

**Chairman Mike Simpson**  
**Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**  
**National Park Service FY14 Budget Hearing**  
**April 12, 2013**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The Committee will come to order.

Director Jarvis, I want to thank you and your colleagues for being with us today to discuss the important work of the National Park Service and your priorities for the coming year. It's nice to see our friends, Bruce Sheaffer, and a member of our subcommittee family, Grace Stephens, with you today.

We received the FY14 budget request just two days ago and look forward to you providing us with some of the details this morning. At the outset, I want to make several observations:

Like many agencies under this subcommittee's jurisdiction, the Park Service is feeling the effects of lean budgets. I commend you and your staff for efforts to prioritize spending in this austere budgetary environment.

It's no secret that sequestration is having a detrimental effect on a number of Park Service functions. It's for this reason that the House actually proposed in its version of the FY13 Continuing Resolution freezing the Park Service operating accounts at the FY12 enacted level—in other words, not making additional cuts beyond sequestration. We felt that this was the best we could do in this tough budgetary environment.

Unfortunately, things didn't turn out as the House would have liked with regard to your budget which is one of the reasons I took the extraordinary step of voting "no" on final passage of the CY14 Continuing Resolution.

On another issue—we understand that the authority the Park Service uses to levy entrance fees expires at the end of this calendar year. This authority—which is also important to the Forest Service and other DOI land management bureaus—is critical to providing revenue to our national parks. We hope you'll shed some light today on the importance of this authority to your overall mission.

Also, the Park Service was the beneficiary of \$348 million in construction funding through the Hurricane Sandy Supplemental funding bill. The subcommittee looks forward to learning more today about how these funds are being spent. I know this will be of particular interest to our full Committee ranking member, Mrs. Lowey.

Lastly, I understand there was a gathering recently of people interested in the future of the National Park System sharing ideas on how to supplement the annual appropriations Congress provides to our national parks. We look forward to hearing about some of these ideas and whether you believe they have merit.

I look forward to focusing on these and other issues this morning but first want to yield to Mr. Moran for any opening remarks he'd like to make.

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