

**STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES OF THE HOUSE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET
REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

March 16, 2016

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on the 2017 President's budget request for the National Park Service (NPS).

NPS Centennial and Second Century of Operations

In 2016, the NPS celebrates 100 years as the steward of the nation's most cherished natural and cultural resources. The NPS is actively preparing for its second century of operations, and working hard to inspire the next generation of park stewards to experience and value their public lands. Our efforts are drawing new visitors to the national parks. We're already seeing this growth, as visitation grew from 274 million in 2013, to 293 million in 2014, and 307 million in 2015. These visits do more than provide inspirational, educational and recreational opportunities; in 2014, they drove \$29.7 billion in economic impact, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs in communities around the country.

The National Park Service has carried out hundreds of projects and programs across the country engaging youth, investing in visitor experience, increasing volunteerism, supporting communities and preserving natural and cultural resources as part of our signature Centennial plan, *A Call to Action*, to prepare for the next century. In addition, the NPS, in partnership with the National Park Foundation, launched the Find Your Park campaign to invite all Americans to rediscover their national parks. The Find Your Park campaign – which is now recognizable to one in four young adults – is helping to inspire and create the next generation of national park visitors, supporters, and advocates. The NPS is also working with the Foundation to leverage the support of major corporate partners and private philanthropy, as well. The Foundation has already raised more than \$200 million through gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other donors as part of its larger fundraising campaign goal of \$350 million for the Centennial.

The funding supported by this Committee in FY 2015 and FY 2016 put parks on strong footing to begin their second century of operations. That funding covered fixed costs and stabilized park operations, restored seasonal rangers, increased volunteer management capacity, and will allow the NPS to address additional deferred maintenance projects on its highest priority non-transportation assets. The funding also expanded the NPS' leveraging capacity to complete public-private partnership projects through the Centennial Challenge program.

2017 Budget Summary

The 2017 budget supports continued stewardship of resources of national significance and the provision of enriching experiences and enjoyment for all visitors. The President's budget will

ensure that national parks continue to serve the visitors who come every year to relax and recreate in America's great outdoors and learn about the people and places that make up America's story.

The 2017 President's budget request proposes total current appropriations of \$3.1 billion for the NPS. This is a net increase of \$250.2 million above 2016 enacted current appropriations. The request fully funds \$12.1 million in fixed costs and includes a net program increase of \$240.1 million. The budget proposes targeted increases totaling \$253.5 million to fund essential programs and emerging operational needs, including \$190.5 million in current funds to build on the Centennial Initiative support provided in FY 2016. The budget also includes \$13.4 million in reductions in external programs and heritage partnership programs.

The request also includes an estimated \$1.2 billion in mandatory appropriations, a net increase of \$712.4 million. The funds would reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on high priority assets, enhance the NPS' capacity to leverage public/private partnerships, and support land acquisition and grants to state and local governments for recreation. In total, the NPS request includes budget authority of \$4.3 billion.

The 2017 budget request includes the remaining unfunded portion of the Centennial Initiative originally proposed in 2016, supported by current and mandatory funds. The current request includes a \$190.5 million increase to invest in the second century of the NPS. Of this increase, \$150.5 million will address the deferred maintenance backlog. Together with the mandatory proposal discussed below, this will provide the NPS the resources to restore and maintain all

currently-identified highest priority non-transportation assets in good condition over the next ten years. Other key increases include \$20.0 million for the President's Every Kid in a Park initiative, comprised of \$11.5 million to transport more than one million students from Title I elementary schools in urban areas to nearby national parks and \$8.5 million to support park-level youth engagement coordinators. Additionally, the request includes a \$20.0 million increase for Centennial Challenge projects and partnerships, leveraging federal funds with partner donations for signature projects and programs at national parks.

Mandatory funding for the Centennial initiative has been proposed as part of the Administration's National Park Service Centennial Act. This includes funding of \$300.0 million annually for three years to support Second Century Infrastructure Investment deferred maintenance projects, as well as \$100.0 million annually for three years to provide the Federal match to accomplish Centennial Challenge signature projects at many more park units. NPS would also have the opportunity to compete for funding through the proposed \$100.0 million Public Lands Centennial Fund, a multi-agency program proposed to be managed by the Department and awarded competitively to the NPS, as well as to Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The Act also provides the authority for NPS to collect and retain additional revenue for senior pass sales and camping and lodging fees. Receipts for this Second Century Fund will be matched by donations in order to fund visitor enhancement projects.

