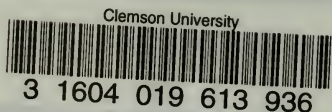


PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012 FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

TO

CONSIDER THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR
2012 FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MARCH 30, 2011



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PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012 FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m. in room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mark Udall presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARK UDALL, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator UDALL. The Subcommittee on National Parks will come to order. The purpose of today's hearing is to consider the Administration's fiscal year 2012 proposed budget for the National Park Service. I'd like to welcome Jon Jarvis, the Director of the National Park Service, who will be testifying this afternoon and look forward to hearing from him in just a few moments.

There's a lot of talk right now about what the appropriate funding levels should be for government agencies and programs in light of the Nation's long term budget problems. But we need to find ways to cut unnecessary spending and spend remaining funds more carefully. It's important to remember that discretionary budget cuts alone, accounting for only 12 percent of the Federal budget, will not achieve long term sustainable debt reduction.

In light of the current fiscal situation and given the importance of preserving our Nation's natural, historical and cultural heritage, the Administration's proposed budget of \$2.9 billion in appropriated funds for the National Park Service is, in my view, a reasonable one. The budget proposes a slight increase in the Park Service's primary operating account with a recommended appropriation of about \$2.3 billion an increase of \$35.3 million or less than 1.6 percent over the current level.

This year's budget seeks to implement the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative, which is designed to promote community based recreation and conservation and to get our youth engaged in outdoor activities. The National Park Service programs are a major part of the initiative, and the funding proposed in the budget will allow the Park Service to improve the visitor experience at our National Parks.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative also includes full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. LWCF, which is funded by receipts from offshore oil and gas development, has

played a critical role across the country in protecting valuable resources while providing the means to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. Even small acquisitions can have an important benefit for our communities. For example, one of the proposed LWCF projects in this year's budget is the purchase of approximately two and a half acres of land adjacent to Monument Canyon which is a popular destination for hikers and climbers in the Colorado National Monument.

The tract would be used to address a critical shortage of parking for visitors. The current situation is creating a dangerous problem for visitors and the park, as visitors are parking along and then crossing the adjacent highway to get to a popular trail head.

The Administration is also proposing significant funding increases for LWCF State grant programs, which provide important financial resources for States and communities for much needed local parks and recreational opportunities.

I look forward to addressing these issues and others in more detail with Director Jarvis. But first I'd like to recognize our Ranking Member, Senator Burr, for his statement. He and I are both long term supporters of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I look forward to working with him on trying to find ways to support this important program.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BURR, U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Senator BURR. Mr. Chairman, good afternoon and my thanks to you for convening this hearing before the National Park Subcommittee. It's our first hearing of the year. I very much look forward to another productive year in this subcommittee with you.

I welcome Director Jarvis. We look forward to your testimony. I might say that parks, National Parks, are important to North Carolina since we possess the most visited National Park in the country. I think some would think that's in the West, but it's actually in the East. Parks are an important part of our national treasure.

Director Jarvis, I look forward to hearing from you about the proposed 2010 budget and how the additional \$137 million which is included in the proposed budget will impact various aspects of the Park Service. Particularly I'm interested, as you heard from Senator Udall, in the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The proposal to fully fund that initiative.

We've both been long supporters of LWCF which is funded through a dedicated revenue stream from royalties of offshore oil and gas production or it's designed to be funded that way. You know, I think we've got our work cut out to do that. But there are success examples all around this country of the great work of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

On a matter of importance to North Carolina I've got to take the opportunity to express my support for a resolution to a long standing issue with Cape Hatteras National Seashores. I believe, as I believe the chairman does, that our parks are a treasure for the use of the American people. That that use should not be restricted in any way, shape or form. Not the case at the Cape Hatteras National Seashores.

I believe that the American people understand how to protect a treasure. We can find balance. But to turn on or turn off is an injustice to the people that own it which are the citizens of this country.

I wish that the courts had never gotten involved in this issue. I hope that the Interior Department will work with me to try to find a satisfactory resolution. If it won't I'll solicit the chairman's help to try to introduce legislation in the next several months that will dictate access that the American people have to this treasure. But hopefully with the right balance of protection of the resources that are there.

So again, I thank you, Mr. Jarvis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Burr.

Welcome Director Jarvis, Mr. Sheaffer, as well. The floor is yours. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; ACCOMPANIED BY C. BRUCE SHEAFFER, COMPTROLLER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, ranking member there, Senator Burr. Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you today at this oversight hearing on the fiscal year 2012 President's budget request for the National Park Service.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to summarize my testimony and submit the entire statement for the record. I'd also ask for your acceptance to have Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer here join me for answering questions.

Senator UDALL. Without objection.

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you.

We appreciate the subcommittee's support for the work we do as stewards of our Nation's cherished, natural and cultural resources. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the National Park Service prepares for our second century of stewardship beginning in 2016. As any resource manager can tell you why stewardship sometimes involves making very hard choices.

The National Park Service's fiscal year 2012 budget request reflects a careful and serious response to the need to reduce Federal spending by supporting our highest priorities while also proposing significant reductions to a number of worthy programs. In addition to the program reductions the budget request also includes substantial management savings and efficiencies. By focusing available resources on the areas of greatest need, the National Park Service can maintain its existing responsibilities while supporting important new initiatives.

The fiscal year 2012 budget proposes a total discretionary spending of \$2.9 billion. This is a net increase of \$137.8 million above the fiscal year 2010 appropriation. The budget request includes an increase of \$39.5 million at more 100 parks. This amount is intended to address operations at new parks and other new responsibilities, improve mission critical operations, engage youth in employment and educational opportunities, protect historical assets at parks commemorating the Civil War sesquicentennial.

Our operations budget is key to helping us continue to protect the critical, natural and cultural resources we are entrusted with. To serve park visitors who numbered last year, \$281 million. Supporting America's Great Outdoors initiative which includes full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund programs at 900 million, the NPS budget request includes 160 million to acquire over 98,000 acres of land within authorized units of the National Park system.

The proposed acquisitions were determined through a coordinated process that the Department now uses to prioritize acquisitions among the 3 Department land management bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service. The criteria we use emphasize opportunities to jointly conserve important landscapes, especially rivers and riparian areas, wildlife habitat, urban areas that provide needed recreational opportunities and those containing important cultural and historical assets. We also look to the ability to leverage partner funds, the degree of involvement with other bureaus and the urgency for project completion.

Also included in the NPS request for LWCF is \$200 million for the State Conservation Grants. That would enable local communities to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities. A portion of these funds would be allocated through a competitive component targeted at community parks, green spaces, landscape level—landscape scale conservation and recreational waterways.

These grants would address the public's concern about the lack of open space and outdoor recreational areas and certain urban and other areas that was frequently conveyed during the listening sessions we held for America's Great Outdoors. In conjunction with the State Conservation Grants, the request also includes an increase of \$1.1 million for the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to bolster their technical assistance to communities that are working to increase and improve recreational opportunities and access.

The fiscal year 2012 request maintains funding of \$9.9 million for the Secretary's Cooperative Landscape Conservation Initiative. This initiative will bring together networks of resource professionals promoting a science base understanding of the effects of climate change. This will produce practical applications that have broad benefits for resource managers seeking cost effective approaches to conservation in the face of economic challenges.

In order to fulfill the service's stewardship responsibilities and sustain key initiatives the critical increases I have described are offset by a number of cost savings and program reductions. The proposed budget requests no funding for Save America's Treasures grants, Preserve America grants or the Park Partnership Projects program. The request also eliminates funding for statutory assistance and proposes significant reductions in the construction in the National Heritage Area programs. In addition the budget includes management savings and efficiencies totaling \$46.2 million.

