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## National Park Service: FY2023 Appropriations

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Park System, which includes 424 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. This CRS product discusses NPS’s FY2023 appropriations; for information on FY2024, see CRS In Focus IF12436, *National Park Service: FY2024 Appropriations*.

### FY2023 Appropriations

P.L. 117-328, Division G, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, was enacted on December 29, 2022. It contained \$3.475 billion for NPS, 6% more than the enacted FY2022 regular appropriation of \$3.265 billion in P.L. 117-103. (The totals do not include supplemental funding in response to natural disasters—\$1.500 billion for FY2023 in P.L. 117-328, Division N, and \$229.5 million for FY2022 in P.L. 117-43—which is designated as emergency spending outside of discretionary spending limits.) The regular appropriations in P.L. 117-328 included increases for four of the five NPS accounts compared with FY2022, and one account where funding was level with FY2022 (**Table 1**).

FY2023 appropriations in P.L. 117-328 were 4% lower than the Biden Administration’s request of \$3.611 billion. The enacted discretionary appropriation exceeded the Administration’s request in two accounts, matched the request for one account, and was lower than the request for two accounts (**Table 1**).

In addition to discretionary appropriations, NPS estimated mandatory appropriations for FY2023 at \$1.220 billion, a decline of 35% from NPS mandatory funding for FY2022. (The FY2022 mandatory funding had included \$700 million from P.L. 117-169, commonly known as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.) NPS’s mandatory appropriations generally come from entrance and recreation fees, concessioner fees, donations, and other sources and also include land acquisition funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF, 54 U.S.C. §200301), designated as mandatory appropriations by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). NPS’s FY2023 and FY2022 mandatory totals exclude allocations from the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF), the deferred maintenance fund established by the GAOA (see further discussion below).

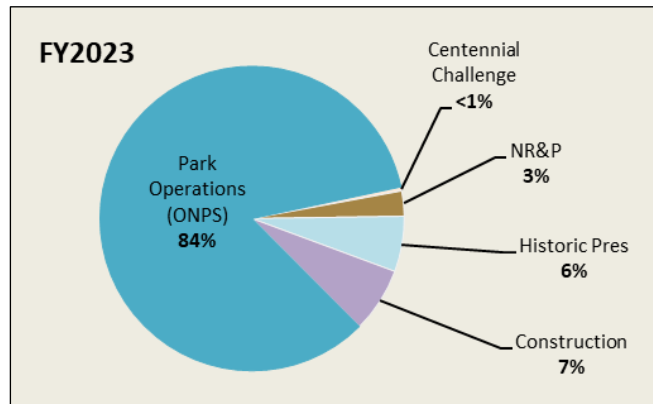
In earlier action, on July 20, 2022, the House had passed H.R. 8294, an FY2023 consolidated appropriations bill with \$3.643 billion for NPS (also see H.Rept. 117-400 on H.R. 8262, an earlier stand-alone House bill). On July 28, 2022,

S. 4686 was introduced in the Senate with \$3.578 billion in FY2023 discretionary appropriations for NPS. Because FY2023 appropriations were not enacted by the start of the fiscal year, a series of continuing resolutions provided funding at FY2022 levels before enactment of P.L. 117-328.

### NPS’s Appropriations Accounts

NPS had five discretionary appropriations accounts in FY2023 (**Figure 1**). About 84% of NPS’s FY2023 discretionary appropriations went 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. The FY2023 appropriation for the ONPS account was \$2.923 billion; the Administration had requested \$3.090 billion.

**Figure 1. NPS Discretionary Appropriations Accounts** (percentages reflect FY2023 appropriations)



**Source:** Joint explanatory statement for P.L. 117-328.

**Notes:** ONPS = Operation of the National Park System; NR&P = National Recreation and Preservation. FY2023 data do not reflect supplemental (emergency-designated) appropriations in P.L. 117-328 to address natural disasters.

The next-largest amount, 7% of the regular appropriation, went to NPS’s *Construction* account, which covers repair, replacement, and improvement of existing facilities as well as new construction. Projects are evaluated based on criteria related to the condition of assets, their importance to park purposes, and project benefits and risks. The account also covers other construction activities and planning. P.L. 117-328 appropriated \$239.8 million for the NPS Construction account for FY2023; the Administration’s request was \$279.3 million.