In addition to the Centennial initiative, the 2017 budget proposes an increase of \$25.7 million for a Cultural Resources Challenge, which focuses on the stewardship of America's cultural heritage

and builds on key programs to meet the needs and challenges confronting NPS and its partners in the 21st century. Included within the Cultural Resource Challenge are increases of \$2.0 million in park project funds to expand the Vanishing Treasures program; \$0.9 million to modernize the National Register Information System and to digitize its records, improving access to information and reducing the risk of resource damage and loss; \$0.8 million to expand grants from the National Center for Preservation Training and Technology; \$2.0 million to provide increased funding for Historic Preservation Fund Grants-in-Aid to Tribes, reflecting the increasing number of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices; and \$20.0 million for HPF Civil Rights grants. The \$20.0 million increase is comprised of a \$17.0 million increase to Competitive Grants and \$3.0 million in Grants-in-Aid to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to document, interpret, and preserve the stories and sites of the Civil Rights Movement and African American experience.

Operation of the National Park System

The Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) appropriation funds the operations of our 410 parks and related programs. The 2017 budget proposes ONPS funding at \$2.5 billion, \$154.8 million over 2016 enacted.

The request for operations fully funds fixed costs of \$11.5 million and \$143.3 million in net program increases. These increases are not offset with reductions to park operations.

In addition to the Centennial initiative and Cultural Resource Challenge current proposals previously discussed, \$10.7 million is requested to support new parks and critical

responsibilities, such as Manhattan Project NHP and the visitor service and law enforcement costs of the 2017 Presidential Inaugural. The request also includes \$8.1 million to provide federal employee health benefits to newly eligible seasonal employees, in compliance with the Office of Personnel Management's 2014 decision expanding availability of Federal Employee Health Benefits coverage for certain employees. The request reflects the amount necessary to fund this new requirement in FY 2017. The budget also includes \$2.6 million to increase Internet bandwidth at national parks.

Additionally, an increase of \$1.1 million would support further research and monitoring at Arctic parks affected by climate change, and \$1.2 million would support coordinated, science-based response to proposed energy development near park lands. The budget includes requests of \$3.0 million to implement climate change adaptation projects at parks, and \$1.0 million to support research and monitoring of the proposed uranium mining withdrawal near Grand Canyon National Park. Finally, the operations account includes a reduction of \$2.2 million for the elimination of the National Capital Performing Arts Program.

Centennial Challenge

The 2017 budget proposes an additional \$20.0 million for this matching program, for a total proposed current funding level of \$35.0 million. Funding would provide the Federal match to leverage partner donations at least one to one for signature projects and programs at national parks in support of the parks' second century. This program is further bolstered by the Administration's mandatory proposal to fund an additional \$100.0 million a year for three years.

In 2016, the NPS leveraged private donations more than two to one, providing an excellent rate of return to the taxpayer.

National Recreation and Preservation

The National Recreation and Preservation appropriation funds programs that support local and community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. The 2017 budget includes \$54.4 million, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$226,000, an increase of \$703,000 for digitization of the National Register of Historic Places, an increase of \$200,000 to modernize the National Register Information System, an increase of \$750,000 to support grants from the National Center for Preservation Training and Technology, an increase of \$260,000 to support the Federal Lands to Parks program, and a reduction of \$10.4 million for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) commissions and grants, a net change of \$8.2 million below 2016 enacted.

The budget provides \$10.1 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, which assists communities in implementing their own vision of livability, sustainability, and responsibility, and assists partners in successfully utilizing the array of resources and tools available through Federal agencies and nongovernmental groups. RTCA helps promote the values of health, conservation, and enjoyment of our Nation's resources with a valuable return on investment through on-the-ground projects, such as river restoration and the creation of walking and biking trails. The budget also sustains funding for American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance (ABPPA) grants at \$1.2 million, which provide grants to partners for the preservation of threatened historic battlefields not on NPS lands. Both the RTCA and ABPPA programs are key components of the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Historic Preservation Fund

