

**EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT  
AND THE GROWING NATIONAL PARK  
SERVICE DEFERRED MAINTENANCE  
BACKLOG**

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**OVERSIGHT HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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Tuesday, April 18, 2023  
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**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON EXAMINING THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREAT AMERICAN  
OUTDOORS ACT AND THE GROWING  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DEFERRED MAIN-  
TENANCE BACKLOG**

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**Tuesday, April 18, 2023  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, DC**

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The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:18 a.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Tom Tiffany [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Tiffany, Fulcher, Stauber, Curtis, Westerman; Neguse, Porter, Kamlager-Dove, Leger Fernández, and Peltola.

Mr. TIFFANY. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess of the Subcommittee at any time.

The Subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on examining the implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act and the growing National Park Service deferred maintenance backlog.

Under Committee Rule 4(f), any oral opening statements at hearings are limited to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member. I therefore ask unanimous consent that all other Members' opening statements be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted in accordance with Committee Rule 3(o).

Without objection, so ordered.

I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TOM TIFFANY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN**

Mr. TIFFANY. Since the creation of the National Park Service over a century ago, our national parks have been called many things: the crown jewels of America; our nation at its best; and America's best idea. Today, we meet because America's best idea is facing its worst problem: an unprecedented \$22.3 billion backlog of deferred maintenance and repairs.

This problem has affected virtually every park unit in every state across the nation. In my district, the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore currently has \$66 million in deferred maintenance, which accounts for over 80 percent of the state of Wisconsin's total backlog.

Last year, our national parks attracted over 312 million visitors. While those visitors took in the sweeping vistas of Yosemite or the awe-inspiring majesty of the Grand Canyon, they also likely

experienced closed trailheads and campgrounds, dilapidated visitor centers, and rundown bathroom facilities.

This deferred maintenance doesn't just affect visitor experiences. They can also lead to serious public safety issues. That is why, in 2020, President Trump signed into law the Great American Outdoors Act, also known as GAOA, to provide a once-in-a-generation investment into our national parks and public lands to address deferred maintenance. At the time, the National Park Service boasted a backlog of \$12.7 billion.

Today, despite billions of dollars of taxpayer resources being spent, that backlog has grown by nearly \$10 billion. Instead of seeing leaking roofs patched and renovated restrooms, this Committee and the American public have been left with questions about how this money is being spent and where it is going. Some of the answers we have found have troubled us, including dubious multi-million-dollar investments in urban liberal cities.

While some larger projects at major national parks are important to address, smaller parks have struggled to compete for funding. And while many states have received at least some sort of funding, the process for selecting projects has left several states without significant investments, and confused about why their projects aren't being selected for funding.

Despite knowing about this \$10 billion backlog increase and repeated requests to conduct additional oversight, Congressional Democrats refused to hold a hearing on the implementation of the GAOA last Congress. That is going to change with our Majority. We are going to hold the Biden administration accountable for every dollar of precious taxpayer money that is being spent.

I have the utmost faith that every single Member seated around this dais today wants nothing more than for the Park Service to rise to the challenge and finally tackle its long-standing deferred maintenance needs. The National Park Service cannot do this alone, and it can no longer address these challenges behind closed doors. We will be shining a light on this program to bring much-needed transparency and reverse the troubling trend line of deferred maintenance at our national parks.

While there have been a few examples of success with GAOA, let me be clear. The exponentially increasing backlog at our National Park Service is unacceptable. With only 2 years of GAOA funding remaining, it is imperative that National Park Service commit to greater transparency and start showing actual progress in reducing the backlog and stewarding the taxpayer resources.

I want to thank the Director of the National Park Service, Chuck Sams, for being here today.

We look forward to hearing your testimony on this important topic, and working with you and your department this Congress to improve the management of our National Park System.

With that, I will now recognize Ranking Member Neguse for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOE NEGUSE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO**

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to examine the ongoing implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act and the actions being taken to address deferred maintenance in our cherished national parks.

Speaking of national parks, I also want to thank the National Park Service Director Sams for taking the time to testify today. He has been doing an outstanding job, in my view, of managing the many assets under NPS's jurisdiction—staffing and visitation pressures, and I certainly look forward to hearing his perspective on the agency's most pressing management concerns.

During my first term in Congress, this was the 116th Congress, we enacted the Great American Outdoors Act, which is a historic investment in the future of our parks, both by permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and by establishing a Legacy Restoration Fund to address high-priority deferred maintenance projects across our parks and public lands.

Now, I will say I thought that was an incredibly important bill for this Congress to pass, and for President Trump to sign into law. I regretted that the vast majority of my colleagues on this Committee voted against it. But, nonetheless, I am grateful we got it done. And I am grateful that we have the opportunity now to be able to visit with the witnesses today about the implementation of the bill. In my view, this was an example of a way in which Congress could come together in a bipartisan manner to prioritize conservation and maintenance efforts, because that is what our constituents sent us here to achieve, and that is why I ultimately voted for the measure.

The benefits of this bipartisan achievement are touching parks all over the country, including in my district, where I know a critical project is planned to greatly enhance visitor experiences at Rocky Mountain National Park, which is in my district in Colorado. That is exactly why we need to continue investing in the future of national parks.

The Great American Outdoors Act was a downpayment, not a silver bullet or a magic wand meant to make deferred maintenance completely disappear. The National Park Service manages a significant amount of physical infrastructure, with over 75,000 assets including 25,000 buildings, 5,500 miles of paved roads and bridges, and 17,000 miles of trails. Just to put that in perspective, the National Park Service is second only to the Department of Defense in terms of Federal agency management of physical assets. And DOD has a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$137 billion.

There will always be some level of deferred maintenance at our national parks, which range from minor projects like light bulbs that need to be replaced, or leaky toilets, to major infrastructure projects, of course, like replacing wastewater treatment facilities, repaving major roads, or retrofitting bridges. It is why this bill is so important, but also why we also need to ensure that we are funding the National Park Service's operations and construction line item accounts to appropriations that support cyclical maintenance and other critical functions.

In 2022, National Parks had an economic impact of \$42.5 billion, and supported 322,600 local jobs across the country. I was encouraged to see President Biden's Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal included an overall increase of approximately \$289 million for NPS, with strategic increases for repair, rehabilitation, and cyclical maintenance. I would certainly urge my colleagues to support the President's proposal in that regard.

And I must say I have read reports that have been very concerning with respect to at least some of the ideas proposed by some of my friends on the other side of the aisle who are considering deep cuts to the National Park Service's base budget. That would be deeply problematic, particularly if one believes that we ought to be addressing some of these maintenance needs that I know the Chair and I both care deeply about.

So, there are legitimate oversight concerns and questions about the implementation process. I would like to get, certainly, a better understanding of the backlog recalculation and the perception that it is growing despite recent investments. And I appreciate the National Park Service being transparent and, again, look forward to being able to get some more clarity today during the course of the hearing.

Director Sams, thank you for your leadership. I certainly look forward to your testimony.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you to the Ranking Member. We will now move on to witness testimony.

Let me remind the witness that under Committee Rules, he must limit his oral statement to 5 minutes, but his entire statement will appear in the hearing record.

To begin your testimony, please press the "on" button on the microphone.

We use timing lights. When you begin, the light will turn green. At the end of 5 minutes, the light will turn red, and I will ask you to please complete your statement. I would now like to introduce Mr. Chuck Sams, who is the Director of the National Park Service.

Director Sams, you are recognized for 5 minutes, and welcome.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. CHARLES F. "CHUCK" SAMS,  
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
THE INTERIOR, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. SAMS. Good morning, Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on the implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act and deferred maintenance within the National Park System.

I would like to submit our full statement for the record and summarize the Department's views.

The Great American Outdoors Act was a historically legislative achievement. It authorized full, permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and established the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund, providing up to \$1.9 billion annually from Fiscal Year 2021 to Fiscal Year 2025 to address the deferred maintenance of America's national treasures.

The National Park Service is using this opportunity to accomplish much-needed asset maintenance, repairs, and replacement. Improved facilities will be more resilient, operate more efficiently, and better serve visitors.

At the end of the last fiscal year, the National Park Service had an estimated \$22.3 billion of deferred maintenance and repair needs. We maintain a complex portfolio of more than 75,000 assets, including historic structures, roads, bridges, trails, campgrounds, and utility systems. Our assets are often unique, frequently in remote locations, or require highly-skilled craftsmen with detailed knowledge of historical construction techniques to maintain and restore.

Addressing deferred maintenance and repairs is critical to the continued preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment of national parks. The criteria we use when selecting Legacy Restoration Funds, or LRF, projects include addressing a significant amount of deferred maintenance, maximizing return on investment, and safeguarding those we serve: our workforce, volunteers, visitors, and partners. Projects that meet the criteria must ensure funds will support conservation and recreational opportunities for years to come.

