



The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2015

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

Next year, Americans will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the modern National Park System. We, the members of the National Parks Second Century Action Coalition, write in support of increasing the nation's commitment to our national parks for their centennial year in the FY16 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Specifically, we support:

- A \$239 million increase in the operating budget for the National Park Service over FY15 levels to restore funds lost over the last several years;
- A \$113 million increase in the construction budget for the National Park Service over FY15 levels to help address the deferred maintenance backlog;
- A \$40 million increase for the Centennial Challenge program to continue to leverage federal funding with private donations to help restore and modernize our parks;
- The temporary extension of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act until a longer term reauthorization can occur; and
- The continued support for legislation to address the financial impacts of wildfire suppression on the Department of the Interior budget.

The National Parks Second Century Action Coalition is made up of organizations supporting conservation, recreation, outdoor industry, travel and tourism and historic preservation that are dedicated to promoting the protection, restoration, and operation of the National Park System to benefit the health and well-being of current and future generations.

We are grateful for the real, though modest, reinvestment in park operations funding in FY15 and we support an additional investment of \$239 million in FY16 so parks can address fixed costs, ensure day-to-day maintenance, advance urban youth education initiatives, preserve the Civil Rights Movement, and restore lost park ranger positions that maintain, restore and interpret parks. In addition, an increased investment of \$113 million in the construction account will help address the \$11.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog. These requested amounts return the operations and construction budgets to FY10 levels prior to the harmful sequester.

An increased investment of the Centennial Challenge program by \$40 million will encourage friends groups, foundations, businesses and other non-federal institutions to help restore our parks. An initial federal investment of \$40 million several years ago generated \$50 million in donations.

We ask for continued support to extend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act until a longer term reauthorization can occur. This will allow the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies to retain and use nearly \$300 million in critically needed fee revenue annually.

Additionally, we urge your support for the reintroduced Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Passage would provide some necessary funding relief to the National Park Service and other Interior agency budgets while relieving the Department of the Interior and the US Forest Service of the many challenges and inefficiencies with “fire borrowing.”

As a final note, we recognize that a more substantial investment is needed in our national parks as the System turns 100, and thus are urging Congress to support the president’s request to provide mandatory funding to support the Centennial Challenge and address the deferred maintenance backlog.

We recognize and thank you for your ongoing efforts to balance limited resources in a difficult fiscal climate. With the National Park System Centennial approaching, we ask you to restore funding to our national parks to ensure enjoyment for future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage, recreational resources, American families who love to visit our national parks, and the economies of park-reliant communities will all benefit from your commitment to our national parks and their gateway communities.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Association for Partners for Public Lands  
American Forests  
American Hiking Society  
American Recreation Coalition  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National  
Park  
The Corps Network  
Destination Marketing Association International  
Friends of Acadia  
Friends of Big Bend National Park  
Friends of Dyke Marsh  
Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau  
Friends of Saguaro National Park  
Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife  
Refuge  
GirlTrek  
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy  
Grand Canyon Association  
Hispanic Access Fund

Mount Rushmore Society  
National Council on Public History  
National Military Family Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Park Hospitality Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Tour Association  
NatureBridge  
Nature Fund for National Parks  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Public Lands Service Coalition  
Receptive Services Association of America  
The Shenandoah National Park Trust  
Student & Youth Travel Association  
Travel Professionals of Color  
U.S. Travel Association  
U.S. Tour Operators Association  
Western National Parks Association  
Western States Tourism Policy Council  
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing