



## Celebrating and Enhancing America's Great Outdoors

*Atop soaring mountain peaks, alongside bubbling streams, in woodlands and grasslands that stretch over rolling hills, Americans find inspiration in our great outdoors. Just as our diverse and rugged landscapes reflect our national character, the way we care for these open spaces mirrors our commitment to future generations.*

*President Barack Obama  
September 26, 2013*

Throughout American history, the great outdoors have shaped the Nation's character and strengthened its economy. Each year parks, national monuments, wildlife refuges, and Interior's other public lands provide hundreds of millions of visitors the opportunity to recreate on America's land and appreciate the Nation's cultural and natural resources. In 2012, Interior lands hosted 417 million visitors, generating an economic output of \$45 billion and supporting 372,000 jobs. These lands protect unique vistas and cultural icons; watersheds that provide water for wildlife habitat, human consumption, and irrigation; areas that preserve and protect historic uses like hunting and fishing; and sites attract visitors that are economic engines for local communities across the Country.

Over the past few years, there has been much to celebrate about public lands and resource conservation. In 2010, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors initiative to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation and recreation agenda to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors. Instead of dictating policies, America's Great Outdoors turns to communities for local, grassroots conservation initiatives. Interior has worked with its sister agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality to engage the public in framing this agenda.

Connecting people with America's special places includes a shared cultural heritage. In 2013, President Obama established five new national monuments that celebrate the Nation's rich history and natural heritage. The monuments, located in Delaware,

Maryland, New Mexico, Ohio, and Washington help tell the story of significant people and extraordinary events in American history.

America's love and appreciation for the outdoors is not new. The Nation's conservation legacy dates back to 1872 with the designation of Yellowstone as the first national park. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt designated Pelican Island in Florida, as the Nation's first national wildlife refuge. In 2014, the Nation celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act, a historic bipartisan law that has protected nearly 110 million acres for the benefit of current and future generations of Americans. In 2015, the landmark Land and Water Conservation Fund will mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. And, in 2016 America will celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service. Widely lauded as "America's Best Idea," NPS has enhanced the quality of life for Americans for nearly 100 years through the physical, mental, and social benefits of outdoor experiences and community engagement.

At the same time, the demands placed on public lands and waters are greater than ever. Population growth, climate change, and resource use place increasing pressures on landscapes and waterways. America is more urban and more diverse than at any time before, and that is especially true of the younger generations. In the increasingly urbanized and plugged-in society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the threat of a diminished connection between people and the outdoors has never been greater.

The actions taken now will lay the groundwork for a future conservation legacy. To meet these challenges, the 2015 budget requests the resources and authorities to care for this legacy and prepare for

the future. Working in partnership with farmers, ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts, hunters, anglers, business leaders, Tribes, States, and local governments, Interior will expand access to public lands and connect Americans to the outdoors. In doing so, Interior will protect America's cultural heritage and resources for future generations; establish and revitalize great urban parks and community green spaces; conserve and restore large landscapes and working lands and waters; and enhance America's rivers and watersheds.

The 2015 President's budget request maintains the Interior Department's commitment to stewardship of America's Great Outdoors with a current request of \$5.1 billion for programs that include operations of public land management units, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and grants to States and others. This is an increase of \$127.1

million compared to the 2014 enacted level. The budget includes a current request of \$246.0 million for Interior's LWCF programs that conserve lands and support outdoor recreation. An additional \$104.0 million is requested for the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service. A separate legislative proposal includes permanent funding totaling \$550.0 million for both Departments. Across all funding sources and agencies, the Administration proposes to permanently authorize \$900.0 million in annual permanent funding for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture Land and Water Conservation Fund programs beginning in 2016.

Land management operations will receive \$4.6 billion, an increase of \$105.5 million compared to 2014. This request provides \$1.1 billion to the Bureau of Land Management, \$1.3 billion to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and \$2.3 billion to NPS for operations.