Mr. Chairman, as I speak to you on the efforts of the National Park Service has taken to restrain spending I'd like to remind you of the important economic value of our National Parks. National Parks are drivers of economic growth particularly in gateway communities. They stimulate spending and job creation. Taxpayer in-

vestments in National Parks result in far more than the obvious recreational and educational dividends.

In 2009 park visitors spent \$11.9 billion and supported 247,000 private sector jobs. Supporting the parks is not simply a matter of wise stewardship. It's also an economic investment in the future.

Mr. Chairman, in closing I must say again and again, how much we appreciate the support, your support and the support of this committee for the National Park Service. I look forward to working with you in meeting the challenges ahead. This concludes my summary. Be pleased to take any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jarvis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN B. JARVIS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this oversight hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2012 proposed budget for the National Park Service. We appreciate your support for our stewardship of our nation's cherished natural and cultural resources and for the important educational and recreational opportunities we provide for the American people.

INTRODUCTION

Responding to the need to reduce Federal spending in a difficult economic climate, the FY 2012 budget request for the NPS contains strategic spending increases combined with selected program reductions and eliminations, made only after serious and careful deliberation. The FY 2012 budget proposes total discretionary appropriations of \$2.9 billion and \$394.5 million in mandatory appropriations for total budget authority of \$3.3 billion. This is a net increase of \$137.8 million above the FY 2010 discretionary appropriations and an estimated net decrease of \$13.0 million in mandatory appropriations from FY 2010.

National parks are drivers of economic growth, particularly in gateway communities. They stimulate spending and job creation. Taxpayer investments in national parks result in far more than the obvious recreational and educational dividends. In 2009, park visitors spent \$11.9 billion and supported 247,000 private-sector jobs. The President's budget will ensure that national parks continue to serve about 280 million visitors who come every year to relax in America's great outdoors and learn about the people and places that make up America's story.

The FY 2012 budget request supports continued stewardship of this Nation's most cherished resources through the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative—a landmark investment in engaging people, particularly youth, in America's outdoors and conserving our Nation's natural and cultural heritage. It also supports the Secretary's goals of cooperative landscape conservation and engaging America's youth in the great outdoors.

BUDGET SUMMARY

The FY 2012 budget request reflects the President's commitment to our national parks with an increase of \$276.6 million over the FY 2010 enacted level, as part of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative. A key component of this initiative is bolstering operational funding at park units that need it most. The budget requests an increase of \$39.5 million for park operations at new parks, and to address new responsibilities, improve mission critical operations, engage youth in employment and educational opportunities, and protect historical assets at parks commemorating the Civil War sesquicentennial.

Further supporting the America's Great Outdoors initiative, the NPS budget request plays a key role in the Administration's proposal to fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs at \$900 million in FY 2012. The NPS request is critical to achieving the goals inherent in the LWCF Act of 1965, which was designed to use revenues generated through the depletion of natural resources for State and Federal land acquisition and the enhancement of lands and waters for recreational and conservation purposes. The request includes \$160.0 million for Federal Land Acquisition, an increase of \$73.7 million from FY 2010, which would be used to leverage other Federal resources, along with those of non-Federal part-

ners, to achieve shared conservation outcome goals in high-priority landscapes. The request also includes \$200.0 million for the State Conservation Grants program, of which \$117.0 million would be targeted to a new competitive matching grants program for States to create and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

The FY 2012 request maintains NPS funding of \$9.9 million for the Secretary's Cooperative Landscape Conservation initiative. This initiative will bring together natural resource professionals at the Federal, State, and local level through real and virtual connections to facilitate the wider sharing of information. These networks of resource professionals will be supported by science centers that translate global scientific understanding of environmental change into solutions at the landscape level. A science-based understanding of these issues and their practical applications will have broad benefits for resource managers that are wrestling with the need to find practical and cost-effective approaches to conservation in the face of economic challenges. With this funding, resource monitoring will increase at more than 150 of the most vulnerable parks in high elevation, high latitude, arid, and coastal areas, such as monitoring for melting permafrost in Alaska and changes in salt marsh salinity along the South Atlantic coast. Additionally, over 500 employees will be trained to incorporate adaptation approaches into resource management.

In order to uphold our stewardship responsibilities and sustain key initiatives, the National Park Service undertook a rigorous review of our ongoing activities and made difficult choices. The proposed budget eliminates funding for Save America's Treasures grants, Preserve America grants, and the Park Partnership Projects program. Further, the request eliminates funding for Statutory Assistance and proposes significant reductions in the NPS Construction and National Heritage Areas programs.

In addition to the program reductions the budget includes management savings and efficiencies totaling \$46.2 million, including \$18.4 million that will be realized in 2011. The NPS will realize the remaining savings in 2012 by reducing \$24.8 million in supplies and material, and \$3.0 million in savings for travel and transportation of persons. In proposing the reductions and absorptions requested in the FY 2012 request, we have been careful to protect park operations as much as possible, and we continue to advance innovative approaches to collaboration and cost savings. The consolidation of our workforce management, acquisition, and contracting offices are prime examples of strategies that will, in future years, deliver greater services at less cost.

I would also like to mention the significant progress we have made in responsibly reducing our unobligated balances. Over the past two years, we implemented a number of policy and program changes, including reducing retention percentages at larger fee-collecting parks if their unobligated balances exceeded 35 percent of gross revenue. The result has been a more efficient targeting of funds to where it's needed most for the benefit of park visitors and protecting resources. It has also allowed individual parks more independence in project selection and expedited the approval of small fee projects. The unobligated balance for this program was reduced from \$218 million at the end of FY 2009 to \$86 million on January 1, 2011.

OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The FY 2012 budget requests \$2.3 billion for the ONPS, a programmatic increase of \$72.9 million over the 2010 enacted level, but a net increase of \$35.3 million. This includes \$39.5 million for park base increases which would benefit over 100 parks. The funds would be used to sustain and improve the condition of cultural resources; provide for new areas and responsibilities; ensure the continuation and improvement of mission critical operations; engage youth; and work collaboratively with partners. These increases are also a critical component of addressing key goals of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative and connecting the public to the Nation's natural and cultural heritage and treasures. Other major increases improve capacity to perform repair and rehabilitation of park assets (\$7.5 million), consolidate workforce management and acquisition offices (\$6.8 million), increase baseline inventories of park cultural resources (\$4.5 million), enhance cyclic maintenance efforts (\$3.2 million), expand security at park icons (\$1.8 million), facilitate information sharing and resource protection of park cultural resources (\$1.5 million), and address oceans and coastal stewardship (\$1.3 million).

The FY 2012 budget proposes a net increase of \$5.7 million in support of the Secretary's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative, which seeks to foster a life-long stewardship ethic in young people. The NPS is dedicated to engaging America's youth in developing a life-long awareness of, and commitment to, our national parks, and we have proposed this investment in 27 parks as part of park base funding to establish youth programs that provide educational experiences and employ-

ment opportunities on a continuous basis. This increase builds upon the \$13.5 million in youth employment and engagement programs that the NPS received in FY 2010 and the \$4.4 million that was provided from recreational fee revenues to youth projects that benefit the visitor experience.

LAND ACQUISITION AND STATE ASSISTANCE

The NPS FY 2012 budget proposes funding totaling \$360.0 million for Federal land acquisition and State Conservation grants funded through the LWCF, an increase of \$233.7 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. Of the total amount, \$160.0 million is available for land acquisition projects and administration, including \$10.0 million to provide grants to States and local communities to preserve and protect Civil War battlefield sites outside the national park system through the American Battlefield Protection Program.

