from low income families to participate in its residential education and summer camp programs. The Conservancy also provides funding and staff support for key outreach programs that bring urban children to experience the park.
- Discover Your Northwest, a cooperating association serving NPS units in three states, partnered with Polaris to provide a brand new electric vehicle for park rangers patrolling the Painted Hills area of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in Oregon. The actions of this nonprofit partner helped the NPS fulfill its goal to make Painted Hills carbon neutral and energy self sufficient in housing, administration and transportation.
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy has provided over \$300 million in support to NPS projects and programs for over 30 years, manages all park visitor centers and directly serves over five million visitors per year. The Conservancy has helped develop a corps of 35,000 annual volunteers providing 500,000 hours of service each year-the largest national park volunteer program in the nation.
- Grand Teton Association is a strong financial supporter of the National Park Service Academy, a program to help recruit and grow future public land employees. Since 2011, this program hosted at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming has introduced diverse undergraduate and graduate students from across the country to career opportunities in NPS.
- Great Smoky Mountains Association and Friends of the Smokies, both APPL member organizations, collectively provide approximately 8% of their park's annual operating budget to support all aspects of the visitor experience in North Carolina and Tennessee.
- Mount Rushmore Society will fund \$500,000 in grants over the next five years for preservation and maintenance of the iconic South Dakota sculpture. These necessary activities will not be met by current NPS budgets.
- NatureBridge, a non-profit education provider operating in multiple national parks, raises and spends \$12.5 million each year to provide residential environmental science programs to over 30,000 students. These multi-day programs translate to over 100,000 student days of hands-on science learning in national parks.
- Rocky Mountain Nature Association provides approximately \$500,000 annually to the education programs of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, including opportunities for over 50 interns and student trail crewmembers to work in the park every year.
- Western National Parks Association (WNPA) has provided over \$86 million to support NPS projects and programs for 75 years. WNPA operates in 66 NPS units in 12 Western states, many of which have little budget capacity for programming, let alone staffing. WNPA's presence at sites like Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial is essential. WNPA staff is often the only personnel encountered by the public, and its aid truly provides the basic interpretation of park resources and meets the needs of visitors.

A vital role of APPL is to represent the interests of our members in working with federal agencies and Congress to ensure that all nonprofit park partners are provided the greatest opportunities to help expand visitor services, educate and inspire the next generation, create jobs and engage all people in public lands stewardship. My comments today represent the experiences of APPL and its member organizations, and I hope will reflect the insights of the National Park Friends Alliance and the contributions of key educational field institutes across the nation.

A Strong Federal Funding Commitment Invigorates Partnerships

While recognizing the fiscal challenges facing our nation, APPL and its member organizations believe that funding for the operations of the national parks, the protection of their resources and the safety of their visitors are the responsibilities of the federal government. Public-private partnership, however, should be a core strategy to address the need for additive funding that provides a margin of excellence in parks. Recognizing the complementary roles of public and private leadership is particularly important at this time when NPS seeks to reach broader and more diverse audiences with more scarce federal funds.

In the presence of a strong federal funding commitment to the NPS, APPL member organizations are ready, willing and able to mobilize their donors, retail customers, volunteers, educational resources, gateway communities and business partners to help the NPS achieve its important mission to preserve and protect America's national parks for the enjoyment of future generations.

INCREASING NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM FUNDING AND SERVICES THROUGH NONPROFIT PARTNERS

APPL trusts that our already vibrant and rewarding relationships with the NPS will add greater resources and save more federal funds if our partnerships were fully embraced and facilitated by law, policy and procedure. With the goal of unleashing the nonprofit sector to enhance parks and achieve more results with tax dollars, I offer a few perspectives and recommendations:

Expand Public-Nonprofit Partnership Authorities

NPS Director Jarvis and his leadership team have been tremendous advocates for park partners, although the tools provided to them have not kept up with the NPS and its growing desire to engage meaningfully in partnerships. Additional or clarifying legislation will help the NPS to simplify and streamline its partnership policies and practices, and to meet the goals that Director Jarvis has articulated.

- **Encouraging Long Lasting Partnerships**—The NPS currently does not have legislation specifically endorsing the value and necessity of partnerships as a central tenet of fulfilling its mission. This gap in authorities can often lead to the NPS, as well as other federal agencies, relying on familiar regulatory or transactional frameworks like contracting and procurement law to practice the art of partnerships. Partnerships, like most good relationships, work best when founded on trust and communication, and are open to the creative risk inherent in entrepreneurial activity and private sector ingenuity.

New authorities that recognize the centrality of partnership in the NPS and provide the agency with the ability to enter into agreements non-competitively with nonprofit partners would give greater clarity to all parties and strengthen the ability of our member organizations to engage the American people to support the parks.

- **Strengthening the Leverage of Public-Private Funding**— The tools provided to the NPS for maximizing the efficiencies of public and private dollars are limited. Cooperative agreement authority, one of the few instruments available, was not conceived as a framework for longstanding partnerships and has presented problematic complications as parks and partners work to achieve shared goals. In the past, APPL members have been told by the Department of the Interior that general federal law preempts the full use of some specific NPS agreement authorities.

Another core partnership tool, the Challenge Cost-Share Agreement Authority, has been recognized by this Committee as a valuable tool to stimulate private investment and confront looming obstacles, most recently in its advancement of S. 783, the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013. The Congressional Budget Office reports that S.783 would provide \$50 million in federal dollars, matched with an additional \$50 million in private funding, to the NPS for maintenance and infrastructure projects within national parks. APPL congratulates the Committee on shepherding this initiative.

These authorities would be strengthened by identifying the unique role that nonprofit partners have in the history and mission of the NPS and recognizing the variety and value of public purposes inherent in preserving our parks and welcoming all generations of Americans to experience them. Modest changes to these agreement authorities would help ensure that the energy and expertise of nonprofit partners, especially those operating in an increasingly competitive philanthropic arena, will be maximized.

Improve and Streamline Partnership Policies, Agreements and Approvals

In *A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement*, the NPS has expressed its desire to work with partners to help strategically focus its many efforts and align its existing resources on powerful actions that advance the NPS mission. APPL applauds Director Jarvis for his commitment to revise the NPS policy on donations and fundraising, known as Director's Order 21, in order to meet the dynamic landscape of 21st century philanthropy. Additionally, APPL is encouraged by the agency's intention to create a workable Reference Manual for Director's Order 32, which governs NPS activities with cooperating associations, and for Director's Order 6, which applies to educational programs.

APPL is eager to assist Director Jarvis and his leadership team in revisiting these policies, and the agreements which tier from them, to focus and align the best elements of the public and private sector and unleash their combined potential.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

Earlier this year, the National Parks Conservation Association, an APPL member organization, and the National Park Hospitality Association developed a series of white papers to outline 16 strategies that could be employed to increase non-appropriated funding for the national parks. Several of these papers identify programs and opportunities central to the viability and strength of nonprofit partnership and funding.

Enhancing Park Experiences Through Fees

APPL supports the reauthorization of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and the continuation of its current authorization wherein the NPS retains the recreational and associated fees it collects.

National park visitors intuitively expect that their fee dollars will support the places they experienced and enjoyed. APPL members are committed to creating great visitor experiences and are concerned that the loss of support for NPS interpretation, maintenance and protection funds will significantly decrease the agency's ability to provide basic services. Additionally, several APPL member organizations and allies leverage these fees to create exemplary resources for park visitors including:

- Like many cooperating associations, the Mesa Verde Museum Association and the NPS combine nonprofit aid with FLREA funds to print and distribute the park visitor guide which includes recreational, educational and safety information, which is annually distributed to over 400,000 Mesa Verde National Park visitors in Colorado.
- The Schoodic Education and Research Center Institute and the NPS completed a \$2.7 million renovation of the historic Rockefeller Hall in Acadia National Park earlier this month. The Center supports research for Acadia that is linked directly to STEM education opportunities for youth and to lifelong learning for all in the sciences and arts. The project cost was shared equally by philanthropic contributions and FLREA fees.

APPL urges the Committee to reauthorize this valuable authority not only for the NPS, but for all federal land management agencies. We also believe this program would be strengthened with the inclusion of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation areas. APPL encourages this Committee's collaboration with the appropriate committee of jurisdiction to help invest these fees in the visitor's enjoyment of all public lands.

Park Legacy Partnership Fund

APPL strongly supports the establishment of a long term public-private philanthropic opportunity wherein federal dollars are matched one-to-one by private dollars. This model has several similarities to the National Park Service Centennial Challenge which was activated for one year in 2008 and provided over \$50 million to critical NPS projects. The combination of \$24.6 million in federal funds matched by nearly \$27 million in philanthropic contributions resulted in many projects including:

- The Friends of Big Bend leveraged a \$100,000 Centennial Challenge grant to make something that its remote park, which encompasses 13% of the U.S. southern border, had never had in 75 years: a visitor center film to enhance public safety and encourage stewardship. Raising \$177,000 in private funds, the Friends not only created the film but upgraded the audiovisual assets of the park auditorium necessary to view it.

- Lewis and Clark National Park Association leveraged a \$30,000 Centennial Challenge grant to complete a formal education plan for the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in Oregon and Washington State. The plan expanded what had been a curriculum focused on 4th graders to a portfolio of placed-based activities for school groups from 4th to 12th grades.
- The Zion Natural History Association and the NPS created an initiative to significantly enhance youth education and outreach in the park by matching a \$54,000 Centennial Challenge grant with \$54,000 in private funds. This modest initiative increased the number of children attending programs by nearly 300% in the first year, and today tens of thousands of young people have been connected to the unique natural and cultural resources of Zion National Park as a result.

The value of a long term federal matching program would dwarf the success of the one-year Centennial Challenge effort. Nonprofit partners who can share the guarantee of a future federal match with their donors and constituents will be better positioned to attract greater philanthropy and aid-especially smaller organizations that may not have high cash reserves or friends groups that lack sizeable philanthropic bases in their gateway communities.

Commemorative Coins

Legislation has been introduced in Congress to create a series of commemorative coins that will celebrate the National Park Service Centennial in 2016. Sale of the coins includes surcharges that provide up to \$12.25 million in funds that may be matched by the National Park Foundation, an APPL member. This is an opportunity for the Congress to help deliver \$24.5 million "for projects and programs that help preserve and protect resources under the stewardship of the National Park Service and promote public enjoyment and appreciation of those resources" without adding to the deficit or finding offsets. (In the interest of full transparency, I authored this white paper when I was a member of the National Park Foundation staff.)

