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National Park Service: FY2025 Appropriations

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Park System, which includes 433 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 FY2025 appropriations; for information on FY2026, see CRS In Focus IF13116, *National Park Service: FY2026 Appropriations*.

FY2025 Appropriations

P.L. 119-4, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, was enacted on March 15, 2025. The act generally continued NPS accounts at FY2024 levels with several changes, resulting in a total of \$3.337 billion for NPS for FY2025, slightly more (+<1%) than the enacted FY2024 regular appropriation of \$3.325 billion in P.L. 118-42. P.L. 119-4 included decreases for two NPS accounts and an increase for one account compared with FY2024 (**Table 1**). This comparison does not reflect FY2025 supplemental appropriations in response to natural disasters—\$2.313 billion in P.L. 118-58—and does not account for inflation.

NPS's FY2025 appropriations in P.L. 119-4 were 7% lower than the Biden Administration's FY2025 request of \$3.576 billion. The enacted discretionary appropriations exceeded the Administration's request for two accounts and were less than requested for the remaining three accounts (**Table 1**).

In addition to discretionary appropriations, NPS estimated mandatory appropriations for FY2025 at \$1.240 billion, a decrease of 1% from estimated NPS mandatory funding for FY2024. NPS's mandatory appropriations come from entrance and recreation fees, concessioner fees, donations, and other sources; they also include land acquisition funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF Act; 54 U.S.C. §§200301 et seq.), designated as mandatory appropriations by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). NPS's mandatory total does not include NPS's share from the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF; 54 U.S.C. §§200401 et seq.)—the deferred maintenance (DM) fund established by the GAOA—which is allocated from a DOI department-wide account (see discussion below).

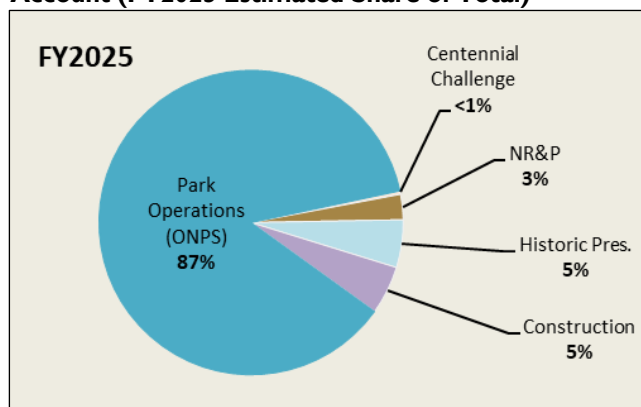
In earlier action, on July 24, 2024, the House had passed H.R. 8998 (H.Rept. 118-581), with \$3.122 billion for NPS for FY2025. On July 24, 2024, the Senate Committee on Appropriations reported S. 4802 (S.Rept. 118-201), with \$3.491 billion for NPS. Because FY2025 appropriations were not enacted by the start of the fiscal year, a series of

continuing resolutions provided funding at FY2024 levels before enactment of P.L. 119-4.

NPS's Appropriations Accounts

NPS had five discretionary appropriations accounts in FY2025 (**Figure 1**). About 87% of NPS's FY2025 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 FY2025 appropriation for the ONPS account was \$2.894 billion; the Biden Administration had requested \$3.090 billion.

Figure 1. NPS's Discretionary Appropriations by Account (FY2025 Estimated Share of Total)



Source: P.L. 119-4; House and Senate Appropriations Committee tables.

Notes: ONPS = Operation of the National Park System. NR&P = National Recreation and Preservation. Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding.

The next-largest amount, 5% of the regular discretionary appropriation, went to NPS's *Construction* account, which covers repair, replacement, and improvement of existing facilities and new construction. Projects are evaluated on criteria related to the condition of assets, park purposes, and project benefits and risks. The account also covers other construction activities and planning. P.L. 119-4 provided \$172.3 million for the NPS Construction account for FY2025; the Administration's request was \$237.2 million.

The *Historic Preservation Fund* (HPF) account received 5% of the regular discretionary appropriation. Under the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. §§300101 et seq.), the HPF receives \$150 million annually from offshore energy revenues, but monies are available only as provided in appropriations acts. Some funding goes to state and tribal historic preservation offices as formula grants to preserve cultural and historical assets. Congress also has provided

funding for nationally competitive grant programs. P.L. 119-4 appropriated \$168.9 million for the account; the request was \$151.4 million.

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

Account	FY2024 Enacted (P.L. 118-42)	FY2025 Request	House-Passed H.R. 8998	Senate Committee- Reported S. 4802	FY2025 Full-Year CR (P.L. 119-4)	% Change from FY2024
Operation of the Nat'l. Park System	2,888.4	3,090.4	2,714.2	2,994.3	2,894.4 ^a	+<1%
Construction	172.3	237.2	135.6	202.3	172.3	—
Historic Preservation Fund	188.7	151.4	168.9	182.8	168.9 ^b	-10%
Nat'l. Recreation and Preservation	91.2	84.4	91.6	96.2	89.6 ^b	-2%
Centennial Challenge	12.0	13.0	12.0	15.0	12.0	—
Total	3,325.1^c	3,576.4	3,122.3	3,490.5	3,337.2^c	+<1%

Sources: P.L. 119-4 and House and Senate Appropriations Committee tables. Funding totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. CR = continuing resolution.

- The House Appropriations Committee majority summary of P.L. 119-4 (hereinafter HAC Summary) stated that a \$6.0 million increase to the Operation of the National Park System account was for planning and security for the 2025 Presidential Inauguration.
- The HAC Summary stated that reductions to the Historic Preservation Fund account and the National Recreation and Preservation account were to remove community project funding/congressionally directed spending (i.e., earmarks).
- FY2024 total reflects rescissions of \$27.5 million in unobligated balances from the Construction account. For FY2025, P.L. 119-4, Section 1101(a)(7), specified that these rescissions were not included.

The *National Recreation and Preservation* (NR&P) account received about 3% of the FY2025 total discretionary appropriation. 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 FY2025 appropriation for the NR&P account was \$89.6 million. The Biden Administration had requested \$84.4 million.

Less than 1% of the FY2025 discretionary appropriation went to the *Centennial Challenge* account, to support the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund (54 U.S.C. §§103501 et seq.). The fund matches donations for projects or programs that further the NPS mission and visitor experience. The FY2025 appropriation for the account was \$12.0 million; the Biden Administration had requested \$13.0 million. The fund also receives offsetting collections from senior pass sales under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. §§6801 et seq.).

NPS Mandatory Appropriations Under the Great American Outdoors Act

The GAOA established NPS funding under the LWCF Act as mandatory appropriations. (Previously, this funding had been provided through discretionary appropriations. For more information, see CRS In Focus IF12256, *Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Frequently Asked Questions*.) 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 FY2025, P.L. 119-4 did not address allocations of LWCF funds.

Funding for the LRF, the DM fund established by the GAOA, also has been provided as mandatory spending. NPS's share is allocated from a DOI department-wide account and thus is not included in the agency's mandatory appropriations estimate discussed above. The LRF has received annual deposits over five years (FY2021-FY2025) based on amounts of federal energy revenues. The funding is capped at \$1.9 billion annually, and the maximum was reached each year, with 70% (approximately \$1.3 billion annually) allocated to NPS. As with 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. P.L. 119-4 did not address allocations of the LRF funding. FY2025 is the final year of authorized funding for the LRF.

For More Information

For more information, see CRS Report R42757, *National Park Service (NPS) Appropriations: Ten-Year Trends*; and CRS Report R48267, *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: Overview of FY2025 Appropriations*.

Laura B. Comay, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy

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