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NATIONAL PARKS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

Serial No. 109–137

Printed for the use of the Committee on Government Reform

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html
http://www.house.gov/reform

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

27–380 PDF WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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NATIONAL PARKS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY,
AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Bellevue, WA.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:12 a.m., at the Lewis Creek Visitor Center, 5808 Lakemont Boulevard, Bellevue, WA, Hon. Mark E. Souder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representative Souder.

Also present: Representatives Reichert, Inslee, and Baird.

Staff present: Marc Wheat, staff director and chief counsel; and Mark Pfundstein, professional staff member.

Mr. SOUDER. Let the meeting come to order. Before I read my opening statement, let me briefly describe for those who aren't familiar with our Government Reform Committee what we're doing here. Congress is basically structured with authorizing committees. For the National Parks, it would be the Resources Committee and National Parks Subcommittee to develop legislation.

Any legislation that is based on the Centennial Act or anything else would have to move through the Parks Subcommittee and the Natural Resources Committee. Then the appropriation process decides how to fund that. In the process, the appropriators who often, I think, are in charge of everything will also do policies with it, but they have to get a waiver from the Resources Committee.

The Government Reform Committee basically looks at whether the policies are being implemented the way Congress intended and the way the money has been spent is the way Congress has intended and is the oversight for all legislation and policy. In the Government Reform Committee, we have kind of like, for lack of a better word, three major subcommittees and then a number of more targeted subcommittees.

The subcommittee I chair on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources has become the primary narcotics committee in the U.S. Congress because not only do we do oversight, but we also have authorization on the drug side, and recently the speaker has assigned other drug policies to our committee, although it's not clear whether it should go to the judiciary or to Congress.

So we spend about half our time on narcotics issues, but we also have very broad jurisdiction in my subcommittee to be able to hold hearings on different topics.

So we have jurisdiction over the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of HUD, as well as all faith-based operations, NPR and so on, and because I swapped Department of Commerce to another committee chairman in our arrangements with National Parks.

Now, what we do in addition to the regular oversight we do in our subcommittee, we try and focus on one area where I do a series of hearings over 2 years and then issue a report.

About 4 years ago, we spent 2 years on the borders and used that border report then as the foundational document that we used in our creation of the Homeland Security Committee, which I'm on on the borders, and the chairman had every Member read that border report.

The last 2 years we focused in the last Congress on faith-based and did a series of hearings around the country looking at how that was being implemented and what the original intents were versus some of the policy being done.

In this 2-year cycle, we're looking at our National Parks. We have had a series of these hearings now in Washington, DC, as well as at Gettysburg and in Boston. We are going to the Grand Canyon next month. And we are doing a series of these field hearings.

Whenever we do these oversight hearings, the authorizing committee and the Appropriations Committee and the administration are never happy. And it doesn't matter whether it's Republican or Democrat, but we were in existence actually before the authorizing committees, and so every time jurisdiction is challenged, we win, as was the case in this, and we have been going ahead. But it's been a little bit of a slow start because a lot of people didn't want us to have our hearings.

But as you can see now with this being our fourth hearing, the hearings are going ahead full steam, and we'll be doing about one a month for the foreseeable future. So I thank you all for participating in this because I can guarantee you that certainly since I've been in Congress and when I was in the staff there hasn't been this systematic looking at the National Parks around the country in an oversight perspective in a long time, because in the day-to-day business of Congress you are busy dealing with the legislation and trying to find the funding. And we wanted to have a sweeping look across the country in each region of the country, so I thank you for your willingness.

This committee when Republicans took over was primarily noted for all the investigations of the last administration. It started with the travel office and running through to the end.

This time we're probably best known because we like to talk about the past because Mark McGwire and the baseball people are up in front of us on steroids, and that was probably the most notable moment in this particular Congress, but that's what the focus of this is. It's oversight to look at the financial policy, long-term goals, particularly pointing toward the 100th birthday of the National Parks System.

So I thank you for coming. As I mentioned, this is the fourth in a series of critical hearings. I would also like to welcome my fellow

Members of Congress who deeply care about the National Parks and who have joined me here today.

As I have said at many of the hearings, our American National Park System is really one of our primary contributions to the world as a concept. Many countries have National Parks and have preserved their historic areas. No other country, however, has developed the same kind of park system with such a diversity and breadth and distinctiveness as our system.

Moreover, each park is unique unto itself. The majesty of Mt. Rainier is different than the breathtaking volcanoes of Hawaii, which are different from the historically and emotionally significant sites of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Although each site is an exceptional example of history and natural beauty, all park service units share one unfortunate commonality: funding pressure.

As operations and maintenance, for example, demand more and more of the Park Service budget, the quality of the Park Service is sure to deteriorate. In many areas, we have already seen a decrease in hours of operation, decline of services and the deterioration of facilities. The pressure on the Park Service affects its ability to conserve and protect the environment, provide recreational opportunities and educate the public.

The parks of the Pacific Northwest contain some of the most magnificent vistas, prime hiking and mountain climbing opportunities and ecologically diverse zones in the Park Service. If these parks are to remain, we must examine the parks of this region, discuss their situations and work to provide solutions so that future generations can enjoy what we have today.

I am pleased to be joined today by several Members of Congress, all of whom have a deep and abiding love of the parks and the Park Service.

First, Congressman Brian Baird joins us today. He and I co-chair the National Parks Caucus in the House. He also was instrumental in the creation of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park.

I would also like to welcome Congressmen Jay Inslee, Dave Reichert, and I know Rick Larsen will be here later because he told me he was coming.

These gentlemen have demonstrated their commitment to the National Parks not only by their presence here today, but also through their efforts in Congress to make a better Park Service.

I would also like to welcome our witnesses. Our first panel consists of Cicely Muldoon, Deputy Regional Director for Public Use, Pacific West Region. Director Muldoon will be testifying on behalf of the Park Service. She will be joined during the question period by Dave Uberuaga, Superintendent, Mount Rainier National Park; Bill Laitner, Superintendent, Olympic National Park; and William Paleck, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park.

Our second panel will be Sally Jewell, trustee of the National Parks Conservation Association; Russ Dickenson, the former director of National Park Service from 1980–1985; Ron Fleck, city attorney/planner of Forks, WA; Rex Derr, director of the Washington State Parks; and Tim Wood, director of the Oregon State Parks. We welcome you all.

I would now like to yield to Congressman Inslee for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Mark E. Souder follows:]

Opening Statement
Chairman Mark Souder

"The National Parks in the Pacific Northwest"

Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform

September 12, 2005

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. This is the fourth in as series of hearing on the critical issues facing the National Park Service. I would like to also welcome all of my fellow Members of Congress who care about the National Parks, and who have joined me here today.

As I have said at many hearings, the National Parks are unique in the world. Many countries have National Parks and have preserved their historic sites. No other country, however, has developed the same kind of park system – with such a diversity and breadth and distinctiveness – as our system. Moreover, each park is unique unto itself. The majesty of Mt. Rainier is different than the breathtaking volcanoes of Hawaii which are different than the historically and emotionally significant sites of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Although each site is an exceptional example of history and natural beauty, all park service units share one unfortunate commonality: funding pressure.

As operations and maintenance, for example, demand more and more of the park service budget, the quality of the Park Service is sure to deteriorate. In many areas, we have already seen a decrease in hours of operation, the decline of services, and the deterioration of facilities. The pressure on the Park Service affects its ability to conserve and protect the environment, provide recreational opportunities, and educate the public.

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I would also like to welcome Congressmen Jay Inslee, Dave Reichert, and Rick Larsen. These gentlemen have demonstrated their commitment to the National Parks not only by their presence here today, but also through their efforts in Congress to make a better Park Service.

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Our second panel will be Sally Jewell, Trustee of the National Parks Conservation Association, Russ Dickenson, Former Director of National Park Service from 1980-1985, and Rod Fleck, City Attorney/Planner of Forks, Washington. Welcome to you all.

#1

Mr. INSLEE. Well, thank you. I really appreciate Chairman Souder coming here, and I'm sorry you didn't make it to any Washington National Parks this summer; hopefully next summer. We'll work on you in that regard.

It goes without saying we're talking about the crown jewels of America here today, and I know everybody in this room cares deeply about it.

Just as a personal note, one of the reasons I care so deeply is my family goes back to the National Parks with my mom and dad who worked with the SCA doing re-vegetation work up in the damaged alpine meadows up in Mt. Rainier National Park in the late 60's and early 70's. And we saw what can happen to our parks as far as degradation when we don't care for them and the great work that we can do if we can get the resources to get it done. And right now those resources are greatly in jeopardy.

And just as a matter of a personal note, I will put in the record, Mr. Chair, if I can, a little picture of Sahalie Peek and Hidden Lake that I took a couple of weeks ago on a great hike.

But I just want to note, and I will hand this around, this shows to the right of this a place, Cascade Pass, and it's an incredible spot. And it was actually trampled about 20 years ago by all of us who loved it to death. And the people at North Cascades National Park with their own resources and some volunteers did an incredible job managing that resource so that now when you go up there, you see alpine meadows, and you can walk in sort of a defined area on occasion. And it was just an indication to me of the great work that people have been doing when they get the resources. And my complements to all the folks who worked on that project.

But I want to note it's not just budgetary pressures we have to talk about, and I will make a mention about that in a minute, but there are two real threats to the National Parks that are in a larger environment that go beyond just our National Park policy.

One of those is the changes in the climate that affects the entire ecosystem in our national parks. If you go up—in fact, if you look at this picture here, there's a picture of Sahale Glacier. Sahale Glacier is 1 of 117 glaciers in the North Cascades National Park that are shrinking. All the glaciers are shrinking. Four of them have actually disappeared. We have four glaciers that were there when I was born and have disappeared. Glacier National Park will not have glaciers in Glacier National Park in 75 years if trends continue.

We have a massive change in our climatic system that has created change in not only the glaciers, but the biospheres in our National Parks. And I know that because I think it's important every chance we get to talk about this threat to the world that we grew up in in America.

I was in Denali Park a few years when they talked about the moving tree line which is moving up which has the threat that eventually some of those alpine meadows that I grew up with may not be there in 100, 200 years if the tree line continues to move up.

Congress has been willfully and totally AWOL dealing with this issue. And no matter what we do voluntarily, unless we deal with global warming, our National Parks are going to be significantly di-

minished from the alpine meadow jewels that we enjoy in Washington in the Olympics, Mt. Rainier and North Cascades Park.

The second threat that's sort of epidemic, and that is that we are told there is a grassroots circulation in the bowels of the Department of Interior that in a major way would diminish our commitment to the long-term commitment to keep our parks in a pristine and natural condition.

We're told that a draft is circulating that would essentially redefine what the word impairment is, which would say you can go ahead and impair our parks if it's just on a temporary basis. That just doesn't cut it. Jet skis, as my friend Brian Baird suggested, don't belong in Crater Lake National Parks, although, it would be intriguing to see them go around the little island there.

This is a major threat to the very fundamental mission of the National Park system, and we need for that memo to never see the light of the day, that it is stopped before it hits the public because I can say unequivocally that the consensus view of the people I represent want to see National Parks for several generations down the road, not just for the next 2 years' potential profitmaking enterprises in our National Parks.

You know, we used to have a golf course at Paradise National Park, but it really wasn't the right thing at the right place, and we want to strangle that bad idea.

The third issue, and I will just make one comment, and I'm looking forward to hearing from the panels about this, we do not want to get ultimately into financing National Parks with a bake sale situation. And there is a bill that is one potential approach to this situation. But we have to have a finer way to pay for the National Parks. If we do not have one of the tax cuts go through for people who earn over $500,000 a year, if we just reduce that by one fifth so the people who earn over half million dollars a year have one fifth less of the tax cuts than they have, you would totally wipe out the backlog of the National Park. And we need to find a bipartisan way to pay for this, and I hope we can do that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

We're here in the home area of Congressman Reichert.

Mr. REICHERT. Well, welcome everyone and thank you for being here this morning. And I would like to thank the panel for being here, and we look forward to your testimony. I certainly thank Congressman Souder for being here and holding this in this area and having an opportunity for all of us here at the local area to be involved in this and listen to the discussion and have an opportunity to ask questions that we're all interested in hearing the answers to.

I agree with my colleague, Congressman Inslee, that we do have to find some solutions here to protect our environment. And I'm the new kid on the block, so I have some different ideas and some hope that, as you see, we have a panel here, we have Democrats and Republicans, so this isn't about a party issue. This is about an issue for our community. And we all have to take a part in this and all have to find a solution.

One of the solutions put forward by Congressman Souder is a bill that would allow people to deduct—check a box on their income tax

to donate money, to have money withdrawn to put toward taking care of our National Parks and helping with the maintenance of our National Parks. I'm a co-sponsor on that bill, and I'm hoping that goes forward.

Right now the current status of that legislation, it's been referred to the House Resources Committee, and it's just one of the ideas put forth. There were several ideas that are still to come as we work on trying to find ways to fund this effort.

One of the other things that we've done is we've been able to acquire $1.63 million which has allowed us to buy an additional section of property on the south side of Mt. Rainier, which is the Carter River Valley area, which many of you might be familiar with. And that's an area that everybody knows has had some flooding issues. So we were excited about that when we heard that we were able to acquire the funding to purchase that property.

So this is a great opportunity really, I think, for all of us to come together to learn a lot more about our community, our national parks and to begin to really look at solutions and protect this environment.

I have three children and now six grandchildren, and I would like them to enjoy the park systems as much as I have during my 54 years here in the Northwest. So I also recall a time when I used to have time to hike in the mountains, and maybe some of you have been to Lake Dorothy recently, but back a few years ago hikes to Lake Dorothy from the Snoqualmie/Stevens Pass side, it was really, really well traveled, and at one point they had to cut the trail off to block the road so the people had to hike in further to reduce the amount of traffic that was going up to Lake Dorothy.

So we have a lot of work to do. I'm pleased to be here and have an opportunity to participate and, again, thank all of you for being here, and we look forward to the witnesses' testimony.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Baird.

Mr. BAIRD. I want to echo the thanks to Chairman Souder who has been just a champion of the parks. He's too modest to mention it, but Mark has a goal, which is nearly achieved, of visiting every single National Park in the system, something I envy, having loved the parks as much as I do.

And Mark and I were proud to start the National Parks Caucus within the Congress and, believe it or not, there are caucuses for almost everything you can imagine, but there has never been a National Parks Caucus even though so many of us cherish the parks.

I want to thank all of you, the folks here in the audience and particularly our witnesses, the superintendents, not so much for being here today, but for what you do every single day to preserve this magnificent treasure that we've been granted for generations to come. And we're grateful for your work.

Jay mentioned his family connection. My father was a seasonal park ranger at Colorado National Monument. Those hats are very familiar. One sat on our dining room table almost every night.

I note also Chip Jenkins is here. He's the superintendent of America's newest national park, Lewis and Clark National Park. And I'm pleased for the chairman's support and our Senators and Maria Cantwell in particular who were able to pass that. And I in-

vite you all to visit the mouth of the Columbia River and see where Lewis and Clark hit the Pacific Ocean on the Washington side as well as on the Oregon side. We're grateful for that.