APPL encourages Senators to co-sponsor S.1158, National Park Service 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, as several members of the Committee have previously done, and thus add resources to and improve public awareness of the NPS Centennial in 2016.

THE FUTURE OF PARK PARTNERSHIPS

All APPL member organizations are honored to be official partners of America's most treasured landscapes. Our national parks have traditionally been supported by both the public and private sectors, and APPL hopes that these perspectives and recommendations open opportunities to expand our partnerships to greater effect and impact.

In summary, APPL strongly encourages the Committee to:

- Encourage the increase of national park system funding and services through partnerships. This may be accomplished by adopting partnerships authorities to help the NPS to simplify and streamline its policies and practices and spur ever greater nonprofit contributions and aid.
- Renew the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act in a manner that will meet park visitor expectations and improve their experience and enjoyment of these treasured places.
- Strongly consider new proposals, including the Park Legacy Partnership Fund and a commemorative coin series, which provide the leverage nonprofits need to further extend scarce federal dollars.

I enthusiastically offer our services to the Committee in developing new partnership authorities and in continuing to serve as a voice for nonprofit park partners. Thank you for your strong interest in helping to galvanize nonprofit partnerships with the NPS and thereby expand the funding of national parks in the next century.

The CHAIRMAN. You all have been very helpful, and I apologize for the bad manners. Senator Murkowski and I are also working on another bipartisan effort at this time on natural gas, and I am trying to be there as well.

So let me just ask one quick question, and then Senator Murkowski has been kind enough to say she's going to step in. Many of the concerns she'll be asking about are exactly mine.

Mr. Gabrys, concessionaires obviously play a key role in maintaining park buildings. It's an essential part of your operation. So you know a lot about this issue. Are there policies, in your view, Federal policies in particular, that ought to be changed or modified or removed so as to let concessionaires do more to adequately maintain their facilities?

In other words, pretend you're in our shoes, and you're looking for ways to move the machinery in the Federal Government around so that you all can get more, in effect, for your maintenance dollar, and do more in the cause that we're all talking about here, which is to deal with the backlog? Are there policies in that area that could be changed or altered?

Mr. GABRYS. Mr. Chairman, I think in terms of the general ongoing maintenance that we're involved with, things are working just fine. Part of the concessionaires responsibility, as you indicate, is providing that maintenance.

Each national park has a maintenance plan developed by the Park Service that delineates what's the responsibility of the Park Service, what's the responsibility of the concessionaire. In recent years, more of that has moved toward the concessionaire, which I think is a good thing.

I think where the focus needs to be, though, is on these big—deferred maintenance is almost a misnomer because it's really these big costs. You look at the old structures that exist such as Ahwahnee, at our park in Mount Rainier, the beautiful Paradise Lodge. No matter how much ongoing maintenance you're doing, the lodge is old. Every year, it gets buried in snow over the winter season. After awhile it just wears out, and all of a sudden it needs some major reshoring of the facility, and 10s of millions of dollars need to be spent.

That's where we need to find the money to do those things. So the things that I mentioned in my remarks, to provide additional sources of revenue at parks, would provide additional money for concessionaires. I would have concessionaires put some of that money into a fund so that when those items are required, there's money there to pay for them.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Senator Murkowski, and again, my thanks that you'll wrap this up.

Senator MURKOWSKI [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony that you've provided today. I think it's been very helpful for all of us. Know that we will be taking your suggestions as we evaluate how we might be a little bit more creative in how we're dealing with our maintenance and backlog.

Mr. Gabrys, you've given some very specific examples of where on the concessions side we can work to either create and gain efficiencies through extent and making sure that the concession contracts are longer. But again, very concrete examples, which I appreciate.

Most of you have mentioned the FLREA and note that it is due to be reauthorized within this next year. Recognizing that that is in front of us, what suggestions might you have that we would tweak or enhance or pull back on, as we look to this reauthorization? I've mentioned that there is an inequity, if you will, between

fees that we see within different parks. Is that an issue that needs to be addressed?

If I could just have your thoughts on what we might be looking specifically to address when we have this reauthorization come before us. I throw it out to any of you. Mr. Obey?

Mr. OBEY. Senator, thank you for the question. There are, I think, a number of opportunities with the fee authorization. I would agree with you that one of the questions that we should be looking at is how to share the wealth, if you will, throughout the park system? Right now, 80 percent of the fees are retained in the park where they're collected. But half the fees that the Park Service collects are collected in about 10 parks. So, there's a wide disparity.

Now, as we heard earlier today, a lot of those parks have very significant maintenance needs as well. So there's a balance. But I think it is very legitimate to look at how to spread that out a bit more, maybe a higher percentage that would go throughout the system.

There are some other things I think that are worth looking at, too. Right now in FLREA in the statute, it sets the senior pass at \$10 for a lifetime. That's a great deal. If it's still there when I'm 62, I'm going to buy one.

[Laughter.]

Mr. OBEY. But I think that we might be able to look at some adjustments to things like that to get a little bit more revenue. They sell about 500,000 of those passes every year.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Of the senior passes?

Mr. OBEY. Of the senior passes. So there's potentially revenue there.

Now, I'm sure they're reselling some of those, because people lose them and it's only 10 bucks, so why not get another one? But I think that that's one area where we might look.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Any other suggestions? Mr. MacDonald?

Mr. MACDONALD. Yes, if I may. Again, the feedback we get is that they're not charging enough. It costs less to come to Acadia for a week than it does to take your family out, you know, to one movie. However, what's been most interesting to me, someone mentioned earlier the business community and striking the balance. The business community, up in Bar Harbor very concerned by the cuts of the sequester, wants the park to sell more passes. So they're offering to help sell passes at their hotels. They're on board.

I initially felt that they might resist trying to collect more fees or raising the fees; they don't. They recognize that this is a key source of revenue, and they're standing right by our side at the chamber of commerce, trying to promote more compliance with it. Acadia has a very irregular boundary, so people can often enter without paying. The business community is a huge supporter of enhancing the collection of fees, at least up in Acadia. So I just wanted you to know that.

Senator MURKOWSKI. OK. Mr. Puskar.

Mr. PUSKAR. I would just add that several of our members who have fee recovery within their parks are able to really take advantage of being able to match those funds to achieve ends with the National Park Service that improve the visitor experience. So to

echo an earlier comment, finding greater ways to share those resources across the system would allow more of our nonprofit members to do more with that work as well.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Good. A lot of discussion about what we can do to encourage greater private donation, participation that way. We all recognize that when you are thanked, it goes a long way to feeling good about what you have done. Some people like the anonymity. But I think it's fair to say that more people enjoy the acknowledgement that comes with some sort of formal recognition.

So I think it is fair to talk about ways that we might be able to tastefully recognize our donors. I don't want to see the new Denali Visitors Center named the Verizon Center, and nothing wrong with Verizon. But I think we expect a little bit more from our national parks.

How do we do this? Mr. MacDonald, I'd appreciate your insights there because, as you know, Friends of Acadia have kind of led the way here with the volunteers and the donors. How do we give that appropriate recognition without really commercializing this?

Mr. MACDONALD. It's a great point. Honestly, in my work, when most of the individuals give to Friends of Acadia, naming rights are not as high on the list as I would have expected. Having said that, having a trail or a bench or, you know, a room would be a terrific option to have. As you know, the private philanthropies that work with the Park Service operate under director's order 21, which gives guidelines for how private individuals can donate to an agency like the Park Service.

Stepping back, even before we get to the thank-you, some elements of that order make it very challenging for the person to even consider making a gift. They have to get vetted and reviewed and, you know, put on hold before a gift could even consider being made. So we're really pleased that—

Senator MURKOWSKI. How difficult is that?

Mr. MACDONALD. I don't do—

Senator MURKOWSKI. I mean, if I just want, out of the generosity of my heart, or my relative who's got no kids and is getting old, he wants to just be able to give you 50 grand. How difficult is it?

Mr. MACDONALD. Fifty grand, it probably isn't too difficult.

Senator MURKOWSKI. OK. Let's go higher.

Mr. MACDONALD. At a higher level—

Senator MURKOWSKI. Let's go to a million.

Mr. MACDONALD. I mean, the Park Service, for good reason, has steps in place to assure that there is no conflict of interest or there's no other motive behind that gift. So they want to review it. They review the person who's offering it and make sure that it's a true gift, with no quid pro quo, or no strings attached.

So I understand the reasons behind that. But I'm pleased that the Park Service has agreed to review that order and look for ways to make it more donor-friendly, more efficient, allow groups like ours not to miss out on opportunities; I guess I would put it that way.

As you say, the naming rights are important. But so is just building a donor-friendly culture to allow us to appear grateful right from the outside when you have a conversation. So again, the Park

Service has been terrific about saying, in this climate in particular to this time, they believe it's time to review that order.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I appreciate that. I think it's something that we clearly need to do. People who are feeling very generous don't want to feel like they have to have their whole life history peeled apart in order to make a gift.

Let me ask one last question. This is reflective of many of the comments that I hear from folks back home, who I mentioned the Wrangell-St. Elias and their cleanup effort coming here in a few weeks, good neighbors getting out and doing good things for their parks.

But what I hear is that we make it very difficult, or the park system makes it difficult for people to just come and volunteer, to come and help. Is this an issue or a problem from your perspective, where people don't feel as welcome to just be a volunteer? Mr. MacDonald?

Mr. MACDONALD. Yes, from the front lines of Acadia, I would answer no. That is, people are treated so well. The volunteer program meets up at the park headquarters. They have priority parking places. There's park staff there every morning to welcome them. So the culture of folks wanting to give back, at least at that park, it's extremely receptive.

The park staff shows up on weekends, you know, to help run these volunteer cleanup days. So at least at Acadia, I think the Park Service as a culture, at the local level, of being very, very receptive and appreciative of the volunteer efforts that have been a hallmark of our work since 1986.

Mr. GABRYS. Senator, from the standpoint of the concessionaire, I think that has been somewhat of a concern with the Park Service. But I think that's changing. I think a prime example is, for the first time this year, we as a concessionaire were invited to ask our employees if they would like to come down to the Mall the day after the July Fourth celebration to clean up the Mall. In past years, that would not have happened.

So we at Guest Services put that out to our employees and say, "If you'd rather go down and help out on the Mall, you can go there instead of coming to your normal work station tomorrow." It was overwhelmingly supported. A lot of other groups participated, too.

So I think there's a movement in the right direction there within the Park Service.

Mr. OBEY. Senator, if I could just add, I would agree with the comments of both Mr. Gabrys and Mr. MacDonald. The Park Service needs core resources in order to manage volunteers. So when you have something like the sequester, obviously, that can be an issue, and Senator Baldwin referenced some of the practical implications that can arise.

But at the same time, I think that there's more of an opportunity than maybe has yet been recognized to use volunteer service and service corps, whether they're youth corps, whether there are others. AARP did a survey several years back, and the single most desired volunteer activity by a retiree was a volunteer ranger. There are so many people with tremendous expertise and experience from a lifetime of work who could bring that to bear in a creative way in a park setting.

So whether it's that, whether it's really trying to leverage the youth corps that are out there with the trained people who know how to run a crew, or whether it's looking at returning veterans, who really have a desire to give back or are looking for other things to do. There's still high unemployment for returning veterans, as well. I think those are areas that we should be looking at.

Mr. PUSKAR. I would simply add that there are a number of non-profit organizations that have been leading their volunteer programs because of the kinds of constraints that have been brought up in some parks where they might not have that internal capacity to date. So when you look at a group like the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy that manages a force of 35,000 volunteers in putting in hundreds of thousands of hours annually, it's amazing in that kind of partnership what you can do to mobilize that community, some of whom, through their volunteer service, may want to continue up a chain that ultimately leads to donations and other forms of contribution back to their public lands.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Good comments there. I was hiking through Klondike Gold Rush National Park some years ago. To come upon a group of AmeriCorps volunteers that was working with some youth corps folks to restore some of the trails there, recognizing that particularly in Alaska, with our remoteness and the size of our parks, in terms of having that trained staff that can then take these groups of volunteers to provide for some of the work that we hope for, oftentimes it can be very, very difficult.

So it's these partnerships, I think, where we're seeing real progress and real opportunity for good things to happen there.

So, again, I appreciate all that you have put out on the table here for discussion today. I think you heard from the chairman, and you saw from the questioning from all of the members here, there is a great deal of interest in how we move forward, how we care for, nurture, and really highlight and showcase the national treasures that we have within our park system. But it takes the work of all of us.

There's been a lot of discussion today about the impact of sequester. That's fair. But we all recognize that we were in trouble a long time before the decision on sequester was made. The graph that Senator Coburn showed us is really quite telling. This is a cumulative effect that we are seeing. The reality is we've got some very serious, I think, reform when it comes to how we handle our maintenance issues within our parks.

I'm hopeful that we'll use this occasion of this anniversary coming up to really galvanize the good ideas and really the hearts of Americans to come out and support truly national treasures.

So thank you for what you've given us and your attention this morning. With that, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:14 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Responses to Additional Questions

RESPONSE OF DAVID MACDONALD TO QUESTION FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question 1. Mr. MacDonald, we have heard from the witnesses here today about the importance of reauthorizing the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act so that the respective park can retain 80% of the fees they collect. In your testimony you state the Act should "authorize the National Park Service to experiment with the fee structure to maximize revenues based on locally appropriate solutions."

Will you explain how an experimental fee structure may be used locally at the Acadia National Park?

Answer. Thank you for your interest and questions regarding re-authorization of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. At Acadia National Park, the ability of the National Park Service to retain 80% of the fees collected here has helped greatly in tackling backlogged maintenance and the improvement of public resources such as hiking trails, carriage roads, motor roads, and visitor services. If FLREA were not reauthorized and Acadia was to lose this funding, the Park's maintenance backlog would grow exponentially, and public enjoyment would suffer.

Although we cannot speak for the Park Service itself, Friends of Acadia believes that it is important to consider providing the authority for parks to implement experimental fee structures in order to enable incentives (or disincentives) through fee structure that would support and reinforce other resource management objectives. For example, here at Acadia National Park, we wrestle during the peak summer season with congestion of too many private automobiles and tour buses at the most popular park destinations at Acadia. This can damage natural resources and detract from the quality of a visitor's experience.

Over the last several years, we have developed an alternative transportation system, the fare free, low-emissions Island Explorer bus system. This system has proved very popular and effective; however, its use by the public remains voluntary. We believe that in order for it to be most effective at reducing congestion and preserving natural and cultural resources within the park, the public needs more incentives to ride it or disincentives to bring their private vehicle into the park. One way to do so (since the bus is already free of charge for passengers) is to give Acadia the ability to increase the park entrance fee for those wishing to bring a private vehicle into the park. At present, visitors pay \$20 for a week's vehicle pass in Acadia and \$5 for those visiting solo by bicycle or foot or riding the Island Explorer. What if Acadia had the ability to charge \$20 per day for those who wish to bring their own vehicle in, but \$20/week for those on foot, bike or using public transportation? This would likely result in more fee revenue for the Park and less vehicular congestion and resource degradation. Exceptions could be made for those visitors with physical disabilities who require their own private vehicle or local residents who may pass in and out of the park daily commuting to work or school (Acadia is unique in how its boundary weaves in and out of dozens of surrounding villages).

I use this as only one example of how different parks may benefit from the ability to apply differing fee structures, based on the unique aspects of their own resource management and visitor experience issues. The current Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act has been successful to date in part because it already does give the Park Service a reasonable level of control of policy and application; even greater gains could be made with additional flexibility to tailor fee structures to increase revenue while complementing other park-specific management objectives.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify last month and to provide additional information in response to your question. I would be glad to discuss any of these issues further as the Committee continues work on this important topic. All of us at Friends of Acadia endorse efforts to reauthorize and strengthen the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

RESPONSE OF CRAIG D.OBEY TO QUESTION FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question 1. The Sustainable Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks report, calls for "Park Zone Taxes" through increased sales or property taxes for gateway communities. The report singles out Estes Park, Colorado, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and Moab, Utah. Such a proposal would also include places like Jackson, Wyoming and here in Washington, DC with all the national parks in the district.

Does the National Park Conservation Association support going to cities and towns and asking them to increase taxes?

Answer. The collection of discussion papers entitled Sustainable Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks: Ideas for Parks Community Discussion was compiled by numerous individuals who represented diverse groups and views. The concepts contained in that piece were put forward for discussion and consideration at a March 19, 2013 symposium hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center. NPCA was a lead group organizing this event and compiling those sixteen discussion ideas, along with the National Parks Hospitality Association.

In an introductory letter prefacing those discussion drafts, former NPCA president Tom Kiernan and National Parks Hospitality Association's Derrick Crandall clarified:

"At the invitation of NPCA and NPHA, funding and national parks experts have drafted 16 papers outlining strategies that could be employed to increase non-appropriated funding for the national parks. The papers are rich in concepts and examples and are designed to spark conversation and comment. They do not represent the positions of NPCA, NPHA or any other organization. Each paper includes the name of those who contributed to the paper and who have also offered to receive and share your thoughts and the thoughts of others who care about America's national parks."

As noted at the conclusion of that paper, Park Zone Taxes, NPCA was not the contributor of that particular paper though welcomed the concept as one among many worthy of discussion that were submitted.

Some communities may elect to pursue park zone taxes that can help augment federal funding, as happened recently with St. Louis area residents who supported Proposition P, a sales tax increase to help fund trail and park improvements and renovations to the Gateway Arch. But NPCA has not taken a position on that concept.

Another recommendation in the report is raising the fuel tax.

Does the NPCA support raising the national fuel tax on fuel?

As I noted in my written testimony for this hearing:

Approximately half of the National Park Service's backlog is attributable to transportation infrastructure, some of which is an integral part of the basic national highway infrastructure system. While the Park Service provides for some transportation needs through its operations account, the most significant source of relevant revenue is the \$240 million our parks receive every year from the transportation bill. "Penny for Parks" would be a partnership with the American people to dedicate one cent from any adjustment to the federal gas tax index towards addressing the transportation infrastructure in national parks and other public lands.

. . . As Congress begins its work to reauthorize MAP-21, now scheduled to expire in October 2014, it should stop treating national parks and public lands as incidental or secondary assets, but rather as the core federal assets that they are, including significant transportation systems that serve states, communities, and park visitors. How Congress and the Administration will choose to fund a reauthorization is an open question. But NPCA believes Congress should devote a user fee equivalent to a penny per gallon from the gas tax for our national parks (emphasis added). The park transportation infrastructure backlog could be reduced within approximately six years to a level that can be addressed through annual DOT surface transportation appropriations and NPS cyclical maintenance.

NPCA has not taken a position on raising the national fuel tax. The Highway Trust Fund that provides for the funding needs of roads in national parks is on the verge of becoming insolvent. Indexing the fuel tax is one avenue being discussed by lawmakers for replenishing this account. In the event Congress takes that step, NPCA is asking for a user fee equivalent to a penny per gallon from the gas tax to be applied to the park roads backlog. In the event Congress takes an alternative approach to replenishing that fund, we would request an equivalent amount to meet the needs of park roads.

RESPONSES OF GERARD GABRYS TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question 1. Mr. Gabrys, in your testimony you made reference to the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act which I cosponsored with Senator Udall and subsequently became law in 2011. The legislation allowed the Forest Service to facilitate additional recreational opportunities at ski areas. What revenue generating visitor services could park concessioners provide to the public?

Answer. Thank you for your efforts on the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act, which is already bringing better experiences to visitors to national forests and economic benefits to communities near ski areas on national forests as year-round employment increases.

Concessioner operations in national parks face many of the same challenges your legislation addressed for ski area permittees in national forests. Visitor infrastructure is utilized for a small portion of the year, yet the peak visitation period has dominated agency thinking and prevented the use of best practices commonplace in the tourism field, from variable pricing and yield management to cooperative marketing efforts. Here are possible opportunities concessioners would seek to expand where appropriate in national parks, ideally under provisions similar to your ski areas bill:

- Astronomy classes and telescope rentals (including computer-aided scopes)
- Camera rentals, including all weather cameras and GPS-coded cameras
- Photography classes, including use of DSLR cameras and photo editing
- Seminars on using the outdoors for health
- Healthy and sustainable foods showcase weekends
- Wi-Fi service, with basic service free and more robust service on a fee basis
- Guided mountain bike tours on trails not normally allowing biking
- Rental tents, yurts and simple cabins erected in existing park campgrounds
- Backcountry fishing trips
- Special interpretation activities for kids
- Docu-dramas about park themes, history-like the Lost Colony production
- Zip lines
- Trail food services (like use of beverage carts on golf courses)
- Kayak rentals
- Fishing equipment rentals and lessons from mobile as well as stationary sites
- Electric bike rentals where regular bikes are rented
- Watchable wildlife tours
- Rental of glass-bottom, electric boats at certain units
- Airport pick-ups of visitors and luggage comparable to that offered by resorts
- Voluntourism programs
- Additional services to international visitors and group tours

The economic activity from these new services will generate new franchise fee receipts for the National Parks Service, 80% retained in the collecting park, and also provide encouragement to concessioners for investing funds in park visitor facilities.

Question 2. In your testimony, you state that the “visitor services you provide in national parks are often inhibited by park policies which limit visitor experiences and reduce payments, or franchise fees, to the agency.” What park policies are deterring these types of opportunities?

Answer. Virtually every park inhibits concessioner efforts to meet changing visitor needs. In the submitted testimony, we described how the limit on passengers allowed on the high speed ferry accessing Dry Tortugas National Park reduces park use from allowed levels by up to 10,000 visitors annually, and thus reduces potential revenues by \$250,000 annually. Curfews on access to Alcatraz and the Statue of Liberty-constraining evening visits-cost these units hundreds of thousands of visitors annually-and again, lead to substantial unrealized revenues. Off-season group business and special events are subject to NPS review and denials. Price approvals are required, frequently burdensome and are rarely offered more than 12-18 months out, when travel industry marketing standards often require pricing 2-3 years in ad-

vance. Integration of park, entrance fee and recreation fee pricing is rare, and creates economic barriers and visitor-unfriendly situations for such offerings as cruises on Lake Mead. We also believe that NPS policies such as Director's Order 21 inhibits concessioner efforts to assist overall visitor experiences through such programs as the Guest Donation Program, although we are delighted to see NPS taking action on this policy.

In its strategy for the next century of success outlined in A Call to Action, the NPS identifies a need for nimbleness and use of partners. The overall relationship between the agency and its concessioners, however, reflects a very different strategy: very detailed management. In one major park, the agency requires the park concessioner to sell cans of soda at three different prices within an easy walk-even though the cans of soda are purchased by the concessioner at the same price from the distributor. The park unit's concessions office specifies differing selling prices at a snack bar, a full service restaurant and a convenience store operated by the same concessioner. Concessioners would like to test out new services to establish visitor interest-but the process to define the service and gain price approval is a significant barrier.

And we must also note the consequences of lawsuits on the National Park Service. The courts have required management of some park agencies to meet provisions of laws as diverse as the Endangered Species Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the NPS has in some cases incorporated curtailment of visitor services as the best solution to this direction-as the agency did in its draft plan for Yosemite's Merced River Corridor.

RESPONSE OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS TO QUESTION FROM SENATOR CANTWELL

Question 1. There is a proposal to establish a Mountains-to-Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in Washington state. It is the culmination of successful collaboration among local community groups, businesses, and governments at all levels, from the Governor to the counties and cities.

This proposal seeks to recognize the strong connections between people and nature in the Pacific Northwest. The proposed Heritage Area includes working farms and forests, 1,600 miles of trails, rivers, lakes, ski areas, and much more. Over 1.4 million people live within the boundary of the proposed Heritage Area and two thirds of the land within the boundary is conserved under permanent protection-including the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area which is one of the most used wilderness areas in the nation. The proposed area demonstrates how the interaction of communities, businesses, and nature contributes to our heritage in the Pacific Northwest and continues to be an economic driver for the region.

The Greenway has a great story of community conservation that has provided national leadership in the cleanup of waterways (e.g. Lake Washington in the 1950's), open space conservation (e.g. the Forward Thrust Initiative in the 1960's), farmland preservation in the 1980's, the Greenway initiative in the 1990's, and the green building and sustainability movement currently underway.

Unfortunately, the Park Service, during its initial review of the proposal as outlined in the Greenway Feasibility Study, did not find that it merits a National Heritage Area designation. I hope that the Park Service will look at all of the resources present in this area and think about how such a living history of this great environmental heritage really does deserve to be recognized as a National Heritage Area.

Director Jarvis, how do you think the National Heritage Area designation can be used to recognize more recent and living histories? Will you work with me and others on this widely supported proposal to designate the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway as a National Heritage Area?

Answer. National Heritage Area (NHA) designation recognizes landscapes that are associated with important events, individuals, and historically significant cultural groups. Many NHAs already celebrate the living history and traditions of their regions. While NHA designation could certainly be used to recognize more recent history, contributing historic and cultural sites are a necessary component of any NHA.

National Park Service staff from the Pacific West Region and Washington, D.C. offices have reviewed the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area Feasibility Study of January 2012 according to our interim guidelines. While the NPS does not offer an official recommendation regarding the suitability of NHA designation until we are asked to provide testimony on a pending bill before Congress, based on our review, the study does not meet the evaluation criteria as outlined in the guidelines. Attached is a copy of our response letter that was sent to the appli-

cant. I would be glad to discuss this with you or to provide additional information about the review process and the feasibility study criteria.

RESPONSES OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PORTMAN

Question 1. Director Jarvis, as you may know, when I was OMB director, I worked with both parties in Congress to secure support for a partnership program that provided needed financial support for the parks. When Secretary Jewell testified before this committee she stated the administration is planning for the park service centennial. Can you provide any further details of that plan?

Answer. 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service—a defining moment that offers the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our accomplishments as we prepare for a new century of stewardship and engagement.

In 2011, the National Park Service launched A Call to Action, a strategic plan for employees and partners that describes specific goals and measurable actions that will guide the NPS as it enters its second century. Public listening sessions and ongoing feedback from visitors and other stakeholders continue to inform planning efforts for additional special programs, commemorations, and communications strategies.

Partnership programs that provide needed financial support to the parks are an other important component of our plan. This past November, the NPS, in partnership with the congressionally chartered National Park Foundation, kicked off the first phase of a centennial campaign that will culminate in a strategy for introducing the National Park Service to the next generation of Americans. This work is entirely funded by the National Park Foundation through its development efforts.

This effort, as well as our experience with the Centennial Challenge—a successful matching fund through which the National Park Service was able to utilize the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations request to help us incentivize private donations with a Federal match—makes us confident that our donors will continue to respond to the types of partnership programs you mentioned.

Question 2. Do you plan to work with Congress to craft an agenda for the centennial?

Answer. The National Park Service is committed to a broadly collaborative planning process. In addition to the valuable engagement of our constituencies in the early stages of developing a strategic plan, the NPS has established an external Centennial Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the recreation, hospitality, tourism, youth and education, and local business communities. As we continue to move forward with our planning process, we welcome the involvement of Congress. We also look forward to Senators' participation in centennial activities in their states and would welcome your help in inviting your constituents to visit national parks and take advantage of the services we offer in their communities—not only during the centennial, but every day.

Question 3. The upcoming centennial will be crucial for the future of our parks, because in these difficult fiscal times it is especially important to recognize the need for new funding strategies to enhance and maintain the quality of the national park experience and continue preserving natural, cultural and historic resources. Do you agree that the upcoming centennial is an excellent opportunity to engage all of those who utilize and benefit from our national parks in helping prepare for their future?

Answer. We certainly agree that the upcoming centennial is an excellent opportunity to engage the broad community of park visitors, stakeholders, and partners in helping prepare for their future. We also believe it is an opportunity—and our responsibility—to reach out beyond current visitors and partners to invite all Americans to understand, visit, cherish and support these places that belong to all Americans.

As noted above, the National Park Service has established an external Centennial Advisory Committee to ensure involvement and input in our preparations from a wide range of stakeholders and partners. This committee is charged with assisting the Service in broad engagement across our many park partner organizations, in addition to providing its advice and feedback based on its members' unique perspectives.

An important component of the centennial will be a broad communications strategy. With the generous support of, and in collaboration with, the National Park Foundation, we will launch a public outreach campaign to build greater awareness and deepen engagement with the public and invite their support in everything from volunteerism to increased private philanthropy.

Question 4. It is important that the 2016 centennial not just focus on a single year, but help engage the public in a lasting commitment to supporting their National Parks. How will the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service

ice utilize the momentum of the centennial to prepare the parks for their next 100 years of service?

Answer. The National Park Service centennial will be a celebration of the ideals of conservation, recreation, and heritage embodied in all of our public lands. Building upon the National Parks Second Century Commission Report and the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative, the NPS has been engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners to shape a vision of this celebration that celebrates the Service's past while recommitting us to a second century of exemplary stewardship and public enjoyment of these special places.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our centennial activities, outreach, and programs support the strategic goals articulated in the National Park Service's A Call to Action-our strategic plan for the next century of stewardship and public enjoyment. With the launch of A Call to Action, there is already a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, and alignment within the agency and our community of partners in meeting the challenges of our next century.

With the generous support of the National Park Foundation, our public outreach campaign will help to build engagement, raise awareness and drive support for our second century of stewardship on behalf of the American people.

Question 5. In 2011, the House/Senate Conference Committee Report encouraged the National Park Service to use innovative solutions like historic leases to help mitigate the growing backlog of historic structures in need of preservation. (H.R. 2055, 112 Cong. Comm. Rep. No. 112-331 (at 1056). Will you please provide the committee with information on how many historic leases NPS has entered in to?

Answer. The NPS system for tracking leases does not identify which are leases of historic facilities and which are leases of non-historic facilities. We currently track the number of leases, both historic and non-historic, with terms in excess of one year. Nationally, there are 86 leases with terms in excess of one year.

Question 6. Do you consider historic leases in parks to be a viable way to help parks mitigate the operation and maintenance backlog?

Answer. The NPS agrees that leasing is a valuable tool and that there is a need to expand its leasing program. To that end, the NPS is currently assessing opportunities to broaden the application of its leasing program. Leasing generally works well in urban areas where favorable market fundamentals and business opportunities exist-Golden Gate National Recreation Area is a great example. The NPS is working to improve the use of leasing by developing a more active leasing program, leasing-specific training, and encouraging urban parks to reassess their commercial services and historic building stock for leasing opportunities.