To date, the National Park Service prioritized 130 projects to address critical deferred maintenance and improve infrastructure across the National Park System. The average project size is \$31.8 million, and it is estimated that the deferred maintenance addressed by these projects will be \$3.8 billion. LRF funding for the projects will improve the conditions of assets in 176 park units located in 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The creation of the LRF enabled the National Park Service to launch the Maintenance Action Team program to address projects at smaller and medium-sized parks. MATs are a mobile unit of trade specialists skilled in historic preservation work. They perform essential repair projects on structures across the country, including forts, buildings, masonry walls, and fencing. The MAT program will also proactively engage Public Land Corps, Youth Conservation Corps, veterans groups, and under-represented communities.

In addition to formulating and executing LRF projects, we have also continued efforts to report the condition of assets more consistently and accurately. We are implementing a multi-year effort to improve the systems used to manage our assets, including the methodology used to assess conditions and calculate deferred maintenance and repair. This approach provides a more comprehensive, consistent, and timely understanding of facility conditions and needs of the NPS portfolio.

The investments provided by the LRF have made an enormous economic impact. In total, National Park Service expenditures for Fiscal Years 2021 through 2024 are estimated to support 48,000 job years, \$3.32 billion in labor income, \$10.3 billion in economic output, and contribute \$4.7 billion to the GDP.

Enactment of GAOA marked a new era for America's outdoors, with unprecedented funding and improved recreation opportunities. We look forward to working together to ensure our country's national parks remain safe, enjoyable, and accessible to everyone.

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be very happy to answer any questions you have or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

Joining me at the table today is Mr. Brian Bloodsworth, Director of the Department's GAOA Program Management Office. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sams follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES F. SAMS II, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's (Department) views on implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund and deferred maintenance within the National Park System.

The historic enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) combined a financial commitment to conservation and recreation for future generations with a significant investment in the facilities needed to carry out the Department's important mission, including the care and maintenance of America's national treasures. The GAOA combined two major conservation initiatives into one legislative package: the guarantee of permanent full funding for the existing Land and Water Conservation Fund and the establishment of a National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF). This investment provides an unprecedented opportunity to address the Department's deferred maintenance and repair backlog and restore deteriorating assets.

For FY 2021 through FY 2025, Congress authorized up to \$1.9 billion annually to be deposited in the LRF for projects that reduce deferred maintenance across several land management agencies. The annual deposit is equal to 50 percent of energy development revenues from oil, gas, coal, alternative, or renewable energy on Federal land and water credited, covered, or deposited as miscellaneous receipts under Federal law in the preceding fiscal year. Of the annual funding, 70 percent is allocated to the National Park Service (NPS), 5 percent is allocated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5 percent is allocated to the Bureau of Land Management, 5 percent is allocated to the Bureau of Indian Education, and the remaining 15 percent is allocated to the U.S. Forest Service.

With these resources, the NPS is using this opportunity to accomplish much-needed asset maintenance, repairs, and replacement. Improved facilities will be more resilient, operate more efficiently, and better serve visitors.

At the end of FY 2022, an estimated \$22.3 billion of deferred maintenance and repair needs existed on roads, buildings, utility systems, and other structures and facilities across the National Park System. DM&R is defined as the cost of maintenance and repairs that were not performed when they should have been or were scheduled to be and which are put off or delayed for a future period. Addressing deferred maintenance and repairs (DM&R) is critical to the continued preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment of national parks. The NPS maintains a complex portfolio of more than 75,000 assets, including historic structures, roads, bridges, trails, campgrounds, and utility systems. Many of these assets require highly skilled, technical craftsmen with specific, detailed knowledge of historical construction techniques to maintain and restore complex period structures.

The criteria the NPS uses when selecting LRF projects, which it implemented in FY 2021, are similar to the criteria used by other bureaus in the Department and include addressing a significant amount of deferred maintenance, maximizing return on investment, and safeguarding those we serve—our workforce, volunteers, visitors, and partners. Projects that meet the criteria must ensure funds are used to rehabilitate assets to support conservation and recreational opportunities for years to come.

The project selection process is built from the ground up, as parks identify condition deficiencies in their assets and develop projects to address those deficiencies. Projects are then evaluated and approved by the respective regional directors and reviewed by the NPS Bureau Investment Review Board, a committee of senior managers from the National Leadership Council, which provides a servicewide policy perspective for and oversight of NPS major infrastructure investments. One of the Review Board's key considerations is how these assets, once improved by LRF funding, will be maintained in the future. From the Review Board, a list of

candidate projects is provided to agency and Departmental leadership for final selection and then included in the President's budget request for Congressional review and concurrence.

To date, the NPS has prioritized 130 projects to address critical deferred maintenance and improve transportation, administrative, and recreation infrastructure across the National Park System. The average project size is \$31.8 million, and it is estimated that the deferred maintenance addressed by these projects will be \$3.8 billion. LRF funding for these projects will improve the condition of roads, buildings, utility systems, and other assets in 176 park units located in 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and will address critical life, health, and safety issues, as well as related code compliance and accessibility deficiencies. Funding will also be used to remove dilapidated and unneeded structures that detract from the visitor experience and attract vandalism. Examples of projects underway include:

At Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky, \$6.5 million was awarded to rehabilitate approximately one mile of cave trail inside Mammoth Cave. The project will harden the existing cave trail, replace narrow stairways, and install new benches to improve both the visitor experience and emergency personnel access.

At Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio, \$12.6 million was awarded to assure continued access to recreational experiences in the park. The project will stabilize the riverbank at sites along the Cuyahoga River where erosion threatens the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the tracks for the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad.

At Acadia National Park in Maine, a \$33 million contract was awarded for demolition of outdated structures and construction of new maintenance and wastewater treatment facilities at park headquarters. This project will support park and partnership staff with enhanced facilities to better serve visitors and protect park resources.

At Yosemite National Park in California, \$31.6 million was awarded to rehabilitate and correct safety issues at the historic Ahwahnee Hotel. Work includes seismic upgrades and other safety improvements, renovation of the kitchen, and replacement of critical systems.

At Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts, \$27.4 million was awarded to preserve and repair witness structures, landscapes, and trails. The Battle Road Trail and Groton Road provide the primary recreational and interpretive infrastructure for park visitors.

The creation of the LRF enabled the NPS to launch the Maintenance Action Team (MAT) Program in FY 2021 to address projects at small and medium-sized parks. A mobile unit composed of trade specialists skilled in historic restoration and preservation work, MATs perform smaller, but critical, maintenance repair projects on historic structures across the NPS, including forts, buildings, masonry walls and fencing. In addition to completing essential work, the MAT program will proactively engage public land corps, youth conservation corps, veterans' groups, and under-represented communities. With LRF funding for the MATs, including for projects proposed in the FY 2024 Budget, NPS will dedicate \$59.1 million to address over 200 deferred maintenance activities in 96 park units.

An example of a recent MAT project that impacted a smaller NPS unit is the completion of deferred maintenance work at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Missouri at the Truman Farm Home. Harry Truman lived and worked on the family farm from 1906 to 1917. LRF funding provided for preserving the character of the Farm Home by repairing and replacing porch decking, exterior siding and trim, porch wainscoting and by replacing damaged porch screens.

While the LRF is the newest and largest source of deferred maintenance funding, the NPS balances its priorities across multiple discretionary, mandatory, and supplemental appropriations to ensure funding is distributed to meet the most critical needs across parks as conditions and funds availability changes. For example, prioritizing large-scale deferred maintenance projects for LRF funding created space in the NPS's discretionary Line Item Construction plan to accelerate work on other projects such as improvements to the visitor center and headquarters of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park in Georgia.

In addition to the work described above to formulate and execute the LRF program of projects, we have also continued efforts to report the condition of assets more consistently and accurately, to ensure that progress, supported by LRF and

other resources, is appropriately documented. The NPS is implementing a multi-year effort to comprehensively review and reform the systems and processes used to manage its assets, including the methodology used to assess facility condition and calculate DM&R.

This improved assessment process aligns with contemporary industry standards, and the cost elements included in the figure are more consistent with other government DM&R calculations. This approach provides a more comprehensive, consistent, and timely understanding of facility conditions and estimate of maintenance, recapitalization, and repair needs for the NPS portfolio.

In response to recommendations from the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Department compiled its work into a Strategic Plan documenting the overarching strategy for maximizing the impact of funding. The Strategic Plan, which is available on the Department's GAOA webpage, describes the Department's strategic goals, objectives, performance measures, risk management strategy, and organizational roles and responsibilities specific to the Department's implementation of the GAOA LRF program.

From the start, the NPS and the Department have worked to develop, implement, and refine strategic planning and best management practices for the LRF and for deferred maintenance. Efforts include, but are not limited to: publishing LRF project plans, data, and other supporting information on public-facing websites as well as hosting public and industry meetings; hosting bipartisan briefings regarding the GAOA LRF program for Congressional staff; implementing improved processes to collect and record deferred maintenance and repair needs; and standardizing definitions across bureaus.

The investments provided by GAOA LRF have made an enormous economic impact. In total, FY 2021–FY 2024, NPS LRF expenditures are estimated to support a total of 48,870 job-years, \$3.32 billion in labor income, \$10.3 billion in economic output, and contribute \$4.7 billion to the US GDP.