<b>AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS</b>			
(dollars in millions)			
	2014 Enacted	2015 Request	Change
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS</b>			
Bureau of Land Management.....	1,071.3	1,058.0	-13.3
Fish and Wildlife Service.....	1,188.3	1,260.0	+71.7
National Park Service .....	2,236.8	2,283.9	+47.1
<b>Subtotal, Land Management Operations .....</b>	<b>4,496.4</b>	<b>4,601.9</b>	<b>+105.5</b>
<b>LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAMS</b>			
Federal Land Acquisition.....	136.1	147.9	+11.8
Fish and Wildlife Service			
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund * ..	27.4	50.0	+22.6
National Park Service			
State Assistance Grants.....	48.1	48.1	0
<b>Subtotal, LWCF Programs .....</b>	<b>211.6</b>	<b>246.0</b>	<b>+34.4</b>
<b>OTHER GRANT PROGRAMS</b>			
Fish and Wildlife Service			
Partnership Programs.....	96.5	87.8	-8.7
National Park Service			
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance.....	9.9	10.0	+0.1
Historic Preservation and Battlefield Grants .....	57.6	57.6	0
<b>Subtotal, Other Grant Programs .....</b>	<b>164.1</b>	<b>155.5</b>	<b>-8.6</b>
<b>RECLAMATION RIVER RESTORATION.....</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>116.0</b>	<b>-4.2</b>
<b>TOTAL, AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS.....</b>	<b>4,992.3</b>	<b>5,119.4</b>	<b>+127.1</b>

*\* This table reflects only the portion derived from the LWCF.*

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Increased resources include \$1.9 million for BLM's National Landscape Conservation System that will allow BLM to address its highest priority needs in national monuments and national conservation areas, including developing management plans for recently designated units and developing and implementing travel management plans for high-use units. The request includes an increase of \$2.5 million for a FWS-wide effort to expand urban-focused conservation training programs for youth from all backgrounds, providing the conservation training, education, and experience needed to develop America's conservation leaders. The request also includes an increase of \$30.0 million in support of the NPS Centennial, which together with funding proposed separately, will support expanded volunteer opportunities at parks, enhance partnerships with conservation organizations to engage youth in service and conservation projects, hire youth and veterans at parks, and improve the condition of park facilities.

The budget for LWCF includes \$672.3 million for Interior, including a current request of \$246.0 million. This includes \$147.9 million for Federal land acquisition. Of this request, \$39.5 million is for acquisition of Collaborative Landscape Projects to address specific conservation priorities identified through a collaborative process conducted by Interior's land management bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service. The current request also includes \$50.0 million for FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants and \$48.1 million for NPS State Assistance grants. The permanent proposal for Interior is \$426.3 million, including \$299.3 million for Federal land acquisition, of which \$154.7 million is identified for CLP projects, \$50.0 million for FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants, \$52.0 million for NPS State Assistance grants, and \$25.0 million for the NPS Urban Parks and Recreation Fund grants.

The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture followed a rigorous merit-based evaluation process to select landscapes for investment. After evaluation and prioritizing multiple ecosystems, they selected eight landscapes for current and permanent funding in 2015:

- California Southwest Desert.
- National Trails System.
- Florida Georgia Longleaf Pine Initiative.
- South Carolina Longleaf Pine.

- Upper Rio Grande in New Mexico and Colorado.
- Grassland/Prairie Potholes in the Dakotas.
- High Divide in Idaho and Montana.
- Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in Wyoming.

The LWCF proposal includes \$15.0 million in current and permanent funds to specifically improve access, including \$2.5 million for recreational access in parks and \$12.5 million for improved access to refuge and BLM public lands for sportsmen and hunters.

Other assistance programs included in America's Great Outdoors will receive \$155.4 million, a decrease of \$8.6 million. This includes \$87.8 million for FWS partnership grants, of which \$34.1 million is for North American Wetlands Conservation grants, \$3.7 million is for Neotropical Migratory Bird grants, and \$50.0 million is for State and Tribal Wildlife grants. Funding for NPS includes \$10.0 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program and \$57.6 million for historic preservation grants, of which \$56.4 million is for Historic Preservation Fund grants and \$1.2 million is for American Battlefield Protection Program grants.