Beginning in FY 2011, the Department instituted a coordinated process for prioritizing Federal land acquisition projects among the three Departmental land management bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service. The cross-bureau criteria emphasize opportunities to jointly conserve important landscapes, especially river and riparian areas, wildlife habitat, urban areas that provide needed recreational opportunities, and those containing important cultural and historical assets. Additional criteria for these projects include the ability to leverage partner funds, the degree of involvement with other Interior bureaus for the project, and the urgency for project completion. The FY 2012 land acquisition request totals over 98,800 acres of the highest priority landscapes, spanning the country from Alaska and Hawaii to Maine and Florida and the Virgin Islands. As required by law, the proposed tracts are located within authorized park boundaries.

The request also provides \$200.0 million, including administrative costs, for State Conservation Grants funded by the LWCF, a net increase of \$160.0 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. Of this total, at least \$78.0 million would be distributed equally to States as required by law, an increase of \$40.8 million over the FY 2010 enacted level. With the remaining funds, the 2012 budget proposes developing a competitive component targeted at community parks and green spaces, landscape-scale conservation, and recreational waterways. These grants would address the public's concern about the lack of open space and outdoor recreational areas in certain urban and other areas that was frequently conveyed during listening sessions for the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

The competitive component would fund "signature projects" that create more outdoor recreational opportunities and conserve open space where access to natural areas has been inhibited or is unavailable; protect, restore, and connect open space and natural landscapes; and provide access to waterways. The projects would be expected to be larger in scale and would likely require and receive greater amounts of funding than has typically been awarded. NPS estimates that 10 to 50 grants could be funded to support acquisition of open spaces and natural areas and development of facilities for outdoor recreation across the Nation. Under the LWCF Act, a single State cannot receive more than 10 percent of total grant funds, so no State would receive more than \$17.9 million under this proposal. Each State would continue to automatically receive an apportionment that would total approximately \$1.5 million. Applications would be evaluated using standard LWCF State grant criteria, as well as new criteria, such as the project's ability to increase and improve recreational access or the use of science and mapping to identify valuable lands for wildlife conservation.

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PRESERVATION

The National Recreation and Preservation appropriation funds programs that support local and community efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. For FY 2012, \$51.6 million is requested; a net decrease of \$16.9 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. The request includes an increase of \$1.1 million for the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to bolster technical assistance to communities that are working to increase and improve recreational opportunities. As a key component of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative, this increase would help provide an important resource to local communities as they work with States to implement projects funded from the proposed \$200.0 million for the LWCF State Assistance program.

The budget also includes a request of \$2.0 million for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails grants program. This proposal reflects the Administration's continuing commitment to ecosystem restoration, including stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, pursuant to Executive Order 13508. The funds would provide tech-

nical and financial assistance for conserving, restoring and interpreting natural, cultural and recreational resources within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As noted above, the budget proposal provides \$19 million in savings by not funding Statutory Assistance earmarks or Preserve America Grants and cutting in half Heritage Partnership Program grants to encourage self-sufficiency among well-established National Heritage Areas while continuing support for newer areas. These reductions are proposed to focus NPS resources on the highest priority needs within parks.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

The NPS plays a vital role in preserving the Nation's cultural history through a variety of programs that address preservation needs nationwide. The FY 2012 request for the Historic Preservation Fund is \$61.0 million, a decrease of \$18.5 million from the FY 2010 enacted level. The FY 2012 budget provides an increase of \$6.5 million, of which \$3.5 million is for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories and \$3.0 million is for Grants-in-Aid to Tribes. The total budget request for HPF in FY 2012 is \$50.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to States and Territories and \$11.0 million for Grants-in-Aid to Tribes. These key increases were provided as part of the America's Great Outdoors initiative to support increased State and Tribal National Historic Preservation Act compliance requirements and an expected 25% increase in the number of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices between 2010 and 2012. No funds are requested for the Save America's Treasures grants program in order to focus NPS resources on the highest priority needs within parks.

CONSTRUCTION

The \$152.1 million requested for Construction includes \$70.3 million for line-item construction projects. The line-item request, along with recreation fee revenues and park roads funding will provide substantial resources for protecting and maintaining existing park assets. Funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and previous appropriations has enabled the NPS to make significant gains in addressing outstanding construction projects. The NPS should complete all ARRA-funded construction projects in FY 2012. The request funds 14 projects including continuation of ecosystem restoration at Olympic and Everglades National Parks and critical new projects at Big Cypress National Preserve, the National Mall, and the Flight 93 National Memorial. The budget proposes funding for the highest priority health and safety and mission-critical projects and does not propose funding for new facilities or deferred construction of replacement facilities. It also includes funding for the Great Smoky Mountains North Shore Road settlement agreement.

PERFORMANCE INTEGRATION

In formulating the FY 2012 budget request, the NPS used a variety of tools to incorporate performance results 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 NPS, as well as to support further accountability for budget performance integration at all levels of the organization. Given the far-reaching responsibilities of the NPS, we must remain strategic in our thinking and decision-making.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my summary of the FY 2012 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.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Director Jarvis for that important statement, for that focus on jobs and the economy. Those are truly important numbers both in terms of revenues, as well as jobs created and maintained. I also thank you for the succinctness of your summary so we have time for some questions and commentary.

Let me recognize myself for 5 minutes first. Let me start out with the National Park Second Century Commission which made several recommendations last year, as you know, to address the future needs of our National Parks. As a long time supporter of parks and now chairman of this subcommittee I want to make sure that we're doing all we can to prepare our National Parks and the Park

Service for the upcoming centennial and hopefully a second century of success.

If this committee were to pursue one new policy initiative to help the parks during this Congress what do you think it should be?

Is it support for LWCF and land acquisition?

Addressing the maintenance backlog?

Bringing more Americans into the parks?

I know those are all big missions and important questions, but I'd welcome your thoughts.

Mr. JARVIS. That's a great question. There's quite an array to choose from. But from my perspective I think recognizing that the National Park Service plays an essential role in this country's public education system is front and center for me.

The role we play in teaching American history. The opportunities that's before us with the sesquicentennial of the Civil War to remind, not only Americans that perhaps had ancestors that served in the Civil War, but new Americans of the challenges of war and how a country recovers from it. The lessons build within that.

The National Parks are extraordinarily important in education. We're reaching about 4 percent of the public school kids in the country today. I'd like to see us grow that.

I know the kids, their education capacity and their interest in our American history as well as the ecology of this country increases when they have access to parks. I think this was a core recommendation of the Second Century Commission. Think it's a huge opportunity for us.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for those insights and for your focus on that opportunity.

Let me move to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It provided \$750 million for the National Park Service. As I recall it took longer to obligate those funds than had been originally anticipated. I know Senator Burr has asked some questions at committee hearings as well on this question.

Could you give me a brief summary on whether all the ARRA funding was successfully spent and what the outcome has been in terms of benefits for the parks?

Mr. JARVIS. It was an extraordinarily great investment in the National Park Service. The \$750 million was received for the National Park Service. 100 percent of that \$750 million is obligated. About 65 percent of it is expended.

This was 829 projects across the country improving our physical plant facilities, visitor services, trails. What was great about it was that we had an inventory of needs. We were able to apply it fairly quickly to a broad array of projects.

But I want to emphasize that 100 percent of that money has been obligated. That, of course, with any project you don't give them all the money the first day of the project began. So there's an expenditure process that goes through and we're at 65 percent.

Oh, yes, the other piece of this was the number of jobs that were created. The total is over 6,000.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that explanation and update. I know you'll continue to categorize and summarize the results of all these projects as we move forward.

Let me turn to the question of climbing fees. I've heard a number of complaints from the climbing community about significant new climbing related fees. It wouldn't surprise you. I know you're on top of everything that comes at the service.