Leasing is one tool the NPS can use to address its maintenance backlog, but it is limited by market forces and the up-front investment that many structures require-an initial cost that the NPS must cover. Further, leasing cannot help with the large portion of deferred maintenance that is tied to park infrastructure, trails, and transportation assets.

Question 7. In addition to being an incredible place to visit and spend time outdoors, the park has gone to great lengths to establish a model education program. The program has grown to become a core part of school curriculum in North East Ohio. The park serves over 3,500 children in week long residential programs and 8,000 in field trips and day camps. This has helped the park reach out to underserved communities and develop innovative programs to work with urban neighborhoods in Cleveland and Akron. Much of this work is funded via philanthropic support. How can the National Park Service support parks like CVNP in their efforts in urban outreach and education?

Answer. The National Park Service is committed to increasing opportunities for education in the parks and connecting urban students with the National Parks in their communities. Park-based education programs strengthen and complement classroom learning. The parks are dynamic classrooms where people interact with real places, landscapes, historic structures, and other tangible resources that help them understand the stories and concepts they learned in traditional classrooms.

In February of 2012, the National Park Service led an effort that resulted in a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior to maximize the use of federal lands and resources to enhance educational opportunities for the American public. The National Park Service has utilized this agreement to expand opportunities for park-based education to high need schools through partnerships with professional and youth organizations and programs such as teacher training and field trips.

In addition, the National Park Foundation is working with local partners to provide resources for educators to use national parks as sources of content and active learning that meet state and federal standards. This has allowed parks and partners to increase teacher development opportunities including workshops, in-depth

subject matter seminars, and summer educator internships opportunities. The National Park Service is working with the National Park Foundation to secure private sponsorships for these and other educational opportunities delivered by partners and park staff.

Question 8. CVNP has grown its volunteer program, co-managed by the park and the Conservancy, to 5,900 volunteers and over 200,000 hours annually. Their volunteers include youth, families, corporations and individuals from diverse backgrounds. How is the National Park Service addressing policies to support philanthropy and the park mission?

Answer. Meeting the NPS mission requires the support of a strong community of citizens who are engaged in and committed to meeting the challenges and celebrating the successes of civic collaboration. Volunteerism is gaining recognition as a critical management tool, and through wise investment, this tool can provide an enormous advantage to National Parks and the communities they serve. There is an increasing need and opportunity for expanding NPS volunteer engagement and management throughout the Service by way of philanthropic and sponsorship funds. Volunteers-In-Parks (VIIPs) are especially crucial in helping the NPS achieve its outreach, stewardship, and education goals. The NPS is also working closely with the National Park Foundation to engage citizens in multiple layers of stewardship and philanthropy, thereby creating more long-term, sustainable civic relationships.

APPENDIX II

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

JOINT STATEMENT OF ROBERT GISH, PRESIDENT, BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF WASHINGTON, ELLENSBURG, WA, AND SHERRY BAYSINGER, MEMBER, WASHINGTON OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES ASSOCIATION, PORT ANGELES, WA

The use of saddle and pack stock on our public lands and in our National Parks has been a mainstay of backcountry service on these lands back to when the nation assumed authority for them. John Muir was a stock user. Teddy Roosevelt was a stock user. Gifford Pinchot was a stock user. In Wilderness, the use of stock has been the only method for outfitters, guides, agencies, and volunteers to transport people and materials into the backcountry in order to accomplish trail maintenance as well as fulfill the vision of the Wilderness Act that all Americans can have access to our wild lands. It is not an easy life to be a packer, an outfitter, or a volunteer stock handler. It has though been a way of life for many past and current stockmen, and it is unfortunately becoming a dying art. NPS crews struggle to maintain funding for their mule strings. Outfitters, often the first to clear trails, have to battle social prejudices, high insurance costs, and politically motivated rules that lead to endless litigation and difficulties getting meaningful permits that allow for businesses to stay in business. The hardships on the land often pale when compared to the hardships in the constant social, legal, and political wrangling that fail to provide the substance that keeps our public lands trails open and accessible.

We did have high hopes for the Department of Interior's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative until it became clear it wasn't targeted for all Americans. It seemed designed for or gravitated to a specific strata of urban society that have little connection with the land or rural lifestyles. This policy to drift with social norms is not new. No place is this clearer than Mt Rainier National Park. Stock use was unnecessarily eliminated on all but one trail (plus a segment of the PCT). The result is that upkeep is strong along the main arterials but many of the outer more distant trails are falling into disrepair without stock support. Stock use was not eliminated because of environmental impacts but because they were simply unwanted due to a new social order dominated by an urban society. This same pressure to eliminate stock use by a culture unused to rural lifestyles is relentlessly playing out around the country at places like Yosemite National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, and in the Pasyaten Wilderness of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. The public lands agencies are given up on the value of heritage and roots except for casting them in Ken Burns' documentaries. Many will say it is simply out with the old, in with the new, but it shouldn't be forgotten that it is the old that provided the cultural heritage for our nation.

Back Country Horsemen of American is this year celebrating 40 years of providing volunteer service to our nation's public lands. These were years of hard work out in the National Parks and National Forests. Many of these workers know well how to sharpen chainsaws and guide a pack string, but they couldn't tell you the first thing about writing an amicus brief for a litigation proceeding or even testifying before a Senate Committee. What they can tell you is that no amount of agency funding will make a significant difference as long as hard working Americans are treated as second class citizens and subject to layers of regulations that may make sense in Washington DC or for courtroom gamesmanship but have little merit on the ground. Outfitters should not have to push for a decade to get reauthorization of their permits, or whether there will be adequate heartbeat allowances and service days to fill some of the few real jobs left in rural communities. Agency stock crews should not have to worry from year to year whether there will be money available to support their working animals. Volunteers should be able to continue to use chainsaws to effectively clear National Park trails within Wilderness, and they should be able to pack their saws with stock. Yes, even once again at Mt. Rainier National Park.

What will keep our National Parks accessible and in good order will be a unified effort by agency crews, youth corps, outfitters, experienced contractors, and volunteers, all having access to the use of saddle and pack stock on trails that are kept open for them, legally and physically.

Thank you for this opportunity to present some of our views,

STATEMENT OF JOHN HARRELL, TENNESSEE RESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to voice my concern and opposition to the fees imposed by the National Park Service, specifically the Backcountry Fees in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

I am an avid backpacker and have been enjoying the backcountry of the GSMNP for many years. I have introduced my son to backpacking and he is the next generation of backpackers who will enjoy the Smokys which are right here in our backyard. Since the implementation of the fee back in February however, we have found that the experience is not as satisfying. There are lots of wilderness areas, State Parks and National Forests in the area that are free to access and the experience is just as satisfying. The grounds of which this fee was implemented were based on false information, a lack of real data, and done so with an attitude of disregard and lack of concern for the true stewards of the Park. The process which was in place was not broken, there was no need for a new system to be put in place, and the new system is not user as effective as the public was told. I'm sure there will be many specific instances brought to light as to the numerous and erroneous excuses this fee was forced on to the backpackers of the GSMNP. If the committee will truly examine the facts and numbers, then one can see that the current administration of the GSMNP hoodwinked us all into taxing and segregating a user group of the Park. After all, backpackers have less impact on the Park itself than any other user group, in the park including Horseback riders, who destroy the trail, day hikers, who require an abundance of assistance and abuse the trails and property, and auto tourist who are sitting with idling exhaust for hours. The backpackers and users of the backcountry are the ones who are paying the only fees to access and stay in the backcountry.

It is with great concern, that I ask you to present this and any other concerns you may have gotten, to the committee as opposition to this unjust tax and fee for the backcountry use in the GSMNP.

Thank you for your assistance and attention to this issue.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND COALITION

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Coalition comprises over a thousand conservation, recreation, business, and sportsmen's groups located in every state working together to support all facets of the LWCF program in order to meet America's conservation and recreation needs in the 21st century. The Coalition appreciates the opportunity to provide our views on the issue of addressing the National Park Service's backlog of maintenance needs.

As the Committee is aware, LWCF has its own funding source derived mainly from annual OCS revenues, and its currently authorized conservation activities can help alleviate the existing maintenance backlog while providing many other conservation and recreation benefits. The LWCF Coalition believes that there must be a long-term solution for both the National Park Service's maintenance backlog and the continued diversion of LWCF funds away from their intended purpose. We also believe unequivocally that this solution must not involve the repurposing of LWCF's existing funding stream, or in any way restricting or limiting the now-authorized use of LWCF to acquire the property interests—fee and easement, by NPS or other federal and nonfederal agencies—that meet conservation and recreation needs across the country, address pressing landowner needs, and maintain the very heart and soul of our national parks and other public land areas.

History of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

LWCF has its own funding source, drawn mainly from annual OCS revenues that far exceed the amounts credited to the Fund. In FY2012, the last year that data is available, OCS revenues were over \$6.8 billion, far larger than the \$900 million slated for LWCF or the \$322.8 million that all programs under the LWCF actually received [NOTE: NPS acquisitions are just one facet of annual LWCF investments.] OCS revenues are scheduled to grow in the coming years, though the allocated amount for LWCF—\$900 million a year—has gone unchanged since the late 1970s. These revenues are a promise made to the many communities across America that

rely on these resource lands, and on the conservation and recreation economies they support. They are essentially a capital account, to be reinvested in lands of lasting value to all Americans-NOT an operating account to be diverted to annual upkeep needs.

LWCF has a nearly 50-year history of bipartisan support and has been utilized in every state and county in the country as a critical tool to create state and local outdoor recreation opportunities, open up key areas-making public lands public - for hunting, fishing and other recreational access, keep working forests working, acquire inholdings and protect critical lands in national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, wild and scenic river corridors, national scenic and historic trails, Civil War battlefields, Bureau of Land Management lands, and other federal areas.

