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National Park Service: FY2026 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. Selected issues for Congress related to NPS appropriations include the overall staffing levels supported by the appropriations, funding to address NPS deferred maintenance (DM), allocations for land acquisition, and NPS assistance to nonfederal entities.

FY2026 Appropriations

The Trump Administration requested \$2.116 billion in discretionary appropriations for NPS for FY2026. The request was 37% lower than NPS’s FY2025 discretionary appropriation of \$3.337 billion enacted in P.L. 119-4. The request would have decreased or eliminated funding for all NPS accounts compared with FY2025 (Table 1).

P.L. 119-74, enacted on January 23, 2026, contained \$3.267 billion for NPS for FY2026 in Division C. This was 2% less than the FY2025 regular appropriation and 54% more than the Administration’s request. The law increased funding for three NPS accounts compared with FY2025 and decreased funding for two accounts (Table 1). In earlier action, on July 24, 2025, the House Committee on Appropriations had reported H.R. 4754 (H.Rept. 119-215), with \$3.124 billion for NPS for FY2026. Also on July 24, 2025, the Senate Committee on Appropriations reported S. 2431 (S.Rept. 119-46), with \$3.270 billion for NPS for FY2026. Because appropriations were not enacted by the start of the fiscal year, NPS experienced an appropriations lapse from October 1, 2025, to November 12, 2025. NPS then received appropriations at FY2025 levels under a continuing resolution (P.L. 119-37) until enactment of P.L. 119-74.

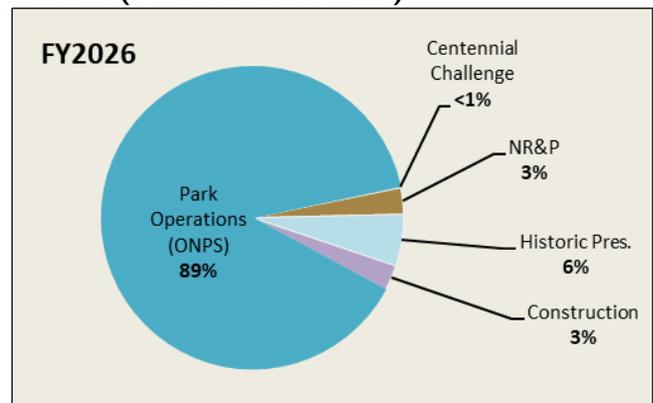
Separately, NPS receives mandatory appropriations from entrance and recreation fees, concessioner fees, donations, and other sources. NPS’s mandatory appropriations also

include land acquisition and state assistance funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF; 54 U.S.C. §§200301 et seq.). DOI estimated more than \$1 billion in NPS mandatory appropriations for FY2026. Outside of these mandatory appropriations, for each of FY2021-FY2025, NPS received more than \$1 billion annually in allocations from the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF)—the DM fund established by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). FY2025 was the final year of new LRF funding.

NPS’s Appropriations Accounts

NPS has five discretionary appropriations accounts (Figure 1). 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’s Discretionary Appropriations by Account (FY2026 Share of Total)



Sources and Notes: See Table I. ONPS = Operation of the National Park System; NR&P = National Recreation and Preservation; Historic Pres. = Historic Preservation Fund. Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

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

| Account | FY2025 Enacted (P.L. 119-4) | FY2026 Request | House Committee- Reported H.R. 4754 | Senate Committee- Reported S. 2431 | FY2026 Enacted (P.L. 119-74) | % Change from FY2025 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Operation of the Nat'l Park System | 2,894.4 | 1,994.0 | 2,718.1 | 2,869.4 | 2,901.2 ^a | +<1% |
| Construction | 172.3 | 99.5 | 135.6 | 140.8 | 88.5 | -49% |
| Historic Preservation Fund | 168.9 | 11.0 | 168.9 | 168.2 | 181.1 ^a | +7% |
| Nat'l Recreation and Preservation | 89.6 | 12.0 | 89.6 | 91.6 | 91.6 | +2% |
| Centennial Challenge | 12.0 | — | 12.0 | — | 5.0 | -58% |
| Total | 3,337.2 | 2,116.5 | 3,124.2 | 3,270.1 | 3,267.3 | -2% |

Sources: Joint explanatory statement for P.L. 119-74; H.Rept. 119-215; S.Rept. 119-46. Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.