Enactment of the GAOA marked a new era for America's outdoors with unprecedented funding, improved recreation opportunities, and broader engagement. We look forward to working together to ensure our country's national parks and public lands remain safe, enjoyable, and accessible to everyone.

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO THE HONORABLE CHARLES F. SAMS III,  
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Mr. Sams did not submit responses to the Committee by the appropriate deadline for inclusion in the printed record.**

#### **Questions Submitted by Representative Westerman**

*Question 1. Director Sams testified several times throughout the hearing that it was "Congressional intent" for \$200 million provided in the Inflation Reduction Act to be transferred to the Presidio Trust, despite the fact that Congress did not explicitly direct funding to the Presidio in the language of the IRA and the Director testified that he did not have conversations with the Member representing this park about transferring funds to that district.*

*1a) Please explain how the administration came to the understanding that it was "Congressional intent" for \$200 million provided by the IRA to be transferred to the Presidio.*

*1b) What date was this funding transferred to the Presidio?*

*1c) Is it common for NPS and the Department of the Interior to base Congressional intent on draft pieces of legislation rather than the final version of the bill that is passed?*

*1d) Did the National Park Service apply the same standards and methodology for selecting priority deferred maintenance projects with the \$200 million provided in the IRA that was used for the Presidio as the agency does with projects that receive funding under the Great American Outdoors Act? Please explain any discrepancies in the process for determining how these funds were allocated.*

*Question 2. According to the FY 2024 budget documents, deferred maintenance and repairs are calculated using three components: (1) Parametric condition assessments (PCA) for industry standard assets; (2) Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) assessments for paved-roads, parking, bridge and tunnel assets; and (3) work orders for concessions-occupied assets and non-industry standard assets.*

*2a) Can you please explain each of these three components in greater detail, including how they differ from the previous methodology NPS utilized?*

*2b) NASA published an 80-page report in the early 2000s explaining their process for parametric condition assessments, has NPS produced any similar comprehensive report? If not, does NPS have a similar report in the works that will be published soon?*

*Question 3. According to the NPS' budget justification documents, NPS was previously using a methodology to calculate deferred maintenance and repairs that did not align with industry standards or even other bureaus within the Department. Can you please explain why NPS calculated its deferred maintenance this way for so long, including when it was justifying spending under the Great American Outdoors Act to Congress?*

*Question 4. What is the percentage decrease in total budget authority for the NPS between FY 2023 enacted and the FY 2024 request according to DOI's own budget documents?*

*Question 5. What is the percentage decrease in total budget authority for the NPS between FY 2022 actual and the FY 2024 request according to DOI's own budget documents?*

*Question 6. Is the administration proposing an increase or a decrease to FY 2024 Line Item Construction Projects compared to FY 2022 actual funding?*

*Question 7. Director Sams' written testimony states: "The NPS is implementing a multi-year effort to comprehensively review and reform the systems and processes used to manage its assets, including the methodology used to assess facility condition and calculate DM&R."*

*7a) Has NPS fully implemented its new methodology for tracking deferred maintenance or should Congress expect further revisions to deferred maintenance statistics?*

*7b) If NPS is still implementing a review of its deferred maintenance systems and processes, when will this review be complete?*

*7c) If NPS is still updating its methodology, is NPS expecting that the backlog will once again increase as a result of updating its processes for calculating deferred maintenance?*

*Question 8. What are NPS' projections for what the total deferred maintenance backlog will be at the end of FY 2023? Is the agency projecting it will increase or decrease from the current \$22.3 billion?*

*Question 9. As Director Sams' testimony notes, funding for the programs authorized by the Great American Outdoors Act—including LWCF and the Legacy Restoration Fund—all come from energy revenues, primarily oil and gas revenues. What would happen to the long-term solvency of these conservation programs if we stopped producing oil and gas domestically?*

*Question 10. Some states and parks have been extremely frustrated in the lack of funding they've received under the LRF. What is NPS doing at a national level to provide support to superintendents in parks who have not received a significant investment in funding under the Great American Outdoors Act?*

*Question 11. There have been concerns for years that the NPS' method of accounting for deferred maintenance incentivizes parks to inflate their backlogs to receive more funding. How is the NPS' new methodology addressing this issue to ensure backlogs aren't artificially inflated by local park units?*

*Question 12. Despite the success of Maintenance Action Teams in addressing deferred maintenance at smaller parks, the administration is only proposing a \$5 million increase for this program in FY 2024. Why isn't the National Park Service investing more money in Maintenance Action Teams to ensure that deferred maintenance isn't building up at smaller park units?*

*Question 13. In NPS' FY 2024 budget documents the agency attributes the \$10 billion increase in the deferred maintenance backlog in large part due to methodology changes that went into effect in FY 2022. However, the largest increase in the backlog*

*happened the year prior, in FY 2021. Between FY 2021 and FY 2022, the years in which the methodology supposedly switched over, the backlog only increased by \$500 million. Can NPS please explain this discrepancy?*

*Question 14. When GAOA passed in 2020, NPS' maintenance backlog was roughly \$12.7 billion. GAOA funding is set to expire in September 2025. By that time, NPS will have received over \$6.5 billion toward reducing its deferred maintenance backlog. At this point, is NPS projecting that the backlog will be higher or lower once GAOA expires compared to where it was when GAOA first passed in 2020 (i.e. higher or lower than \$12.7 billion)?*

*Question 15. What is the average length of time it takes to complete a NEPA analysis for a deferred maintenance project?*

*Question 16. What is the average cost for complying with NEPA for a deferred maintenance project?*

*Question 17. What effect is inflation having on completing deferred maintenance projects on budget and on time?*

*Question 18. What effect are supply chain issues having on completing deferred maintenance projects on budget and on time?*

*Question 19. To what extent do wildfires contribute to deferred maintenance issues at NPS?*

*Question 20. To what extent does NPS consider potential additions to the deferred maintenance backlog when conducting special resource studies?*

*Question 21. What is NPS doing to reduce the backlog of special resource studies?*

*Question 22. Last year, the Bureau of Land Management permanently damaged dinosaur tracks at Utah's Mill Canyon Dinosaur Tracksite during the replacement of a boardwalk. Internal documents uncovered during a FOIA request and published by E&E News showed that agency officials tried to cover up the fact that this was done using GAOA funding, stating: "Will you please encourage the District and Moab office to refrain from talking about the funding source if at all possible. So far this has not been publicized as a GAOA disaster, and we would prefer to keep it that way."*

*22a) To the agency's knowledge, has GAOA funding used in any NPS project resulted in any resource damage and destruction, similar to the BLM's incident in Utah?*

*22b) In light of E&E News' investigation into this coverup, did the NPS implement any new protocols to ensure that if GAOA money did fund a project that resulted in resource damage or destruction, that this would not be concealed from the public?*

*Question 23. The Committee has heard concerns that there appears to be a discrepancy between the prioritization of investments under the LRF. How is it that some projects appear to be fast-tracked for action and results while others are seeing no progress despite being in a planning process for many years? With only 2 years of funds remaining under the GAOA, how is NPS preparing to address these deferred maintenance needs for these kinds of projects?*

*Question 24. There is a recognized housing shortage associated with the National Park System.*

*24a) What is the NPS doing to address backlogged building and housing infrastructure repairs?*

*24b) With housing for NPS gateway communities remaining a pinch point for both NPS and tourism operators in meeting their full capacity, does the NPS have any plans to address housing shortages?*

*Question 25. The Committee has heard concerns from several local communities about delays in deferred maintenance at various NPS sites. Can you please provide an update on the following projects:*

*25a) Elevator repairs at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota.*

*25b) Visitor center repairs at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota.*

**Questions Submitted by Representative Grijalva**

*Question 1. The Great American Outdoors Act permanently authorized annual mandatory funding of \$900 for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which included a requirement to prioritize federal land acquisition. What is the benefit of federal land acquisition?*

*Question 2. How does land acquisition create management efficiencies and reduce ongoing operating costs?*

*Question 3. The Great American Outdoor Act also established the National Parks and Public Land Restoration Fund to address priority deferred maintenance at the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies. Does federal land acquisition contribute to deferred maintenance at the National Park Service?*

*Question 4. At the hearing, it was suggested that the National Park Service's FY24 budget proposal cuts the agency's budget by approximately 20 percent compared to FY2023 levels? Is that an accurate depiction of the administration's budget proposal?*

*Question 5. House Republicans are considering funding levels that could decrease the National Park Service budget by approximately 22 percent. How would across the board cuts of that level impact the operation of national parks?*

*Question 6. Would decreasing the Operation of the National Park Service and Construction accounts to FY2022 levels impact efforts to address deferred maintenance?*

**Questions Submitted by Representative Kamlager-Dove**

*Question 1. Director Sams, I know that national parks need our help and are struggling with funding challenges, which is why I signed on to support their operational funding in this year's appropriations bill (dear colleague attached). It seems they have multiple overlapping budget challenges, from insufficient staffing to funding challenges associated with climate change and a huge backlog of deferred maintenance projects. It appears that the repairs backlog in California is nearly \$4 billion, a staggering amount. Can you please speak to how understaffing at parks, climate change and other challenges can exacerbate the maintenance challenges you're facing and why the Great American Outdoors Act is an important lifeline?*

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Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Director Sams. The Chair will now recognize Members for 5 minutes for questions. First, I am going to turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Neguse.

