



Mount Rainier National Park © Danny Warren/ISTOCKPHOTO

National Park System Funding

No more funding cuts, keep it clean of policy riders

We continue to urge Congress not to cut funding for America's National Parks. Specifically, we are concerned about cutting operations which means cutting the rangers, interpreters, scientists and other important employees who keep our natural areas, wildlife habitat, museum collections, historic buildings and monuments protected and maintained for visitors to enjoy.

National parks - places like Yellowstone, Gettysburg, Statue of Liberty, Grand Canyon and National Mall - ensure that America's historical and natural treasures are preserved for our children and grandchildren to enjoy, and they do it with less than **one-thirteenth of one percent of the federal budget**. Investments in our national parks are needed to overcome years of underfunding, and ensure preservation of our American heritage; and these modest investments can deliver substantial economic returns.

Funding Shortfall

Many parks continue to lack the resources necessary to operate visitors' centers, hire park rangers, protect historic artifacts, combat invasive species and prevent the deterioration of our national treasures. The current operations shortfall stands at over \$600 million. Investments are needed to keep up with inflation and

fixed costs and ensure that special places - from Appomattox to Yosemite - do not fall into disrepair. National Parks should provide safe and enjoyable experiences for park visitors to keep them coming back for family vacations.

National Parks are Proven Economic Generators

Investments in our National Park System are proven to provide substantial economic returns. A recent study commissioned by NPCA found that **every dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars in direct economic impact to the economy**—supporting approximately \$13 billion of local private-sector economic activity and nearly 270,000 private sector jobs.

Impact of More Funding Cuts

At least 80 percent of Park Service funding is for operations, and the bulk of that goes to staff and support for that staff, including vehicles, equipment, and training. Cuts to national park funding mean a reduced presence of park rangers and other staff who serve visitors and prevent damage to these national treasures. Some visitor centers and campsites would have to reduce their hours of availability, and without staff to ensure maintenance, park facilities would likely deteriorate.



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The Deferred Maintenance Backlog

The massive deferred maintenance backlog is currently estimated at almost \$11 billion. Within this backlog is a list of core of projects that are vital to the continued function of parks across the country and the health and safety of park staff and visitors. This list includes “critical systems” such as building roofs, plumbing and piping, safety systems and the pavement on park roads. The park system’s critical systems deferred maintenance backlog unrelated to roads (non-road CSDM backlog) currently stands at \$3.4 billion.

Concerns about Policy Riders

We oppose several policy provisions included and amendments filed for the FY12 Interior-EPA Appropriations bill that will adversely affect national parks and their visitors, water quality, air quality and wildlife. Below are a few of the riders we oppose:

Provisions in the bill:

- **Grand Canyon uranium mining** (Sec. 445) – This provision stops a temporary moratorium on new uranium mining surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, thereby threatening the water quality of the Colorado River that approximately 25 million people downstream rely on for drinking, agriculture, recreation and other purposes.
- **Mountaintop Mining oversight** (Sec. 432 & Sec. 433) – These two provisions would negatively affect the protection of park resources from coal mining impacts. One of those (432) would keep the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement from updating existing regulations relevant to surface coal mining. By improving these regulations, the agency could better protect streams flowing through national parks. This language would affect Big South Fork National River and NRA and New River Gorge National River.
- **Waters of the U.S.** (Sec. 435) – Halts EPA’s ongoing work to clarify which waters remain protected by the Clean Water Act in the wake of confusing court decisions. EPA estimates that roughly 117 million Americans get at least some drinking water from headwaters and other critical streams that are at risk of being denied Clean Water Act protections. This could affect many

national parks such as Mt. Rainier, Colonial National Historic Park and Indiana Dunes.

Amendments filed, no vote yet:

- **Antiquities Act** (Rehberg amendment) – This rider would diminish the president’s authority to designate new national monuments. Since the Antiquities Act was passed in 1906, many of our most celebrated national parks were first designated national monuments by 15 past presidents – both Republicans and Democrats.
- **Regional Haze** (Berg amendment) – This amendment would prevent EPA from cleaning up haze pollution in America’s national parks and wilderness areas as Congress directed it to do in 1977. By blocking EPA from developing haze cleanup plans, the Berg amendment would allow many antiquated coal-fired power plants—responsible for polluting the Grand Canyon, Theodore Roosevelt, and other national parks—to continue emitting high levels of pollution for decades to come.
- **Climate Response** (Scott amendment) – This sweeping amendment would prevent the National Park Service and other agencies from implementing any research, program or activity related to climate change. In order to understand how to protect America’s National Parks NPS must have the freedom to direct scientist and planners to research and plan for the impacts of climate change.

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