



September 15, 2021

National Park Service: FY2022 Appropriations

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Park System, which includes 423 units valued for their natural, cultural, and recreational importance. System lands cover 81 million federal acres and 4 million nonfederal acres. As part of the Department of the Interior (DOI), NPS receives funding in annual appropriations laws for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Selected issues for Congress include the total level of NPS appropriations, funding to address NPS’s backlog of deferred maintenance (DM), and funds for NPS assistance to nonfederal entities.

FY2022 Appropriations

The Biden Administration requested \$3.497 billion in FY2022 discretionary appropriations for NPS. The request was 12% more than NPS’s FY2021 discretionary appropriation of \$3.123 billion, enacted in P.L. 116-260. The request included increases or level funding for all NPS accounts as compared with FY2021 (Table 1). NPS’s budget justification also estimated \$1.108 billion in mandatory appropriations for NPS for FY2022, an increase of 7% over estimated NPS mandatory funding for FY2021. These mandatory appropriations come from entrance and recreation fees, concessioner fees, donations, and other sources and also include land acquisition funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF, 54 U.S.C. §200301). The LWCF funding previously had been provided through discretionary appropriations but was made mandatory in the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). NPS’s mandatory total does not include NPS’s share from the DM fund established by the GAOA, which is recorded as a separate allocation from a DOI department-wide account.

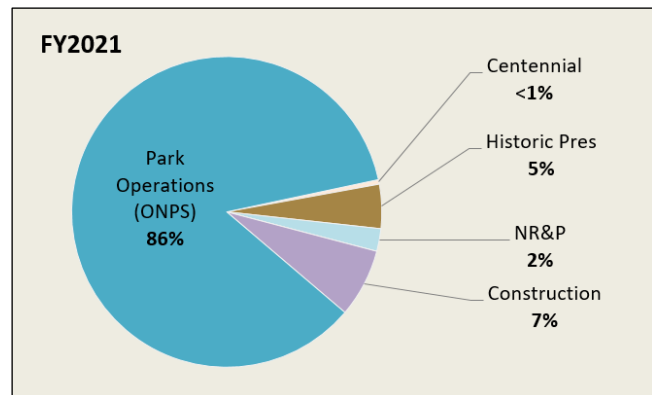
On July 6, 2021, the House Committee on Appropriations reported H.R. 4372 (H.Rept. 117-83), with \$3.470 billion for NPS for FY2022. On July 29, 2021, the House passed H.R. 4502, a consolidated bill with the same amount for

NPS (Table 1). The House-passed amount is 1% lower than the Administration’s request and 11% higher than the FY2021 appropriation. The House bill contains increases or level funding for all NPS accounts compared with FY2021.

NPS’s Appropriations Accounts

NPS has five discretionary appropriations accounts (Figure 1), not counting the land acquisition account (for which funding is now provided by mandatory appropriations). The majority of NPS discretionary appropriations typically have gone to the Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) account to support day-to-day activities, programs, and services at park units. These include resource stewardship, visitor services, park protection, facility operations and maintenance, and administrative costs.

Figure 1. NPS Appropriations Accounts (percentages reflect FY2021 appropriations)



Source: Joint explanatory statement for P.L. 116-260.

Notes: ONPS = Operation of the National Park System. NR&P = National Recreation and Preservation. The FY2021 appropriation included a rescission of \$23.0 million from the Land Acquisition and State Assistance account.

Table 1. NPS Discretionary Appropriations by Account (\$ in millions)

Account ^a	FY2021 Enacted (P.L. 116-260)	FY2022 Request	% Change from House-Passed FY2021 H.R. 4502	FY2022 Request	% Change from FY2021
Operation of the Nat'l. Park System	2,688.3	2,977.3	+11%	2,965.8	+10%
Construction	223.9	278.6	+24%	252.6	+13%
Historic Preservation Fund	144.3	151.8	+5%	155.8	+8%
Nat'l. Recreation and Preservation	74.2	74.5	+<1%	80.4	+8%
Centennial Challenge	15.0	15.0	—	15.0	—
Total	3,122.7^a	3,497.2	+12%	3,469.6	+11%

Sources: Data from House Committee on Appropriations and NPS FY2022 budget request. Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding.

a. Table does not show NPS’s Land Acquisition and State Assistance (LASA) account. In past years this account has been supported by discretionary funding from the LWCF, but the funding was made mandatory by the GAOA (see above). No discretionary funds were

provided for the LASA account for FY2021 under P.L. 116-260 or for FY2022 under the President's request or House-passed H.R. 4502. For FY2021 (P.L. 116-260), Congress rescinded \$23.0 million from the LASA account, which is reflected in the total shown here.