But the criticisms are not only that the new fees are excessive, but they're often established under your special use authority which doesn't require the level of public involvement that's required under your general fee authority. Would you provide some thoughts as to your response?

Mr. JARVIS. I have recently met with the climbing community representatives to discuss this. Both of those points were raised. Specifically regarding Mount Rainier and Denali where that particular authority is used specifically to collect fees for climbing parties attempting that.

There really was basically no particular concern about Mount Rainier. They felt that the public process had been pretty effective. They had been involved. The increase from \$30 to \$43 was relatively nominal and affordable.

The biggest concern was around Denali and the proposal to raise the fee to \$500 from its current level of \$200. We have not made a final decision on that. I think some of the concerns that were raised by the representatives of the climbing community were legitimate both in terms of process and in terms of end result. So we're still in consideration of how and what increases would be appropriate in the case of Denali.

It has caused us to look across the service in the use of the specific authority and the way it's applied to particular user groups and specifically climbers. Part of it is to—the opportunity that that fund source, that fee authority, is that 100 percent of that funding is retained at the park level. That has allowed parks specifically to increase its overall program of safety and rescue and professionalism of the organization.

I know when I was the Superintendent of Mount Rainier that was one of our goals. It was very effective. We ultimately reduced the number of incidents on the mountain, loss of life as well as climbing rescues by professionalizing our rank and file climbers from this fee program.

But there is a balance we have to strike. We're definitely looking into that.

Senator UDALL. Follow up question. I know other countries charge international climbers higher fees. Have you thought about that, particularly in regards to Denali? I, as you know, have climbed there on 2 occasions and there are quite a number of international climbers, but—

Mr. JARVIS. We have talked about it. I would have to defer to our attorneys to whether or not we have the authority to single out other folks and charge them a higher fee. I'm not sure that we actually have that authority.

Senator UDALL. Thank you Director Jarvis. Let me recognize Senator Burr.

Senator BARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

How's the Kid's Passport doing?

Mr. JARVIS. That was something that we came up with a few years ago and in cooperation with the Eastern National. It seems

to be popular. All those kinds of programs that we develop with—focus on kids is pretty popular.

Senator BURR. I was instrumental in that with the Head of the Park Service at the time. My vision was to try to barter with somebody like Scholastic magazine. I would only tell you this. If we can figure out how to put the kid's passport in hands of every school age child, we will figure out the equation to your challenge which is how do we get children exposed to the parks.

It sort of became a profit center of the parks. The only problem was you had to go to the park to actually get the passport. It's a chicken and egg story.

You give the kid the passport. They're going to influence where their parents choose to go on vacation. So I throw that challenge out to you.

Let me ask you. Secretary's Climate Change initiative. How many agencies of the Federal Government do work on climate change?

Mr. JARVIS. I really am unsure of that. I know within the Department of Interior pretty much all of the bureaus have some aspect of climate change responsibility.

Senator BURR. Have you ever stopped to wonder why we don't let one agency collect the data and disseminate the data to all the customers of which the Park Service is one versus to have our own effort to go out and collect data on climate change?

Mr. JARVIS. In our case for the National Park Service, we actually do rely, heavily, on the other agencies, the big science agencies. No—

Senator BURR. But where's all the cost for the program come from?

Mr. JARVIS. I'm sorry?

Senator BURR. Where does all the costs for the program come from?

Mr. JARVIS. In our case one of the challenges we have with the climate change that the other agencies—they're all looking at, you know, at the issue at a very broad scale. What I need to know in order to manage parks in the National Park system that are subject to the effects of climate change, I need a very scaled down level of information. For instance, predicting fire incidents in the Sierras as a result of grasses moving into that environment.

No one else is doing that work other than perhaps the Forest Service would be adjacent to us. So for us to manage, you know, I need to know if the big agencies are predicting that there's a sea level rise. I need to know which archeological sites will be affected by sea level rise so I can inventory those now.

The only people that are going to do that scale kind of work is the National Park Service. That's where we're focusing our dollars.

Senator BURR. In a tight budget year, and I think we're looking at that for the foreseeable future. You know there may be some ones that can't be filled. You know, the one thing that I think we've got to get used to is prioritization.

Let me get into some of the budget items, if I can. The \$138 million more for more than the 2010, 2011. Shouldn't the Park Service share in the reductions that just about every branch of the Federal Government is going to feel?

Mr. JARVIS. We have identified a significant number of cuts.

Senator BARR. Yes, but you've got \$138 million increase on the top line. Is that fair?

Mr. JARVIS. I think that when you're faced with tough economic times you absolutely you have to make some choices. I personally think that on the operational side of the National Park Service house that that's a good investment. That's a 4 to one investment.

For every dollar that we get appropriated dollars that's \$4 to the economy. But what's really great about the Park Service is that money is a local economy level. That's the gateway communities in your State and in all the States across the country that result in tourism.

We saw bulks in tourism this last year. In some parks we're setting records in terms of visitation because in part people were not going to Europe or they were doing stay-cations. They were doing shorter vacations. So they're going to National Parks.

When they go to National Parks they expect to see rangers and have clean restrooms and—

Senator BARR. As you see this surge up in visitors, common sense would tell me that you would put more toward the maintenance budget knowing that things are going to get used. In this particular case I'm curious. You've got an \$81 million education in construction. I'm curious? Does that have an effect on the maintenance projects?

Mr. JARVIS. The one advantage that we have in dealing with that particular issue and I would agree with you that there is a challenge there. But we did get a substantial investment through ARRA which allowed us to invest across the system with over 800 projects and improve the quality of the facilities. So in this particular budget year we were able to sort of strike that balance.

Senator BARR. But you have a projected \$9 billion maintenance backlog. Am I correct?

Mr. JARVIS. Ten billion.

Senator BARR. Ten billion.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARR. So 10 percent of that's been addressed and you're looking at rates of visitors going up. I mean, do we believe that there's going to be a \$750 million genie coming in the future that begins to address the maintenance budget again?

Mr. JARVIS. The maintenance backlog is a huge issue for us. We are dealing with old infrastructure that we have to invest in. Now that large number, the \$10 billion can be broken down into critical systems which is a smaller number.

Mr. SHEAFFER. Roughly \$3 billion.

Mr. JARVIS. About \$3 billion is critical systems. Those are the water systems, the waste water systems, the front line services. We've got a lot of things in the Park Service, a lot of facilities. Only a certain segment are real critical. We are focusing our annual appropriation which is somewhere in the \$500 million a year of repair, rehab, line item construction and fees—

Senator BARR. What you just described to me is 6 years worth of critical infrastructure needs that you currently have. Six years.

Mr. JARVIS. Yes.

Senator BURR. Visitor-ship going up. I'm not sure that the budget, as I look at it, is prioritized based upon where the greatest needs are right now. I just make that point to you.

Let me ask you when the Park Service makes new land acquisition. Do you go through any type of process to determine what the potential maintenance cost of that new land acquisition is going to be?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir. We do.

Senator BURR. Every acquisition we make?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir. Absolutely. If I can add something to that?

Senator BURR. Sure.

Mr. JARVIS. If there are facilities and that appear to be high maintenance we try to have them torn down before we add that land to the parks if they are non historic. We do not want to be adding to our inventory. So that is one of the standards that we've put in place is to remove things that will result in an increase in the maintenance backlog.

Senator BURR. One last inventory question. Is the objective here to add more land to the total inventory or to piece together partials that make a more complete asset that we've got?

Mr. JARVIS. It's the second. It's to fill in blanks inside of an existing boundary.

Senator BURR. Let me just ask, given the vast acreage that we have under control why would we purchase partials that complete verses exchange pieces that are in our inventory for the parcels we're after?

Mr. JARVIS. Within the National Park Service we don't really have, except in a few circumstances, the authority to do land exchange.