- a. Amount reflects amendments to P.L. 119-74 in P.L. 119-75, Division D, Section 426(d).

NPS's *Construction* account 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.

NPS administers historic preservation programs through its *Historic Preservation Fund* (HPF) account. 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.

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 (54 U.S.C. §§103501 et seq.), which matches donations for projects or programs that further the NPS mission and visitor experience. The fund also receives offsetting collections from sales of [federal recreation passes](#) to seniors.

Issues for Congress

NPS Staffing Levels

In [May 2024 testimony](#) before the House Natural Resources Committee, the then-NPS Director highlighted declines over time in NPS staffing capacity. Over the past decade (FY2016-FY2025), NPS's full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing levels fell by an estimated 6%, based on budget data. In the [President's FY2026 Budget Appendix](#), NPS's request would have supported 13,598 FTE staff, a 26% reduction in FTE levels compared with FY2025 estimates. FTEs supported by P.L. 119-74 have not been estimated. Separately, P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 budget reconciliation act, rescinded unobligated balances from a \$500.0 million mandatory appropriation enacted in P.L. 117-169 to hire NPS employees. The amount of unobligated funding is not readily available.

Staffing capacity supported by appropriations does not necessarily measure the number of positions filled at any given time. For example, following Administration initiatives during 2025 to reduce the size of the [federal workforce](#) to achieve efficiencies, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management [reported](#) a 16% drop in NPS employee counts between FY2025 and FY2026.

Deferred Maintenance (DM)

NPS's *DM backlog*, estimated by NPS at \$22.986 billion as of the end of FY2024 (the most recent data available), has been a focus in the appropriations process. Despite legislation and agency actions aimed at addressing the

backlog, it has grown over the past decade, including a 59% nominal-dollar increase between FY2020 and FY2021 that NPS attributed partly to changes in its methods for estimating DM. Congress may continue to assess NPS's authorities and sources of funding to address DM, including the balance of discretionary and mandatory funding provided for this purpose. Congress also may consider funding for preventive (e.g., cyclic and routine) maintenance that could help keep DM from accumulating.

Two discretionary appropriations activities ("Line-Item Construction and Maintenance" in the Construction account and "Facility Operations and Maintenance" in the ONPS account) have been primary sources of discretionary funds for NPS preventive and deferred maintenance. For FY2025, P.L. 119-4 provided \$994.8 million for these two budget activities combined. For FY2026, Congress provided \$948.4 million for the two activities, increasing Facility Operations and Maintenance by 3% while providing no funding for Line-Item Construction and Maintenance, except for one item of community project funding / congressionally directed spending (CPF/CDS). With respect to DM, the Line-Item Construction and Maintenance activity has typically focused on projects costing \$2.0 million or more. The joint explanatory statement for P.L. 119-74 stated that this activity was not funded because NPS did not submit a list of line-item project funding requests.

For FY2021-FY2025, mandatory spending for NPS DM derived primarily from the [LRF](#). For each year, NPS received the maximum annual authorized amount of \$1.3 billion from the fund. In the 119th Congress, S. 1547 would reauthorize LRF funding through FY2033, with specified changes. Separately, 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.

Land Acquisition Funding

The GAOA shifted [LWCF land acquisition](#) funding from discretionary to mandatory spending. The funding typically has been allocated to agencies and projects through the annual appropriations process. For FY2026, P.L. 119-74 provided \$94.7 million for NPS's own land acquisition (not including state grants). DOI had requested \$10.2 million for NPS land acquisition and proposed to repurpose \$241.6 million from the LWCF to address NPS DM.

NPS Assistance to Nonfederal Sites and Programs

Some Members of Congress and other stakeholders have questioned whether NPS assistance to nonfederal sites and programs should be reduced to better focus on the agency's "core" mission of managing national parks. In particular, some have encouraged [national heritage areas](#), which are nonfederally managed, to develop plans for self-sufficiency, while Congress has increased heritage area funding over the past decade as new areas have been added. Two NPS discretionary accounts (NR&P and HPF) provide funds for nonfederal assistance. The NPS request would have reduced these accounts' combined funding by 96% ([Table 1](#)); P.L. 119-74 increased funding for both accounts and included CPF/CDS for 40 nonfederal assistance projects.

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