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

Account	FY2022 Enacted (P.L. 117-103)	FY2023 House-Passed Request H.R. 8294	Senate S. 4686	FY2023 Enacted (P.L. 117-328)	% Change from FY2022	
Operation of the Nat'l Park System	2,767.0	3,089.9	3,089.9	3,044.2	2,923.4	+6%
Construction	226.0 <sup>a</sup>	279.3	279.3	241.2	239.8 <sup>a</sup>	+6%
Historic Preservation Fund	173.1	151.8	170.8	191.9	204.5	+18%
Nat'l Recreation and Preservation	83.9	74.6	88.2	85.4	92.5	+10%
Centennial Challenge	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,265.0</b>	<b>3,610.6</b>	<b>3,643.3</b>	<b>3,577.8</b>	<b>3,475.3</b>	<b>+6%</b>

**Sources:** Data from House Committee on Appropriations. Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding.

a. Does not include supplemental funding provided in P.L. 117-43 and P.L. 117-328, Division N, to address natural disasters.

About 6% of the FY2023 discretionary appropriations went to the *Historic Preservation Fund* (HPF) account. The HPF, established by the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. §§300101 et seq.), receives \$150 million annually from offshore energy revenues, but monies are available only as provided in appropriations acts. P.L. 117-328 provided \$204.5 million for FY2023, primarily for NPS formula grants to state and tribal historic preservation offices to preserve cultural and historical assets and sites. Portions of the total also were for competitive grant programs, historically black colleges and universities, and historic revitalization, as well as the Save America's Treasures program (which preserves nationally significant sites, structures, and artifacts) and sites related to the U.S. Semiquincentennial (the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United States). Certain individual projects also were included as community project funding/congressionally directed spending (also called earmarks). NPS had requested \$151.8 million overall for the HPF account.

The *National Recreation and Preservation* (NR&P) account received about 3% of the FY2023 total discretionary appropriations. This 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 FY2023 appropriation for the NR&P account was \$92.5 million, of which \$29.2 million was for national heritage areas. The Administration had requested \$74.6 million for the account, of which \$22.3 million was for national heritage areas. Other funded programs included natural and cultural programs, international park affairs, and environmental and compliance review. The account also contained community project funding/congressionally directed spending under the category of statutory and contractual aid.

Less than 1% of the FY2023 discretionary appropriations went to the *Centennial Challenge* account, to support the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund. Authorized in 2016 (54 U.S.C. §§103501 et seq.), the fund matches donations for projects or programs that further the NPS mission and enhance the visitor experience. Deferred maintenance projects are prioritized. The FY2023 appropriation for the account was \$15.0 million, the same as requested by the Administration. The fund also receives offsetting collections from senior pass sales under the

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. §§6801 et seq.).

### Mandatory Appropriations Under the Great American Outdoors Act

The GAOA established NPS funding from the LWCF as mandatory appropriations. (Previously the LWCF funding had been provided through discretionary appropriations.) The LWCF funds NPS's own land acquisitions—typically nonfederal “inholdings” inside the boundaries of national park units—as well as NPS grants to states for outdoor recreation needs. Allocation of the funding remains an issue in the appropriations process, as the GAOA requires that the President's annual budget submission include account, program, and project allocations for the LWCF funds, and appropriations acts may specify alternate allocations. For FY2023, NPS received \$461.8 million from the LWCF. In addition to allocating funds for projects proposed in NPS's budget request, appropriators designated one NPS land acquisition project as community project funding/congressionally directed spending.

Funding for the LRF, the deferred maintenance (DM) fund established by the GAOA, also is designated as mandatory spending, allocated from a DOI department-wide account. The LRF receives annual deposits over five years based on amounts of federal energy revenues. The fund has a cap of \$1.900 billion annually, with 70% allocated to NPS. As in the case of the LWCF, the Administration must submit to Congress, with the annual budget request, lists of priority DM projects to be addressed with LRF funding. Appropriators may specify alternate allocations for the funds. For FY2023, NPS proposed \$1.330 billion in DM projects and administrative costs, and appropriators allocated \$1.333 billion. The FY2023 allocations included one project as community project funding/congressionally directed spending, as well as some other changes to the NPS proposal.

### For More Information

For more information, see CRS Report R42757, *National Park Service (NPS) Appropriations: Ten-Year Trends*; and CRS Report R47253, *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: Overview of FY2023 Appropriations*.

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