Senator BURR. Do you want it?

Mr. JARVIS. I think on a case by case basis. In some cases it does make sense, but if you're trying to buy an in holding inside of Rocky Mountain National Park you're not going to want to trade out another piece of Rocky Mountain National Park in order to achieve that. What you're trying to do is ultimately have a complete National Park.

Senator BURR. How about if it's the choice between that's the only way to access that end piece or you don't get it?

I hate to be walking you through a prioritization but this sense of unlimited funds has to stop. At some point Congress is going to demand that agencies stop coming up with 10, 12 years worth of backlog so once in a special occasion we can have this dump of money to take care of a serious, serious problem. I mean, with all due respect.

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir.

Senator BURR. It borders on mismanagement of this asset to suggest to me that we've got 6 years worth of critical infrastructure needs and those infrastructure needs are not in this year's budget. Now that may mean that the Secretary's Climate Change Initiative gets defunded for a year or it may mean that there's another aspect with the Park Service that we draw down. But I'm, as the ranking member of the committee, I'm having an increasingly difficult time trying to figure out if there's any level of prioritization that we go through to manage the assets other than just to spread them out

and continue to add to the inventory of land which continues to add to the inventory of maintenance backlogs.

So, I share that with you not to solicit a response, to share with you a frustration. My hope is that we will probably see much more review relative to the need for prioritization. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to focus, if I could, Mr. Jarvis, on some of the issues I see in the National Parks in Wyoming. You know, Wyoming is small businesses, communities that depend on winter use activities in Yellowstone National Park. You and I have had a chance to discuss Yellowstone in the past.

I think we need to make sure that the Park Service makes it a priority to ensure the public has access to the Park. That snowmobile access is an essential part of winter use in the park. Certainly having some level of certainty in park policy is also essential.

So I take a look at the time line that's established in the Park Service's winter use plan brochure. The draft environmental impact statement will be released to the public it says in February or March 2011, February/March 2011. Today is March 30.

The draft EIS to me has not yet been released. I'm, you know, the existing winter use rule expire this year. So if the Park Service falls behind it's not going to have a rule in place which is a concern to people that I've talked to throughout Wyoming. Clearly you can imagine the consequences this has on small businesses, on communities in my State and in the communities around Yellowstone.

So I'm wondering when will the draft EIS be released? Do you have it today for us or since it's kind of the end?

Mr. JARVIS. I don't have a specific date. But let me tell you I have as much concern as you do about getting this done prior to the 2011 season. Give some assurances to the communities around this.

We've been, as you know, we have my former Deputy Director, Dan Wenk, is now the Superintendent of Yellowstone and is out there with us at the top of his priorities to get this completed. So I do believe it will be released in April. But I don't have a specific date.

Senator BARRASSO. OK. So can I get your commitment to try to keep this on schedule?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Additional question about Yellowstone is we talk about certainty in Park Service policy being imperative as well, families, businesses plan 6 months, twelve months in advance for the upcoming year. So it's going to take time to transition to a new plan once that plan is out. Will operators function under the existing plan this coming winter as the park transitions to the new plan or what are your thoughts on how that all rolls out?

Mr. JARVIS. My understanding and my expectation is that this new plan when we come out with the Winter Use Plan for 2011 they will be operating under that plan.

Senator BARRASSO. Which is, I guess, kind of the reason I'm saying that the sooner we get that the better it's going to be.

Mr. JARVIS. The sooner, the better.

Senator BARRASSO. The more able people are going to be able to plan because this is a time when they start planning ahead. At some point, if we don't have this in a timely manner, that we're going to need to try to find a better way to do it.

Mr. JARVIS. Yes, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. Now I know that the Park Service has worked closely with my home State to reach the agreement for the exchange of State owned lands within the Grand Teton National Park. I know that you're very familiar with that situation. This is State owned land which is very valuable.

The President's budget includes funding for the first step in a multiyear process of purchasing. The Park Service has ranked it about half way down its list of land acquisition priorities. I think 17 out of 34.

So, you know, there's no Congressional earmark, so the Administration going to have full discretion in prioritizing this spending. So my question is the Park Service committed to the land exchange agreement or should Wyoming start considering other options?

Mr. JARVIS. No, we're fully committed. That comes from the highest level. That I met in Wyoming with the Governor and we've made that full commitment that we're on board.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. The ranking member has joined us of the full committee, Senator Murkowski?

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ranking member.

Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Sheaffer, thank you for being here this afternoon.

Mr. Jarvis, I want to follow up on our incident from this summer. The infamous incident on the Yukon out in the Yukon Charley area with Mr. Jim Wilde and that very unfortunate incident that as I reminded you when we were meeting in my office for all the work that the Park Service does in our State it sometimes takes just one incident. In this case, one that turned out to be very high profile, very public and very unfortunate, not only for Mr. Wilde, but I think for the image of the Park Service.

We had talked about, you know, how we move forward. That matter is, I still understand, before the courts coming up.

Mr. JARVIS. Correct.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I recognize that we're limited in our ability to talk specifically about that because that is a case that will be taken up in the courts. But what you and I had discussed was whether or not the effort is underway to improve the relationship or the perspective of Alaskans toward the National Park Service, particularly out in this region. We had talked about perhaps some additional ANILCA training for Park Service law enforcement officers that are operating in that area. Perhaps some level of sensitivity training.

Can you give me any update in terms of what we might expect for this upcoming season?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Senator. I have followed up in quite a bit of detail on that incident and the needs for rebuilding relationships with the people of Alaska. In March the staff participated in

a Potlatch and community meeting in Eagle. Actually in Eagle Village.

As a follow up we have hired a liaison into the organization from the community to really assist parks in understanding how to build and maintain relationships.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Is this a liaison out in Eagle then or?

Mr. JARVIS. No, they are on our Anchorage staff.

Senator MURKOWSKI. OK.

Mr. JARVIS. So, but there is someone specifically in Eagle that has volunteered to work directly with the park. I don't remember his name right now. But he's a local guy that has made specific—in his words he said, "I don't object to what you're doing. I object to how you're doing it and I can help you."

In discussions I've had with the Regional Director, Sue Masica, up there about that. They were going to take advantage of that opportunity to engage directly with training with the employees. To ensure that, you know, these kinds of incidents really don't happen.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Do you know if Sue Masica has been up to either the Eagle or the Circle area to visit with the local folks up there?

Mr. JARVIS. I do not think she's been up there yet. But I know she is planning it. There is a meeting planned for April the 8th in Eagle. Then some similar ones in other places like Tok and Circle and other parts in sort of that northern tier.

So I do have a commitment from Sue to get out there. She was scheduled to go up there and I think they were weathered out recently. So they—

Senator MURKOWSKI. I think it would be critically important, again, in this relationship that we have that right now is very, very tenuous.

Mr. JARVIS. Yes.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I think the message from the Park Service needs to be one that is a genuine outreach and not just based on one incident, but a continuing outreach and a continuing collaboration. I would certainly encourage that. I know it's going to be uncomfortable for a while. But the only way to get past this is to really be working at it.

Right now the local people do not feel that the Park Service is engaging with them in a manner that is anything close to being described as neighborly.

Mr. JARVIS. I understand.

Senator MURKOWSKI. So we need to get around this.

Let me ask about the, kind of, the source of this issue with Mr. Wilde. This was when his boat was attempted to be boarded of the middle of the Yukon River. That the stated purpose of approaching boats in the Yukon is to conduct the boater safety checks also the checking for the State of Alaska boat registrations.

The questions that I have for you are two-fold. The checking for the State of Alaska registration is one that typically the State of Alaska would do. Did the State give you the authority to enforce the boater registration requirements?