The Bureau of Reclamation river restoration projects are funded at \$116.0 million, a decrease of \$4.2 million compared to 2014. These projects are identified as part of the America's Great Outdoors initiative because of their direct benefit to the restoration of important watershed ecosystems in the West. Included in this total is \$32.0 million for Reclamation's San Joaquin River Restoration Program, an increase of \$6.0 million, which will primarily be used for the Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Channel and Structural Improvements Project to implement two of the highest priority projects identified in the Settlement of *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Rodgers* and authorized in the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act.

In the national dialogue about the development of the America's Great Outdoors initiative, Americans reiterated the importance of open spaces and recreation to their quality of life, health, and commitment to conservation. National parks, wildlife refuges, and BLM public lands provide recreation experiences that include many forms: camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, bird watching, biking, swimming, and many other activities. Many water-related recreational activities have been made available as a result of Reclamation projects. The resources

provided in the 2015 President’s budget will allow the bureaus to provide important visitor services such as interpretive programs, displays, videos, and other visitor facilities in addition to providing access to the spectacular land, water, wildlife, and

cultural features themselves. By focusing on visitor services, increasing volunteer opportunities, youth engagement, and safeguarding access for recreation, Interior ensures that public lands and cultural objects will be preserved for future generations.

<b>2015 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND</b>			
(dollars in millions)			
	Current	Permanent	Total
<b>GRANTS TO STATES</b>			
LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants .....	48.1	52.0	100.1
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Grants .....	50.0	50.0	100.0
Forest Legacy Grants .....	53.0	47.0	100.0
Urban Parks and Recreation Grants .....	0	25.0	25.0
<b>Total, Grants to States .....</b>	<b>151.1</b>	<b>174.0</b>	<b>325.1</b>
<b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>			
Bureau of Land Management .....	25.0	64.4	89.4
Fish and Wildlife Service .....	55.0	113.8	168.8
National Park Service .....	55.9	115.1	171.0
U.S. Forest Service .....	51.0	76.7	127.7
Interior Office of Valuation Services .....	12.0	6.0	18.0
<b>Total, Land Acquisition Total .....</b>	<b>198.9</b>	<b>376.0</b>	<b>574.9</b>
Subtotal, Department of the Interior .....	246.0	426.3	672.3
Subtotal, Department of Agriculture .....	104.0	123.7	227.7
<b>TOTAL, LWCF FUNDING.....</b>	<b>350.0</b>	<b>550.0</b>	<b>900.0</b>

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## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL

*The national park idea has been nurtured by each succeeding generation of Americans. Today, across our land, the national park system represents America at its best. Each park contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of the United States and our way of life; of the natural processes which have given form to our land, and to the enrichment of the environment in which we live.*

*George B. Hartzog, Jr., NPS Director 1964-1972*

In 1916, NPS was charged with a dual mission—to make the parks accessible to all while preserving them for future generations. America has changed dramatically since the birth of NPS, and this once revolutionary concept of preserving the Nation’s most significant natural and cultural resources has evolved into a quintessential symbol of the Nation. The responsibilities of NPS now extend to 401 units that receive hundreds of millions of visitors each year. Many of these units challenge and expand the predominantly wilderness image of national parks from 100 years ago, encompassing urban centers, cultural venues, and sites that document America in all of its complexity.

Prior to 1916, the Federal government only sporadically engaged in preserving public lands and focused mainly on the western United States. In 1832, Congress established the Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas, and in 1872 Yellowstone National Park was established. In 1890, Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant (now part of Kings Canyon) National Parks were created. In 1906, the Antiquities Act gave the President the authority to declare national monuments. Among numerous other sites, this Act allowed for the protection of the Grand Canyon National Monument in 1908.