You have 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Sams, thanks again for taking the time to be here today. As clearly evidenced by the focus of today's hearing, there are some long-overdue projects that your agency is advancing to support basic park needs and enhance visitor experience across the National Park System. Many of these needs, as you referenced, were not always met with other funding sources, which is why the Great American Outdoors Act was such a huge achievement.

Like many of my colleagues on this Subcommittee, outdoor recreation and access to the outdoors is incredibly important to my district, and I was particularly pleased, as you might imagine, to see a Legacy Restoration Fund project planned in my district at Rocky Mountain National Park to update utility infrastructure at the Moraine Park Campground and headquarters.

This popular area has not been upgraded since when it was first built in the 1960s. Pipes often break during freezes, campsites flood during rain events, and there isn't electrical service available at any of the campsites. Infrastructure used by tens of thousands of visitors has become considerably degraded and in need of

maintenance. But because of the investments made possible by the Great American Outdoors Act, this project is going to rehabilitate the water system and electric utilities, which will considerably improve the visitor experience and reduce the need for constant costly repairs.

So, just a note of gratitude to say thank you to the Park Service for identifying, certainly, that project as one that will be implemented moving forward.

Director, I guess I wonder if you might be able to opine a bit on your sense of what the consequences would be were the National Park Service's budget to be cut substantially, as I think some—not all, but some—of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have proposed, at least broadly speaking.

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Mr. Neguse. If we were to roll back the funding of our general operations, it would deeply affect how we are implementing GAOA and our LRF funding significantly.

I am extremely appreciative of the Great American Outdoors Act, of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act, and there has been a very clear need for us to ramp up our abilities to implement this planning and execution of deferred maintenance and to get more boots on the ground.

We have seen a nearly 20 percent increase of our visitors within the national parks across the United States, and yet we have seen nearly a 19 percent decrease in our staffing since 2011. These investments that Congress has made has significantly helped us put those boots on the ground, and we are beginning to see the effects of those. If there were deep cuts as proposed, we would see some of that being rolled back, we would see projects slow down, and we would not be able to make near the investments that we are expected to make.

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Director Sams. And I think that context is incredibly important as we debate the nuances of the Fiscal Year 2024 budget here in the coming months.

I know I have limited time, and there are innumerable projects that are happening across the country. I do just want to take a moment to note, and I suspect you would agree with me on this Director, that these projects span the mosaic of our country. They are in rural America—parts of my district, for example, like Rocky Mountain National Park, as I mentioned; suburban America; urban America. There are projects in a wide variety of states, middle America, coast to coast. It is not concentrated in any particular jurisdiction. Is that a fair articulation?

Mr. SAMS. Absolutely. When I look from Alaska to Hawaii, from Acadia to Zion, we are excited about the transformative projects happening all across the country.

The Great Basin National Park in Nevada received a \$4.5 million project that will replace deteriorated water systems, the park's only source of potable water, which provides water to help fight fires in the park.

At Yellowstone Park in Wyoming, a \$118 million project will replace the structurally deficient Yellowstone River bridge in—

Mr. NEGUSE. Where is Yellowstone?

Mr. SAMS. Say again, sir?

Mr. NEGUSE. Where is Yellowstone?

Mr. SAMS. Yellowstone in Wyoming.

Mr. NEGUSE. Yes, I know where it is, but I want to make sure, for the benefit of my colleagues, that it is in Wyoming. It is not in Chicago, it is not in LA, it is not in New York. It is in Wyoming, which, of course, I know well, given that it is my neighboring state to the north; my district is adjacent to it.

But I ask you that question, it is a rhetorical question because, again, I think oversight is important, and this process certainly matters, but it is also helpful to keep context. These projects are having an incredible, tangible impact in rural America, in parks across the country, and I am very grateful for that, and I certainly appreciate your leadership in that regard, Director Sams.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Ranking Member. Next, I would turn to the Full Committee Chairman, Mr. Westerman.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

When I played sports, if somebody messed up, the whole team would have to run extra sprints, and the coach would often say, "You are spoiling it for everybody."

A few years ago, we passed the Great American Outdoors Act, and it was with great bipartisan support, and we had lofty ideas of how this would be transformational across the country.

And Director Sams, I know that you are in a situation where you just kind of have to probably do what you are told on a lot of things. But last year, the National Park Service provided \$102.2 million for the San Francisco National Maritime Historical Park. This was the second most expensive project funded. Can you tell me which Congressional district this project is located in?

Mr. SAMS. It is in Congresswoman, former Speaker, Nancy Pelosi's district.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Right, California 11 represented by Speaker Pelosi.

The National Park Service also gave \$63.5 million to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the fourth most expensive project funded last year. Do you know which Congressional district that project is in?

Mr. SAMS. I cannot recall off the top of my head.

Mr. WESTERMAN. That is Speaker Pelosi's, former Speaker Pelosi's district, as well.

The National Park Service received \$200 million in the Inflation Reduction Act last year for deferred maintenance at the National Park Service. Can you tell us how that money was used?

Mr. SAMS. That money went to the Presidio Trust, and they are using it on their deferred maintenance because they are not eligible for GAOA funding.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Where is the Presidio Trust located?

Mr. SAMS. It is within the boundaries of the national area that we—

Mr. WESTERMAN. In whose Congressional district?

Mr. SAMS. That is also in former Speaker Pelosi's district.

Mr. WESTERMAN. In total, the National Park Service spent more than \$365 million last year on deferred maintenance in Nancy Pelosi's district, which is almost a quarter, 24 percent of the total

funding your agency received last year to address deferred maintenance nationwide. Do you know how many states have deferred maintenance backlogs that could have been fully addressed using this funding?

Mr. SAMS. Not off the top of my head, no.

Mr. WESTERMAN. It is 37, including my home state of Arkansas.

This \$200 million earmark orchestrated by Nancy Pelosi represents a 3,113 percent increase in the amount of Federal funding received by the Presidio last year.

[Chart.]

Mr. WESTERMAN. As you can see by the charts behind me, I am not exactly sure where the deferred maintenance even is in the Presidio.

Director Sams, yes or no, when you transferred this money to the Presidio, did you put any restrictions in place stipulating that taxpayer funding could not be used to improve the Presidio golf courses or luxury hotels?

Mr. SAMS. Not that I am aware of, sir.

Mr. WESTERMAN. This \$200 million earmark from the IRA for the Presidio was originally announced on February 1, 2023, in a press release put out by Nancy Pelosi's office. The Presidio Trust official government website then posted the exact same release with a link to Nancy Pelosi's website, which is still up today. This release included a quote from Jean Fraser, the CEO of the Presidio Trust, who you transferred this money to from the IRA.

Ms. Fraser is quoted as saying, "This funding will be used to lay the foundation for the Presidio to be a zero-climate-impact park."

Director Sams, is creating a zero-climate-impact park a recognized category of deferred maintenance used by the National Park Service?

Mr. SAMS. It is not with the GAOA money that we use.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Would you repeat that?

Mr. SAMS. It is not with the GAOA money that we use.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Can you explain that a little bit?

Mr. SAMS. The Great American Outdoors funding that we implement, that is not one of the priority areas that we are using that for.

Mr. WESTERMAN. OK, but the \$200 million for deferred maintenance—

Mr. SAMS. The IRA funds—

Mr. WESTERMAN. That was an earmark—yes. Is that a—

Mr. SAMS. My understanding is the Presidio has \$400 million in deferred maintenance. When I toured it last year, a number of that has to do with the electrical, water, and sewer throughout the system that had been left behind when it had been a military base.

Mr. WESTERMAN. And when the Presidio was set up, was there supposed to be government funding to go to it?

Mr. SAMS. I do not know the details of the Presidio—

Mr. WESTERMAN. There wasn't supposed to be taxpayer dollars.

Can you think of any other example of deferred maintenance funding being announced by a Congressional office instead of the National Park Service?

Mr. SAMS. No, sir.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Can you think of any other instance in which the National Park Service has posted a press release containing partisan attacks originally released by a Congressional office on its own website?

Mr. SAMS. No, sir.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Did the National Park Service apply the same standards and methodology for selecting priority deferred maintenance projects with the \$200 million provided in the IRA that was used for the Presidio, as you do with projects that receive funding under the Great American Outdoors Act?

Mr. SAMS. No, sir. The funding that came through IRA for the \$200 million, we understand, was Congressional intent for us to send that to the Presidio Trust, since they were not eligible for GAOA funding.