Then similarly the Coast Guard as well because under the Park Service jurisdiction you've got, as I understand it, you adopt all the applicable laws and regs of the Coast Guard. But does the Park

Service have either that authority that is conferred to them either by the Coast Guard or by the State when it comes to checking for boating registration?

Mr. JARVIS. The legal interpretation that we have and this of course is being challenged in this particular case and was the assertion in the first round of the case that the Park Service did not have jurisdiction. The legal foundation is our ability to assimilate other laws and enforce them in areas within boundaries of the National Parks. In Yukon Charley, in this case, the Yukon River is within the boundaries.

Our attorneys believe strongly that the National Park Service has the authority to enforce these both Federal Coast Guard regulations and State regulations on those waters without having a granting of that from those other agencies. Those are assimilated regulations that are promulgated already as National Park Service regulations. So we're basically enforcing our own regulations that they are assimilated from both State and in this case, Coast Guard.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I guess the question would be most people when you think about the National Park Service and the mission that you have it's not to be the Coast Guard. It's not to be the State of Alaska. It is to operate, to build, maintain our parks. It has nothing to do with boating safety or boating licensing registrations.

The concern that we're facing in Alaska right now is the actions by the Park Service are being viewed as an over reach, an over reach of your agency into the authority of others. That the methods that were used, the tactics that were used on this one individual those were unfortunate in and of themselves. But I think it speaks to a broader concern and that is viewed as the over reach.

Again I understand that much of this will be the subject of the legal proceedings that are underway. But I think it is important to have some kind of an understanding that the confines within which the Park Service operates will be respected and that you will not be the law enforcement for all that goes on within the Yukon Charley region. I think that's what you are facing right now.

Again, I don't think that puts you in good stead with the Alaskans in the region there.

Mr. JARVIS. We're having discussions around that, about, at least in the sense of priority, in terms of what the Park Law Enforcement staff are focused on.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman, I have some other questions, but I'll submit them for the record. I appreciate the time. Thank you, Mr. Jarvis.

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Murkowski.

Let me recognize Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Udall. Thank you, Director for your appearance before the subcommittee.

I just spent last weekend in one of my favorite National Parks, the St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands Park. A place I've camped many times over 30 years and was hiking up and down trails with my children and enjoying, in particular the underwater trail at Cinnamon Bay. I'm thinking to myself, my gosh, I may actually get a chance to convey to the Director of the National Park Service.

This is an outstanding jewel in the National Park System. One I hope you will attend to with some enthusiasm given I think its unique status.

Unfortunately the thing I wanted to raise today was, as Delaware's Junior Senator, I'm from the only State in the country, as I'm sure you know, without a National Park. I simply wanted to encourage you to continue to work diligently with our Senior Senator. I'm a co-sponsor on his bill that would establish the First State National Historical Park. He has laid out a vision in collaboration with a broad range of our community that would celebrate our early Dutch, Swedish and English settlement history and our role in being the first State to ratify the Constitution.

Let me focus my 2 questions today, if I could, in addition to 2 areas in your budget.

First, I was really pleased to see \$10 million included for the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program within the NPS. There are several projects in my home State that have been supported by that. I think it's critical to continue to encourage outdoor recreation given understandable concerns about health and obesity connecting with the natural world, strengthening communities.

Can you tell me about your vision for the RTCA and how it will play a supportive role in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, please?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you, Senator. I really appreciate that question because I'm a huge fan of RTCA. It's a program that frankly has been unrecognized for the values that it provides to communities across this country. That is why I requested a little over a million dollar increase to the RTCA program.

There are about 70 employees service wide stationed at communities not necessarily associated with units of the National Park System but there to assist communities organizing around protection of particularly rivers and river fronts, but trails as well. I think that when we went out and listened to the American public in the 51 listening sessions with America's Great Outdoors. We heard over and over again from communities about how much they valued our RTCA employees and the work that they do.

As we move down this path of implementation of America's Great Outdoors report, RTCA is going to be an essential component for us organizing communities and seeking opportunities to bring all the disparate pieces of the Federal Government to play in providing outdoor recreation opportunities, blue ways, access to rivers, green space and places for, you know, kids to move outside across this country. So I have a vision that RTCA will be highlighted as a major component of our America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Senator COONS. I'd like to continue to work in collaboration with you on that. In my former role as a county executive I did a lot of working with our local parks community to build and develop green ways and trails in our community. We have a great, I think, opportunity in Delaware where there's several thousand acres, about 9,000 acres of Federal land on either side of the C and D canal. Where there is an undeveloped trail way on both sides.

I'm looking to find ways to support former Congressman Mike Castle's long work with the Army Corps on trying to raise the standard and quality and accessibility of that. To your point is both

a green way and a blue way and something that connects us to a great, untapped, local recreation resource. In your view would RTCA funds potentially be accessible to help with further accessing or developing the C and D canal green way project?

Mr. JARVIS. RTCA can certainly be a participant in developing the planning and helping to identify fund sources. But RTCA really doesn't have any sort of bricks and mortar or trail funds. Unfortunately because that particular route exists on Federal land which is Army Corps of Engineers if I understand it, it's ineligible for the State side of LWCF. The Corps is not an eligible agency for the Federal side of LWCF.

So it's a little bit of a conundrum in terms of actually how to get that done.

Senator COONS. That is the longstanding challenge. I will in passing also note my enthusiasm for the LWCF funding. It's funded more than 200 projects in Delaware, many of them in the county where I've previously served.

So if neither the Army Corps, as an entity nor Federal land are eligible. Any suggestions or comments about how we might proceed to find some resources that would help with further development of this resource for Delaware?

Mr. JARVIS. You know, the Army Corps of Engineers in of itself, is an agency that has a fair amount of money.

[Laughter.]

Senator COONS. Indeed they are.

Mr. JARVIS. Now whether or not they're willing to use it for that. They were a participant in America's Great Outdoors. They are a major recreation provider in this country. They collect a lot of fees.

I think that our RTCA individuals that are working with you up there are very creative folks. I think that with them we could perhaps find some way to provide some funding for that.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Director. I just wanted to renew my support for Senator Corker's good work over many years. If there's anything I could be doing to be constructive and supportive in both pursuing the C and D canal green way and Delaware's National Park, I'd love to. But I'll also tell you that the network of National Parks out west to which we've taken our young children several times in the last few years in Wyoming and elsewhere, very impressive and pleased with the work that you and your staff do.

So thank you very much for your testimony today.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Coons. We'll start a second round.

If I might, Director, return to the question I asked you at the end of the last round about international climbers perhaps being charged larger fees. Would you, for the record, be willing to let us know what your attorneys determine?

Mr. JARVIS. Yes. Absolutely. We will look into that. We'll get back to you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you for that.

Before I had the great privilege of serving in the Congress I was an outdoor educator and a mountain guide with the Colorado Outward Bound School. I just am passionate about getting Americans outside and encouraging them to enjoy our public lands. It's one of

the reasons that Senator Risch and I started the Senate Outdoor Recreation Caucus.

Can you talk about your role in the America's Great Outdoors initiative, especially with respect to getting more of our children outside and physically involved and can you also tell me what the Park Service is doing to engage young people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you for that question. Again those are very near and dear to my heart. The America's Great Outdoors report itself, as you would kind of expect, is a conglomerate of a variety of comments that we received around the country, about 100,000 comments, 51 listening sessions of which 21 were with young people, specifically with youth. You sort of had to be under 24 in order to be in the room. We had those actually facilitated and run by young people.

They provided a wide array of ideas of how to reconnect young people to the outdoors. They have both optimism and concern about the disconnect we have today. So in terms of the AGO report at the National Park Service, it's my intent to take the comments that were specific to the National Park Service, such as investing in RTCA or having an urban parks focus for a while to really use urban parks as a threshold experience to use our State side of land and water conservation fund more strategically to provide access to rivers for blue ways and river trails and canoe routes. To provide linkages in trail systems, bike paths, horse trails, those kinds of things where they're missing, all of these things to sort of unify a better connection for the American public.