Some years ago I tried to ask myself what is it that makes our country so unique and special? And if we have newcomers to our Nation, what values do you want to instill them with? And as we try to export our highest values to the world, what would those be?

And after a great deal of thought and a lot of study, two things came to me that I think are so quintessentially part of our culture that have been gifts to the whole world, and they are the Bill of Rights and our National Park system.

If I had to say I had only two things to pass on, I mean, there's jazz and baseball and lots of other stuff, but the Bill of Rights and the National Parks are profoundly important to me and to all of us I think.

One of my concerns is I think they are both under some assault today, but particularly the National Parks. We face a multibillion dollar infrastructure backlog, and we don't have adequate personnel to staff the parks the way many of us believe they should be staffed.

And as a result, we have seen curtailment of the naturalist programs that many of us recall as young people, as children. Remember taking your kids to the ranger? Many of us are of that age where we remember. We were kids, too. But at one point taking our kids to hear the ranger talk and learning about the natural wildlife and the history of the area.

Those have been curtailed. Parks are closing. They are not provided needed maintenance. And we're building a backlog on this treasure that we've been given, a backlog of maintenance and current and seasonal staffing. So I think we must address that. So I will intend, I will say, to ask some pretty tough questions today.

And I had the experience back in January of being concerned about whether we would have resources for our returning veterans from Iraq. I was convinced we wouldn't. I spoke with people who worked for the VA at the time, and they were pretty much under orders not to tell the truth. And they were told, "Tell anybody who asks that we have adequate resources to meet the needs of our veterans."

Well, it turns out we were more than $1½ billion short, and so I'm aware that any government official right now faces a difficult challenge, and I will not jeopardize the careers of these individuals because they are outstanding public servants. But it is of great concern——

Mr. SOUDER. There is a sigh of relief.

Mr. BAIRD. But I contextualized that because I have personal experience of seeing valuable, valiant public servants being put in a difficult position of being given a mandated admission that they passionately believe in, and yet not getting adequate resources to fulfill that mission, but having overt or implicit instructions that if they raise those alarms, the very career that they so cherish could be in jeopardy.

So I will not try to jeopardize any of these folks, but I will ask them very pointed questions about how many naturalists are you

able to provide right now, what kind of maintenance backlogs do you have, etc.

And I will just close, I suppose, by echoing my friend Mr. Inslee's comments. I read with, I wouldn't say horror, but I would say outrage and indignation the reports about the Hoffman memo. In my judgment, this fellow Hoffman may be the most dangerous man in the United States of America today, and I aim to do absolutely everything I can to stop his rewrite of the mission of the National Parks.

And so I thank Chairman Souder for holding this hearing and look forward to some very instructive and informative comments from our distinguished guests.

Mr. SOUDER. I just want the people here from Washington to know that in the other Washington we also know that Brian Baird is one of the most shy, retiring Members on the Democratic side and is not known to speak out in many cases.

And this is a very awkward process that we're all going through, and I want to acknowledge this at the beginning of this hearing because it is hard in the present atmosphere of Washington, quite frankly, to do anything in a bipartisan way.

And one of our huge challenges with the National Park Service is not to have it get in a crossfire of what is a very evenly divided but steadily Republican tilt country right now, and that if we can't build bipartisan support for the National Park Service and hold that through this, it will suffer with everything else that gets caught in the cross fire.

And it's very difficult because we have many things upon which we disagree, but we're trying to figure out how we can work this through. It's been very important, as you will see as I go through the committee rules here, and I want to say this for the record, that without Elijah Cummings, the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, allowing us to proceed with these hearings even when he's not here, you can't do this. There aren't very many committees in Congress that can work on, basically, a unanimous consent basis.

Furthermore, the chairman of the committee, Tom Davis, along with the ranking member, Henry Waxman, have given, in effect, a budget that we can set up a field hearing, pay to travel, pay the stenographers to do this in a bipartisan way, which has been very important, and I appreciate that.

It's also not easy to get committees to get clearance to allow other committee members to appear at the hearing and participate as full committee members, as we're doing with the Washington delegation today.

So first I ask for consent that all Members have 5 days to submit written statements and questions for the hearing record and any answers to written questions provided by the witnesses also be included in the record. Without objection, it is so ordered. And I ask for consent that all Members present be permitted to participate in the hearing and without objection, it is so ordered.

The technical thing that I just did, since I'm the only member of the committee, I couldn't say have a voice vote, so I said without objection it is so ordered, which means that theoretically one of the

Democrats could object later, but we've had prior sign off. But that means now everybody can participate in the hearing.

Our first panel is composed of——

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you for that in all seriousness. It would have been very easy for the chairman or others to say either, A, you cannot have the hearings or, B, you can have them, but you can only invite Members.

And we are certainly grateful, caring as we do for the parks but not privileged enough to serve on that committee, we're grateful for your indulgence in allowing us to be here.

Mr. SOUDER. Our first panel is composed of Cicely Muldoon, deputy regional director for Public Use, Pacific West Region; David Uberuaga, superintendent of Mt. Rainier; Bill Laitner, superintendent of Olympic; and William Paleck, superintendent of North Cascades National Park, who are not official witnesses, but may be able to answer questions.

Now, as an oversight committee, it's a standard practice to ask all those who testify to do so under oath.

I appreciate that what wasn't known in our previous hearing was that Mark McGwire ducked the subpoena for 3 days because he knew that if he came and testified under oath, he could be prosecuted for perjury as Rafael Palmeiro is finding out right now. The question is did he answer the questions when he was under steroids or not, and the latest we have is we still don't know. We're trying to sort that out because it appears he may have been.

Now presumably, first off, I'm not going to ask any steroid questions. Second, if you will stand, each stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SOUDER. Let the record show that each of the witnesses responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Muldoon, we'll have you speak, and then everybody else can field questions.

STATEMENT OF CICELY MULDOON, DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC USE, PACIFIC WEST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ACCOMPANIED BY DAVE UBERUAGA, SUPERINTENDENT, MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK; BILL LAITNER, SUPERINTENDENT, OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK; AND WILLIAM PALECK, SUPERINTENDENT, NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

Ms. MULDOON. OK. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Congressmen, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear today at this oversight hearing on issues facing the National Park Service in the Pacific Northwest. Thank you, too, for your continuing support of Congress for parks here in the Northwest and throughout the National Park System. It's really terrific to have you all out here and have such a good showing from the State.

As requested by the committee, our testimony today highlights activities and issues related to maintenance, funding, homeland security, partnerships and environmental stewardship. And I know how Congressman Reichert feels about being the new kid on the

block, so I'm very pleased to have my colleagues from the big three parks here today to join me in the questions.

So to begin, I would like to speak to the Pacific West Region, itself, and how we're organized. The Pacific West includes 58 parks in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Hawaii and the heart of the Pacific. Now, this testimony is specific to the parks in western Washington and northwestern Oregon, which we call the North Coast and Cascades Network. This network includes Olympic, North Cascades, Mt. Rainier, San Juan Island, Lewis and Clark, Klondike Gold Rush, Ross Lake, Lake Chelan, Fort Vancouver and Ebey's Landing.

The networks of parks is a concept born of the Natural Resource Challenge, and they work collaboratively to share staff, training and expertise in all aspects of park operations. So the large parks do a lot of the supporting both of each other and small parks in every network across the region.

I would like to highlight a few of the projects in the Northwest parks that speak to funding sources, the maintenance and visitor services and homeland security. Annual operational funds, of course, are fundamental to our ability to keep day-to-day operations running, and we deeply appreciate the increases in operating funds Congress provided to the National Parks in both fiscal year 2005 and upcoming in fiscal year 2006. Other annual operational funding is dedicated to cyclic maintenance needs and repair and rehabilitation projects.

And for major construction projects, our parks have appropriated construction funds, recreation fees and contributions from other sources. The Transportation Equity Act also provides a critical source of infrastructure funding, authorizing more than $1 billion in funding for park roads over the next 5 years.

So as some examples, locally North Cascades has repaired or replaced aging infrastructure, campgrounds, trails, power lines, bridges, roads and visitor facilities using line-item construction funds, emergency storm damage moneys, rehabilitation funds, user fees and mitigation funds that total more than $7 million in recent years.

With 20 miles of boundary shared with Canada, North Cascades also is a porous avenue for illegal aliens and drug trafficking across the border. The budget increase from Congress in fiscal year 2004 has been used to add park rangers so that we're better equipped to assist with the Department of Homeland Security in securing our borders and protecting both park visitors and park resources.

At Olympic, the range of improvements include picnic tables and campfire grills, improved roads and back country trails, accessible restrooms and seismic retrofits. Olympic received an operating budget increase of 4 percent for fiscal year 2005 which has enabled the park to hire additional seasonal employees and include visitor services.

And finally, in the last 2 years at Mt. Rainier, the National Park Services has completed four major construction projects, and two other multi-year construction projects are about to begin—rebuilding the Jackson Visitor Center and rehabilitating the Paradise Inn. I see I'm out of time.

Mr. SOUDER. In the field hearings, we are a little more generous with the 5-minute clock. We want to make sure we hear what you have to say.

Ms. MULDOON. Thank you for that. I don't have far to go.

Another area in which Northwest park work extensively is in partnerships, and the national parks in Washington State have a long history of working with their neighboring national forests. They share offices and visitor orientation facilities. We share resources for wildland firefighting and emergency law enforcement response.

The newly designated Lewis and Clark National Historic Park is a leading national example in Federal/State collaboration with Washington, Oregon and the National Park Service working in concert to preserve the sites important to this great story on both sides of the Columbia.

Seattle City Light uses runoff from North Cascades to produce 25 percent of Seattle's electricity. This utility spent $10.7 million to build the park's new Environmental Learning Center which opened this past July. The North Cascades Institute, a non-profit park partner for nearly 20 years, operates and maintains this facility.

And finally I would like to touch on environmental stewardship in the Northwest. Addressing threats to the natural ecosystems is, of course, one of the greatest challenges we have in the parks in the Northwest, and it's an area where we're beginning to see some successes.

I think Olympic might be our poster child as the site of one of the Nation's most critical restoration products, removal of two dams on the Elwha. This will be the largest dam removal effort in the Nation to date and I believe the second largest restoration project in the National Park System.

We expect this project to result in restoration of salmon and steelhead habitat and populations which will benefit the Elwha tribe and the local communities and restore a healthy ecosystem.

Invasive species are a critical threat in the Northwest and throughout the Nation, and the Northwest parks are actively engaged in working with public and private partners to combat invasive species, particularly plant species, throughout the region.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement, and we will be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Muldoon follows:]

STATEMENT OF CICELY MULDOON, DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC USE, PACIFIC WEST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE, AT AN OVERSIGHT HEARING ON NATIONAL PARKS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

September 12, 2005

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your today at this oversight hearing on key issues facing the National Park Service (NPS) in the Pacific Northwest. We are pleased to have the opportunity to touch on some of our activities and issues in this region, including funding, maintenance, homeland security, partnerships, and environmental stewardship. We appreciate the continuing support of Congress for our parks and programs here in the Pacific Northwest, as well as throughout the entire National Park System.

Regional Organization

National Park units in the Pacific Northwest region of the country are part of NPS's Pacific West Region, which covers the five westernmost states (not including Alaska), Hawaii, and U.S. territories in the Pacific. This testimony will cover the park units in western Washington state and part of northwestern Oregon, which comprise our North Coast and Cascades network. This network, one of seven within the Pacific West Region, includes Olympic, North Cascades, and Mount Rainier National Parks; San Juan Island, Lewis and Clark, and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Parks; Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas (part of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex); Fort Vancouver National Historic Site; and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

The organization of parks by "networks" within the Pacific West Region is an outgrowth of the Natural Resource Challenge, a major effort to improve how NPS manages the natural resources under its care. Funding for the Natural Resource Challenge has increased by 160 percent, from $29.5 million in 2001 to $76.6 million in 2006. Scientific information underpins the protection of natural resources. The Natural Resource Challenge provides information, expertise, and tools to help protect our natural resource heritage.

As part of this effort, parks throughout the National Park System were organized into networks to share capacity in inventorying and monitoring resources. The Pacific West Region adopted the network organization for other aspects of park management as well in order to share capacity in other venues and make the most efficient use of existing funds. Through the network system, each park works with other parks in its network to advance common goals. Each network designates a superintendent to represent the parks in the network on our regional leadership council.

Funding, Maintenance Projects, and Homeland Security

Funding for parks come from a variety of sources. For day-to-day operations and maintenance costs, we depend on annually appropriated operations and maintenance (ONPS) funding that is allocated to each park. Other ONPS funding, including cyclic maintenance (which includes cultural cyclic and exhibit funds), and repair and rehabilitation, is provided through regional

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accounts. We appreciate the substantial increases in operating funds Congress provided for national parks in FY 2005 and FY 2006. For construction and major maintenance projects (projects over $500,000), our parks benefit from appropriated construction funds, as well as funds from recreation fees and contributions from other sources.

Another important source of funding is provided through the Department of Transportation. Public Law 109-59, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, signed into law on August 10, 2005, would authorize $1.050 billion in funding for park roads over Fiscal Years 2005 through 2009. This is approximately a 27 percent increase in funding over the previous transportation reauthorizations; however, it is not commensurate with the President's request and commitment to reduce the maintenance backlog in parks.

The following are snapshots of successful projects at North Cascades, Olympic and Mount Rainier that were undertaken with funds from a mix of some of these sources:

- North Cascades combined funding from user fee revenues, facility maintenance funds, and mitigation funds from Seattle City Light, the city's power utility, for a major rehabilitation project at its most popular campground at Colonial Creek. Fully accessible campsites and fishing facilities were added. Deteriorating boat docks and ramps as well as water and power lines were replaced.

- The Washington state national parks suffered substantial flood damage in 2003 damage to roads, trails, trail bridges, campgrounds, and other facilities. In North Cascades, all of these key recreational facilities and access routes have been repaired with about $1.5 million in regional repair and rehabilitation funds, and about $1.2 million in emergency storm damage funds. Mount Rainier's storm damage has also been repaired or replaced.

- With an investment of nearly $5.6 million in line-item construction funding and regional repair and rehabilitation funding over three years, North Cascades has undertaken a substantial number of facility maintenance projects, ranging from rehabilitation of the Golden West Visitor Center to the replacement of dilapidated pit toilets with more environmentally friendly and visitor friendly prefabricated vault toilets.

- At North Cascades, 20 miles of boundary are shared with Canada and, despite rugged terrain, it is a porous avenue for illegal aliens and drugs crossing the border. The $350,000 budget increase that Congress appropriated for North Cascades in FY 2004 has been used to add park rangers so that we can more actively cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security in securing our borders and protecting park visitors and resources. As part of that effort, recreation fee and facility maintenance funds are being used to design and install narrow-band radio capability for more effective communication in this mountainous park.