Places such as the Columbia River Gorge, Cube Cove in the Tongass National Forest, the Dakota Grasslands, Mount Rainier National Park, Green Mountain National Forest, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park, Voyageurs National Park, Red River National Wildlife Refuge, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Grand Teton National Park, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Ace Basin National Wildlife Refuge, Cherokee National Forest and Cuyahoga National Park have all benefited from LWCF investments. These projects have provided enhanced recreational access to popular outdoor areas, safeguarded watersheds critical to local economies, preserved natural areas and wildlife habitat, and have supported local economies and jobs through increased outdoor recreation.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund can help create management savings

The LWCF Coalition believes it is wholly inaccurate to suggest that land acquisitions add to the backlog of maintenance needs. Purchase of inholdings and properties adjacent to existing boundaries can help solve management problems and reduce costs rather than add to them. Most lands acquired with LWCF funds are within the existing boundaries of federal parks, refuges, forests and other recreation areas, and much of the rest is used for conservation easements and state grants which do not add to federal management costs. Agencies generally avoid acquisitions with burdensome infrastructure improvements that require significant capital investments. An added inholding parcel generally does not increase management presence; rather, management is usually just absorbed within existing stewardship costs.

Consolidation of inholdings has many benefits for land management agencies and the public. These acquisitions reduce the costs of internal boundary line surveying, resolve rights-of-way conflicts, and help agencies address long-standing and costly management issues such as invasive species, fire management and special use permits. These benefits enhance visitor experiences and allow managers to focus their attention on other pressing needs.

Many LWCF projects provide management savings to the individual land management agencies. For example, in Mt. Rainier National Park, an LWCF acquisition allowed the Park Service to address a costly and frequent road washout. Projects in the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge allowed the Fish and Wildlife Service to greatly reduce fire management costs. The Ophir Valley project in Uncompahgre National Forest reduced boundary maintenance costs and allowed the Forest Service to more effectively treat invasive species. Rocky Fork in Cherokee National Forest reduced wildfire costs, allowed for more effective noxious weed treatments, obviated the need for costly watershed restoration and reduced boundary line maintenance. These projects and many others reduce land management costs while providing critical conservation benefits.

Benefits of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects

Investments in LWCF stimulate our nation's economy, create jobs and shore up our infrastructure. LWCF makes a substantial contribution to these critical priorities by strategically securing the economic asset that our federal, state and local public lands represent. Hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation activities contribute a total of \$646 billion annually to the economy, supporting 6.1 million jobs. Whether manufacturing, retail or service related, most of these jobs are sustainable resource or tourism-based jobs and cannot be exported, with magnified impacts in local and rural communities. LWCF drives local economies not just by helping recreation lands to keep up with population and development pressure, but creates and protects jobs in our working forests and on working farms and ranches.

With changing land use and ownership patterns, historic recreational access is being cut off or blocked in many areas. Often, vast expanses of public land are separated from roads and towns by narrow strips that are in private ownership, necessi-

tating a 40-mile drive to access hunting or fishing grounds only a few miles away. Continued strategic LWCF investments protect the economic asset that is our public lands, preventing incompatible development and enhancing access to outdoor recreation opportunities. For example, all public access points along West Virginia's Lower and Middle Gauley River, which is used by over 50,000 people annually, were made possible by LWCF funding. Access to Pennsylvania's popular Youghiogheny River in Ohio was built in the mid-1970's with LWCF funding. Other purchases connect existing public lands or create expanded parking and trailhead access.

In other cases, creation of new federal units is important to the American public as a way to commemorate key moments in our history. For example, LWCF funds allowed for the successful protection of the new Flight 93 National Memorial, dedicated to the brave Americans who gave their lives on 9/11. While these new units and associated LWCF acquisition authority are not the norm, they are meaningful additions to our uniquely American history and are made possible through the existence of the LWCF program.

Conclusion

While inadequate funding of the NPS operations and maintenance budget is a critical problem that Congress needs to address, LWCF was created nearly 50 years ago to serve different, diverse and equally critical needs and to provide an asset-for-asset permanent investment on behalf of the American people. Diversion of LWCF funds to write down the maintenance backlog would violate this time-honored concept. LWCF and maintenance investments should continue to move forward in tandem to safeguard our country's natural and cultural heritage, and polls show that Americans do not support robbing one in order to slap a temporary bandage on the other. The LWCF Coalition believes that there must be a long-term solution for both problems but that this solution must not involve the repurposing of LWCF's existing funding stream.

We stand ready to work with the Committee to find this solution. Thank you again for the opportunity to present our views on this challenging issue.

STATEMENT OF PETER WIECHERS, KERNVILLE CA

I am writing in regard to the Senate hearing on National Park fees which will be held Thursday July 25. I am requesting that this note be included as part of the public record.

I am especially dismayed by the idea of dynamic pricing (charging more for park admittance during more popular times of the year). This sort of thing might be okay for freeways during rush hour, but not so for "America's Best Idea."

I don't like the idea of supposedly upgrading National Park Campgrounds to include such things as wifi. In fact, I think the private sector is doing a fine job with this sort of stuff in the gateway areas just outside of our National Parks. Let's keep it that way.

In three years I will be retiring. Soon thereafter I will qualify for a discounted lifetime Senior Pass. I would like to still have this pass available to me when I qualify for it.

It's my understanding that National Parks Director Jon Jarvis will be testifying. It is also my understanding that he has been an advocate for removing economic barriers so that all Americans can have access to our parks. I would hope that he (and Congress) actually believe this and will not capitulate to the commercial interests who view our public lands in the same vein as the marketing of fast food and laundry detergent.

Thank you.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION,
July 23, 2013.

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We applaud this week's hearing "to consider supplemental funding options to support the National Park Service's efforts to address deferred maintenance and operational needs." Our organizations have worked actively for the past several years to explore these options and feel certain that, while continued significant general funding of the National Park Service is both necessary and appropriate, there are

important steps that can be taken to provide both supplementary and sustainable funding for the agency and its responsibilities.

We especially ask that this letter and the accompanying document, entitled "Sustainable Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks," be made a part of the record of your full committee hearing on July 25, 2013. The document consists of sixteen white papers prepared for a session hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center in March 2013. The March session hosted by the Center generated broad and bipartisan interest and support. The white papers, which represent proposals by the authors and not necessarily by sponsoring organizations, are now the subject of working groups and pilot projects which, together, leave us excited and optimistic about the potential to find common ground on various ways to supplement funding for our national parks. The papers are also under review by the National Park Service.

We would be pleased to facilitate one or more briefings for committee and member staff to explain ideas of interest and answer questions.

Thank you for this opportunity to assist your important efforts regarding America's national parks.

Sincerely,

THERESA PIERNO,
Acting President, National Parks Conservation Association.
DERRICK CRANDALL,
Counselor, National Parks Hospitality Association.

STATEMENT OF PAMELA WHITE, SCIENCE INSTRUCTOR

I am an avid user of the park system here in Florida as well as many years when I lived in the western U.S. Please consider that we have a very poor tax base here in Florida and thus we are paid poorly for college level jobs. I have always been thrilled that I could use the parks and it was within my meager budget as a teacher.

By the same token (involving money or lack of it), the problem has arisen here in the Ocala National Forest-it is a prime example of a lawless, sprawling area that most people are afraid to visit and use. This is such a shame and we all realize that it would take tax dollars and law enforcement to make our forest usable again. This is so very SAD-it (Ocala National Forest) is the worst case of misuse of public lands (meth labs, criminals, etc. who LIVE in the forest) that I have ever seen. I lived out west for years in northern Az. where they managed the parks MUCH better. I was never in fear for my life when I hiked out there!

It would be ideal to keep costs very low for people like myself but also be able to keep the parks clean and SAFE. I know this takes money. Please do your best in the voting days ahead to consider and address both issues.

Respectfully,

STATEMENT OF MARGARET M. GRAVES, PRESIDENT, PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION, INC.

The 1916 National Park Service Organic Act directs the National Park Service "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This directive presents a significant challenge for the National Park Service which currently is responsible for conserving 27,000 historic structures, 3,500 historic statutes and monuments, an estimated 2 million archaeological sites, 123 million museum objects and archival documents¹ and 84 million acres of land within 401 park units.

The National Park Service is failing to fulfill its mandate to preserve the nation's historic resources.² The National Park Service estimates that its deferred maintenance

¹ See National Parks Conservation Association, Center for Park Research: The State of America's National Parks, June 2011, pp. 22-33.

² See National Parks Conservation Association, Center for Park Research: The State of America's National Parks, June 2011. ("National park cultural resources are often ignored and consistently underfunded." P. 4) (. . . "the Center for Park Research found that the National Park Service is increasingly unprepared to meet its heritage preservation management challenges now and during its second century." P.24); National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA): Saving Our History: A Review of National Park Cultural Resource Programs, 2008; the National Parks Second Century Commission: Advancing the National Park Idea, 2009. These three re-

nance needs are currently \$11.5 billion,³ of which \$4.5 billion is for structures listed on the National Park Service's List of Classified Structures.⁴ This staggering sum represents more than simply leaking rooftops; it represents the potential loss of our national heritage for future generations. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2,811 historic structures of national significance are in poor condition in the Park system.⁵ The NPS itself estimates that less than 60% of the historic structures it is responsible for maintaining are in good condition.⁶

Government funds alone will not resolve this crisis. In Fiscal Year 2012 the annual operating budget for the entire National Park Service was \$2.2 billion.⁷ Clearly, private funds are needed to save the nation's historic resources. Fiscal common sense requires the National Park Service to embrace public private partnerships to stem the loss of historic resources.

Historic leases provide an opportunity to attract private capital and expertise to the challenges of the preservation of historic resources in parks. Leases offer a cost effective tool to preserve historic park structures that are underutilized and therefore at risk of deterioration. A historic lease shifts the burden of maintenance to the lessee during the duration of the lease term. In a historic lease, the lessee agrees to invest in the rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of the leased structure in exchange for the right to use the structure. Depending on the condition of the property at the beginning of the lease term, the lessee may be required to pay rent. Because many of the historic structures available for leasing are not in pristine condition, many leases provide for lessee performed rehabilitation in lieu of rent. Historic leases offer a win win solution because they provide for privately funded preservation and maintenance and an opportunity for enhanced revenue for public park purposes.

The value of historic leases is not only in the dollars generated in revenue but also in the value of rehabilitation, restoration and ongoing maintenance of park resources with private funds, saving taxpayer funds for other national priorities. Given the current federal budget restraints, the National Park Service is unlikely to ever have all of the funds necessary to preserve the 27,000 historic structures within the Park System.