Mr. WESTERMAN. So, \$200 million here and then another \$165 million, and before you know it, almost a quarter of the country's expenses for deferred maintenance ended up in one Congressional district. I think that is unacceptable, and it goes against the intent of the Great American Outdoors Act, and it is why we should not have earmarks like that. And we fought those earmarks in this Committee, but they were put in anyway.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. I am out of time.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields back. Director Sams, I want to follow up on Chairman Westerman's line of questioning.

Oh, I am sorry. I apologize, Representative Peltola. I got ahead of myself. I recognize you for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. PELTOLA. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany.

Good morning, Director Sams. I am wondering about the funding that is intended to go to Alaska for a project in Gustavus. And I just want to preface my statements by saying that I am very thankful for this Act having been passed 2 years ago. In Alaska—the folks that are traveling to Alaska—we have at least a million people a year who come to Alaska and to visit our national parks. Those million people spend more than \$600 million. So, they are a really important part of our economy.

And, specifically, I want to ask you about a project in Gustavus and Glacier Bay. They have a housing facility that is supposed to lodge 60 people, and there are 32 rooms. I believe that that housing unit was condemned, and it does not meet health fire safety standards, and it should have been demolished in 2005. But luckily, because of this legislation, we do have a plan for new housing. And I just wondered if you could let me know—and I don't expect you to know every single major maintenance project on the list, but I wondered if you might have a list and share a timeline for when Glacier Bay might be expecting to have that construction built.

Mr. SAMS. I understand that it will eliminate \$4.7 million in deferred maintenance and that, yes, we have plans to demolish and replace the three apartment buildings that are currently used for the concessionaire housing, and it will be demolished and replaced with a non-historic, multi-use concession building situated in the Glacier Bay Lodge Historic District.

As far as the timeline, I don't have a timeline in front of me, but I do know that it is on our priority projects.

Mrs. PELTOLA. OK, thank you.

I will yield my time back, Chairman Tiffany.

Oh, excuse me. If I have any time left, I would like to yield it to Representative Neguse.

Mr. NEGUSE. I want to thank my distinguished colleague from Alaska. I just want to follow up.

I have great respect for my colleague, and my friend, and the Chairman of our Full Committee. But again, context matters. And as we go through the full list of projects that will be funded by virtue of the Great American Outdoors Act, we know that there are a variety of projects in every single Member who is sitting here at this dais, in our respective states, in our districts.

And we could go through this exercise with Director Sams and ask him—Hot Springs National Park, is that one of the projects that the NPS intends to take up under the GAOA?

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. NEGUSE. And where is Hot Springs National Park?

Mr. SAMS. In the great state of Arkansas.

Mr. NEGUSE. And who represents Hot Springs National Park?

Mr. SAMS. Mr. Westerman.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Westerman. So, the Chairman of our Full Committee will ultimately benefit from a project upwards of \$17 million.

New River Gorge National Park, where is that park, Mr. Sams?

Mr. SAMS. In West Virginia, sir.

Mr. NEGUSE. West Virginia, thank you.

Mammoth Cave National Park. Do you know where that is, Director Sams?

Mr. SAMS. Kentucky, sir.

Mr. NEGUSE. Kentucky. Yes, sir.

Organ Pipe Cactus National Park. Do you know where that is, sir?

Mr. SAMS. New Mexico?

Mr. NEGUSE. Arizona.

Mr. SAMS. Arizona, sorry.

Mr. NEGUSE. Arizona. I knew I would quiz you on one of these that you might not be able to get.

[Laughter.]

Mr. NEGUSE. It is all right. You are doing great.

Cuyahoga—I am pronouncing this wrong—Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Mr. SAMS. The great state of Ohio.

Mr. NEGUSE. Ohio. And Natchez Trace Parkway?

Mr. SAMS. Mississippi.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee.

My point, Mr. Director, again, accountability is important. I recognize there is a role for us in terms of engaging in oversight. And to the extent that the Chairman has raised some questions that the NPS should answer, I certainly take no issue on that front. But let us not confuse the public by creating this perception that these projects are only in a particular—

Mr. WESTERMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NEGUSE. I will in a moment, Mr. Chairman—in a particular district or another, when across the country, from Arkansas, to

Mississippi, to Arizona, and everywhere in between, there are projects that ultimately will be funded by the GAOA.

I am happy to, of course, yield to the Chairman.

Mr. WESTERMAN. I thank the—

Mr. NEGUSE. Oh, I am sorry.

Mr. TIFFANY. It is Representative Peltola's time.

Mr. NEGUSE. Yes.

Mr. TIFFANY. Do you yield to the Chairman?

Mrs. PELTOLA. Yes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you. So, I would just like you to, with a straight face, can you say it is OK that a quarter percent of the National Park Service's deferred maintenance went to one Congressional district?

Mr. NEGUSE. If I may go through Mary, and then come back to me—

[Laughter.]

Mr. NEGUSE. And I think she says yes.

What I would say, Mr. Chairman, is I will take a look at the statistics that you have provided today. That is certainly the first that I have heard of that summation.

What I take issue with is the characterization that these projects are only being funded in one Congressional district. That is why I am going through that.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Well, the numbers don't lie, that 24 percent—not quite 25—but of deferred maintenance from the National Park Service went to Speaker Pelosi, former Speaker Pelosi's district.

Mr. NEGUSE. I see I am out of time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Does the gentlelady yield back from getting in between this discussion?

[Laughter.]

Mrs. PELTOLA. Yes, please remove me.

[Laughter.]

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you.

Director Sams, I would like to follow up on Chairman Westerman's line of questioning. The press release on the Presidio Trust website announcing the \$200 million IRA payout clearly states multiple times that Nancy Pelosi secured this earmark for the Presidio, despite the fact that the language in the IRA does not explicitly state that this funding should be used for Presidio. In fact, it only says that funding shall be used for deferred maintenance within the National Park Service. This is different from language the House Natural Resources Committee marked up last Congress, which not so coincidentally earmarked the exact same amount of funding explicitly for the Presidio Trust.

Did you or anybody in the Administration have conversations with former Speaker Pelosi's office about modifying the language in the Democrats' final reconciliation bill to disguise from the American public the fact that \$200 million for deferred maintenance would actually be used for the Presidio?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have not had any discussions with former Speaker Pelosi's staff, and I can't speak for anybody else.

Mr. TIFFANY. You said earlier in your testimony, you said it was Congressional intent.

Mr. SAMS. That is my understanding as it came down to me, that it was Congressional intent.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, how did you know that, if you didn't have any conversations or communication with Speaker Pelosi's office?

Mr. SAMS. Because the direction came through the Department.

Mr. TIFFANY. Came from the Department of the Interior?

Mr. SAMS. Yes.

Mr. TIFFANY. Who in Interior?

Mr. SAMS. The Assistant Secretary.

Mr. TIFFANY. The Assistant Secretary directed you to send that \$200 million to the Presidio?

Mr. SAMS. That is correct, sir.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you. Director Sams, the elephant in the room is that after spending \$4 billion over the past 3 years to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog, it has somehow increased by almost \$10 billion. How does the National Park Service explain this increase?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This increase is based on how we finally were able to use better methodology in assessing the maintenance needs at some of our parks, and being able to use that.

The process of changing our methodology has been in development for years, prior to the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act. The new process is both simpler and more comprehensive, and gives us a much better picture of the conditions and the assets in our portfolio.

We are finally using an industry standard that does give us the more full picture. And because of that, when we look at it—for years, many of our national parks and our superintendents have been placing Band-Aids on a number of these infrastructure and deferred maintenance. When GAOA came out, it actually provided us to do surgery. And, of course, as you know, surgery is very expensive.

So, when we started looking at really what we had had in those assets since the last major investments in the national parks, which were in 1966 at the end of Mission 66, we recognized that, yes, we have a much larger portfolio. And because we were able to better look at and calculate it, that number did grow.

Mr. TIFFANY. Are we turning these into Taj Mahals? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. SAMS. Absolutely not, sir. Most of these are to make sure they are up to not only code, but that they are resilient, so that they can last another two or three generations. And, therefore, we also have to build out a better post-maintenance plan to upkeep these facilities.

Mr. TIFFANY. The agency attributes the \$10 billion increase in the backlog in large part to methodology changes in Fiscal Year 2022. Is that correct?

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir.

[Chart.]

Mr. TIFFANY. However, you can see in the chart the largest increase in the backlog happened the year prior, in Fiscal Year 2021.

Between Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022, the years in which the methodology supposedly switched over, the backlog only increased \$500 million. Can you explain that discrepancy?

Mr. SAMS. I am going to ask for a little help from Brian.

Mr. BLOODSWORTH. Mr. Chairman, the increase that you are referring to—

Mr. TIFFANY. If you don't mind, Director Sams, I am going to take this offline because I only have a limited amount of time to question. But we are going to get this information shortly.

When GAOA passed in 2020, the National Park Service maintenance backlog was roughly \$12.7 billion. Funding is set to expire September 2025. By that time, NPS will have received \$6.5 billion to reduce this maintenance backlog.

At this point, is NPS projecting that the backlog will be higher or lower, once GAOA expires compared to when it passed?

