



# Please Support National Park Funding in FY17

Provide the National Park Service with needed resources to protect, restore and interpret parks as the system moves into a new century.

In FY16, after parks have struggled with years of insufficient funding, Congress provided an [enhanced investment](#) in the National Park Service. The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is grateful that members of Congress recognized national parks as a priority and asks them to build on this investment.

This year, the president's budget proposes building on the FY16 investment with increases to several accounts. NPCA and our partners in the [National Parks Second Century Action Coalition](#) urge Congress to support this request. As the Park System begins its next century of service to the American people and international visitors that together bolster local economies, parks are in need of resources to address the [\\$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog](#), provide routine maintenance, ensure sufficient staff to greet [record numbers of visitors](#), and protect and enhance world-class resources.

Budget cuts and insufficient funds in recent years have led to crumbling facilities and too few staff to serve visitors and protect and enhance cultural and natural resources. Many parks remain understaffed: between FY10 and FY15, park service staff were reduced by 2,006 —an 11.2% reduction (discretionary FTEs, a measurement of the equivalent of one full-time staff) . Funding in FY16 will help parks recover from years of underfunding, but more is needed for maintenance and staff to protect resources, connect youth to parks, and for projects to enhance the visiting experience.

Among other increases we support, NPCA respectfully asks members of Congress to support NPS budget request for:

- Increase the **national park operations account** by \$155 million for a total of \$2.52 billion. These funds would support enhanced staffing for routine and small maintenance projects, initiatives including introducing fourth graders to parks, and resources for scientific work and to accommodate record visitation.
- Restore \$59 million to the **construction account**, which would help address the deferred maintenance backlog by funding projects such as repairing a leaking visitor center roof, completing a sanitary sewage system to prevent raw sewage spills, replacing a deteriorated potable water system, destroying excess structures, and safety code compliance for a museum.
- Provide a \$20 million increase for the **Centennial Challenge** (National Park Partnerships), a public-private partnership model that leverages non-federal donations to support projects in parks across the country (fact sheet available by request).

## A RARE CENTENNIAL OPPORTUNITY

As the National Park System prepares to enter its next century of service, Congress has an extraordinary opportunity in FY17 to build on FY16 investments by supporting our national treasures and restoring the places that so deeply inspire American families, protect America's natural and cultural treasures, provide healthy recreational opportunities, support local economies and create jobs.



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# PARK FUNDING

## Economic Importance

National Park Service investments support [robust economic activity](#):

- Every dollar invested in the National Park Service yields nearly \$10 in economic activity.
- In 2014, the National Park Service supported nearly \$30 billion in economic activity and more than a quarter million private-sector jobs.
- National parks are some of America's top [travel destinations](#). They [support international visitors](#) that invest in the U.S. economy during their visits. One out of every five international visitors goes to national parks, and those who do stay longer, visit more places and are more likely to be repeat visitors to the U.S.
- The 2013 federal government shutdown demonstrated the economic importance of national parks to gateway communities. These communities lost \$414 million in visitor spending alone.

## Popular Support

[Bipartisan polling](#) commissioned by NPCA showed that 9 in 10 voters—Independent, Democrat, and Republican—do not want national park funding cut.

## A Modest Investment

The investment in our parks is small and is declining as a portion of the federal budget. The entire budget for the National Park Service is a tiny 1/14<sup>th</sup> of one percent of the federal budget; in 1982, it was 1/8<sup>th</sup>.

## Stewardship Needs

Park resource stewardship has much work to be done, with only 1.5 percent of acres of invasive plants controlled; 17.3 percent of exotic animal species controlled; 61 percent of historic structures in good condition; 49 percent of cultural landscapes in good condition; and 54 percent of archaeological sites in good condition.

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“...Our businesses and livelihood, and that of our employees and their families, depend on keeping the national parks open and in good condition... Simply put, even more cuts to national park budgets would be penny wise and pound foolish. Our families and our communities and the nation's economy will suffer without much real fiscal benefit to the federal budget...”

*--Excerpt from a letter sent by nearly 300 local businesses to Congress and the president, February 28th 2013.*