The Historic Preservation Fund appropriation supports Historic Preservation Offices in states, territories, and tribal lands for the preservation of historically and culturally significant sites and to carry out other responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act. The 2017 budget requests \$87.4 million, an increase of \$22.0 million from 2016 enacted. The request provides \$46.9 million for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories, level with 2016 enacted; an increase of \$2.0 million to Grants-in-Aid to Tribes for a total of nearly \$12.0 million; an increase and total program amount of \$3.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); and an increase of \$17.0 million to Competitive Grants for a total of \$25.5 million. The newly proposed HBCU grants and \$25.0 million of the competitive grants would support preserving the sites and stories of the Civil Rights Movement. The remaining \$0.5 million of the competitive grants would support grants to underrepresented communities, as established in 2014.

Construction

The budget proposes \$252.0 million for Construction, reflecting increased fixed costs of \$347,000 and a net programmatic increase of \$58.8 million, for a total change of \$59.1 million above 2016 levels.

Of the \$58.8 million in targeted increases, \$54.7 million supports the Centennial initiative. Line Item Construction is funded at \$153.3 million, a \$37.1 million increase from 2016 enacted, providing funding to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on the highest priority non-transportation assets. Complementary increases of \$8.3 million for Construction Planning, \$3.7

million for Denver Service Center operations, and \$5.7 million for Regional Facility Project Support would ensure capacity and ability to implement the proposed projects. The Construction request also includes \$4.0 million to replace public safety and emergency telecommunications systems.

As discussed above, the Centennial initiative's proposed efforts on deferred maintenance—current and mandatory—would allow NPS to ensure all currently-identified highest priority non-transportation assets are restored and maintained in good condition over 10 years.

Land Acquisition and State Assistance

The budget proposes full funding for programs funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, totaling \$900.0 million in current and mandatory funding for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture in FY 2017, and proposes to permanently authorize \$900.0 million in annual mandatory funding beginning in FY 2018. For NPS, the 2017 budget proposes \$178.2 million for current Federal Land Acquisition and State Conservation Grants, a net increase of \$4.6 million from the 2016 enacted level. Of the total amount, \$68.2 million is proposed for Federal Land Acquisition projects and administration, a programmatic increase of \$4.5 million compared to 2016 enacted. This includes increases of \$4.2 million for high-priority land acquisition projects, \$72,000 to support acquisition of inholdings, donations and exchanges, and \$252,000 to support administration of the American Battlefield Protection Program acquisition grants. A total of \$110.0 million is proposed for State Conservation Grants and administration, with a net programmatic reduction of \$14,000 proposed. This is comprised of an increase of

\$825,000 proposed for administration of state conservation grants, and a decrease of \$839,000 proposed for State Conservation grants.

Mandatory Proposals

The budget proposes several mandatory proposals related to the Centennial Initiative, including the Centennial Challenge, Second Century Infrastructure Investment, Second Century Fund, and Public Lands Centennial Fund.

Additionally, the budget includes a proposal for mandatory LWCF funding, of which \$141.2 million is proposed for the NPS in 2017. Of this amount, \$66.2 million is for Federal Land Acquisition and \$45.0 million is for State Conservation Grants. The remaining \$30.0 million would provide funds to re-establish the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) grants program, providing competitive grants to rehabilitate and improve existing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in urban communities. Program efforts would align with the America's Great Outdoors goal of creating and enhancing a new generation of safe, clean, and accessible urban parks and community green spaces. Projects would focus on connecting and engaging communities, especially young people, to their neighborhood parks and would include objectives to directly engage underserved populations, renewing an emphasis on improving recreation services to inner-city minority and low-to-moderate income populations and communities.

Planning and Performance Integration

In formulating the 2017 budget request, the NPS used a variety of tools to incorporate performance results and other information into the decision-making process. These tools include

the Budget Cost Projection Module, the Business Planning initiative, and the NPS Scorecard, as well as continued program evaluations. These tools are used to develop a more consistent approach to integrating budget and performance across the NPS, as well as to support further accountability for budget performance integration at all levels of the organization. The 2017 budget reflects the priorities of the NPS as the primary agency promoting both conservation and recreation for every citizen and visitor to enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my summary of the 2017 budget request for the National Park Service. We would be pleased to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.