Mr. SAMS. We anticipate that it will be lower. As we are starting to see the fruition of the projects that came out and were funded in Fiscal Year 2021, we expect that these investments will start to show lowered deferred maintenance over time, and we will have to continue to figure out how to build out and ensure that we are getting back to that backlog once GAOA is closed out.

Mr. TIFFANY. Lower than \$12.7 billion?

Mr. SAMS. I would have to go back and do some calculations and get that number back to you.

Mr. TIFFANY. I am going to ask one other quick question here.

To what extent are NEPA reviews a challenge when completing these deferred maintenance projects?

Mr. SAMS. I wouldn't say they are a major challenge. NEPA is an important part of our planning process. The bigger expenses, of course, are in the actual engineering costs that we have to do in order to make sure these projects are sound.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you. In closing, I would just say I hope that your agency is not becoming the Nancy Pelosi Service, rather than the National Park Service.

With that, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regardless of where the Presidio is located, I will point out that it is a treasured site in California. All Californians from around the state and, indeed, the millions of visitors who come to the Presidio from across the country and across the world should have that national park to enjoy. So, I think it is to the benefit of all Americans that we invest in all of our national parks.

I recently had the chance to visit three of our most remote national parks, and want them to have all of the resources—in New Mexico and in Texas—and I want them to have all the appropriate resources, as well.

The Great American Outdoors Act was both a necessary investment and an incredible bipartisan achievement. You might not know that it was an incredible bipartisan achievement from some of the questioning today, but it was. And it passed the House with nearly three-fourths support, and was signed by President Trump,

to his great credit. So, yes, Washington actually did something big 3 years ago, based on a simple and popular principle, which is that everyone should have the joy of visiting our national parks.

Today, what I want to do is explore exactly how the law's vision of accessibility looks, and see how committed we truly are to it. As you know, Mr. Sams, the Great American Outdoors Act includes language that requires the Legacy Restoration Fund projects to improve access to national parks for visitors with disabilities. How has the National Park Service been prioritizing this requirement?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congresswoman. As I said earlier, many of our projects and our parks came out of Mission 66, the parks that came between 1956 and 1966—of course, way before the ADA was passed.

National Parks is committed to ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunity to benefit from NPS facilities, programs, service, and activities. The LRF projects incorporate measures to improve the accessibility of assets and accommodation to visitors and employees with disabilities. Improving accessibility is a factor of the project selection criteria we use.

Ms. PORTER. Can you give an example, if you can, of any exemplary projects that may hit home, any projects that were selected in particular to improve accessibility?

Mr. SAMS. Yes, Congresswoman. Sarasota National Historic Park project to rehabilitate the battlefield interpretive experience improves physical accessibility of wayside areas and amenities, and adds new field exhibits that incorporate universal design.

Crater Lake National Park, in my own home state, a project to rehabilitate a section of the East Rim Drive, will ensure parking areas along the drive have accessibility-compliant surfaces, markings, and overlooks.

And Yosemite National Park campground projects improve accessibility of campsite surfaces, amenities, and the historic bathrooms to make sure there are accommodations.

Ms. PORTER. I really appreciate that. And one of the things—when I was Subcommittee Chair of Oversight and Investigations last Congress, we had a hearing on disability access in the national parks. And one of the things that came across is that many of our veterans are people with disabilities and enjoy our Federal lands, whether it is for recreation or for other purposes. So, I have seen these disability projects myself, firsthand. For example, the boardwalk at White Sands National Park, which makes it possible for people with mobility issues to go and visit that.

And one of the things that came across in that hearing is that accessibility design doesn't take away from the experience of visitors without disabilities, but in fact good quality disability design improves the experience for everybody. So, you think about kids who might be in a stroller are the same people who are able to enjoy a boardwalk that might be designed for people with physical disabilities.

What else does the National Park Service need from Congress to make all national parks accessible to every visitor?

Mr. SAMS. We appreciate your continued engagement with us on the issue, and keeping this conversation going is very helpful, and

I look forward to sitting down with many of you to talk about how we can even be better at this.

Ms. PORTER. Yes, and what I have heard is that there is about \$900 million a year that you are still short in the Great American Outdoors Act. And the bill, as it is written, only addresses about half of the backlog. So, what that means is that we still have more projects to do, which means we still have more opportunity to work on inclusivity and accessibility during that.

We can't pass the Great American Outdoors Act to be popular with our constituents one year and then turn around later and cut that very funding that will allow us to achieve its bipartisan goals. So, today I ask my colleagues, do you truly want to achieve the vision of the Great American Outdoors Act, or will you vote to fund or to cut the National Park Service, based on whatever is politically popular at the time?

We will find out when we take our votes to fund the Department of the Interior. I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields back. Next, I would like to recognize Mr. Fulcher from Idaho.

Mr. FULCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sams, thank you for being here today and for your testimony. I want to just talk a little bit further about the acquisition of new land when the Park Service does that, and just how that contributes to your existing backlog maintenance. When there is new land acquired, what happens to your backlog for maintenance, Mr. Sams?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congressman. It really depends on the type of land we bought, and what is on or not on the land. So, it may have—

Mr. FULCHER. Would it be safe to say that, generally speaking, if you get more land, you have more maintenance?

Mr. SAMS. Say again, I am sorry.

Mr. FULCHER. Would it be fair to say that, if you get more land to manage, that there is typically more maintenance?

Mr. SAMS. There are additional maintenance costs, yes.

Mr. FULCHER. One of the things that concerns me as well as some others, I think, on the dais today is the ability of the National Park Service to manage new land, given the backlog that we already have. And there is just a concern about that.

And that brings up what has already been touched on, the \$38.6 billion in deferred maintenance that has been roughly doubled in the last 3 years. What is the current plan to reduce the backlog maintenance that you have, Director Sams?

Mr. SAMS. Between the GAOA money, coupled with additional funding we have been able to use in line item budgets, we have been able to really tackle this in a different way.

This additional funding that has come in through this bipartisan act really is helping us tackle this and be able to make further investments with funds that we were so limited on before.

Mr. FULCHER. Director Sams, the backlog numbers have almost doubled in 3 to 3½ years.

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir. They doubled because we are doing a much better assessment. We weren't really doing a standard, what I would say, a standardized industry assessment prior to this. And

because of that, our systems allow us to do a better calculation of what the real costs are.

Mr. FULCHER. Director Sams, have you ever thought about opportunities to partner with local governments, with states, with tribes in ways to work on this backlog maintenance issue? Has that discussion ever come up? And is that something that you think about on a routine basis?

Mr. SAMS. We do. I actually want to praise our associations, whether that is at Yosemite or Yellowstone. Many of our associations help raise funds, and have done so for 20, 30-plus years.

The National Park Foundation has also helped us with some of this deferred maintenance prior to the Great American Outdoors Act, and they continue to make those investments.

So, we have been able to use those local monies from our associations, from counties and states to help even further what the Great American Outdoors Act has done.

Mr. FULCHER. There is a proposal—my understanding is that the President put forth in his budget for \$104.3 million for the National Park Service to acquire new lands.

Coming from a state where nearly two-thirds of the land mass is Federal or under Federal control, and a state that, on average, over the last 8, 10 years will see 500 million acres burn to wildfire because of, largely, mismanagement, unkept fuel load, that is a real red flag for me, and that is a real concern.

And Director, I would just encourage you to prioritize the management and the stewardship of that land. And I want to encourage you to utilize and to allow partnerships locally, for those of us who actually live on it or live right next to it, who want to see it taken care of as well, and that is our tribes, our local counties, the local governments, and the states.

If we don't do that, and look no further than the state of Idaho to see the evidence, if we don't do that, it goes up in smoke. And that takes out the wildlife, that kicks tons and tons of carbon into the atmosphere. And we are all better off if we can figure out how to work together, local, Federal. And I encourage you to do that.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. Next, I would like to recognize the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Curtis.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Director Sams. I spent the last several days in Acadia National Park. My compliments to your team there. I met one particular young lady who was as bright, and intelligent, and helpful as anybody I have ever met, and just a really good experience there.

You may know that Utah is home to a number of national parks. We like to call it the Mighty Five. Many of us regret that they have become so popular. We have probably over-advertised them, and now see tremendous use of these national parks.

I think, in truth, if I could redo this life, I would be a park ranger. I love to spend time in the national parks. Having been a former mayor, I realize firsthand how they impact the quality of life. I think we way under-emphasize the impact on morale, on people, on positive life, nature because of our experiences in the

national parks. And I would be one of your biggest fans and be cheering for your success.

Let me turn to the discussion that we have had a little bit about how these funds are used. When I was mayor, we looked at deferred maintenance from the perspective of this is maintenance that, because it was deferred, it will cost us more later on than if we did it right now. And that makes a great case for funding. A parking lot is a really good example. If we don't repair a parking lot, those cracks get bigger, the potholes get bigger, and it actually costs taxpayers more than if we just repaired it right now.