Unfortunately, the National Park Service has made only limited use of historic leases to date. According to the most recent information available from the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation 2008 Progress Report, in Fiscal Year 2007, 48 parks leased a total of 147 historic properties.⁸ This represents a small fraction of the historic properties eligible for historic leases. Bureaucratic obstacles must be overcome to save historic structures from demolition by neglect.⁹

In 2011, the House/Senate Conference Committee Report encouraged the National Park Service to use innovative solutions like historic leases to help mitigate the growing backlog of historic structures in need of preservation. (H.R. 2055, 112 Cong. Comm. Rep. No.112-331 (at 1056). It is not clear what actions the NPS has taken to expand the use of historic leases since 2011 or why the NPS has not made greater use of historic leases. Legislative action may be necessary to facilitate the greater

ports document the dire condition of cultural resources within the National Parks. The vast majority of park units were established because of their historic and cultural significance.

³See Statement of Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director, National Park Service, Department of Interior, Before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, for an Oversight Hearing to Consider Supplemental Funding Options to Support the National Park Service's Efforts to Address Deferred Maintenance and Operational Needs, p. 2.

⁴The List of Classified Structures is a computerized inventory of all historic and prehistoric structures in which the NPS has, or plans to acquire, any legal interest. These structures have historical, architectural or engineering significance. Structures listed on LCS must either be listed individually or eligible for National Register listing or be a contributing element of a historic site or district that is listed or is eligible for listing on the National Register.

⁵See <http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/advocacy-center/preservation-funding/budget>.

⁶See US Department of Interior Budget Justifications and Performance Information for Fiscal Year 2013 National Park Service, p. 13

⁷See Statement of Jonathan B. Jarvis, p. 2.

⁸Advisory Council for Historic Preservation Progress Report dated September 30, 2008 and Report of the National Park Service Sept. 30, 2004 pursuant to Executive Order 13287 "Preserve America" Section 3 Improving Federal Agency Planning and Accountability.

⁹A Report by John Hope Franklin and the National Park Service Advisory Board titled Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century: A Report of the National Park System Advisory Board issued in July, 2001 described the NPS as "a sleeping giant-beloved and respected, yes; but perhaps too cautious, too resistant to change, too reluctant to engage the challenges that must be addressed in the 21st century." This assessment rings true today, especially at lower levels of the Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov/policy/report.htm>. Park Superintendents today have extraordinary control over what happens within a park unit. See NAPA, Saving Our History, 7.

use of historic leases by the NPS. As members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, you have the opportunity to direct the Park Service to pursue more historic leases or risk losing more of the nation's historic assets.

The legal framework for historic leases is well established. Leases are authorized by the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (16 USC 1a-2(k)) and Section 111 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and comprehensive regulations are included in 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 18. In addition, Director's Order 38, issued on January 20, 2006 and the NPS Leasing Reference Manual, issued in 2005, provide substantial regulatory guidance.

A recent report prepared by the Center for Park Management outlines the many benefits of historic leases. Benefits include:

1. Underutilized park structures are restored
2. Provides funding for historic preservation and maintenance
3. Provides NPS with option to offer preservation tax credits
4. NPS ownership of capital improvements made by lessee
5. Repairs, renovation and maintenance of park facilities and infrastructure
6. Reduces workload for park maintenance staff
7. Reduces liability for hazardous assets
8. Additional revenue for parks
9. Park assets are refurbished with private sector development expertise and financing
10. Assets continue to be well maintained, enhancing National Park Service mission
11. Fosters economic growth in the local community
12. Strengthens relationship between park and local business
13. Outreach to community¹⁰

Parks that have pursued historic leases are enthusiastic about the benefits and believe that the program has real potential to address critical historic preservation needs. Historic leases have been granted in the following parks:

Acadia National Park, ME
 Antietam National Battlefield, MD
 Appomattox Court House National Historic Park, VA
 Boston National Historical Park, MA
 Buffalo National River, AR
 Cape Cod National Seashore, MA
 Cape Lookout National Seashore, NC
 Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park, MD
 Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, TN
 Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area, OH
 Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, PA
 Gateway National Recreation Area, NY/NJ
 Golden Gate National Recreational Area, CA
 Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, MT
 Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, IA
 Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, OH
 Horse Shoe Bend National Military Park, AL
 Hot Springs National Park, AK
 Independence National Historical Park, PA
 Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, IN
 John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, OR
 Keweenaw National Historical Park, MI
 Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, AK
 Lincoln Home National Historic Site, IL
 Lowell National Historic Park, MA
 Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, GA
 Pea Ridge National Military Park, AR
 San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, CA
 Shiloh National Military Park, TN
 Statue of Liberty National Monument, NY
 Valley Forge National Historic Park, PA¹¹

¹⁰National Park Service Leasing Program Assessment Final Report: Finding and Recommendations by Kristen McConnell, Stephanie Hester, Geoff Kish. November, 2010.

¹¹Report of the National Park Service Sept. 30, 2004 pursuant to Executive Order 13287 "Preserve America" Section 3 Improving Federal Agency Planning and Accountability. See National Parks Conservation Association Center for Park Research: The State of America's National

These leases include historic structures of all sizes and types and agricultural land. Each lease is crafted to the specific site's needs but all of the leases require that any rehabilitation or restoration work meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards guaranteeing only quality work. Permitted uses include residential use, office space, hotels, bed & breakfasts, artist retreats and schools. Public interpretation or access may be required as part of the lease terms.

Cumberland Island National Seashore offers a textbook example of how a historic lease could enhance the preservation of the Seashore's historic resources. The Seashore was established in 1972 "in order to provide for public outdoor recreation, use and enjoyment of . . . shoreline, and waters . . . and to preserve related scenic, scientific, and historical values." 16 U.S.C. 459i. The Seashore includes a myriad of diverse historic resources ranging from Native American shell middens to large historic mansions built by the Carnegie family. The National Park Service is responsible for the preservation of 82 individual historic structures and 47 known archeological sites. Park maintenance funds are inadequate, a fact acknowledged by park personnel and outside advocacy organizations.¹²

In December, 2010, at the conclusion of a use and occupancy agreement, the NPS gained control of the Grange and Beach Creek Dock House, two National Register listed structures. The Park Service does not have the funds to maintain these structures and they currently sit empty and unused. Partners in Preservation, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is willing to invest the necessary funds to preserve and maintain these two structures. However, the local superintendent prefers an alternative which will require over \$2.5 million of appropriated funds which are not likely ever to be available. Other National Register listed structures within the Seashore have been lost to demolition by neglect due to inadequate park maintenance funds. A historic lease of these structures would guarantee their preservation and alleviate the ongoing maintenance burden on the National Park Service—a win, win, win for the public, the Park Service—and future generations.

In sum, our nation's heritage is at risk of being lost due to the lack of necessary public funds to preserve and protect historic resources within the National Park system. If the National Park Service embraces historic leases as a flexible, cost effective tool for public private partnerships in parks, many historic resources can be saved for the benefit of future generations. The time to act is now before more historic resources are lost forever.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH GERSEN, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE COALITION

On behalf of the Public Lands Service Coalition, I would like to provide testimony on the significant cost savings Conservation Corps provide the National Park Service on backlogged maintenance projects. A significant opportunity to utilize NPS funding more effectively is to engage conservation corps to complete backlog maintenance projects at a 50%+ savings.

The Public Lands Service Coalition promotes youth service, jobs, and career development on public/tribal lands and waters. Each year, Coalition members engage more than 20,000 young people in jobs and service opportunities, and they are poised to expand greatly to address the record-high youth unemployment, the billions of dollars of backlogged maintenance needs on public lands, the need for a future federal public lands workforce, the national youth obesity epidemic, and the disengagement of youth from the great American outdoors.

Experienced conservation corps programs engage thousands of young people on public and tribal lands and waters each year. Operating in all 50 states, these programs provide public and tribal land and water managers with an effective and efficient way to complete necessary and important projects and give young people opportunities to further their education and improve their career prospects, while building the next generation of land and water managers and resource stewards.

Each year, Corps complete hundreds of high-quality and often technical projects on public lands and waters. Project sponsors consistently express a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of work and productivity of the Corps. Virtually all federal project partners (99.6%) say they would work with Corps again. Types of work include, but are not limited to:

Parks, June 2011, p. 39 for information re historic lease at Valley Forge National Historical Park.

¹²2009 National Parks Conservation Association State of Parks Report for Cumberland Island National Seashore.

- Protecting wildlife and preserving public lands and waters (ecological restoration);
- Preparing communities for and responding to disasters, including wildfire;
- Enhancing recreation on public lands;
- Preserving historic structures;
- Supporting individual placements and internships at the land and water management agencies.

Cost Savings through Public Private Partnerships

Corps work with the National Park Service through a fee-for-service project-based approach (conservation, restoration, and historic preservation) through cooperative agreements.

The National Park Service (NPS) Park Facility Maintenance Division (PFMD) conducted a project analysis to determine how the costs of engaging a conservation corps to accomplish cyclic maintenance activities at national parks compares with the costs of using contractors or NPS crews. The project analysis determined that, on average, using conservation crews instead of NPS crews saved 65% with the minimum savings just 3% and the maximum savings 87%. The analysis found that the savings using conservation corps instead of contractor crews were even more significant with average savings of 83% and over \$130,000 per project.

Finally, it is estimated that the cost of two professional level SCA interns, is the same as one seasonal employee doing similar work. These public private partnerships also leverage the federal investment by bringing at least a 25% match.

The National Park Service should expand the use of partnerships with Conservation Corps on backlogged maintenance projects in order to get more projects done for less while addressing pressing national needs.

STATEMENT OF ROY R. SCHWEIKER

The National Park system is supposed to be the common heritage of all Americans, hence fees need to be kept at a level that ordinary Americans can afford. Park concessionaires need to be prevented from gentrifying their offerings to a level that excludes the working class.

Generally, those desiring expanded services such as full-service hotels or RV parks with hookups should expect to find them in gateway communities not within the park. (Anybody remember when a bowling alley and movie theater were proposed for Yosemite Valley so all those bored people would have something to do?) Park camping and lodging facilities should be oriented toward those who will be exploring the park not those using them as a base for traveling outside the park. Concessionaires should be discouraged from making upgrades to increase fees and extend their contracts - instead of letting wealth determine who gets rare spaces in the park let them go to those who appreciate the rustic way things are.