However, there was no specific organization, let alone uniform policies for the management of this growing assembly of parks and monuments.

National parks were administered by the Secretary of the Interior, but as in the case of Yellowstone, patrolled by soldiers detailed by the Secretary of War. The national monuments were administered in various ways: monuments of military significance by the Secretary of War, those within or adjacent to national forests were placed under the Department of Agriculture, and the rest were administered by the Department of the Interior.

By 1916, the Interior Department was responsible for 14 national parks and 21 national monuments but had no organization to manage them. Stephen T. Mather, a businessman and conservationist who was an early proponent of creating a Federal agency to specifically oversee national parks, became the founding director of NPS in 1917 and served until 1929. Mather’s lasting legacy was the creation of a professional civil service organization and the establishment of systematic criteria for adding new properties to the national park system.

Today’s NPS covers over 84 million acres, encompassing 401 park units. The support of over 150 non-profit park friends groups, 65 cooperating associations, and 246,000 volunteers plays a crucial role in advancing the NPS mission.

The NPS also helps administer dozens of affiliated sites—the National Heritage Areas, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Landmarks, and National Trails. Additionally, NPS works with States, Tribes, local governments, and other partners to protect natural, cultural, and recreational resources outside of the park units. This assistance takes

the form of grants, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Conservation Assistance grants and Historic Preservation Fund grants, or through technical assistance from programs such as the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program.

In 2016, NPS heads into its second century, a defining moment offering an opportunity to celebrate America’s conservation and cultural heritage and to invest in improvements for the next century of stewardship.

The NPS seeks to recommit to the preservation of these special places, to invest wisely in the system's most important assets, to use parks to enhance informal learning, engage volunteers, provide training opportunities to youth, and to enhance the NPS' ability to leverage partnerships to accomplish its mission. The President's budget request proposes a robust Federal investment through a three-pronged funding strategy of current and permanent funding, and inclusion in the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative. This significant investment will include:

- \$30.0 million for NPS operations to expand volunteer opportunities at parks, engage youth in service and conservation projects, hire youth and veterans at parks, and improve the condition of park facilities.
- Funds for matching NPS Centennial Challenge projects and programs at national parks to catalyze creative initiatives to improve visitor services, support outreach to new audiences, and leverage partnerships to reinvigorate the parks and connect with communities. Requested are \$100.0 million a year for three years from new, permanent funds and \$10.0 million in current funds in the 2015 budget's Centennial Challenge account.
- \$200.0 million a year for three years in new, permanent funds, to complete high-

priority deferred maintenance projects which are needed to ensure that parks can complete their missions and serve visitors safely and effectively.

- \$100.0 million as part of the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative to complete high-priority deferred maintenance projects.
- The opportunity for NPS to compete for an additional \$100.0 million a year for three years, in project funding to meet conservation and maintenance needs through a Centennial Land Management Investment Fund as part of a new, permanent proposal. Also, \$100.0 million is included as part of the Administration's Opportunity, Growth, and Security initiative. Project funding will be awarded competitively to Interior's public lands bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service.

Overall, the Centennial initiative—including current, permanent, and Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative resources—will allow NPS to ensure that 1,700 or 20 percent of the highest priority park assets are restored to good condition. The effort creates thousands of jobs over three years, provides over 10,000 work and training opportunities to young people, and engages more than 265,000 volunteers in support of public lands.

<b>CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE</b>			
(dollars in millions)			
	Current	Permanent	Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative
<b>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE</b>			
Operations .....	+30.0	0	0
Centennial Challenge.....	+10.0	+100.0	0
Construction.....	0	+200.0	+100.0
<b>Subtotal, NPS.....</b>	<b>+40.0</b>	<b>+300.0</b>	<b>+100.0</b>
<b>CENTENNIAL LAND MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT FUND.....</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+100.0</b>	<b>+100.0</b>
<b>TOTAL, CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE .....</b>	<b>+40.0</b>	<b>+400.0</b>	<b>+200.0</b>