- At Olympic, cyclic maintenance, repair and rehabilitation, and recreation fee funding is being used for a range of improvements. We have replaced picnic tables and campfire grills, improved roads and backcountry trails, upgraded the exterior of

the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center, installed accessible restrooms, replaced roofs, and retrofitted the administrative building for seismic safety.

- Olympic received an operating budget increase of 4 percent for FY 2005, which has enabled the park to hire several seasonal employees. Olympic has improved visitor services by offering a new orientation video and wilderness trip planner and increasing the number of staff at wilderness information stations.

- In the last two years at Mount Rainier, NPS has completed four major construction projects: burying four miles of underground power line, rehabilitating the Paradise Guide House, repairing the Longmire Suspension Bridge, and replacing seasonal employee trailers with a dormitory for a total of $9.9 million. The park has embarked on two other major, multi-year construction projects: one to rebuild the Jackson Visitor Center and rehabilitate Paradise Inn, a national historic landmark. Congress appropriated $22.2 million in the FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Act for these two projects.

- In 2004, Congress passed legislation and approved the first $1million toward land acquisition for a new campground and other visitor and administrative facilities in the Carbon River Valley section of Mount Rainier. These new facilities will replace similar facilities that are often inaccessible due to road washouts that are costly to repair. After these facilities are built, the park will no longer need to spend funds repairing the road as a result of the washouts.

Management Initiatives

Along with other parks throughout the country, the parks in the Pacific Northwest have been actively involved in developments to run parks in a more business-like manner. We are focused on new ways of managing facilities in parks, and new processes for determining the most effective and efficient use of funds.

As part of our effort to improve the way we manage our assets, NPS has a new data system that is providing a more accurate estimates of maintenance needs on a weekly basis. Mount Rainier served as the pilot park for this new computer tracking system for assets. An integral part of this program is assessing conditions by quantifying deferred maintenance, documenting inspections, setting industry-standard cost estimates, and establishing business practices that measure results based on the facility condition index.

One of the most important areas in which we are pursuing more business-like practices is in our budget formulation process – the process we use to determine the most effective and efficient allocation of funds in the President's budget and appropriated to NPS by Congress. Our tools are the park scorecard, core operations analysis, and business plans.

The scorecard is an indicator of a park's financial, operational, and managerial health. It provides an overarching snapshot of the current situation by analyzing park needs based on broad criteria. The current version of the scorecard has over 30 separate measures identified and grouped in four

categories – financial, organizational, recreation, and resource management. The scorecard played a role in the selection of parks for the additional FY 2005 operations funding by Congress.

The core operations analysis process integrates management tools to improve park efficiency and has been used successfully in the Intermountain Region. The goals of this process are to achieve personal services and fixed costs equal to or below 80 percent of base funds, pursue efficiencies based on cost benefit analyses of alternatives, and ensure that each park's base budget relates to core operations and NPS goals and priorities. This year, the Pacific West Region is planning to look at 12 parks in the region using a core operations analysis model.

Business plans help parks focus on operations, develop cost objectives, identify revenue sources beyond appropriated funds, and plan out the highest priority projects for the next three to five years. Our business planning has evolved and improved over the past four years. Olympic and Mount Rainier have business plans which identify park activities, core needs, methods to achieve efficiencies, and strategies for meeting goals within budget. Our business plans now provide a better roadmap for effectively and efficiently addressing priorities.

Partnerships

With so much public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest, the three national parks in Washington state have a long history of working cooperatively with our neighboring national forests. In many locations, our offices and visitor orientation facilities are co-located. We share resources for wildland firefighting through the interagency coordination system. We also provide assistance on the national forests for emergency law enforcement response. Just as we are finding opportunities to share resources and support among parks, we will continue to do the same with the US Forest Service and our other agency partners.

The Pacific Northwest parks are also engaged in a multitude of partnerships with other public and private entities. The newly designated Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, formerly Fort Clatsop National Memorial, is a leading example of where partnerships are bringing new resources to bear in increasing public awareness of the inspiring journey of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as more effective and efficient management of the resources associated with this story.

The Federal government and the States of Washington and Oregon are sharing costs for the new park, which Congress redesignated and expanded in 2004. NPS recently completed acquiring land around Fort Clatsop and, with a recent $1.6 million appropriation from Congress, will be acquiring the land at Dismal Nitch, one of the new Lewis and Clark National Historical Park sites on the Washington side of the Columbia River. Meanwhile, the State of Washington is investing $5.5 million in construction of new visitor facilities and services at Station Camp, another new National Park Service site on the Washington side. It will include the realignment of Highway 101, construction of restrooms and trails, and some interpretive media on the Chinookan and Lewis and Clark story. Once completed, the state will donate these visitor facilities and services to NPS.

As directed by Congress, NPS and the States of Washington and Oregon will collaborate on sharing management resources and on interpretation at the various park sites managed by the three entities. We are looking forward to beginning this year our joint celebration of the 200th anniversary of the pinnacle of the Lewis and Clark journey—reaching the Pacific Ocean—and to continuing to work together to engage the public in this marvelous story in the years ahead.

Washington State has been collaborating with NPS in other ways as well. The state's National Park Fund, a non-profit affiliate of the National Park Foundation, raised nearly $340,000 in philanthropic giving on behalf of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks last year. In its last session, the Washington State Legislature authorized the sale of a special vehicle license plate beginning in 2006. The proceeds of those sales will go directly to benefit these parks.

Seattle City Light, a municipal utility, uses glacial runoff from North Cascades to produce 25 percent of Seattle's electricity. This utility, as a condition of receiving an operating license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, spent $10.7 million to build the park's new Environmental Learning Center, which opened in July. The North Cascades Institute, a non-profit park partner for nearly 20 years, operates and maintains this facility.

Environmental Stewardship

Addressing threats to the natural ecosystems is one of the greatest challenges we have in our Pacific Northwest parks. It is also an area where we are beginning to see some real successes, both through efforts we have undertaken on our own and in partnership with others.

In the area of environmental restoration, Olympic National Park is the site of one of the nation's most critical projects. In a major, long-term effort, we are working to restore anadromous fish to the Elwha River through removal of two dams proposed to begin in 2008. This will be the largest dam removal effort in the nation to date, and the second largest restoration program for NPS. Following removal of these dams, salmon and steelhead that over 80 years ago were restricted to a five-mile section in the lower river will be able to utilize habitat throughout the watershed. The return of these fish will benefit not only the Elwha Tribe and local communities, but also provide nutrients to many other species in the watershed, including bears, eagles, and weasels.

We have had some real success with eradicating invasive species. Invasive species proliferation is implicated in the listing of 42 percent of all species protected by the Endangered Species Act and causes more than $20 billion per year in economic damages across public and private land. The proliferation of noxious invasive species reduces natural diversity.

One of the features of the Natural Resource Challenge was the establishment of several exotic plant management teams to conduct eradication projects in national park units—a "strike force" approach to the decades-old problem of dealing with invasive species. The four-person team for the Pacific Northwest is led by an employee who has a Master of Science degree in Weed Science. This year the crew was supplemented with five interns from the Student Conservation Association, another important partner to NPS.

The results have been very encouraging. At North Cascades, a cooperative program involving NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, Seattle City Light, The Nature Conservancy, three county Weed Boards, and the Washington State Departments of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources is successfully checking the spread and beginning the eradication of knotweed, a particularly troublesome invasive which, if left unchecked, can alter riparian systems and impede salmon recovery. Olympic is part of a similar multi-agency working group for the same purpose.

At Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, the team provided the impetus for the formation of a Cooperative Weed Management area partnership that includes The Nature Conservancy, Washington State Parks, Island County, and the Town of Coupeville. Their particular focus is on poison hemlock, an invasive exotic with the potential to seriously threaten public health.

At Mount Rainier, staff, with the help of conservation youth groups and volunteers, have been working for 10 years to control invasive plants along trail corridors where they tend to spread easily. Approximately 350,000 invasive plants are removed annually and research shows that in areas where plants have faithfully been controlled for several years, the invasive numbers are down significantly. In some cases, populations that originally numbered in the tens of thousands have been reduced to just a few individual plants. And, in response, native plant species have rebounded in areas formerly infested with non-native plants.

Recognizing that invasive species cross geographic and jurisdictional boundaries, these types of collaborative efforts are highly effective in managing a shared problem. To facilitate such efforts, the Administration has transmitted to Congress a draft legislative proposal entitled, "the Natural Resource Protection Cooperative Agreement Act". This proposal would provide the Secretary the authority to expend Federal funds on lands inside or outside of National Park System units through collaborative efforts with State and local entities and willing private landowners where there is a clear and direct benefit to park natural resources. Other federal land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, already have such authority.

Another area where we are addressing threats to the environment, and saving parks money, is in energy conservation and efficiency. All units of the National Park System are working to improve their use of energy, and Mount Rainier has had some particular successes in this area. One of the most important contributions the park will make to energy conservation is in rebuilding the Jackson Visitor Center. The new structure will no longer have a huge flat roof that consumes 75,000 gallons per year of diesel fuel to melt snow, but rather will have a chalet-style roof that will reduce heating space and shed the snow load.

The park has been pursuing sustainable energy solutions in a number of other ways, including using a grant from the Department of Energy for efficient lighting retrofits. It has replaced a 35kW generator at White River Entrance with a 15kW Solar/Hybrid System, winning a 2003 Federal Energy Saver Showcase Award, and hopes to make a similar change with the 100kW generator at Sunrise. Diesel back-up generators are being replaced with efficient propane fired units for improved air quality at Paradise. This creativity is guided by a staff Energy Coordinator and Energy Efficiency team that researches purchases and practices and educates coworkers about energy-wise behavior.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. We will be happy to answer any questions you or the other members may have.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you for your testimony. Tell Jon Jarvis I said hi. I very much appreciated that when he was superintendent and we had a problem with our car, I still remember him running alongside the car trying to hear what was wrong with it. My wife was not going to go down. Brian was telling me about—I'm not a climber. He's a climber. We were in a car. But my wife wasn't going to go down the mountain with me in that car. So he saved us at that time, and I appreciate that.

I listened to a number of the things that were proposals back then now being implemented. If I could ask, I remember I believe it was 2001 when I was at Olympic when this river dam project was about to be started. Has this been moved back? When was the original target?

Mr. LAITNER. Sir, I would be happy to. First of all, thank you for the invitation to be here. We appreciate the opportunity to come before Congress. Quite frankly, though, I wish we were on a trail with you this afternoon rather than sitting here.

The Elwha River restoration project is the second largest project that the National Park Service has ever undertaken. Right now the current schedule is to begin dam deconstruction in late 2008.

Because there are 22 million cubic yards of silt behind the dams, we need to make sure that the drinking water for Port Angeles and the industrial water for Port Angeles remains clean. So the National Park Service is in the process with the city of building a municipal water treatment plant and industrial water treatment plant.

We're working with the tribe to construct a new fish hatchery so that when this habitat opens up, we can restock the area. We're working with the tribe to extend the levy for flood protection.

We're working with neighbors outside of the park on the Elwha River to insure that their properties don't become flooded. And we are in the process of building a greenhouse to re-vegetate that area with many millions of plants.

So all of those things need to take place prior to dam deconstruction. But we're, with our many partners, moving fully ahead to open up 74 miles of habitat for salmon and steelhead that is now closed because of two dams.

Mr. SOUDER. I would like to look at this, this is kind of a mini case here for a second, and how we look at questions like backlog. Has that been—it's hard for us to tell what is a wish list, what is a backlog, what is in need of imminent repair. Has that been counted in the backlog up until now?

Mr. LAITNER. Actually, I don't believe that has been included in the backlog. Parks are at different stages of determining what their backlogs are.

Olympic National Park this summer had a contract team come in and do what is called a Comprehensive Condition Analysis of our front country facilities. What do your buildings look like? What repairs do you need? What do your utility systems looks like? What repairs do they need?

And the results of that team coming in are not yet into the computerized system, so it appears for Olympic, for example, that our number is $23 million, which is quite a lot lower than Mt. Rainier's. It doesn't mean that Olympic's facilities are in much better

condition than Mt. Rainier's. It simply means that our needs have not yet been entered into this national computerized data base.

Mr. SOUDER. When you said that you are in the process of working with the Indian nations, with the community of Port Angeles, all of which were critical before that project was ever going to be undertaken, will there be funds outside the Park Service, say, through the Department of Interior that go to the Indian nation, through the Department of Energy or water resources or wherever the money might come from to Port Angeles in addition to the Park Service or is this going to go through the Park Service budget.

Mr. LAITNER. Most of the money comes through the Park Service budget. However, especially in the field of research, we are looking to many partners. A National Science Foundation Grant just went to Peninsula College in Port Angeles and to Western Washington University in Bellingham for $1 million to study the effects of dam removal.

I mean, what a great opportunity to look at an area that was pristine, two dams went in, almost 80 years went by with nothing else happening, two dams are going to come out, and be able to look at the changes.

We're looking for a lot of private support for that part of it. There are also some moneys from the tribe and some from the city, but the bulk of the funds come through the National Park Service.

Mr. SOUDER. So when we look at a park budget, and taking Olympic in particular here as an example, you are going to have a backlog figure, you are going to have a general operations figure, and then something like this would be an additional project.

Mr. LAITNER. Right. It's in the portion of the budget that is the line-item construction, and that money to do all those things that I mentioned comes through that funding source.

Mr. SOUDER. And if the region is giving—unlike most discretionary funds, at least the National Park Service got an increase, it's right around 3 percent or thereabouts, so in a region then—maybe, Ms. Muldoon, you can address this question.

If there is a project that is a new project, and that project presumably is going to be, although, it's out in 2008, is going to take money, do you see this coming out of the operations or kind of tackle the backlog? How do you make a priority decision?

Ms. MULDOON. A project like the Elwha would never come out of operations. It's too big of a one-time shot. That typically in our world comes out of the line-item construction funds. Anything that is over $500,000, a project of that size competes nationally with other line-items.

Mr. SOUDER. If I may interrupt you for just a second then, if you are saying you get it out of the line-item construction, is it Congress then that is determining whether something goes to line-item construction or NPS? Because if you have $100, let's just say it was $100 in the total budget, and you have a backlog in your general operations, 3 percent doesn't even cover—a 3 percent increase means you have lost ground in staffing. So that section of the budget is losing ground.

How do you make a decision and who makes the decision? Is it made at the national, at the regional or the park level as to, yes,

we're going to put this money in new construction, which means we're going to be this much extra short?

We all know what the numbers are. There's no way to handle the pensions, health care, the salaries, under the existing structure, and the backlog isn't going down. So the question is what do you do with the projects, which I don't want to kill new projects, so the question is how are you—where does this money come from and who is making that decision?

Ms. MULDOON. The full answer for the record on that one, I would defer to my colleagues. My understanding is that for much of the line-item construction funding in particular, the Park Service sets priorities and submits them to Congress, and Congress assigns those priorities and line-items and more parks.

Mr. SOUDER. For parks, which I'm for. We're the elected officials. It's just I'm wondering then how that ripples into the system. If there's an earmark in your area that comes through, does this come out of your other budget then.

