



# **Chairman Ken Calvert**

*Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations*

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**National Park Service FY 2017 Budget  
March 16, 2016  
Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The Committee will come to order.

Director Jarvis, I'd like to welcome you to today's hearing, along with the Park Service's Chief Financial Officer, Lena McDowall. This morning's hearing will address the important work of the National Park Service and its budget priorities for fiscal year 2017.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Organic Act creating the National Park Service, a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior responsible for protecting the 35 national parks and monuments then managed by the Department and those yet to be established. One hundred years later, the National Park Service is comprised of 410 individual park units—and that number continues to grow.

The award-winning filmmaker, Ken Burns—with whom this subcommittee met two weeks ago—has described our national parks as “America’s best idea.” Few Americans would disagree with that assessment; everyone loves our national parks. Last year, the National Park Service welcomed more than 307 million visitors to its parks—a record-breaking number—which was 14 million more visitors than the previous attendance record set in 2014. That trend will likely continue well beyond this year’s centennial celebration.

Overall, the proposed funding level in your fiscal year 2017 budget request is \$3.1 billion—which is \$250 million, or 9 percent—above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The largest increase—about \$191 million in discretionary funding—is proposed for Centennial related needs and priorities. This includes sizeable funding increases for deferred maintenance needs in both the Operations and Construction accounts.

Last year, this subcommittee made a substantial investment in our national parks by providing additional funds for park operations as well as significant funds to address longstanding deferred maintenance issues. We will endeavor to make similar investments this year within the confines of our 302(b) allocation.

Also worth noting is the proposed expansion of the so-called “Centennial Challenge,” which leverages Federal dollars with private sector dollars through at least a one-to-one matching of

funds. Congress provided \$15 million for the Centennial Challenge in fiscal year 2016. The Administration proposes to increase the Federal share by \$20 million—to \$35 million—in fiscal year 2017.

As the Service prepares for its second century of stewardship of our national parks, this subcommittee looks forward to learning more about the budget request and receiving additional details of the role Park Service partners and the private sector will play in this effort.

We will do our very best to address the Service's highest priority needs, but we also need to face this budget reality: any increases above last year's enacted level will likely have to be offset elsewhere within the Service's budget or within our overall bill. While this subcommittee does oversee the budget for the Forest Service, we have yet to find money growing on trees within our national forests. We welcome any ideas you may have on how to pay for some of the proposed increases within your budget request.

Director Jarvis, today's hearing is the beginning of a very important conversation about the Service's funding priorities. We look forward to hearing from you on these and other issues but first, let me yield to our subcommittee's ranking member, Ms. McCollum, for any opening remarks she'd like to share with us this morning.

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