NPS's Construction account covers rehabilitation and replacement of existing facilities as well as new construction. NPS prioritizes DM in project planning. Projects are evaluated based on department-wide criteria related to the condition of assets and their importance to the park's purposes. The account also covers other construction activities and planning.

NPS administers historic preservation programs through its Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) account. Under the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. §300101), the fund receives \$150 million annually from offshore energy revenues, but monies are available only as provided in appropriations acts. Most of the funding goes to state and tribal historic preservation offices as formula grants to preserve cultural and historical assets and sites. Congress also has made some funding available for nationally competitive grant programs.

The National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) account funds NPS programs that assist state, local, tribal, and private land managers with grants for outdoor recreation planning, natural and cultural resource preservation, and other activities. The largest single program funded through the account is NPS assistance to national heritage areas.

The Centennial Challenge account supports the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund. Authorized by Congress in 2016 (54 U.S.C. §103501), the fund provides matching grants to spur partner donations for projects or programs that further the NPS mission and enhance the visitor experience. DM is prioritized. The fund also is authorized to receive offsetting collections from the sale of senior passes under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. §6801).

Issues for Congress

Deferred Maintenance

NPS's backlog of DM, estimated at \$14.368 billion as of the end of FY2020, has been a significant issue in the appropriations process. Despite legislation and agency actions aimed at addressing the backlog, it has increased over the past decade. NPS funding to address DM comes from multiple sources and includes both discretionary and mandatory spending. Congress may continue to assess NPS's progress in addressing DM, including the balance of discretionary and mandatory funding provided for this purpose.

Two discretionary appropriations sub-activities (Line-Item Construction and Maintenance in the Construction account and Repair and Rehabilitation in the ONPS account) have been primary sources of discretionary funding for NPS DM. For FY2021, P.L. 116-260 provided \$267.8 million for these two budget sub-activities; for FY2022, House-passed H.R. 4502 would provide \$274.7 million. Portions of other NPS discretionary budget activities also are used for DM.

The majority of mandatory spending for NPS DM is provided through the GAOA (P.L. 116-152), enacted in 2020. To address DM of five agencies, the GAOA

established a fund receiving deposits of certain federal energy revenues over five years, up to a cap of \$1.900 billion annually, with 70% of the available funding allocated to NPS. For FY2021, the maximum revenues were available, so that NPS received \$1.330 billion. NPS must submit to Congress, with annual budget justifications, lists of priority DM projects to be addressed with this funding. Appropriators may specify alternate allocations for the funds. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF11636, *The Great American Outdoors Act (P.L. 116-152)*.

Additionally, allocations from the Highway Trust Fund support NPS road repair and improvements, including DM. Other mandatory funding sources, such as recreation fees, also have been used for NPS DM. For more information, see CRS Report R44924, *National Park Service Deferred Maintenance: Frequently Asked Questions*.

Land Acquisition Funding

LWCF funding for NPS land acquisition has been a subject of debate in the annual appropriations process. Some Members have expressed the view that agency funding to acquire new lands is misplaced given maintenance needs for existing lands, whereas others have contended that the funds—which typically are used to acquire nonfederal inholdings within existing park units—help to complete valued parks and may facilitate maintenance efforts. The GAOA shifted LWCF land acquisition funding from discretionary to mandatory spending. Under the GAOA, NPS budget submissions still must include account, program, and project allocations for the LWCF funds, and appropriations acts may specify alternate allocations. For more information, see CRS Report RL33531, *Land and Water Conservation Fund: Overview, Funding History, and Issues*; and CRS In Focus IF11636, *The Great American Outdoors Act (P.L. 116-152)*.

NPS Assistance to Nonfederal Sites and Programs

Some Members and other stakeholders have questioned whether NPS assistance to nonfederal sites and programs should be reduced in order to focus funding on the agency's "core" mission of managing national parks. Two NPS discretionary accounts (NR&P and HPF) provide funding for such nonfederal assistance. These accounts combined represented less than 10% of total NPS funding in FY2021. For FY2022, both the Biden Administration's request and House-passed H.R. 4502 would increase funding for the NR&P and HPF accounts. In previous years, both the Trump and the Obama Administrations proposed reductions for some programs, including NPS grants to national heritage areas, which are nonfederally managed. President Trump's FY2021 budget request, for example, would have eliminated heritage area project funding and encouraged heritage area managers to seek sustainable funding from local and private beneficiaries. For more information, see CRS Report RL33462, *Heritage Areas: Background, Proposals, and Current Issues*; and CRS Report R45800, *The Federal Role in Historic Preservation: An Overview*.

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