Ms. MULDOON. If there's an earmark in line-item construction, it just bumps down our existing priority list for line-item construction which is set regionally and then also set nationally. Parks compete for those projects. So the Park Service has a standing priority list for construction, and earmarks are inserted in that priority list, so it just bumps them down through the years.

Mr. SOUDER. I will followup on that question. I mean, the total budget for the parks or anything else, in other words, if we earmark it for that, if we earmark it in highways, that total budget doesn't change? It comes out of that, and presumably earmarks are then assigned by region or something by the Park Service? It doesn't mean it necessarily goes up to that region.

That's what Brian was asking, and I'm curious, too, in relation to the same question, what happens precisely when something gets earmarked, how does that ripple through in the budget and what does it do?

Does it mean that what I understood you to say is it comes out of the Pacific West Region, it comes out of the zone marked construction, so there's less other, but somebody also made the decision to keep a certain amount of dollars of construction versus operation and backlog?

Ms. MULDOON. That's right. You know, I'm going to defer to Dave Uberuaga on this one.

Mr. UBERUAGA. I will try that. So we have distinct pockets of money, if you will. Line-item construction is a stand-alone in the Park Service appropriation. And each park has needs of projects that are over $500,000 prioritized at a park level that are prioritized and compete on a regional level and then as well on a sophisticated scoring system based on needs, safety and visitor access, how many people are receiving the benefit from that and how serious of a maintenance backlog maybe even that is involved in repairing this facility.

So those priorities within the line-item construction are in that category of that budget. And sometimes we've had as much as $400 million in line-item construction, sometimes it's as low as $150 million, but in that range depending on the appropriators.

So in the case, I will give an example, Sunrise Lodge at Mt. Rainier was scheduled on the Park Service's and Mt. Rainier's schedule for funding in 2008. That would have been on the table for the appropriation 2008. Based on the priorities that are coming in, something was inserted, earmarked, if you will, in 2004 or 2005 that bumped all projects that were below it, maybe bumped them down in a priority, and finally that particular project was rolled to the next year. So Sunrise is going to be in fiscal year 2009 in this year's schedule.

It doesn't mean it's off the table. It just means if there have been any inserted, then it would have a ripple effect through the whole priority. But line-item construction is kind of self contained and the appropriators range depending on funds available.

Mr. SOUDER. And my impression, and I will ask Mr. Dickenson who has had expertise at the Federal level for years, too, is that then in reality, the Park Service will make a request that's basically—I mean, you have this ongoing kind of project list that really you are working out.

How far would you say, if you have new proposals, are you now proposing out to 2012?

Mr. UBERUAGA. We have a rolling 5-year program.

Mr. SOUDER. So 2010 is the farthest out you are. So if you have new things, you are kicking it in to 2012 now. And then Congress, when we put earmarks in, we bump a certain amount of that back, and those presumably you make requests up to the regional office, the regional office then kicks them up to the Park Service and reworks it coming over to Congress and then Congress tinkers with it. Is that the general process?

Ms. MULDOON. Yes.

Mr. SOUDER. So when we earmark, it doesn't necessarily change regions, and it doesn't necessarily change accounts. It just alters the year structure within those accounts for everything else in that region.

Can the regional director reshuffle if he wants to keep certain things or do you have the flexibility or once you have this kind of long-term plan, how locked down is that plan?

Ms. MULDOON. The regional director has some discretion to reshuffle, but generally line-item construction gets set as a region, and then it moves on to a service wide priority setting committee, so then those priorities are set on a service wide basis. So our boss couldn't take a Pacific West project and put it over on a Southeast project that has already been put on.

Mr. SOUDER. But he could switch it around in the Pacific West or is that——

Mr. UBERUAGA. He has that discretion.

Mr. PALECK. I think it's 10 percent, and then we re-program it, request to re-program it.

Mr. SOUDER. Particularly when you have cooperative agreements, I would assume that puts some pressure on it as well because if Port Angeles and Indian nations said, "OK. We have our money. We can't go two more years or we are going to lose it," you would be able to—do you have a process to, in addition to 10 percent, do a request that would be—I mean, is that done or is that considered?

Mr. UBERUAGA. Well, if I understand it correctly, in the evaluation of each project, there are a number of scoring factors. So partnership is a scoring factor, you know. If it's a life/safety/health issue, that scores more. So all of the projects are ranked, and so there is a scoring in that relationship.

So if something does come up, and then it's re-scored, you can look at that and move it up in priority, and the regional director has that discretion.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses. Just to make sure I understand, let's suppose theoretically your region has $1 billion just for a nice round number.

Mr. PALECK. Sure.

Mr. BAIRD. It's a nice round number. And you decide we're going to try to get money for a particular project that we find important. It doesn't sound like you have actually added money to your region. It sounds like to me what we have done is we have forced you to take that money that we just patted ourselves on the back be earmarked and moved that higher up the priority list, so it would mean other things got knocked back. Is that correct?

Ms. MULDOON. That's correct.

Mr. BAIRD. We should know that when it's being earmarked.

Mr. UBERUAGA. You can add funds to the earmark.

Mr. BAIRD. That's a helpful suggestion. I would be remiss, by the way, if I didn't also acknowledge the presence of the NPCA. The National Parks Conservation Association has been a stalwart supporter of the parks, and I am grateful for their presence. I also want to mention our wonderful Fort Vancouver. We should acknowledge that and appreciate that, and Tracy Fortnum does a fantastic job.

We have, coincidentally, a visitor center project down there which we would like to see funded. For some people who are 40 years old now and growing, the use of that park would warrant some funds for that.

You mentioned earlier the field had $1 billion in National Parks over 5 years. Any sense off the top of your head? $1 billion sounds like a lot of money, but I'm wondering any sense of the total number of road miles of international parks, even a rough approximation, or in your own just for example?

Mr. UBERUAGA. At Mt. Rainier, I have 88 miles of paved road, all national historic landmark designated road. So there are cultural roadways as well as the infrastructure that ties all of those together. And I have seen contracts recently from $1 million a mile to $2 million a mile even in the State here in terms of what the projects cost.

Mr. BAIRD. Is that for maintenance or——

Mr. UBERUAGA. That would be for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the roadway. So in the bill, those are primarily for reconstruction, rehabilitation of our roadways. At Mt. Rainier, we have seven projects in the package there, and they are all $5 to $7 million each over the next 5 years.

And so that impact in our case would be about $75 million in maintenance backlog currently in the 5-year program for our roads at Mt. Rainier.

Mr. BAIRD. The reason I ask that is because one of the things I found back there is you can have a number that sounds pretty big, like $1 billion nationwide, and then when you start breaking it out to where the demands are on it, you realize it's not big at all.

So if you have 88 miles of road, and it takes $1 million to refurbish a mile of road, and this is difficult terrain, you have all kinds of sensitivities, sometimes shifting landscape, rock falls, creek passages, etc., so you say here's Mt. Rainier, $1 million a mile, 88 miles in one park alone.

If you look at a park like Yellowstone or Yosemite, you pretty quickly add on, and you realize that's how we get to these shortfalls when we talk about billions of dollars in shortfalls. You just simply do the math, and you realize that what sounds like a big number.

And it's fun, I mean, as a politician or administration, you can pat yourself on the back and say, "By God, we have $1 billion in this bill," and everybody says, "Oh, my goodness, $1 billion is a lot of money." And then you start piecing it out, and you realize it's a lot, but it's not nearly a lot enough.

Mr. SOUDER. May I make a point for the record that official testimony says correctly that there was a 27 percent increase since the last highway transportation bill. The last highway transportation bill was 6 years ago which means just basic inflation would have taken about 24 percent of that. So it's really at most a 3-percent increase assuming the highway costs didn't go up at a faster rate than general inflation, which it would, and that's part of the problem with the numbers.

Mr. BAIRD. Exactly, and that's part of the reason that Mr. Souder and I have responded is in recognition of that. And our goal is by the 100th anniversary, we can eliminate this backlog with the help of voluntary largely contributions from our taxpayers.

Now, on a similar kind of—I'm going to pursue this issue of maintenance, and over the last number of years, I'm going to ask each, if I may, just give me your best assessment of what has happened here to the systems in terms of trail maintenance? How many miles of trail have you been able to improve? Are there trails that you have closed down or are not maintaining and letting them sort of survive as they will under the rigors of human transport and nature?

Mr. Paleck, let's start with you.

Mr. PALECK. Thank you, Mr. Baird. North Cascades National Park Service complex has 398 miles of trail. As you may recall, there was a devastating flood in October 2003, and most of our attention shifted from routine maintenance to replacing major bridge structures, replacing entire sections of trail that were lost in the flood.

In fiscal year 2005, we received $689,500 for emergency storm damage. The year before, it was $668,800. Most of that money, frankly, went to trail repairs and major bridge structure repairs. And I'm pleased to report that by the end of this fall, we'll have all those major trail structures replaced. There was also damage to campgrounds and roads, but the road money comes from separate accounts.

The challenge of maintaining 398 miles of trail with a limited and shrinking staff in a place that grows vegetation quite profusely is a real challenge. Happily we have a very skilled crew. Also we rely on the efforts of volunteers that help us. The Pacific Crest Trail, for example, goes through a portion of the park, and we rely on PCA volunteers.

To say that we're keeping all 398 miles of trail in a constantly well-maintained condition would not be accurate. So we make decisions based on popularity of the trails and the conditions as we encounter them.

Mr. BAIRD. I appreciate that. One of the reasons I ask the question is I've have constituents recently come tell me they've been hiking on the trail system in the park with their family, and the trails were basically gone, and they had to turn back both for safety concerns and for fear they might get lost because it was just gone.

Mr. Uberuaga.

Mr. UBERUAGA. Thank you. In Mt. Rainier, we have 228 miles of maintained trail, and we have almost another 100 miles of non-maintained trail, just the end of the road in some cases that it's noted in the trip planning as well.

We have relied on our fee demonstration funding to maintain our trails. We have based it on really three trail positions. The rest of them are relying on project dollars each year to see what project dollars we get for what trails we'll be able to open and maintain.

We have the supervisor of our trails who has been at Mt. Rainier 40 years. He takes exceptional pride in every linear foot of that trail, every culvert. You can ask him about every foot bridge. And the crew and its dedication, to me, has made the trail system what it is today and how it's maintained. It's their dedication. It's their pride. They can't go home until that segment is done.

We've had a tremendous amount of volunteers. The most common volunteer effort at Mt. Rainier is for companies, whether it's Unilever or K-Mart or in this we've had Boeing Co. quite often come in with crews to help facilitate our trail maintenance throughout the park.

On a couple of occasions, and I could speak to it myself coming up to a trail this last year with a river crossing, actually a small stream crossing, and what we have done over the years is look at rather than an extensive bridge across that line-item, we put what we call a stringer or a log bridge, and in those cases some of those log bridges can be knocked out one or two times, three times a year.

And with our regular patrols, a crew may not be out for 3 or 4 days before they find the log has been removed and they have to replace it.

So in general our trail crews rely on project dollars specifically for trail bridges, trail tread and erosion and have done an outstanding job. But every year we are not sure if we are going to get the money to do that. And just the regular season opening of fallen timber across trails is monumental. We survived the flooding with about $140,000 in back country trail damage that did not specifically fund—we did not get any money specifically to overcome that deficit, but the trail crew through their ingenuity and some re-

sources around the park took care of those deficits just this last summer and during the winter as well.

So that would be my comments on our trail system.

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you.

Mr. LAITNER. Olympic National Park has approximately 600 miles of trails that range from trails on the Pacific Coast to trails through the Rain Forest and trails in the high country. In 1998 and 1999, the Pacific Northwest before I got here was a very strange winter. It would snow, and then it would rain, and then it would snow and then it would rain.

And much of that snow accumulated on bridges, and it wasn't just snow, it was ice. Normally the snow will come on the bridges, it will get to a certain point, and that's as much snow as you can get on there. Well, in that year several bridges collapsed. It took us from early 1999 until approximately the middle of 2003 to fix those bridges.

I remember talking with the trail crew, and we were kind of getting the feeling like we were getting ahead, we were real proud of flying in two major bridges that were over 100 feet long, and then in the fall of 2003, there was that rain storm that my colleagues have referred to, and we lost all of the ground just about that we gained. We lost several roads that we did repair and a lot of miles of trail.

Olympic National Park did not get any storm damage, emergency storm damage money, so we took the project money that would have gone to other projects and redirected that to higher level emergencies.

I had the distinct pleasure of being out in the park over Labor Day, and I did a solo hike of about 55 miles. And I had crossed the Elwha River at Chicago Camp, and I had slipped on the rocks and gotten my feet wet and stopped and got across and took my boots off and put my dry socks on.

And I looked at the map and said, "Well, at least the next stream crossing has a bridge." And I got to the next stream crossing, and it had half a bridge. It had a very nice half going over the middle of the river. And I had forgotten that had been washed out during the floods of 2003. And so I took my boots and socks off and put on my Teva's and went across the river one more time.

I think that park visitors have gone through that many times over the 600 miles of trails. I think we have gotten trails so that you can find the root, but we have certainly not repaired trails. As Dave Uberuaga was saying, most of our trail crew are based or paid out of project funds rather than National Park Service based funds. That was not true 10 years ago. It was just the opposite. We had trail crews paid out of base funds. But we rely on volunteers, some foresters come in, some conservation associations, Washington Conservation, a number of groups come in to help us out.

But our 600 miles of trails need work. Actually on another hike, I met two seasonals who I had not met before. They were hiking, and they had this wheel that they were pushing along. I knew that they weren't the usual back country users. They were inventorying all the trails and the condition.

And we don't have that yet in our maintenance backlog, and I think that's another reason why our number at Olympic National

Park is low. Mt. Rainier National Park is a pilot park and has more up-to-date information on roads and trails and maintenance needs than does Olympic.

And I think that in the next year when we catch up, if you will, it's going to show that there are significant needs at Olympic National Park.

Mr. BAIRD. I thank you. And the one thing I would say is we hear a lot about waste, fraud and abuse in government, and there's no question in my mind that we need to eliminate that. One thing we don't hear about are the employees who work tremendous hours, tremendous dedication, volunteer time, and we owe them a great deal of thanks because as resources have been cut, these employees have really taken it on their own to try to keep fighting the good fight to keep the resources.

And I want to thank you and thank them through you, and if you pass on our gratitude, I would appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Reichert.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to take the opportunity to thank you, Dave, for your tour several months ago of 3 to 4 hours. We had the opportunity to watch some volunteers in action repairing one of those foot bridges. And they offered me a chainsaw, I think, and I turned it down. But it is a great experience to see volunteers, people from around our community, come out and meet these challenges.

You know, in my previous life with the sheriff's office, we depended a lot on volunteers, 2,500 volunteers through our search and rescue program working on Green River, working on you name it, and they were always there. So this is a truly community effort.

And by the way, you serve a great lunch and have homemade pie and all that stuff out there. So I can see that's one of the other reasons why they come out, plus just the fun of it.