Can you tell me, from your perspective, is there an intent within priorities to use this money for projects that truly, by deferring, cost the taxpayer more, or how are they prioritized?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congressman. Absolutely. We are looking at that, and we have to make the best business case possible before we will accept a project for funding. That business case has to talk about what is the resiliency of the project that we are putting in.

So, whether that is putting in a bridge, a road, a new building, or repairing a building in such a way, or replacing a building, we have to ensure the resiliency will be there for the next 20, 30, 40, 50-plus years, and that it should reduce the overall deferred maintenance if we do the right, appropriate upkeep over that—

Mr. CURTIS. Thus saving the taxpayer more money than if we hadn't done the project.

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. CURTIS. Congressman Neguse mentioned that this was a downpayment, and you have heard how this can quickly become political today. To the extent that we want more money—and I do—to go to this, I think it is imperative that your agency is able to make this a non-political issue, and assure people that it really is, in the long term, saving taxpayers money by spending this money.

I also have the pleasure of being part of the Grand Canyon National Recreation Area. It is one of my family's favorite places to recreate. As you probably know, it is suffering because of the extreme drought. We have a little bit of a break from that this year. We will see how that does. But overall, it is really stressing the infrastructure there.

And I don't expect you to be familiar with every single project, but I would like to point out the North Wash at Cataract Canyon. It is a boat take-out place that has been used. The lower water and the deteriorating condition has caused a serious problem for people who use that, and I would love to have that on your list to look into and see if we are doing everything that we can there, as well as the Hite Marina suffered because of that, and I would love to see a boat take-out spot is there, as well.

And if you could—I can see your help is taking notes here. If you could take a look at those personally, and let me know if they are on a priority list, that would be helpful.

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congressman. I will definitely take a look at those. I am appreciative that the Biden-Harris Administration is taking an all-of-government approach on the drought issue on the Colorado River, and we are looking at recreation, particularly

because of its effects on the local communities, and also just on the economic impacts we have. So, we will—

Mr. CURTIS. Yes. I think it is fair to say it impacts local guides, it impacts individuals with recreation, it impacts the local tribes. It is a serious impact, economically, throughout the whole region.

Do you care to estimate how much the lake will go up this year?

Mr. SAMS. I do not know. But I am very hopeful that it will go up this year.

Mr. CURTIS. We are all watching carefully. We have been blessed with one good winter. We need a lot more. But thank you for your attention to that specific area.

A shout-out to Patricia Trap, who manages the region there with Arches National Parks, and Canyonlands, and others. Once again, just all of my experiences with your people on the ground have been positive. You have great people. And I think that is one of the great badges that you wear in your organization is the people on the ground.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. Next, I would like to recognize Ms. Kamlager-Dove from California for 5 minutes of questioning.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for having this hearing.

I am still sort of trying to take in all of the information that I was able to read in the binder. And while it would be helpful if both could respond, I am just curious about what you think the takeaways should be from this hearing as it relates to what the focus should be moving forward. And I would like to start with Director Sams.

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congresswoman.

First and foremost, that we are trying to be and we will be as transparent as possible. I appreciate the Committee's oversight on this. As people well know, when we are doing our projects we talk to our community partners, we talk with our county, and with the state governments. We are trying to make sure that this is as transparent as possible. You can follow the process online. We have put all of our projects out there. Our projects, as we have laid them out, come before Congress for approval each fiscal year. And the oversight is extremely important. It is important to me.

Last year, I visited 60 parks, 26 states to look at where our deferred maintenance was. I have seen more septic systems than I have ever thought I would see in my life. That being said, though, those are important because when those don't work, our visitors could suffer from both health concerns and other issues. And we want to ensure that we have clean water when people come into the parks.

So, I appreciate the work that this Committee does, and Congress as a whole, to ensure that we are spending these dollars the way we say we are going to spend these dollars.

Mr. BLOODSWORTH. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the question. Excellent question.

We have taken the Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund money that has been entrusted to us, thank you to the Congress for enacting this bipartisan piece of legislation, it

has been tremendously impactful, and we have been taking it extremely seriously, in terms of how we look at the intent of Congress when this Act was passed, which was to reduce deferred maintenance.

And yes, while the backlog has increased, that is not necessarily because the projects are not achieving their intent and their purpose. The projects that we are picking are large in nature. They are multi-million-dollar, with an average project size of roughly \$15 million over the course of the 4 project years that have been funded or proposed thus far. And these projects will not be completed for multiple years.

We address and eliminate deferred maintenance when projects are at completion. So, as these projects begin to be completed, you will start to see that deferred maintenance start to come off the books. We are very much looking forward to that. We have metrics that we are tracking very much surrounding that.

We are also taking seriously the considerations around geographic equity, about how do we make sure that proportioned amounts of investment align with where the backlog resides in the United States. The backlog is not distributed evenly across the landscape.

For example, the questioning around the state of California earlier. California represents roughly 14.5 percent of the nation's backlog. And to date for the projects funded in 2021 through 2023, California has received roughly 8.5 percent of the GAOA investment dollars thus far. Some of the statistics cited earlier are incorrect, and I just wanted to make sure that that was clear on record.

We very much appreciate the opportunity to address the backlog. We have lots of hardworking men and women at the Department of the Interior across all four bureaus receiving funding that are hard at work addressing this. We are always looking to get better with our data, with our numbers. That is why the backlog numbers jumped between 2020 and 2021, was the Park Service was not including planning, design, and construction management costs that were similar to the other three bureaus at Interior. So, to make sure that we were all accounting for and looking at an apples-to-apples comparison, we felt that was important to factor in, to look at the full cost of delivering a project.

That 35 percent markup is what led to the backlog increase, the primary result of that. We are now at that level of equity in comparison, and we very much appreciate the opportunity to continue this dialogue. There is lots more work to be done, and we look forward to talking to Congress about how we can achieve that.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you for that, and I would yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields. Next, I would like to recognize the Representative from Minnesota, Representative Stauber.

Mr. STAUBER. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director Sams, thank you for joining us here today.

In my district, we have Voyageurs National Park and the Grand Portage National Monument. Voyageurs is unique. It is comprised of huge, interconnected waterways with unparalleled summer and

winter activities. It is known as a world-class fishing destination, where you can get to your spot by boat or snowmobile. It also has a strong houseboat presence and supports many small business co-operators.

But because Voyageurs has a unique relationship with the water, we have unique needs. The funding needs aren't great. According to your agency, Voyageurs requires about \$40 million in deferred maintenance. We have lake walls that need repair, docks and marinas that need updating, and more.

When I voted for the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020, I was voting for Voyageurs to receive deferred maintenance funding. I could picture families putting boats in with clean, safe docks before catching some walleyes, or snowmobilers using well-groomed trails.

Mr. Sams, can you tell me how much Legacy Restoration Funding Voyageurs has received over the life of the program that is up for reauthorization in just a couple of short years?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congressman. Voyageurs is unique, and I look forward to getting up there, hopefully, this year. In talking with the staff, and having staff who I have sent out there, they have told me about its uniqueness and its multi-use.

But I am going to have to ask Brian—never mind, it is right here. Voyageurs National Park replaced power distribution line connecting Kettle Falls Hotel was \$13.8 million, proposed.

Mr. STAUBER. OK. The \$14 million was proposed for the Kettle River Falls Hotel power line.

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. STAUBER. But to be correct here, no money has been allocated from your Department for Voyageurs.

And I want to ask you this. How much has the George Washington Parkway been allocated for DC commuters?

Mr. SAMS. Approximately \$123 million.

Mr. STAUBER. My account is it is \$208 million. To me, that is unacceptable. For under one-fifth of the money that you chose to spend on a DC-area road, you could have fixed all of our needs at Voyageurs National Park.

The Great American Outdoors Act was intended to rejuvenate our parks, the crown jewels of our public lands. And NPS, under your leadership, chose to use it on pet projects on the coasts. I intend to work with my colleagues on this Subcommittee on reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund. It clearly needs a closer look.

In closing, I just want to remark that I am troubled by the proposed changes to the use plan for Voyageurs National Park. Constituents that have long been able to use motorized portages are concerned that after this plan update, they will lose access. My staff and I intend to watch this plan play out carefully, and you will hear from me if it is not done right to the constituents' needs and desires.

I will tell you that, for me, for Voyageurs to take a back seat—I mean, zero funding—is just out of line. Minnesota matters. That national park, Voyageurs National Park, matters to northern Minnesota, matters to all of Minnesotans. And it received zero funding. I am here to advocate for that park.

And I am very happy to hear you talk about you want to get up to Voyageurs. I would ask that when you coordinate that trip, please get a hold of our office. I would love to join you up there, and visit the park, and look at some of the needs.

And I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. Next, I recognize the Representative from New Mexico, Ms. Leger Fernández. You have 5 minutes.

Ms. LEGER FERNÁNDEZ. Yes, thank you so much, Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse, and thank you both, Director Sams and Director Bloodsworth, for being here.

I am very excited about the Great American Outdoors Act, because it is indeed a great America that we are investing in, that which belongs to all Americans, which are our public lands, right? And our beautiful parks.