We are developing an action plan from the AGO report specific to the National Park Service a priority list of actions that we can take over the next couple, next 5 years, basically up to 2016. We are focused on developing an action plan around that. With a big component of it focused on youth. We feel that youth employment, youth engagement, you know, youth involvement is a major component of that.

So even if we don't get any new money. I mean, if we've got to think about that in terms of our economy. There are things that specifically the National Park Service can do within our existing priorities and funds.

Let me talk a little bit about Let's Move Outside. The First Lady's initiative Let's Move which had principally a focus on physical education and nutrition, we introduced the concept of Let's Move Outside which is really about using the outdoors to exercise and to improve young people's health, their education and their sense of themselves and their sense of potential future employment as well. So this is a great opportunity for us.

To use programs like our Junior Ranger programs as a Let's Move component. So kids that are participating in some of our Junior Ranger programs now have physical exercise components to it that are branded as part of the Let's Move initiative as well.

We also are piloting a series of very specific youth initiatives that are targeted and focused on young people of color. We feel that this is probably the greatest opportunity to build a whole new constituency for the National Parks, besides all the secondary benefits it is for those young people as well.

So within our 2012 budget a number of the base increases that we have requested are specifically designed toward youth employment and youth engagement in urban environments such as at Fort McHenry in Baltimore to focus on reaching out to kids there, getting them engaged in the park and employed as well.

Senator UDALL. I look forward to seeing this unfold and working with you.

Let me turn to LWCF and some funding cuts. In the most recent CR, continuing resolution, there were a number of funding cuts to programs in the Department of Interior including \$17 million in cuts for Park Service land acquisition. My understanding is those were cuts representing Congressional earmarks and were not in the President's budget.

As you know there are ongoing discussions about the extent of the additional cuts in the next CR. What would be the effect on the Park Service if additional funding cuts were made to your land acquisition budget?

Mr. JARVIS. Are you speaking of the \$17 million or the larger cuts proposed in—

Senator UDALL. I was using the \$17 million as a lead in to—

Mr. JARVIS. OK.

Senator UDALL. Additional cuts to be identified.

Mr. JARVIS. OK.

Senator UDALL. What the effect would be on—

Mr. JARVIS. As you know, for the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund is really in 2 categories, one Federal side and one State side. We administer the State side program. Let me speak to the State side first.

The State side of LWCF has been a very essential program in many cash strapped States to provide green space and provide improvements to parks in over 40,000 properties across this country. You know, we go to National Parks on the weekend. But where do you go after dinner are these small communities, State, regional and city parks. That's what the State side of LWCF really funds. So any cuts to that would significantly reduce the opportunity to provide those local experiences for young people.

On the Federal side, you know, we have a ranked priority list in terms of land acquisition and cuts to that ultimately reduce the total number of properties that we would be acquiring. Most of these or all of these are in holdings such as the one that Senator Barrasso pointed out. But that where there are properties inside park boundaries that are critical to park operations and resource protection. We would just ultimately have to reduce that.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Senator BURR. Mr. Director, if we—if those cuts came from the central office in Washington what would be the net effect on the experience somebody might have at a National Park around the country?

Mr. JARVIS. The central office provides a pretty critical role, in my view. We answer a lot of questions from the American public. Provide a lot of great services out of the central office as well.

Senator BURR. Do you think it could be cut and not have a negative impact on one's experience at the National Parks?

Mr. JARVIS. I'm not exactly sure how to answer that.

[Laughter.]

Mr. JARVIS. I don't even know what the central office budget entails.

Mr. SHEAFFER. There's a number of centrally performed functions like for example, bill paying by the Central Accounting Office and financial management that's done out of a central office. That would cripple the parks if that didn't continue. So and the Park Service has gone through a number of internal reviews over a period of 20 years to reduce the central offices. I'd put the size relative to the field operation up against almost any organization as to being relative to remain.

Senator BURR. I'm just trying to explore where Senator Udall was going which is the choice he presented you was a very specific choice. I would suggest to you the choice, if there are budget cuts that have to happen, should not leave any part of the National Park Service untouched. I would think that if you're focused and the mission is to make sure that the experience at the National Parks is the best possible for its visitors. The first place you would look at what doesn't contribute on the daily basis to the actual natural park and visitors.

So I would think we wouldn't cut payroll. But I would think that there are areas of the central office that we could probably find that we might—

Mr. SHEAFFER. There are cuts to the central office in here. There's \$47 million worth of efficiency cuts that are here some of which will affect the central office.

Senator BURR. Any of those in personnel or was there actually a FTE?

Mr. SHEAFFER. No, they're not intended to hurt personnel at any level. They are intended to look at efficiencies and IT and purchase of supplies.

Senator BURR. Sort of like waste, fraud and abuse. We use that frequently up here.

Mr. SHEAFFER. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. So we would—

Senator BURR. We've sold that about 3 or 4 times in the last couple years.

Let me ask you as it relates to the line item construction category. That seems to be where a majority of the construction reductions were. How would you counsel Congress about our ability to keep track of where and how that money is being used without the line item construction listing?

Mr. JARVIS. We can, at any time, come up and provide you detailed information about the program both in terms of current as well as out year planning. I'll tell you where my head is in terms of construction in the service right now. We are in the process of re-evaluating a long laundry list of so-called needs in the National Park Service for new visitor centers and new facilities that really are probably not justified.

Because what we're seeing a trend in park visitation where the public are no longer going to the visitor centers in the same numbers that are actually going to parks. Many of them are downloading the information onto their iPhone before they even show up. Then once they get there if they've got wireless they can get even more information.

So it's causing us to rethink this kind of bricks and mortar investment that we've been making or are in the queue in some cases. To say maybe this is not where we need to be making these investments. So in part we're reassessing that entire program. We'd be glad to come up and talk to you about that in detail.

Senator BURR. Delighted to hear more about that.

Let me ask you as it relates to the National Heritage areas. I think the Administration has shared with us concerns about the future and the need for some stated criteria. When might we expect the Park Service to submit some type of legislative proposal that sets up the criteria for evaluations of potentially new qualified National Heritage facilities?

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you for that question. That's a great question. We have drafted legislation for that and have submitted it to the Office of Management and Budget which must clear it first before it can come to Congress.

But we do believe that some criteria, some process, some planning and some assurances that there is an organization that can carry out the goals and objectives of a Heritage area is a necessary component to really having a sustainable long term Heritage Area program.

Senator BURR. I certainly agree with you. Both urge OMB to get that out as quickly as they can. That's not always the fastest process, as you know.

I thank you, Mr. Director and thank the Chair.

Mr. JARVIS. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Director Jarvis, let me follow up on Senator Burr's question about the National Heritage area. I want to turn to the Preserve America Grants program which is if not a sibling certainly a close cousin to the National Heritage area concept. I know you've proposed to eliminate funding for that Preserve America Grants program.

Can you tell us what your thinking is as to how you protect nationally significant cultural and historic properties that would no longer be covered by the program?

Mr. JARVIS. In these times you have to find something to cut. When we looked at the actual production on the ground of, you know, real protection of these critical cultural resources, the Save America's Treasures program was actually having more direct effect than the Preserve America program. So in terms of rank priority, in my mind, Save America's Treasures was actually having a better effect than Preserve America.

Preserve America was more of a recognition program than a bricks and mortar program. We have processes for recognition of critical cultural resources through the National Register of the National Historic Landmarks Program as well. I think that, you know, it's a part and parcel to the Heritage Area program but I think if we can figure out a way to establish specific criteria and goals and objectives in the Heritage Area program, I think it will achieve pretty much the same objective that it was originally written for Preserve America.