We've talked a lot about, you know, the funding sources that you have, and I just jotted down a few notes. The Natural Resource Challenge, 160 percent increase over 2001 from $25½ million to $76.6. What does that really mean, the Natural Resource Challenge, that increase, what does that actually get used for?

Ms. MULDOON. The Natural Resource Challenge has been around since 2001, and that is actually new money that Congress has appropriated to the Park Service. It was an initiative that sort of came from the ground up. Superintendents put it together and identified the lack of knowledge that the Park Service really had across the system in understanding the whole realm of our resources.

So the intent was to establish the natural resource challenge, get a certain level of funding every year from Congress, which happily you folks did to help us understand the resources we have in the parks and help us make decisions that were based on good science.

Mr. REICHERT. So how does—just to followup on that, the good science effort and those fundings that helped you kind of evaluate the resources, how does that apply to how you prioritize your maintenance backlog? Does that science come into play in that effort?

Ms. MULDOON. That's a good question. I will let the superintendents speak to how that might have happened in their parks.

Mr. REICHERT. Not yet maybe? See, I always seem to stump the panel.

Ms. MULDOON. That's a good one.

Mr. UBERUAGA. Actually, sir, there's a lack of scientific knowledge in all the parks in terms of the species and bio that are in existence there, so the Natural Resource Challenge was kicked off in 1999. Actually it was announced during the National Park Service celebrating Mt. Rainier's 100 anniversary. So at our centennial celebration, we had the director, and that was the announcement.

And the goal of that campaign, if you will, was to increase funding for science and natural resources $100 million over the next 5 years. That was the original goal that Congress began, and so every year it funded for that.

In terms of the resources that are assigned under the Natural Resource Challenge, there isn't a direct connection between that science and our preferred maintenance in a lot of cases. The preferred maintenance primarily has been some re-vegetation, so there's been some of that, but for the most part it has been the big infrastructures, roads, treatment plants is the main focus. So it's a direct connection to the deferred maintenance.

Mr. PALECK. I can give you one example. The flood in 2003 literally wiped out half of the campground, the Colonial Campground, off of State Route 20. It was a campground we inherited from the Forest Service in 1968. And that portion based on the hydrological studies that have been done is that the campground never should have been put in that place.

And the science informed us that in looking at what repairs should we do, we shouldn't try to rebuild the entire campground. Instead we should back off, accept the loss of half a dozen sites in order to site the facility in a place where it can be sustained.

Mr. REICHERT. I was just curious as to how this might impact the efforts there in making decisions on just that kind of scenario.

So I would think that good science helps us to make good decisions and helps us to direct our resources where they are most needed.

And we have talked about the increase of the transportation budget which really ends up to be instead of 27 percent, as the chairman said, 3 percent. And there's been a substantial increase in your operating funds, but you are still falling behind, you know, your real needs. So the bottom line is how much money do you need for your maintenance backlog? Do you have a figure you can give us today?

Mr. UBERUAGA. I think you would be in shock.

Mr. REICHERT. Because Brian is ready to write a check.

Mr. UBERUAGA. Well, I just have a little bit of context here in terms of the deferred maintenance. Let me just use Mt. Rainier as an example. Mt. Rainier is the fifth oldest national park in the system. It's 106 years old. The infrastructure that was created when the park was designed is all part of the park experience, plus 3 percent of the front country is now national historic landmark district. Almost all of that is our roadways.

And so all of those historic villages connected through the roadway system are also cultural resources all obtaining the national

standard or the high standard in the country of national historic landmark district.

So you have cultural preservation on top of just maintenance of infrastructure, and so the preservation and the combination of those has contributed to the overall cost to the rebuilding of those.

And for Mt. Rainier, $71 million is what we have in our system. Again, we were a pilot study for what we call asset management, primarily what are the biggest assets we have at Mt. Rainier, and we prioritized them from No. 1 to 229 and on and on until we had each one ranked and prioritized. And then we did field condition assessments that would look at that structure and say how much is it going to take to repair that.

And then there's another level of funding coming that would have an architect or engineer come in instead of a historic carpenter and kind of touch up the professional judgment of the carpenter and then say here's the best estimate of what the deferred maintenance is on this, and this is the condition of this facility.

So, based on that and the new asset management program, there are industry standards that are applied to estimate how much it would cost to repair those. So we are looking at industry standards, industry practices for assessing conditions of facilities, finding out how much it's going to cost to repair and then estimating those costs of repairs. So that's all built into the National Park Service system now, and each park is taking on that challenge to more accurately define this backlog.

But what I can tell you, quite frankly, is the more you delve into it, you know, what was maybe a carpenter's guess as to how much it was going to take to rehab a building, what was our initial input into all the systems, and when you come back with a professional architect, for example, and they look at every detail, then those numbers all have tended to go up.

So at Mt. Rainier, the historic roads that are out there is about $71 million, as I said. Just two visitor projects alone at Mt. Rainier, rehabilitation of the national historic landmark building Paradise Inn, which is scheduled for 2006, that's a $13 million project, and the replacement of the Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center with a new visitor center, between those two it's a $35 million in deferred maintenance backlog. Those are backlogged projects in the National Park System at Mt. Rainier.

So those two replacements, plus the replacement of the Sunrise Lodge, which is another $10 to $12 million project, those are the three biggest pieces that add up to $35 million in Mt. Rainier backlog.

And then when I did the inventory on the trails, the bridges, the campgrounds, several water systems, several sewer systems, all the historic buildings that we have that are all contributing factors to the cultural districts, all the back country structures and then power systems, at two parts of the park alone we generate our own power, at Sunrise, the second most visited destination in the park, we are off grid. So you look at those systems, and they do take a lot to repair.

And what I would call our projected backlog at this time is $168 million for Mt. Rainier.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. I don't want to make it a request, but first off I would like to have the full document inserted into the record. Is that a problem?

Mr. UBERUAGA. No.

Mr. SOUDER. The second thing is if you have similar documents for the other parks, that would be helpful, that would show the specifics of your backlog.

I don't want you to waste limited time coming up with something that you don't have, so when I say go back 5 years, if you have it, say, like one from 3 years ago and one from 6 years ago, but to do a comparison to see how that backlog is moving. In other words, did it drop? Did it go up? And how much of that is because either projects have fallen into backlog because they haven't been maintained and how much of that is inflation and how much it would take to do it if we had done it 5 years ago.

Because I'm not sure exactly, I don't want to make this too big of an effort, but one of the things that we're sorting out here is the assigned date to pick up projects like you just mentioned with Sunrise, Paradise, roads, trails, moves. It's a moving target based on how much we fund national priorities. When we add something like the Lewis and Clark Park, it changes a region, that you can easily on those backlogs show if there's any kind of tracking of how many times that's changed.

In other words, like let's say Sunrise Lodge is slated for 2005, moved to 2006, moved to 2008 or moved to 2009, so we can just kind of get a feeling for what is happening with the budget process as to how you are moving things around.

The bottom line is this is going to blow a huge hole in our budget and everything, and every agency is feeling squeezed. I mean, part of the reason we have to be cautious working with this is that we can talk about a tax increase and we can talk about other things, but even then we're talking about a relatively small zone. We have these same problems with Medicaid, Medicare, water clean up around the country, so there are going to be squeezes.

What we want to know as the Congress is that we have a right to know what squeezes are being made. And we don't feel right now that we really have a good feeling for the decisions that are being made. We may still have to make them, but we need to know what they are.

Mr. UBERUAGA. OK. Help me clarify this, then. And it wasn't indifference to Katrina and the other country needs that I said that, but in terms of——

Mr. SOUDER. No, I understand that.

Mr. UBERUAGA [continuing]. This involving truly commiting what I call a very sophisticated asset management program in place for the National Park Service to articulate clearly to the appropriators that this is a bona fide need and here's how we determine that and just recognizing there's a whole range of how each park is in a different stage because we have a 5-year goal to get that.

So each park is on a time schedule to get the assets in, get the initial assessments and then get the most sophisticated conditions assessed. So each park will have a little bit different timeframe as well, and they are all on different schedules.

Mr. SOUDER. Just so you know, I want to do this, I'm doing this in a fair way, the administration understands that I'm a Republican. I'm not hostile, I'm not interested in cutting off Republican's debts. Others may, but I'm not, and I'm trying to figure out how to address this in a realistic way.

My son actually works for the National Park Service, is now in the Denver office and is working for ops, and so I understand there's a lot of evaluation ongoing. And there's not always an enthusiasm out of administration to share their processes and how they do this process.

But what we need to kind of understand is what tradeoffs are being made, and that's what we're trying to sort through here. And we'll work with the regional director and with Steve Martin and Fran Mainella because I don't want to get into the situation like we get into in, quite frankly, with some other agencies, it's not just in the Park Service, in trying to sort out that so we understand, much like you said, an architect's estimate may be different than the carpenter's estimate.

There are all sorts of levels here of trying to get a handle just like there's additional funds in the Natural Resource Challenge and America's historic treasures, but they aren't really new funds. They were funds that were taken out of your regular operating and backlog to create special target funds.

And for us to understand that when we grade a category that targets a good project, what does that do to this list of projects you have or what does that do to raise your interpretation or trail maintenance? Because to some degree, as a former staffer I can say this, to some degree we need to understand.

Mr. REICHERT. I think I would be remiss to not recognize the effort that the rangers put forth in securing another area that's increased in your responsibilities as it has for all local law enforcement, and having visited you and some of the people who work for you, I know that puts additional stress and strain on protection of the National Parks and people who frequent the park system is also a major, major part of your job.

And as my friend Mr. Baird said, we do have great respect for the work that you do and very much appreciate the effort with the limited resources and the great job you do, so thank you.

Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BAIRD. Honorable Inslee.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you. Let me make a comment, but before that, I want to thank your personnel. When you talk about trail maintenance, how hard people work, I climbed Rainier last summer, and it was incredible the work people had done to try to keep climbers on the right trails so they don't trash all the meadows going up.

You could see people that treated it like their kitchen with such care. It was really amazing. We really appreciate the personnel efforts.

The reason I say that is the sad fact is National Parks are a mess. It's just a crying shame what is going on in our National Parks. And this isn't from hearings. This is from my personal observation. I go to Mesa Verde down in Colorado. It's a mess. Paint is peeling off everything. The hand rails are falling down. The

trails going down to see the monuments are closed because they are falling off the cliff faces.

You go to the climber's shack at Mt. Rainier National Parks, paint falling off all over the place. If it was a Holiday Inn, they would shut it down. You are losing trail interpretive rangers by the score at Olympic National Park, which I loved for my kids for an educational purpose. It's just a crying shame what is going on.

And it's not because of what you are doing; it's what Congress is not doing, which is funding the National Parks. And the reason it's not doing it is it's sacrificing your budget on the alternative tax cuts. And I hate to be the skunk at the picnic party, but that's what is going on.

Now, I just want to ask a simple question: Are we funding the National Parks? I will just ask you, Ms. Muldoon, if I can, are we funding the National Parks in a way that we can say that we'll hand our National Parks to our grandchildren in as good of condition as we had when we grew up both in a physical condition and with the services they provide? That's a softball question.

Mr. BAIRD. You can see the high heat.

Ms. MULDOON. How about those Giants? Well, how do I answer that? None of us are going to sit here and whine because compared to other public land management agencies, we are doing quite well.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, would you disagree with me that we are not cutting the mustard in funding our national parks? Basically, if we continue the trajectory we are on, we'll hand National Parks that are seriously degraded to our kids and our grandchildren, both in their physical and biological system and in the services we provide our people? Is that a fair statement?

Ms. MULDOON. I think we've made some strides in the last couple of years. We've had increases from Congress for operating budgets across——

Mr. INSLEE. If we have made strides, then why are we having to cut rangers, seasonal rangers, in the Olympic National Park? Why is that? Why do constituents go to Hurricane National Park and other National Parks and rangers that we saw who had helped do crowd control and keep people off the meadows and instruct people on how the frogs and the trout work in the lakes, that kids just love seeing a person in that uniform tell them what is going on in the biosphere, why are those people not there if we are doing such a good job?

Ms. MULDOON. We've absolutely lost purchasing power. There's no doubt about that. As costs have gone up, operating budgets haven't gone up every year. They have in the last two, but they don't every year. So we have lost ground over many years, I would have to say. Absolutely true.

We gained some ground in the Natural Resource Challenge, I will say, because we do have a better handle now on our resources than we did 5 years ago.

Mr. INSLEE. If it came to a question of the people that you serve in the National Parks whether to maintain the Cascade National—or Cascade Pass Trail in a pristine condition or whether to give more tax breaks to people earning over $500,000, what do you think they would say.

Ms. MULDOON. I think I should defer that to the superintendent.

Mr. INSLEE. I will let him off the hook. He does too good of a job. Let me ask you this serious question: On the situation regarding this proposal to seriously change the mission statement of the National Parks, we are very concerned about this because as we understand it, the proposal is it will change the definition of impairment to say right now you can't cause impairment of the National Parks.

But as we understand it, the proposal is when you go and do impairment, particularly for motorized vehicles, jet skis, four wheelers, as long as it's, "only temporary," cell phone towers, goodness knows what, that is a major dimunition of our commitment to the future generations to head in that direction. We are very concerned about it.

Have you been involved in those discussions? And, if so, what can you tell us about it?

Ms. MULDOON. I can tell you a little bit about that. You know, I have worked for the service since 1985, and during that time there have been two revisions of management policies. So it's not an extraordinary thing that management policies get revisited from time to time. It is extraordinary that the first draft of management policies goes out to the public in any circumstance no matter what they say because it's always kind of a long, deliberative process. It goes through many iterations.

So we've provided comments on the first draft, every region has, and there's a group of Park Service professionals working on that now. And my understanding is that we're working toward a new draft. So that draft that was out there to begin with has already changed and will undoubtedly change again, and the director has made a commitment to take it out to the public and have a good public debate about the management policies.

Mr. INSLEE. And if you have any input in this decision, will you report that back for the State of Washington, the State of Washington believes it is a terrible idea to diminish the preservative mission of the National Parks, to hand back these most precious jewels in the Nation to our grandkids unsullied on a permanent basis? Would you report back to Mr. Hoffman to that effect?

Ms. MULDOON. Yes, sir.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you very much. Thank you. And by the way, I made a comment about the painting in the climber's shack. I met one of your painters back in DC. He's doing a great job. We've just got to give him a little more help.

Mr. UBERUAGA. I would like to comment on that, if I could. There is an operational funding for the day-to-day operations at Mt. Rainier. I want to just mention a couple things.

Last year, in 2004, we conducted a strategic organizational review at Mt. Rainier to address our budget situation and higher operating costs. We engaged all employees in what I call a self-directed evaluation to develop the most effective organization that we can at Mt. Rainier.

Again, looking at all the circumstances, what do we have control over, what can we manage at Mt. Rainier versus all the other things that are going on around us? We developed the 5-year target organization that we could afford that retained some of the frontline staff while we abolished supervisory positions. We cut 3 per-

cent a year or $275,000 a year for the next 5 years recognizing a total cut of 15 percent or $1.4 million per year from then on for those 5 years and continuing into the out-years.