In New Mexico, as you know, our delegation was a big supporter of the Great American Outdoors Act because we knew it was going to help us conserve and restore the many public lands and sites in New Mexico. The Legacy Restoration Fund is going to help our parks and features just become more resilient and more enjoyable.

I love reading about what are the ingredients of happiness. And a key ingredient is being outdoors, is being with nature. And we know that too many of our children, our schoolchildren, don't get to enjoy that. So, part of what this fund is doing is making it possible for us to get everybody outside enjoying what is theirs.

The Legacy Restoration Fund is important to New Mexico because it is helping repair the Wild Rivers Backcountry Byway, which is important for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in Taos County. I have spent many, many a moment finding my happiness up in Taos County.

It is also at Bandelier, which represents both a connection between what was there and came before and our ability to now sit and wonder about it. Whether you are looking at the beavers—we have beavers moving in there, which is important for wildlife—or climbing those stairs into the ancient kivas. That is the kind of work that we are seeing in New Mexico, which is key.

The fact that there is so much deferred maintenance, and that it is taking us so long to get to all of the beautiful places we identify in our states like we just heard on the dais up here, is because we haven't been paying attention to it, right? Too many of our facilities are falling apart.

Director Sams, could you describe to us the steps that the Park Service is taking to partner with local communities and businesses on this great American opportunity funding?

Because I think that is the other piece of it, that this is an economic opportunity for those local communities that we have heard on both sides of the aisle talk about when we want our places restored.

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Congresswoman. I appreciate that.

We just most recently held our leadership council meeting in Albuquerque, and I was visiting with the Albuquerque parks director and the number of projects we have already done with the city of Albuquerque and throughout the state.

First and foremost, all our major projects involve stakeholder engagement, including the local communities, as part of the public review process and through NEPA. Our superintendents and staff in the field are actively engaged with their local gateway communities, listen to community concerns, and communicate about project impacts. Parks and superintendents maintain active and robust consultation with tribes who have an affiliation with the respective park units, and many of our projects are contracted with local small businesses.

And it is extremely important—and I impress upon that with my superintendents—that we have to get outside the park and go visit our gateway communities, and go beyond that, and visit our tribal partners, and go beyond that to visit the surrounding community that we also need their support from, and where we have a symbiotic relationship.

Ms. LEGER FERNÁNDEZ. Right. And I think that that really is the key, is the park isn't sitting outside of the community. The park is part of the greater community.

I am glad you mentioned tribes. Could you talk a little bit more about the co-stewardship of Federal lands with tribes that you are pursuing? What is your vision on that?

Mr. SAMS. My vision overall is ensuring that where tribes have been here for thousands of years, they have an opportunity to use Indigenous knowledge to help us in how we maintain.

As we heard earlier, there has been a lot of mismanagement around forest lands throughout the West. We have all seen, from New Mexico to my own home state of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, the massive fires that we have had to deal with. For thousands of years, tribes have used prescribed burn to ensure that we wouldn't have these mass conflagrations. And we are finally being able to bring that knowledge with tribes around co-stewardship and co-managing these spaces in Federal, state, and tribal lands so that we can deal with such elements as this, including invasive species.

Every LRF project is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with our tribes, not just through required consultation, but through continued conversations on how we care for these special places that we all love so much. Depending on the specific project, co-stewardship could come in the form of incorporation of tribal, traditional, ecological knowledge, collaborating with tribes in how to tell Indigenous stories when updating our exhibits, tribal involvement through cooperative agreements or self-governance contracts that relate to the projects being completed also.

Ms. LEGER FERNÁNDEZ. Thank you so very much. And I think the issue of how do you tell the stories of these places coming from those who emerged and for whom it is still a living place is important. So, thank you for that work.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields back. Now, we are going to do a second round of questioning if anyone wants to do that on the panel, and I will start out. I just want to do some follow-ups here, Director Sams.

There has been discussion about a proposal to freeze Park Service funding at Fiscal Year 2022 levels. Secretary Haaland

recently sent a letter—I have it here in my hand—discussing the effects of a 22 percent reduction to Fiscal Year 2023 levels. She talked about reduced hours at Yosemite, closed visitor centers, or various things like that that were in this letter. Are you familiar with it?

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir, I am.

Mr. TIFFANY. OK. So, your own Park Service budget proposes a 20 percent cut compared to Fiscal Year 2023. How do you reconcile the fact that Secretary Haaland said a 22 percent cut in National Park Service would be catastrophic, while your own executive budget recommends a 20 percent cut, and says it would provide essential investments?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you, Chairman. I would have to go back and do a better analysis of that, and I would be happy to report back to you in written form of my analysis.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes. The Park Service's own budget proposes a nearly 20 percent decrease. So, while we have this letter from Secretary Haaland decrying what may be these draconian cuts that she says are due to Congressional Republicans and their actions, it turns out that the Administration is proposing a 20 percent cut by going back to Fiscal Year 2023 levels. We heard earlier that we cannot have these draconian cuts. I believe the Ranking Member commented about that. What is the difference between a 22 percent cut and a 20 percent cut, as provided in the executive agency's budget?

Mr. SAMS. Again, Mr. Chairman, I will do a deep dive on this, and I will get it back in writing and explain it.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes. If you would do that, I would really appreciate it.

Mr. SAMS. Absolutely, sir.

Mr. TIFFANY. I want to go back to the Presidio. The Presidio Trust has sought \$200 million to redevelop 22 historic Spanish colonial barracks at the 30-acre Fort Scott site and turn it into a place for change. According to the Trust's CEO, Jean Fraser, the Trust envisioned renovating these buildings so that people who are working in the environmental or social justice areas would have a place to do great work in this magnificent setting.

Is taxpayer money from the Inflation Reduction Act that you transferred to Presidio now being used to create this environmental and social justice area?

Mr. SAMS. Mr. Chairman, I don't know the specifics, but I can go look into that, though.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes, if you would get us an answer in regards to that.

Do you think environmental and social justice improvements should be categorized as deferred maintenance?

Mr. SAMS. It would depend on if they were already prior there, and were making adjustments for that. Again, I would have to go back and do a deeper dive on this.

Mr. TIFFANY. Well, I suspect the American people don't think that fixing up the nation's parks, which is what was supposed to be the intent of this, right?

Mr. SAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. TIFFANY. It is supposed to deal with deferred maintenance, the backlog that is going on. Creating environmental and social justice areas, I don't think, are what the American people envisioned for this.

And knowing San Francisco the way it is, what used to be one of the most beautiful cities in the United States of America, that people on the right and left are saying has went into an abyss. Is the Presidio going to become a homeless shelter? I think that is what many American people would be concerned about.

The Presidio's enabling statute directed the Presidio Trust to operate without taxpayer funding by 2012. If the Trust failed to achieve this self-sufficiency and continued to rely on taxpayer funding, the Trust Act stated that all property under the administrative jurisdiction of the Trust be disposed of, and any real property so transferred shall be deleted from the boundary of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Is receiving \$200 million in taxpayer funding from the IRA considered self-sufficient?

Mr. SAMS. Again, I would have to go back and take a deeper look into those issues and get back to you, sir.

Mr. TIFFANY. I mean, you can be straightforward here. Is that being self-sufficient, when the taxpayers are having to put up \$200 million?

Mr. SAMS. Again, I don't know all the specifics of the Presidio Trust, but I will definitely look into it, and I will get back to you with an answer.

Mr. TIFFANY. Since they are clearly in violation of the Presidio Trust Act, would you support either rescinding this \$200 million in taxpayer funding or deleting the Presidio Park from the boundaries of the Golden Gate NRA?

Mr. SAMS. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. Again, I would have to look more deeply into that and get back to you.

Mr. TIFFANY. Could you get us an answer if this is in violation of the Presidio Trust Act?

Mr. SAMS. Again, I don't know all the particulars for the Presidio Trust Act, but I will look into it and get back to you.

Mr. TIFFANY. I would like to know specifically if this is in violation of the Presidio Trust Act.

And this is really not difficult to deal with. All the Presidio Trust has to do is go to the billionaires that are out there in Silicon Valley, go to Mrs. Jobs, go to Mr. Zuckerberg, go to Sergey Brin and the Google crowd who have these billions of dollars. Just go ask them for the money—this is pocket change for them—rather than asking the American people to do this.

I see no one else that is here to ask any questions. So, Director Sams, I want to say thank you for your testimony, and I want to thank the Members for their questions.

I really look forward to your answers coming back. And we may have some follow-ups to those answers. I think they are very important for the American people, especially as we leave here and we go out and have hearings of the Federal Land Subcommittee around the United States. We are going to want the American people to know what is happening here.

The members of the Committee may have some additional questions for our witness today, and we will ask that he respond to those in writing, if you would, Director.

Under Committee Rule 3, members of the Committee must submit questions to the Subcommittee Clerk by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 21, 2023. The hearing record will be held open for 10 business days for these responses.

If there is no further business—we are pretty alone here, aren't we?

[Laughter.]

Mr. TIFFANY. Without objection, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:32 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

