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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. This CRS product discusses NPS's FY2022 appropriations; for information on FY2023, see CRS In Focus IF12112, *National Park Service: FY2023 Appropriations*.

FY2022 Appropriations

P.L. 117-103, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, was enacted on March 15, 2022. It contained \$3.265 billion for NPS, 5% more than the enacted FY2021 regular appropriation of \$3.123 billion in P.L. 116-260. (The FY2022 total does not include \$229.5 million provided in P.L. 117-43 as supplemental funding in response to natural disasters, which is designated as emergency spending outside of discretionary spending limits.) The regular appropriations in P.L. 117-103 included increases for four of the five NPS accounts compared with FY2021 and one account where funding was level with FY2021 (**Table 1**).

FY2022 appropriations in P.L. 117-103 were 7% lower than the Biden Administration's request of \$3.497 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 FY2022 at \$1.093 billion, a decline of 1% from 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). Through FY2020, the LWCF funding had been provided through discretionary appropriations, but it was made mandatory in the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA; P.L. 116-152). NPS's FY2022 mandatory total does not include \$1.330 billion for NPS from the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF), the deferred maintenance fund established by the GAOA.

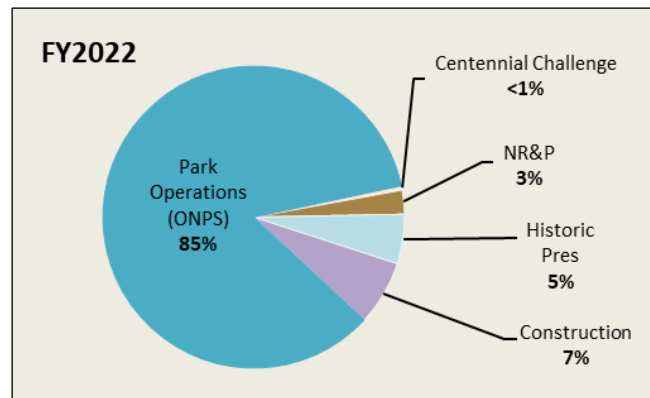
In earlier action, on July 29, 2021, the House had passed H.R. 4502, an FY2022 consolidated appropriations bill with \$3.470 billion for NPS (also see H.Rept. 117-83 on H.R. 4372, an earlier stand-alone House bill). On October 18, 2021, the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee

had released a majority draft bill, later introduced as S. 3034, with \$3.463 billion for NPS. Because FY2022 appropriations were not enacted by the start of the fiscal year, a series of continuing resolutions provided funding at FY2021 levels before enactment of P.L. 117-103.

NPS's Appropriations Accounts

NPS had five discretionary budget accounts in FY2022 (**Figure 1**), not counting the land acquisition account, for which funding is now provided by mandatory appropriations. About 85% of NPS's FY2022 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 FY2022 appropriation for the ONPS account was \$2.767 billion; the Administration had requested \$2.977 billion.

Figure 1. NPS Appropriations Accounts
(percentages reflect FY2022 appropriations)



Source: Joint explanatory statement for P.L. 117-103.

Notes: ONPS = Operation of the National Park System'
NR&P = National Recreation and Preservation. FY2022 data do not reflect supplemental (emergency-designated) appropriations in P.L. 117-43 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. 117-103 appropriated \$226.0 million for the NPS Construction account for FY2022; the Administration's request was \$278.6 million.

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

| Account ^a | FY2021 Enacted (P.L. 116-260) | FY2022 Request | House-Passed H.R. 4502 | Senate S. 3034 | FY2022 Enacted (P.L. 117-103) | % Change from FY2021 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Operation of the Nat'l. Park System | 2,688.3 | 2,977.3 | 2,965.8 | 2,930.1 | 2,767.0 | +3% |
| Construction | 223.9 | 278.6 | 252.6 | 253.1 | 226.0 ^b | +1% |
| Historic Preservation Fund | 144.3 | 151.8 | 155.8 | 180.1 | 173.1 | +20% |
| Nat'l. Recreation and Preservation | 74.2 | 74.5 | 80.4 | 85.2 | 83.9 | +13% |
| Centennial Challenge | 15.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 | — |
| Total | 3,122.7^a | 3,497.2 | 3,469.6 | 3,463.4 | 3,265.0 | +5% |

Sources: Data from House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; joint explanatory statement for P.L. 117-103. Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding.

- Table does not show NPS's Land Acquisition and State Assistance (LASA) account, for which funding was made mandatory by the GAOA (see above). No discretionary funds went to the LASA account in FY2021 or FY2022. For FY2021 (P.L. 116-260), Congress rescinded \$23.0 million from the LASA account, which is reflected in the total shown here.
- This amount does not include supplemental funding provided in P.L. 117-43 to address natural disasters, which is designated as emergency spending outside of discretionary spending limits.

About 5% of the FY2022 discretionary appropriations were for 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. 117-103 provided \$173.1 million for FY2022, 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 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States). The Administration had requested \$151.8 million overall for the HPF account.

The *National Recreation and Preservation* (NR&P) account received about 3% of the FY2022 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 individual program funded through the account is NPS assistance to national heritage areas. The FY2022 appropriation for the NR&P account was \$83.9 million, of which \$27.1 million was for national heritage areas. The Administration had requested \$74.5 million for the account, of which \$22.2 million was for national heritage areas.

Less than 1% of the FY2022 discretionary appropriation went to the *Centennial Challenge* account, to support the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund. Authorized 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. Deferred maintenance projects are prioritized. The FY2022 appropriation for the account was \$15.0 million, the same as requested by the Administration. The fund also receives offsetting collections from the sale of senior passes under the Federal Lands Recreational Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. §§6801-6814).

Through FY2020, NPS's *Land Acquisition and State Assistance* (LASA) account consisted of discretionary appropriations from the LWCF, the primary funding source for the federal land management agencies to acquire lands. The account covered NPS's own acquisitions—typically nonfederal “inholdings” inside the boundaries of national park units—and NPS grants to states for outdoor recreation needs. In August 2020, the GAOA made all funding from the LWCF mandatory spending. 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 FY2022, in addition to allocating monies for projects proposed by the Administration in the NPS budget request, appropriators designated five NPS land acquisition projects as community project funding/congressionally directed spending.

Funding for the LRF, the deferred maintenance 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. For FY2022, the maximum revenues were available, so NPS received \$1.330 billion. 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 FY2022, the funds were allocated as proposed in the NPS budget submission.

For More Information

For more information, see CRS Report R42757, *National Park Service Appropriations: Ten-Year Trends*; and CRS Report R46908, *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: Overview of FY2022 Appropriations*.

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