In addition, we still have 10 permanent positions that are vacant. We have filled most of these positions with non-permanent, seasonal, temporary and term positions which reduces our overall fixed costs, but at a price that will impact the park's long-term employee retention and management succession.

Our seasonal operations, and this is paid for out of base operations, has decreased 49 percent over the last 10 years. And that's approximately 52 seasonal positions at Mt. Rainier. Our permanent positions are down 7 percent, about eight permanent positions.

What we have done in recent years with the deferred maintenance program, is that we have shifted from a base funded to deferred maintenance, if you will, backlog project based funding. We have a substantial increase in our deferred maintenance project funding and have hired term employees and seasonals, and our project work force has increased by 75 percent.

So to speak to that, there is an impact on park operations. Those are some of the specifics I have. And the trend is there as well.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, would you allow me one more question? Thank you. By the way, thanks for coming here to this hearing. We really do appreciate your interest and leadership on this.

There is this proposal that we could go to, this voluntary check-off system where you can check on your income tax to send money to the National Parks. We do it for the Presidential election right now.

And as the tenor of my comments have indicated, I think we're in desperate need of funds for the National Parks, but I think there is some cause for concern if we tend to move in the direction of making National Parks kind of a volunteer system that no longer is a national commitment insuring statute and fiscal policy, but rather something that is like large bake sales for the PTA. We don't do bake sales for the Pentagon. We don't have check offs about buying, you know, airplanes.

And I'm a little concerned that this could diminish the umph, if you will, at budget time to really get commitments for provisions.

Mr. BAIRD. If I may respond.

Mr. INSLEE. You bet.

Mr. BAIRD. I share that concern, but as the co-author of the bill, admittedly this could be fudged, but the bill specifically says the money that will be allocated in this mechanism is going to be over and above the appropriations. So this is meant to be an over and above resource. But now whether or not the appropriators would say, "In fact, we're getting X amount of money through the Centennial Act, so, therefore, we don't have to appropriate," that's our job in Congress to make sure that doesn't happen.

Your point is well taken. The point is for us, the reality on the ground and to some extent I think it's the case with fee demo. Many people might wish we didn't have fee demo, but ask any superintendent I know of, "Could you make it without?" The answer is no.

And so I think Mr. Souder and myself, I can't speak for the chairman, but certainly we are cognizant of that. And our hope is, and I think for me the kind of testimony we've heard today and the kind of visual experience and personal on-the-ground experience of the American people, they are going to say at some point we actually want a mechanism to give more.

The American people look at the parks and say we see the kind of impact you have been describing we have heard something about today. They wish they could do something. Congress hasn't stepped up to the plate. This is a way to empower them. I personally, in supporting this bill, want to share your concern, but say that will be part of our job to say we can't start then cutting the appropriations because in view of the Centennial Act revenue, if it comes about, would supplant that.

Mr. INSLEE. The question is how can we diminish that prospect that it could diminish our ability to win appropriations? Do you have any advice for us on that? If we do create this voluntary stream——

Mr. SOUDER. I don't think you have characterized it correctly. If it was a check off, it would be over the Ways and Means Committee. It's not a check off. It is a bill, and the Resources Committee has jurisdiction because it will work through this way. It's much more controversial than a check off.

It is a set amount of money of which people can designate from their own, and the Federal Government makes up the shortfall, that's not likely to pass in that form, but that's our goal to try to fight this debate.

This hearing isn't about that, but this hearing sets that up. The second thing with it is that it's possibly a compromise where individuals, unlike the Presidential campaign where you can give a dollar or whatever, if a company gives $5,000, the Federal Government would match it might be where we would go.

Right now it actually says the appropriation is bigger, and then depending on how much people give, the government's responsibility goes down over and above the budget. And that fixed amount has a baseline Federal budget with a percent on it and then this has to go above that. So that's how we're trying to address it.

I don't think they need—I don't want to put the pressure on them to try to get into how we should write the legislation, but at the same time I think your basic question to them was in—do they have enough, I think, is a legitimate thing to ask them.

And then, sure, they are worried that all these private things may replace baseline funding. I mean, that's always a risk. But that's really for us to figure out. So their goal is to get it from wherever they can get it.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms. MULDOON. Thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. I will follow with two observations: One, you know, the history of the American National Parks I do not know it well, but I spent a little bit of time studying it. Part of this came about as a reference to this proposed management plan. Part of the reason we have our National Parks is because people looked at horror what had happened to Niagra Falls.

The history of the development of our natural park system was Niagara Falls was a national and international treasure that had been developed in some of the most garish and outlandish ways through private enterprise trying to take advantage of this.

And people from Europe particularly came over and Americans came over to this region and looked at that Niagara Falls and were astonished at how bad it looked. And there was a realization that we must not let this happen to other natural areas.

And interestingly at the time there was a certain envy on American's part of European cultural history and their religious monuments and the great churches. And we saw in America, people at the time, an opportunity to do something that was uniquely American and that our cathedrals were the cathedrals of the Sequoia and the cathedrals of the canyons of Yosemite and the great canyons of Yellowstone and the mountains of Mt. Rainier.

That was our heritage and that was vital that we preserve this. And as I read this new potential management plan, I think we would be starting a step backward and the biggest step backward in a long, long time toward the direction that we were trying to avoid when we started the National Park Service.

And I just cannot underscore how important it is that we not do that. It is a sad thing to me already that we have a maintenance backlog. It is a sad thing that trails and interpretive resources are lost.

But if we change the fundamental core mission of our National Parks, eternal shame on us because you don't get it back. You don't get it back. One thing——

[Pause.]

Mr. BAIRD. One thing I want to——

Mr. SOUDER. We can give speeches, but you can't applaud for speeches.

Mr. BAIRD. We'll disregard that. But one thing that was eluded to earlier, and I don't expect you to necessarily—I had the occasion to bump into a couple of park rangers, particularly the seasonal employees. I'm concerned about the long-term morale of our service. There are a bunch of young sprites out there today. I worry sincerely about this, that as this generation of superintendents and park workers retire, that the ability to fill that with career employees who see ambiguity, uncertainty, change in mission, change in responsibility, I think you run a morale risk. And we haven't talked about it. We have talked about the money for the ground, we have talked about the money for the trails, etc. I worry about morale, and I worry about the incoming pipeline of the dedicated Park Service employees.

I open it up if you want to talk about that, we can, but I have talked to some folks who say, you know, this was my dream to be a park ranger, and I have wondered now if I'm going to have to abandon that dream.

Mr. SOUDER. What I would like to do is go to the second panel. I was going to make a similar request of each of you. Mr. Uberuaga referred to this career track, that would you talk—if you could give us a written response to this direct question for the record that we can have as to what you think the impact is on recruitment of

young people in the Park Service in addition to the morale of the Park Service, is there a career track.

If we can only have seniors in, and we all meet young people who maybe give 7 to 10 years on temporary status——

Mr. BAIRD. Exactly.

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. What is happening inside the service? And is this going to impact the great people with double degrees? Is this going to impact these people's patience to do that as they try to figure out how to cover health care?

Just if you can, just spring forward as straightforward as you can, this is what I see happening as opposed to editorializing off of it, which could get into all kinds of discussions. But this is under oath.

Mr. BAIRD. And particularly, if I may, Mr. Chair, is the seasonal issue and the issue you raised regarding health care because the seasonals who are not employed long enough to receive health care? I think this raises particular challenges, if you can talk about that in your comments.

Mr. SOUDER. And I'm going to give some other written questions so we can match up the different hearings and do that to some degree through the park office, through the regional office, but particularly in this area of the upper Northwest, could you give us how many permanent and seasonal staff the region had 4 years ago as opposed to currently and any comments you want to add to that.

We also have a question on the maintenance backlog and also how the recreation fee is working in relationship to this. And also if you could give me an idea, this is an area of huge natural resource parks, but you also have lots of others that you can refer to such as the Klondike headquarters.

And some of what is happening here is we are able to cover the bigger parks better, but some of the small ones may be getting lost in the system, but if you can give us some indication of whether that's occurring as well.

And I want to say for the record, we're going to have political differences, and Jay has referred back to the question a couple times, I don't favor raising taxes. I favor making some adjustments, and I don't believe they will solve the problem. I think we can handle a legitimate disagreement over that.

But from our perspective as the revenues have gone up, the expenditures have soared. And most of it is entitlement spending, and we have a huge challenge.

And I'm one who believes that we've gone too far in some of the Park Service reductions. But it isn't going to be like the old days. There aren't as many funds to restore the buildings there. We are going to have to find more ways to be creative, more self service, creative ways with the Internet.

Our school teachers around the country have a great educational, cultural, scientific resource in the United States, most of which probably have more actual original artwork than our national art museums inside the system. But we have to figure out different ways to do this because the country is changing. What we have are the greatest resources we have in America, and we can't let them get denigrated for the next generations based on the challenges that we have.

And we'll try to work through our differences of how to do that. But first we have to define what we have, what is happening to it and how best to address this and raise the awareness of Congress. Thank you for participating in that this morning.

If the second panel can start to come forward, we'll take a brief recess to give the stenographer a break.

[Recess.]

Mr. SOUDER. The subcommittee will come back to order. And as you heard from the first panel, each witness has to be sworn in. So if you will stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SOUDER. Let the record show that each of the witnesses have responded in the affirmative. Mr. J. Paul Malmberg is here representing—he's a regional director, Washington State Parks, Southwest Region. He's representing the Oregon and Washington State Parks. And we'll get his testimony.

Let's start with you.

STATEMENTS OF J. PAUL MALMBERG, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON STATE PARKS, SOUTHWEST REGION; SALLY JEWELL, TRUSTEE, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION; REX DERR, DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION; TIM WOOD, DIRECTOR, OREGON STATE PARKS; RUSS DICKENSON, FORMER DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; AND ROD FLECK, CITY ATTORNEY/PLANNER, FORKS, WA

STATEMENT OF J. PAUL MALMBERG

Mr. MALMBERG. Thank you. Chairman Souder, members of the committee, my name is Paul Malmberg. I'm regional director for the Southwest Region, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to be able to testify on behalf of both Washington State Parks and Oregon State Parks. We like to think that our joint testimony is an example of the cooperative, seamless two-State park system, as taught by the National Park Service.

We are pleased today to be able to give you an overview of some of Washington's major Centennial 2013 goals and to describe our involvement with a variety of Federal, State and non-profit organizations and partnerships.

Washington State's Parks System is 93 years old. Established in 1913, we are the Nation's second oldest State parks system. In 7 years, our system of 120 parks and 260,000 acres will be 100 years old. With our Centennial in mind, the seven member State Parks Commission created our Centennial 2013 plan. This plan is a framework to position and guide the agency as it enters the next 100 years. It is a bold plan that focuses on renewed commitment to traditional roles, pushing the envelope for future plans and actively connecting with our most important resource: Engaged communities.

The Centennial 2013 Plan has three parts. First, six renewed commitments to our major activities: To stewardship, the protection and preservation of natural historical and cultural resources; to quality, the added value of participation in our parks; to our em-

ployees, to equip them with a strong customer service ethic; to partnerships, at all levels to leverage scarce resources beyond status quo to improve the park experience; and to its stable funding source.

The second feature of our plan is leaving a legacy. This is the plan's bold part. It is not only business as usual or the status quo, it is asking for $100 million—yes, $100 million—as an up-front investment to kick start the first phase of our plan and leave a legacy for the next generation of park users. And we're asking partners to buy into this legacy with money, muscle and organizational resources.

The third leg of our Centennial Plan is 100 connections. This part is the community-based part; the part where local citizens make local investments to improve local State parks. This phase is a natural channel for the passion people have for parks.

Now I'd like to go a little more into partnerships, that key feature in the 2013 plan that some of our people refer to as "parknerships." Partnerships are a key element of Centennial 2013, in all three areas, commitment, legacy and 100 connections. In building on existing and forming new partnerships, we realize the value of leverage, the extra boost that individual, group and governmental linkages can give our State parks.

Partnerships are the win/win feature of our plan. The partners win by giving to the communities, by succeeding in business by doing good. Of course, parks win, too. In an era of dwindling resources, we can tap into the muscle that makes our country great: People power. These benefits from partners are not only tangible bricks and mortar or interpretive shows, they are goodwill and the seal of public approval of well-invested tax dollars.

Washington State Parks' view of partnership is not only people power. The view encompasses more—remember, we're thinking boldly here. So our plan will work on attracting corporate sponsorships, foundation support from Boeing, Starbuck's, Seattle's Bullitt Foundation. We are trying for major investments that make a difference.

Now that you have an idea of what we think partnerships are, let me outline a few of our most important ones to date. The first is our work with the National Park Service, Oregon State Parks and other local jurisdictions at the Lewis and Clark National and State Historic Park on both sides of the Columbia River as it flows into the Pacific Ocean. Working collaboratively with the National Park Service as a marketing and management partner, using the National Park Service Web site, Oregon State Parks, through a number of State parks, including Fort Stevens, and Washington State Parks, through a number of State parks, including Cape Disappointment, offer a variety of cultural, historical and natural park experience in a seamless delivery system.

A second collaboration is referred to as WORP, or Washington Oregon Recreation Pass, where both Oregon and Washington State Parks teamed up with the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to pilot a "one pass fits all" endeavor. Visitors can use this one pass to enter national parks in the region, park at forest service trailheads, use

BLM lands and certain Corps of Engineers parks, and park for free in selected Oregon and Washington State parks. This one-pass experiment is a fine example of strong customer service and the seamless park system we all aspire to.

A third example of symbiotic partnerships is the Grand Coulee National Recreation Area. There in Central Washington, the Federal land management agencies, the National Park Service and Washington State Parks work together for a top-notch Ice Age Floods interpretive experience. The floods occurred 12,000 years ago and carved up dramatic landscapes in a four-State area.

Another example of a successful partnership is the Northwest Discovery Water Trail that runs from Canoe Camp on the Clearwater River in Idaho, down the Snake and Columbia Rivers to Bonneville Dam in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, providing kayak, canoe and boating experiences to outdoor enthusiasts from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and visitors from all over the country. The trail is a collaboration of 33 different agencies and jurisdictions. As we like to say, the Northwest Discovery Water Trail is the proof of the partnership pudding.

In addition to the Northwest Discovery Trail, the Lewis & Clark National and State Historic Park, and the Washington Oregon Recreation Pass mentioned above, Oregon State Parks provides another fine partnership example in their cooperative effort with the National Park Service in providing the Fort-to-Sea Trail from Fort Clatsop to the Pacific. It's an example of a joint park/trail management borne through partnerships.

There are other examples in operating public information officers, coastal management, long-distance rails-to-trails management and coordination of training for cultural/historical resource interpretation they portend well for future endeavors that leverage the resources at all levels—Federal, State, and local, but time does not permit a detailed description.

As concluding remarks, on behalf of Washington and Oregon, I cannot emphasize this final point enough: As Federal resources dwindle or are directed toward recent reconstruction efforts, these Federal, State, private and non-profit partnerships become more and more crucial to our joint mission. We view our collaborative past as a great asset and maybe even a "best-kept secret," and we will continue to view our joint future as equally valuable as a key 21st century asset necessary for the success in our mutual, collaborative park-based missions.