We did request a fiscal year 2012 increase in the historic preservation fund of \$6.5 million. So that was an area that we felt was an appropriate focus for the boost in the HPF. That would be

money that we then could work through the SHIPPOS to do that kind of work.

Senator UDALL. I have to tell you I really appreciate the open minded approach your team has brought to looking at these tough fiscal year constraints we face. This hasn't been easy, I know. But I want to make sure you know that I'm well aware of the way in which you've gone about this.

If I might, let me return to the centennial that we're approaching and I think that has us all excited. As you know the Second Century Commission made several recommendations to address the future needs of our parks. One recommendation was that you prepare a new National Park plan since the last one was written in, I think, 1972.

Mr. JARVIS. In 1972.

Senator UDALL. Do you have any thoughts on that proposal?

Mr. JARVIS. The Second Century Commission specifically recommended that there be a National Park System plan developed. As you know our specific authority to develop that plan was removed in the mid 1990s. I feel that in order to guide the growth of the National Park System there needs to be a plan.

The growth of the system now tends to be much more random. It puts us in a position of not really being strategic in the design of the National Park System into the future. If we are, which I believe we are, tasked with being the representative institution in this country that represents the best of our natural resource, our natural resources of this country and the American tapestry of history than we need to strategically focus on where we're going to invest in that.

There are missing pieces. There are missing themes in this country. For instance we've had a strong discussion with the Secretary Salazar about if you looked at the Park Service's current inventory of Hispanic history. It would appear that all Hispanic history ended about 1835-1865. There's nothing happened since then related to the Latino and Hispanic culture in this country. We have no parks that celebrate anything since that period.

So there are missing parts. The way to get to that, frankly, is to develop a National Park System plan. That was why it was a core recommendation of the Second Century Commission.

Senator UDALL. I look forward to working with you as we move forward. It may seem like it's a few years away. But the centennial is truly bearing down on us.

I know I've had conversations with the ranking member as well. Clearly his passion for the Park Service and the Park System is well established. So let's carve some additional time to work together.

I think at this point if there are no further questions for today, let me thank you, Director Jarvis, not just for your testimony but for your service and for your wide ranging grasp of the opportunities that the Park Service present to us, America's best idea's in your good hands.

I know some members of the committee may submit additional questions in writing. If so, we may ask you to submit answers for the record. I know you're no stranger to that, those kinds of re-

quests. So in that spirit we'll keep the hearing record open for 2 weeks to receive any additional comments.

Senator UDALL. With that the subcommittee is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 3:41 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX
RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

[Responses to the following questions were not received at the time the hearing went to press:]

QUESTIONS FOR JONATHAN B. JARVIS FROM SENATOR MARK UDALL

Question 1. As you know, the Presidents' recent Executive Order 13563 instructs government agencies to review existing regulations and identify any that are duplicative or unduly burdensome. Does NPS consider the regulation of mountain biking in the national parks, which necessitates the Special Regulations process, to be unduly burdensome and would this regulation be eligible for review under the President's Executive Order?

Question 2. I know that some other countries assess higher climbing fees for foreign visitors. Has the Park Service ever considered charging international climbers a higher climbing fee? Does the Park Service have this authority?

QUESTIONS FOR JONATHAN B. JARVIS FROM SENATOR LANDRIEU

Question 1. Last year, I requested support for a \$2 million LWCF project at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. The acquisition from a willing seller this year would have allowed for preservation of an important historical and ecological site and the restoration of marshland on the property to help absorb storm surges and combat flooding and subsidence. Acquiring this land would also link the state's greater coastal protection and diversion building effort. I am disappointed that your National Park Service (NPS) request for FY 2012 does not include this important project. What is NPS' long-term plan for funding the many projects like Jean Lafitte that are beneficial for recreation, historical preservation, tourism and in cases such as this, coastal restoration?

Question 2. During these fiscally constrained times, I know authorizations for National Park studies are going to have a hard time making it through the legislative process and to become signed into law by the President. However, there are several sites and areas that are nationally significant that should become part of our National Park Service. Fort Jackson and Fort St. Phillip in Plaquemines Parish are two such sites. These forts have a significant place in American history and this country runs this risk of losing these sites if they are not permanently protected. As such, has the National Park Service explored alternative sources of funding for National Park studies to determine whether a site or location is suitable for admission into the National Park Service? Would the Park Service be willing to accept private compensation, rather than Federal appropriations, for conducting a congressionally authorized study?

Question 3. Can you tell me how many National Park studies are currently pending before the National Park Service? And when do you expect to be completed with each of those studies?

QUESTIONS FOR JONATHAN B. JARVIS FROM SENATOR MURKOWSKI

Question 1. Since the "Jim Wilde incident," has the National Park Service ("NPS") implemented additional ANILCA training or sensitivity training for Park Service law enforcement officers operating in rural Alaska for the upcoming summer season?

Question 2. Park Service Rangers have only conducted boater safety stops for three years now. Why was this policy implemented?

Question 3. Did either of the Law Enforcement Rangers involved in the Jim Wilde incident have a criminal background? Does the NPS hire employees before a background check is complete?

Question 4. Are there any current plans to station a law enforcement office in Eagle, Alaska full time to improve interaction with local residents?

Question 5. Is NPS currently planning any hunting closures this year in any of Alaska's National Preserves? If so, on what grounds does the National Park Service feel that it is necessary to re-implement these hunting closures?

Question 6. What is the status of the EA for the Falls Creek Hydro project? When can we expect the Park Service to connect to the Falls Creek Hydro facility? What can Congress do to help facilitate this process?

Question 7. Will NPS issue guidance to the Alaska Region to eliminate "less is better" criteria from future concession prospectuses for hunting guide area permits?

Question 8. Is NPS conducting wilderness reviews in Alaska? If so, how does that comply with ANILCA? Section 1326 of ANILCA states, "No further studies of Federal lands in the State of Alaska for the single purpose of considering the establishment of a conservation system unit [including designated wilderness areas], national recreation area, national conservation area, or for related or similar purposes shall be conducted unless authorized by this Act or further Act of Congress."

Question 9. The State of Alaska has long sought completion of The South Denali Visitor Center. Although NPS Alaska and along Denali Superintendent Paul Anderson support the project greatly, there does not seem to be any support from the National Park Service in DC. Why is the South Denali Visitor Center not a priority for the National Park Service, and what can the Committee do to ensure that this project receives funding in the near future?

Question 10. Why is the National Park Service updating its oil and gas regulations at this time? Is this a necessary expenditure of time and resources? Does NPS foresee this hindering any oil and gas production on private lands within National Park Units in the future? Is it possible for Alaska's National Parks to be exempted from this review, since many of the National Park Units in Alaska operate under unique laws and regulations?

Question 11. In light of the numerous constituent complaints received by my office from Air Transporters who work in and around the Noatak National Preserve, when does the National Park Service plan to reevaluate the authorizations for air transport companies to provide transport services in Noatak National Preserve to help improve the current system? How was the original number of allocations determined?

Question 12. What can the NPS do to accelerate the restoration process of the Kennecott Mine? Please provide a timeline for the project's completion.

QUESTION FOR JONATHAN B. JARVIS FROM SENATOR PORTMAN

Question 1. I appreciate and share your strong interest protecting our national parks and other public lands. I am particularly interested in seeing the completion of the Blossom land acquisition, which would protect hundreds of acres of land in the heart of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, America's 6th most-visited national park. In the context of the funding constraints we face: Can you tell us how you plan to use the Land & Water Conservation Fund to take care of these sorts of opportunities before they are lost?