



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

AUG 29 2023

The Honorable Tom Tiffany
Chairman, Natural Resources Subcommittee
On Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany:

Enclosed is a response to the follow-up question addressed to Mr. Mike Reynolds, Deputy Director for External and Congressional Affairs at the National Park Service, from the March 28, 2023, legislative hearing on multiple bills. These responses were prepared by the National Park Service.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Christopher P. Salotti
Legislative Counsel
Office of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Joe Neguse
Ranking Member

**Questions for the Record
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Legislative Hearing
March 28, 2023**

Questions from Rep. Westerman

- 1. This Committee has heard from people across this country about the closure of amenities on land managed by the Department of the Interior (DOI).
 - a. For all DOI managed federal lands, please provide the number of closures since 2000 for campsites, campgrounds, and day use areas. Please provide the number of closures of miles of trails, roads, and routes that served a recreational purpose, such as horseback riding, hiking, and motorized vehicle activities, since 2000 across DOI managed federal lands.****

Response: The National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) do not maintain a system for comprehensively tracking the number of permanent or temporary closures of campsites, campgrounds, day use areas, trails, roads, and routes. Closures may occur for a wide variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, weather, national disasters, public safety, damaged infrastructure, construction, seasonal wildlife protection and conflict management, and other administrative needs. Each agency's asset management system tracks infrastructure maintenance and repair but does not record data on closures that occur related to maintenance or other reasons.

Additionally, closures have yet to result in a significant reduction in visitation Department-wide. In FY 2022, NPS received 312 million recreation visits, up 15 million visits (5%) from 2021. While lower than in 2018 and 2019 (318 million and 327 million recreation visits, respectively), service-wide visitation has essentially recovered to pre-pandemic levels. NPS worked to mitigate, as much as practicable, the impact of any COVID-related closures on visitation. BLM also experienced a visitation increase at its sites in FY 2022, receiving 81 million visitors, 1 million more than in 2021 and 19 million more since the start of the trend in 2015, an increase of 29%. Visitation to FWS's national wildlife refuges has steadily increased from 45.7 million visits in FY 2011 to more than 67 million visits in FY 2022 – a 46% increase.

NPS, BLM, and FWS are highly conscious and proud of our responsibility and privilege of maintaining recreational access to federal lands for the American people and ensuring underserved communities and future generations retain these opportunities.