STATEMENT OF BRYAN BURKE, ELOY, AZ

I would like to urge the Senate to reject the move being made by concessionaires to increase costs to use public services by privatizing facilities and/or raising fees to use public lands.

This happened in the California State Parks years ago. The result was a significant increase in the cost to use campgrounds, no improvements to most of them, and former state employees were forced to take cuts in pay and benefits when they became employees of concessionaires.

I also strongly object to the management model being put forward in places like the Tonto National Forest in Arizona. The Tonto NF has all sorts of fee areas, and their rationale is that the fees will be used to improve access. That "improvement" is better roads and larger camps for RVs towing toy haulers full of quad runners and motorcycles. This is popular with gateway towns selling gas and beer, but it is devastating to the natural environment.

The Park Service has already ruined the "front country" in places like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon by making access far too easy. These popular parks are now giant traffic jams throughout most of the summer. I don't even visit the developed areas any more. The only decent sections left are the back country, remote, and hard to access parts.

Please, please don't turn our nation's wild lands into profit machines for concession corporations and bureaucrats that only care about the money. These lands are

far more valuable than money. No new fees and no new development! If anything, the management agencies should start removing more roads.

Thank you for your consideration,

STATEMENT OF ALLEN NELSON, PH.D., NEDERLAND, CO

I am writing in regard to your July 25th hearing on National Parks fees. I am a senior and a Colorado resident who frequently visits our national parks, especially RMNP which is within 50 miles of my home. I also am the holder of an original Golden Age Passport. On the passport, it reads "A LifeTime Admission Permit".

I feel strongly that the National Parks are public lands and that access to these resources should not be limited due to increased fees and economic restrictions. I also feel that the lifetime promises of the interagency passes such as my Golden Age Passport should continue to be honored. For seniors, the guarantee of unlimited entry into our national parks is one of the few benefits of getting older.

My underlying concern is the potential effect of commercialization and privatization of public lands. I've seen recent instances here in Colorado, where private concessionaires who manage Forest Service Recreation Areas, have raised fees and attempted to not honor interagency passes. I understand the costs of operating these resources and I am not at all opposed to the profit motive in business. That said, I believe that there are areas where profit should not be the objective. As with the guarantee of access to education, access to the public lands should be a right and not a privilege. The operation of these public lands should be driven by the benefit to the public rather than the profit of private companies. I strongly urge the committee to keep access to these lands affordable to all citizens.

Thank you for listening.

WESTERN SLOPE NO-FEE COALITION,
Durango, CO, July 24, 2013.

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Chairman, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, U.S. Senate.

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI,
Ranking Member, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, U. S. Senate.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WYDEN AND RANKING MEMBER MURKOWSKI:

I am deeply troubled by the article calling for boosting funding for the NPS by increasing fees on park visitors, as expressed in the NPHA/NPCA publication *Sustainable Supplementary Funding For America's National Parks*. On behalf of the Western Slope No-Fee Coalition and the public lands supporters we represent, I would like to go on record as opposed to these ideas.

The proposal for "differential pricing" would convert the best parks at the most desirable seasons into enclaves for the wealthy. Visitors of more modest resources would be shunted to the shoulder and off seasons. This might help fill concessionaire hotel rooms during the slower times of year, but it does nothing to nurture public support for the National Park system. This "differential pricing" scheme is driven by the commercial interests that operate in the parks and runs counter to the egalitarian ideals under which they were established.

The establishment of national passes, with discounted pricing for seniors and the disabled, was never intended to maximize revenue. Those were policy decisions made by Congress meant to provide an affordable way for all Americans-and foreign visitors-to visit our parks because they are a defining part of our American heritage. While it of course takes money to operate the park system, making money should never be the driving factor. The provision of affordable national passes has been very popular with the public and must continue.

Ideas like selling "debit" cards for National Parks would place them in the commercial market, on an equal footing with any other market commodity. The parks are not market commodities, were never intended to be run for profit, and to reduce them to that level would cheapen their value in the public perception. Assuming that people would not fully utilize the value of these "debit cards," with the NPS keeping the unredeemed cash, is a backdoor way of cheating people into making donations. There are already numerous ways in which people can and do donate to the National Parks. We don't need to be tricked into doing it.

Charging per person per day entrance fees, instead of the current per carload per week, would not only dramatically increase the cost of visiting a park, it would become an enforcement nightmare. Do we really need to have Park Rangers checking people's passes to make sure they haven't overstayed their entrance fees, instead

of giving interpretive talks and protecting visitors and park resources? Because very few park visits last more than a week the current system is largely self-enforcing and very efficient to administer. It's not broken and does not need fixing.

The National Parks were established for the benefit of the people and the park resources, not as a fund-raising mechanism for the National Park Service. The best way to ensure the long-term financial health of the National Parks is for people of all ages, incomes, origins, and abilities to visit them and to feel welcome in them. That is how people learn to appreciate them, which leads to public support for the use of taxpayer funds to operate them. Treating the parks as money-makers for the NPS will, in the long run, reduce rather than enhance that public support. Instead of raising fees, Congress should be seeking ways to make the parks more affordable.

Sincerely,

PRESIDENT.

STATEMENT OF SCOTT SILVER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WILD WILDERNESS, BEND, OR

COMMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE RECORD

The following brief comments are submitted on behalf of Wild Wilderness, a conservation and recreation organization based in Bend Oregon since 1991.

I watched today's hearing online and have read the testimony, including the document submitted by Mr. Gabrys titled: "\$ustainable \$upplementary Funding For America's National Parks." I have long been involved with issues pertaining to the National Park System and have followed the work of the National Park Hospitality Association and the closely affiliated American Recreation Coalition. I have made a decade-long study of the efforts of the concessionaire industry and its various lobby groups to influence Federal policy and speak on this topic with uncommon experience.

With respect to today's hearing, I wish the following bulleted points to be available for consideration by Committee Members.

- The National Parks are Special.—Use any superlative you wish, the National Parks are not just any old piece of public land. This fact is well appreciated by the committee and was emphasized by each of the witnesses.
- FLREA will soon sunset and something must be done.— This too is a simple statement of undisputed fact. If Congress does not provide continuing fee collection and retention authority for the National Parks, there will be serious consequences.
- With respect to recreation fees in general, the National Parks are Special.—Unlike recreation fees charged by the USFS and BLM, National Park entrance fees are well accepted by the public. That is not simply the result of entrance fees having been charged at the National Parks for nearly 100 years, while forest fees are a relatively new creation. It is the consequence of the parks being special. They are understood to be "National Treasures" and they are recognized and appreciated as being different than other public lands which serve other functions and purposes.
- Congress should create and pass legislation to provide the NPS with its own authority to charge, collect and retain Entrance Fees.—FLREA has been controversial and problematic since it became law in 2004. Much of the problem can be attributed to trying to create a single authority which applied to both the "Crown Jewels" and to more common lands.
- Some of the fee-related funding ideas are better than others and some are much worse.—The \$ustainable \$upplementary Funding document includes a panoply of fee-related suggestions, one of which is so offensive as to be the focus of the remainder of these comments. That offensive suggestion has to do with "differential pricing" or as it is sometimes called, "peak pricing".

Differential Pricing is a concept the concessionaire industry has been pushing for the past 30 plus years. Their interest in differential pricing has little, or perhaps nothing, to do with funding the parks. It is a solution for a problem the concessionaires themselves have long faced. That problem is that the parks are more popular at certain times of the year than at other times. For example, people want to visit Death Valley in the springtime when the flowers are in bloom. People do not want to visit Death Valley in August when the temperature can top 120 degrees. No doubt, Committee Members can think of many analogous examples so I will not belabor this point.

The idea of differential pricing is to raise the price of entering a National Park to a level where the fee itself becomes so high as to dissuade visitation. Differential

pricing works by pricing those for whom the price increase is significant, out of the market. When used in this way, differential pricing is exclusionary, discriminatory and antithetical to the vision of our National Parks famously stated by Stegner in the following words:

“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.”

From the standpoint of National Park concessionaires, the value of differential pricing is in shifting use from those times of the year when their accommodations are fully rented to the slack shoulder-season when occupancy and the sale of goods and services is sub-optimal for profitability.

From the standpoint of the National Parks themselves, differential pricing is unlikely to provide added revenue. When park fees increase by more than a small increment, visitation falls and usually revenues fall as well. One need only look to what has been happening in Washington State Parks since the introduction of its new “Discover Pass”.

Please consider the possibility that the motivations of the National Park concessionaires are not necessarily in keeping with those of the National Parks. Likewise, the concessionaires’ motivations may not necessarily be aimed at enhancing, or supporting, the best interests of the totality of National Park visitors. The concessionaires are in the hospitality business for the purpose of making a profit and depend upon the drawing power of these parks to attract customers. But, making money is not a purpose of the National Parks nor, for that matter, is attracting customers. The purpose of the parks is to protect the resource and to provide for the enjoyment thereof.

That said, and as Director Jarvis reminded the committee in his testimony, for every one dollar spent in operating the National Parks the nation enjoys a ten dollar benefit in economic activity. This same 10 to 1 ratio holds for recreation upon the National Forests.

To the extent that National Park entrance fees are over-priced or priced at exclusionary levels in an effort to dissuade visitation, the general economy will be adversely impacted. We ask that you reject the concessionaires’ oft-stated (but unsubstantiated) claim that differential pricing will shift visitation to lesser used parks and that the total amount of visitation will remain constant or even increase. People want to go to Yosemite, or Acadia, or Yellowstone or Glacier National Park. They want to go in the summer when the weather is good, when the kids are out of school and when both husband and wife can get time off work. And while it is possible to price families out of the market and drive them to visit Disneyland instead of a National Park, no amount of promotional marketing can convince them to visit a substitute park which is not in the same league as the park they wanted to visit. Marketing can not convince them to visit any National Park in the shoulder-season, at least not after the kids have returned to school and not after they’ve already spent their family vacation budget somewhere else.

In conclusion: We ask that the Committee crafts fee authority legislation for the National Parks and that it deals separately with the more common lands. We also ask the Committee to please try and be as attentive to the input of citizens, taxpayers and park visitors as it is to the input of park concessionaires.

Thank you for holding this important hearing, for considering these comments, and for doing what is necessary and appropriate to provide for sustainable National Park funding.

Sincerely,