Thank you on behalf of the Oregon State Parks and Washington State Parks. I hope these remarks will help you in your future deliberations. We wish you all well.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Malmberg follows:]

GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mark E. Souder, Chair
September 12, 2005

Joint Testimony of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and Oregon State Parks

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Malmberg, Regional Director for the Southwest Region, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to be able to testify on behalf of both Washington State Parks and Oregon State Parks today. We like to think that our joint testimony is an example of a cooperative, "seamless" two-state park system, as taught us by the National Park Service.

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The Centennial 2013 Plan has three parts. First, six renewed Commitments to our major activities:

- to Stewardship - the protection and preservation of natural historical and cultural resources
- to Quality - the added value of interpretation at our parks
- to our Employees - to equip them with a strong customer service ethic
- to Partnerships - at all levels, to leverage scarce resources beyond status quo to improve the park experience;
- to a Stable Funding Source.

The second feature of our Plan is: Leaving a Legacy. This is the Plan's bold part. It is not only "business as usual" or the status quo, it is asking for $100 million--yes, one hundred million dollars--as an up-front investment to kick-start the first phase of our plan and leave a legacy for the next generation of park users. And we're asking partners to buy into this legacy, with money, muscle, and organizational resources.

#3

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A second collaboration is referred to as "WORP", or the "Washington Oregon Recreation Pass" where both Oregon and Washington State Parks teamed up with the NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to pilot a "one pass fits all" endeavor. Visitors can use this one pass to enter national parks in the region, park at forest service trailheads, use BLM lands and certain Corps of Engineers parks, and park for free in selected Oregon and Washington state parks. This one-pass experiment is a fine example of strong customer service and the "seamless" park system we all aspire to.

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There are other examples--in operating public information centers, coastal management, long-distance rails-to-trails management, and coordination of training for cultural/historical resource interpretation--that portend well for future endeavors that leverage the resources at all levels--federal, state, and local, but time does not permit a detailed description.

As concluding remarks, on behalf of Washington and Oregon, I cannot emphasize this final point enough: as Federal resources dwindle or are directed toward recent reconstruction efforts, these Federal, state, private and non-profit partnerships become more and more crucial to our joint mission. We view our collaborative past as a great asset, maybe even a "best kept secret." And we'll continue to view our joint future as equally valuable, as a key 21st Century asset, necessary for success in our mutual, collaborative park-based missions.

Thank you for your interest. On behalf of Oregon State Parks and Washington State Parks, I hope these remarks will help you in your future deliberations. We wish you well.

Respectfully,

Rex Derr, Director
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Tim Wood, Director
Oregon State Parks

Mr. SOUDER. Our next witness is Sally Jewell, the CEO of REI, I think the favorite store both online and directly of my two sons.

STATEMENT OF SALLY JEWELL

Ms. JEWELL. Great. Then I don't have to explain REI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I especially thank you for traveling out here to meet in our neck of the woods. I think the view you have behind me is indicative of the kinds of things that our citizens like to do in terms of protecting open spaces and beautiful areas amidst growing urbanizing areas. And we're in, I think, Representative Reichert's district, and you know what a struggle that is. So thank you. I thank Representatives Inslee and Baird, as well as Reichert, for being here as well.

REI is—it's great to know it's your sons' favorite store. We are now in 25 States. We'll have 82 stores by the end of the year, and we are hopeful we'll cross $1 billion in sales. So it is not a small business. We employ 7,000 taxpayers in those 25 States.

But that's not why I'm here today. I'm here really as a trustee for the National Parks Conservation Association [NPCA], which I will be talking about a little bit.

Unlike the individuals on the panel before us, my salary is not paid by the Federal Government, and I am free to speak as a citizen. And so I will start by answering Representative Inslee's question, which is we are not leaving our parks in the same condition as we inherited them from our parents. And I'm preaching to the choir here. The four of you know that we have challenges that we have to solve.

So one of the functions of the NPCA, which was formed in 1919, I believe the same year the National Park Service was founded, was to be able to speak out like I can speak out as a private citizen in favor of protecting the National Parks for future generations unencumbered and in the condition that we inherited them. That is the role of the NPCA. We have over 300,000 members and people sign up voluntarily to support the organizations through the contributions to do exactly this, which is to advocate for not just the natural resources we've heard so much about, but the historical and cultural heritage of these wonderful places.

I'm also a founding board member of the Mountains to Sound Greenway, which is in primarily Representative Reichert's district and basically runs from the mountains to the sound along I–90. We're sitting in it now. And I'm on the board of the University of Washington Board of Regents and also served on the State of Washington Governor's Competitiveness Council looking at what we need to do within this State to remain competitive.

Before REI, I have 20 years in the banking industry so I have kind of a varied background and know the complexities that you must face every day in trying to figure out how to deal with limited resources to do good things.

I'm an immigrant to this country. One of my first memories coming here with my family in 1959 was of hiking the Carbon River, an amazing area. Later on as a child, I did a 100-mile trek across the Olympic Mountains coming out in Dosewallips, which actually I tried to visit yesterday, but the road was washed out, I guess it has been for a number of years on U.S. Forest Service land.

But we live in an amazing place here, and there are amazing places like this across the country. As a child growing up, my family went to many National Parks mostly in the west, and we always went to the ranger chats. And seeing rangers dressed very similarly, actually a little bit dressed down from our superintendents here today, but still they had the uniform of the National Park Service, and that meant a lot to me as a child, as I'm sure it did to a number of you.

It came a little closer to home this year. My son is actually a volunteer climbing ranger at Mt. Rainier National Park. He hasn't run into Dave Uberuaga very much. He's down the totem pole quite a bit, actually quite a bit of time spent volunteering on the trails and swinging a pick ax and other things.

But I've had, besides a lot of Rainier dust to clear out about every week when he brings his pile of dirty laundry home, I've had a lot of opportunity to talk to him about what it's like to work in the parks. And there is a shift. There is a shift away from interpretive rangers. There are no where near as many as there once were. The NPCA put out a report called Endangered Rangers, and I know you are all familiar with that. Representative Dicks brought it up at I think it was an Interior Appropriations Subcommittee or Appropriations Committee, raising the issue of the reduction in the number of rangers available to do interpretive programs.

My husband and I a year and a half ago went to Yosemite. Of course, we went to all the chats that we could get to, and none of them were put on by rangers. They were all put on by contractors. And it's just not the same.

So I know that when I think about the experiences I had as a child compared to the experiences my children have right now, it is different.

My son's roommate has been a ranger at Olympic National Park and now Rainier National Park, and he is an interpretive ranger, back country ranger, but he's taking the law enforcement classes that now one needs to do to move ahead in the park. So the shift from interpretation toward law enforcement is also very true in the parks as they work on security issues, not the things, perhaps, that we traditionally associate with rangers, although, that is an important component.

These park rangers inspired in me a love of nature, respect for culture and also through a lot of our historical parks the sacrifices that our forbearers made in shaping the country. So I hope we can get back to that and not just have them babysat until somebody gets out to help encourage future generations to appreciate what we have.

Funding challenges are increasingly evident in the parks that I visit. I reference those a little bit. I think that you all are aware of it, and I will try to not repeat the testimony I just heard, so I will scale back on a fair amount of it. I do have two tables that are in my written testimony. One talks about the base operating budget of each of the 14 national park sites in Washington and Oregon and where they were in 2004, 2005 and 2006 and what the increases in those budgets were, and in addition there's a table on the economic impacts of the National Park System in the northwest, and they are substantial.

There is chronic underfunding in our National Parks. You are aware of it. Chairman Souder and Representative Baird have cosponsored the National Parks Centennial Act. We applaud that. The NPCA is fully in support of that, and we really appreciate your effort to move that forward.

This is not a Republican or a Democratic issue. This is an American problem. It spans every part of the political spectrum. And I just appreciate the courage that you all have to sign onto that bill and to try and move it forward.

Business plans that were developed in over 70 National Parks across the Nation show that on average parks operate with only two thirds of the funding that they need. That adds up to a systemwide deficit of $600 million annually, so it's no surprise that the annual operation budgets have not kept pace with the need. And we heard about that from the individuals a few minutes ago.

Increased security demands, as I mentioned, are an issue. The years following September 11th, a number of the resources from our National Parks here have been sent to help protect places like the Golden Gate Bridge and Statue of Liberty. That's all coming out of the local budgets, and they are having to absorb these unbudgeted costs.

Chairman Souder mentioned in his opening remarks the cost of living adjustments that are mandated, but when the budgets don't keep up with those cost of living adjustments, it means you scale back a number of people, and that's exactly what is happening.

We've also heard about storm damage. I think that's true in many National Parks, not just the ones here. These are wild and wooly places, and they are costly to maintain.

I won't even get into oil prices because that's going to impact every part of our economy, but it certainly impacts the National Parks with all of the vehicles they have to maintain to run it.

When we look at the Pacific Northwest budgets at a glance, only 2 of the 14 park sites in the Northwest are slated for base increases which are above the rate of inflation, and that's all identified in that table that I mentioned in the upcoming 2006 budgets. On average, the parks are going to get an increase of 2.6 percent compared to inflation of 3.1 percent—(Telephone interruption.) That's an obnoxious ring.

But because inflation is higher than what the Parks' budgets are, we are continuing to have the same struggles. I do want to recognize, however, that in 2005, there was a significant increase, and we really appreciate that, and you can see that in the tables.

It's going to take a sustained effort to increase the annual funding. It's not going to be annual appropriations alone, and it's going to require public/private partnerships. We heard a little bit about some partnerships in the State parks, and we'll talk in a minute about something REI is doing and a number of folks like us, but it's not the only solution.

So let me talk just briefly and even more briefly than I intended to about two of our premiere Pacific Northwest area parks, and that's Mt. Rainier and Olympic.

At Mt. Rainier National Park, it's an active volcano. REI's distribution center, all the stuff that your sons order through mail order, comes from a distribution center in Sumner, WA. It's on the

volcano evacuation route to Mt. Rainier. There are actually signs that say that Mt. Rainier blows this way.

There is no full-time volcanologist on staff at Mt. Rainier National Park. It's the kind of thing we think they should have given the uniqueness of that particular asset.

We heard from Dave Uberuaga about the deferred maintenance. I had in excess of $100 million. He said $168 a few minutes ago. Mt. Rainier has better information than the other parks. We talked about that. The strategic operational review in 2004 found that the flat budgets, higher operating costs and the increased work loads were factors stressing the park, and they went through that very effectively.

If you want to just cut to the quick, in constant dollars, inflation adjusted, the Parks 2004 budget of $9 and a quarter million have been flat lined since the last increase at 1997. And that is, I think, pretty indicative of other parks as well.

We appreciate Representative Reichert getting out there. I thought you were operating a chainsaw. I guess not. But at least that's what was reported.

Mr. REICHERT. That's a little scary.

Ms. JEWELL. But for those of us who do get out and volunteer in the Parks, you get a real sense of just how hard the work is to maintain these things, how critical the volunteers are, but also how critical good staff is to be able to get the job done effectively.

Olympic National Parks: a million acres, 65 miles of shoreline. It's an amazing, amazing park. Part of the work of the NPCA is to do reports called the State of the Parks. They are working their way around the country, but they have done Olympic. And they put in place a rating scale about how effectively the park is able to support and steward its resources, natural, cultural, historic.

Unfortunately, Olympic National Park rated a poor 59 out of 100 on that score card, and that is not at all because the staff is not running like squirrels in a cage doing as much as they can. And we heard from Bill, and the staff does incredible work out there. But it's just because there aren't enough of them.

The health of Olympic National Park is threatened by an annual shortfall of about $6 million just in the base budget funding. So we talked about Elwha dam. This is just the basic operations.

This was a shocking statistic to me and perhaps improved a little bit, Bill, in 2005, but the number of seasonal rangers was reduced from 130 in 2001, to only 25 in 2004. The seasonal rangers are the backbone of these programs. Those are the people you run into in the back country. Those are the people you rely on to answer your question or to call for help if you have an injury.

And 2 years ago, in addition, funding shortfalls threatened to close the visitors center in Forks, and I suspect Rod Fleck will be talking a little bit about that. But these are—it's not only critical for protecting the resources, it's an engine of an economy that otherwise has survived on timber harvest and is changing, you know, for the good, I think, in large part because of Olympic National Park. It won't be if we can't maintain those resources.

NPCA recently collected 5,000 comment cards at various parks from park visitors. This is just this past summer. And I thought I was going to have a box of them. I guess not——

Mr. SOUDER. It's there.

Ms. JEWELL. Oh, it's there. All right. I can't see it, but there's a box. I'm told there's a box; 5,000 personalized comments from park visitors, and, you know, not unlike the four of you who expressed your comments earlier, they're very engaged in National Park issues. They care a lot about it, and they expressed a great deal of concern for the parks.

I'm just going to read a few of the quotes. David of Kirkland, WA, "Along with the wilderness areas, the National Parks are all we have left. Future generations will judge our efforts in whether we sit around or preserve these areas."

From Jonathan of Vancouver, WA. Gee, it just happens to be in your district. What do you know? "The National Parks provide historical information. They also promote tourism which helps stimulate the local economies."

And from Joseph and Margaret Miller from right here in Bellevue, "We worked from the late 1950's to 1968 for the establishment of North Cascades National Park. Upon our retirement in 1970, we worked as unpaid volunteer biological researchers for the National Park Service. We feel that the current lack of funding is undoing much of this work."

So that is very indicative of the comments that were in the 5,000 folks that chose to participate in supporting the kinds of things that you know.

I want to talk just a minute about public private/partnerships and specifically REI just by way of example, but there are many other examples. Just as increased public funding is critical to the health of natural parks, private dollars through partnerships also play a critical role. We have done a number of things with the Park Service just to indicate to you some of the examples out there.

Last year, REI donated $100,000 to support the National Parks Volunteerism and Enhancement Program, and that was through the National Park Foundation. Specifically we took 130 volunteer projects and narrowed them down to 22 that we could fund and then provided funding to support the volunteer efforts to do that. So bringing those folks into the park to do good work that you heard our superintendents talk about a little bit ago.

Over the last few years, we supported sales of the National Park Pass in our stores, and in addition we did a shirt promotion with all of our employees that had a ranger on the front, you know, raising awareness of the National Parks and the National Parks Pass, the work of the foundation and supporting parks overall.

In addition, we did custom artwork for several of the National Parks and with the proceeds going to support those parks.

We've also supported something called Japan Volunteer in the Parks Program at Mt. Rainier. The country of Japan provides volunteer students to come over and work in our National Parks every year, something that maybe we could be doing as well.

The public places a really high value on the National Parks, and while REI is a private organization and other philanthropies are more than willing to partner with the Park Service, it has to be clear that the role of philanthropists and businesses like ours should provide the margin of excellence, not the margin of survival.

We should provide the margin of excellence, not the margin of survival.

When the private sector sees the funding that it's doing supplanting the resources that we should be providing as a country, you can bet that firms are going to retreat and say, "Wait a minute. This isn't right." And I think that's so critical. It's just too big for any philanthropist or any private individual or company to do. We have to work hand in hand.

I have talked briefly about the benefits, economic benefits. Just to quote a few statistics, according to the National Park Service, overall in the country, the National Parks generate about $11 billion in economic impacts each year. That's 226,000 tourism-related jobs in local economies, as well as lots of positive economic impacts on those economies.

I gave you the table. More than 8 million tourists visited the National Parks in the State of Washington and Oregon in 2003. They spent over $250 million, created over 6,700 jobs and generated over $100 million in income to our communities, and I suspect Rod is going to talk a little bit about his own community and its impact.

So in conclusion, the work you are doing is good work. It's important work. We have to fund these parks. We have to find a way to do it.

I know that this is a time of sadness in our country. I know that there will be many resources that are directed toward the hurricane-damaged areas. It's just like private philanthropy, we can't allow other things, other needs in our country, to go unmet as we respond to this catastrophe. I really think we need to do both. And I so applaud the work you are doing in raising awareness with the National Parks Centennial Act and having these hearings out here and listening to how important these treasured resources are for all of us. Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jewell follows:]

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Testimony of Sally Jewell
CEO, Recreational Equipment Incorporated
Board of Trustees, National Parks Conservation Association

Re: "National Parks in the Pacific Northwest"

before the
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
of the House Government Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Bellevue, Washington

September 12, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, it is with great honor and pleasure that I appear before you today to discuss the future of our national parks. I want to thank you for holding this important hearing and for your interest and support of our nation's crown jewels -- our national parks.

My name is Sally Jewell and I am Chief Executive Officer of Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI). REI is the nation's largest consumer cooperative with more than 2.5 million active members. It is the leading national retailer and online merchant of outdoor gear and clothing for camping, hiking, climbing, bicycling, canoeing, kayaking and winter sports. I am here today in my capacity as a member of the National Parks Conservation Association Board of Trustees, on which I have served for the past year. Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its 300,000 members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

In addition to being an avid supporter and visitor to the national parks, I am a founding board member and past president for the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, a local organization, dedicated to enhancing the long-term environmental health and economic vitality of the I-90 corridor from Puget Sound to the Cascade Mountains. I serve on the University of Washington Board of Regents and have been a member of the Washington State Governor's Competitiveness Council. Prior to joining REI, I worked for nearly 20 years in the banking industry, serving as head of business activities in the Northwest for Rainier Bank, Security Pacific, and WestOne Bank; as president and CEO of WestOne Bank Washington; and as president and CEO of Washington Mutual's Commercial Banking Group.

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My passion for the national parks stems from a lifetime of experience in and around the parks. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we are blessed to have some of the nation's most spectacular national parks including Olympic, Mount Rainier, and North Cascades. As a young child, my first hiking experiences were along the Carbon River in Mount Rainier National Park. The incredible old growth trees of Olympic continue to move me and bring as they bring back childhood memories of the Hoh Rainforest and my first backcountry adventure with a group of fellow 12-year-olds making a weeklong trek.

The national parks across the western United States, from Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon, were destinations for my family and I as we explored the wonders of this country as fresh immigrants from England. Integral to my experience in the parks with my family were the guided ranger tours and talks that we were fortunate to enjoy. I came to deeply appreciate and respect our national park rangers, who were knowledgeable and patient in satisfying my childhood curiosity.

The national parks have come even closer to home this year as my son joined the volunteer corps of the climbing rangers at Mount Rainier National Park, interacting on a daily basis with thousands of visitors who come to see this amazing place, many attempting to achieve the climb of a lifetime. I myself have made that climb on a number of occasions, each a unique and enriching experience.

Unfortunately many families today don't have these same experiences because lack of funding in our national parks has significantly reduced the number of ranger programs and rangers themselves. This point was central to NPCA's *Endangered Rangers* report issued last year, and was effectively raised by Representative Dicks during debate over the fiscal year 2005 Interior Appropriations bill. I am very concerned that my grandchildren will not have the same opportunities to learn from the rangers as I did growing up.

Each part of the world has its unique attributes that make it special. Here in the United States, our national parks play no small role in making this country a very special place for residents and visitors alike. Our national parks preserve our most treasure natural and cultural assets for this and future generations to experience and enjoy. Rangers and staff of the Park Service inspire a love of nature, a respect for culture, and a reminder of the sacrifices our forbearers made in shaping this country. The parks serve as a bridge to introduce our history and culture to the things we value highly as a nation. As an adult and a parent, I have visited national parks from coast to coast, always making time to meet park rangers and attend programs when available. The funding challenges facing the parks have become increasingly evident in many of the parks I visit. Yet, these parks continue to have a magic that I only hope will continue indefinitely. As a nation, we must show a strong commitment to our national parks and provide the parks the funding they need to thrive. Doing anything less is unacceptable.

National Parks of the Pacific Northwest

The national parks preserve the most superlative examples of America's natural, cultural and historic resources. The fourteen national park sites in Washington and Oregon protect some

of our nation's most treasured natural and historic resources, from the snowcapped peak of Mount Rainier to the historic spot at Fort Clatsop where Lewis and Clark first viewed the Pacific Ocean 200 years ago.

For example, the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, created in November 2004 by incorporating state parks in Washington and Oregon along with Fort Clatsop National Memorial Park, preserves the historic lands and provides interpretation for Lewis and Clark's epic journey. The park includes the winter encampment of Lewis and Clark, which will celebrate its bicentennial this November.

Crater Lake National Park, located on the northern end of the Klamath Basin in Oregon, lies within the caldera of Mt. Mazuma. This volcano of the Cascade Range erupted more than 7,000 years ago, creating the deepest lake in the United States. The park extends from the depth of Crater Lake at 1,932 feet to the peak of Mt. Scott at 8,929 feet, with 90 percent of the park managed as wilderness. Crater Lake has long been of particular cultural significance to native peoples, particularly the Klamath and Modoc Indians. Portions of this park were originally included in the lands allocated to the Klamath Tribes in their 1864 treaty with the United States government.

North Cascades National Park, a wilderness park with high jagged peaks, glaciers, waterfalls, rivers, lakes, and lush forests, contains tremendously diverse flora, fauna, and animal species. In addition to its unprecedented natural amenities, the park is also rich in history. The area was home to the Native Americans and a trade gateway between the Plateau tribes to the east and the Coast Salish to the west for over 8,000 years.

These examples are but a few of the tremendous natural, cultural, and historic resources managed by the National Park Service in the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, the Park Service just does not have the resources needed to adequately protect these priceless parks.

Funding Challenge

There is no question that one of the most pervasive challenges facing America's parks is chronic under funding. This is not a Republican or Democratic problem; it is an American problem, one that has grown over decades of inadequate funding under administrations and congresses of both parties.

Business plans developed in over 70 national parks across the nation show that on average, parks operate with only two-thirds of the needed funding—a system-wide deficit in excess of $600 million annually. Annual operating budgets of the national parks have just not kept up with the need. Compounding this problem in recent years has been the increased security demands place on the parks in the years following 9-11. Additionally, individual park sites have been forced to absorb a number of unbudgeted costs, including cost-of-living adjustments, storm damage, and other fixed costs. With oil prices soaring today, the utility and vehicle costs associated with managing the 388 national parks covering 83.6 million acres will only further exacerbate the financial crunch placed on our parks.

Pacific Northwest Base Operating Budget at a Glance

When reviewing the base operating budgets of the national park sites in Oregon and Washington, you find a similar trend to the budgets of parks across the country -- the base operating budgets of these parks is just not keeping pace with needs. As you can see in the chart (Appendix 1), only two of the 14 park sites in the Pacific Northwest are slated for base increases above the rate of inflation in the upcoming fiscal year 2006 budget. Parks in Washington and Oregon on average are slated to receive an increase of only 2.6 percent to their base operating budget in the upcoming 2006 fiscal year, with Olympic and Mount Rainier receiving an increase of 2.7 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. When factoring in a 3.1 percent rate of inflation, it is no wonder the parks are not able to keep up with the needs.

Thankfully Chairman Souder, you, and the other members of Congress gathered here today, have raised the issue of the importance of increasing park operations funding with your colleagues in the House, and the final fiscal year 2006 Interior Appropriations Act provided an increase of approximately $10 million above the administration's request for park operations. However, once Park Service assessments are factored in, and an across-the-board reduction to the final bill is applied, that increase does very little to address the needs of the parks.

One bright spot to note when looking at the Park Service budget is the increase provided to the parks base-operating budget in the current 2005 fiscal year. Parks in the Pacific Northwest received an average increase of 7.7 percent this year. While this annual increase was helpful, and due in large part to the efforts of the members of Congress gathered here today, particularly Representative Dicks and his tireless work in the Appropriations committee, it must be sustained and built upon for years to come.

To truly address the park's annual operating shortfall requires a sustained effort of significant annual funding increases and effective park management of these resources to enable the parks to thrive. Absent this, the Park Service is unable to properly protect the priceless resources contained within their boundaries and provide the services to the millions of visitors that they expect to receive when experiencing our national crown jewels.

It is also clear that annual appropriations alone cannot alone fix the problem facing the national parks. This problem is larger and demands public/private partnerships, something REI is actively involved in. But we also need some creative thinking in Congress and must look for innovative ways to provide the parks the funding they need. One such approach is the National Park Centennial Act that you, Representative Baird, and Representative Reichert, have all sponsored, to address this problem. NPCA strongly supports the Centennial Act. As you know, this legislation has garnered strong support across both sides of the aisle and I encourage you to continue to work with you colleagues on Capitol Hill to move this legislation forward in support of the parks.

Two premier national parks in the Pacific Northwest region, Mount Rainer and Olympic, provide striking examples of the consequences of the funding shortfalls to the national parks in the region.

Mount Rainier National Park

Mount Rainier National Park encompasses over 200,000 acres, including the greatest single-peak glacial system in the United States. The park contains Mount Rainier (14,410 foot summit) an active volcano encased in over 35 miles of snow and ice, as well as dense old growth forests and sub alpine flowered meadows. The park is also rich in cultural resources and was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1997. The park provides outstanding recreational opportunities. Climbers from around the world come to hike and summit Mount Rainier every year.

Yet, funding shortfalls have had a significant adverse impact at Mount Rainier. While the park surrounds an active volcano, it has no full-time vulcanologist on hand. Park officials estimate the backlog of deferred maintenance costs for historic buildings, trails, and bridges exceeds $100 million. Faced with budget shortfalls last summer, Rainier's rangers were forced to curtail visitor center hours and cancel educational programs.

A Strategic Organizational Review (SOR) conducted by Mount Rainier National Park key staff in 2004 found that flat budgets, higher operating costs, and increased workloads were taxing the workforce of the park. According to the Mount Rainier SOR, "Mount Rainier National Park has struggled with the same stressing factors facing all national parks: Erosion of base funding through higher operating costs, no diminishment of operational and project workloads, competing internal and external priorities and expectations, and a pending competitive sourcing study. In constant dollars, the park's FY04 budget of $9.29 million has been flat-lined since the last base increase in 1997. In reality during this period that park has lost an estimated $1.79 million in annual funding capability through unfunded pay increases, increased benefit costs association with the transition of FERS-based workforce, assessments, CPI and other cost increases."

Based on these trends, the park projected an additional 15 percent loss in base funding over the next five years. An internal hiring freeze was in place and 16 permanent positions were left vacant.

This review at Mount Rainier provides a stark picture of the fiscal reality facing our parks. I appreciate that Representative Reichert celebrated National Trails Day this past May volunteering at Mount Rainier, expressing his support for addressing the funding shortfall and maintenance backlog crippling the park. He has seen first-hand the effects of the financial pressure facing Mount Rainier.

Olympic National Park

The mission of Olympic National Park is to preserve, protect, and interpret, for the benefit of the American people, the Olympic Mountain and Pacific Coast wilderness, containing the finest remaining examples of temperate rain forest, seacoast, active glaciers, herds of Roosevelt elk, and those cultural resources that trace human presence in Olympic National Park from prehistory through to modern times. The park protects nearly one million acres of mountains, forests, and coast, including approximately 65 miles of Pacific coastline – one of the

largest stretches of protected wilderness coast in the contiguous United States, as well as one of few temperate rainforests in the world. Olympic National Park has traditional ties to more American Indian groups than most other national park units.

According to a comprehensive resource assessment conducted by NPCA's *Center for State of the Parks*, Olympic's overall stewardship capacity – the Park Service's ability to protect resources at Olympic National Park – rated a poor score of 59 out of a possible score of 100. Funding and staffing shortfalls constrain resource protection efforts and all park operations.

The health of Olympic National Park is chronically threatened by an annual shortfall in excess of $6 million. This shortfall impacted the experiences of visitors this past summer and limited the Park Service's ability to care for Olympic's wildlife, cultural artifacts, and buildings. The number of seasonal rangers was reduced from 130 in 2001 to only 25 in 2004. Two years ago, funding shortfalls threatened to close the visitor center in Forks.

In order to address the funding shortfalls, the park has cut back on permanent staffing levels through retirement and attrition, with 28 positions currently vacant; reduced the number of seasonal staff; and started to charge more operational costs to what were traditionally project, donation, recreation and franchise fees. As a result, preventative maintenance at Olympic goes undone.

In 10 years, the seasonal labor force so critical to search and rescue, visitor service, research, maintenance and performing other operational functions through the busy visitor season has gone from a base funded operation in 1994 to one almost entirely funded by project monies or fees. Since the certainty of these funds from year to year is fluid, it makes it difficult to plan for summer operations in advance, when the parks face the highest visitation. These basic operational needs funded by project monies creates not only great uncertainty in the park, but also more time spent by park staff competing for these funds internally within the Park Service to cover these basic services that are reoccurring annually.

Concerned with what they were seeing on the ground at our national parks, NPCA collected over 5,000 personalized comments from park visitors at national parks across the Pacific Northwest this past summer on why they care about the parks. These visitors were very engaged in national park issues, expressing their appreciation and adoration of the parks. They expressed concerned about the future of the parks, specifically the funding challenges facing the parks in the northwest and across the nation. For example, from David of Kirkland, Washington: "Along with the wilderness areas, the national parks are all we have left. Future generations will judge our efforts in whether we stood around or preserved these areas." From Greg of Winlock, Washington: "National parks are an appreciated part of the American experience. Interpretive programs should continue to be a high priority. It is not just a warm and fuzzy experience; these are traditions and gifts passed on to our children." From Jonathon of Vancouver, Washington: "The national parks provide historical information. They also promote tourism, which helps stimulate the local economies." And from Joseph W. and Margaret M. Miller from Bellevue, Washington: "We worked from the late 1950's to 1968 for the establishment of the North Cascades National Park. Upon our retirement in 1970, we worked as unpaid volunteers – biological researchers for the National Park Service. We feel that the current lack of funding is

undoing much of this work." It is clear from these comments that the public understands well both the value of the national parks and the challenges they face.

REI Partnership with the Park Service

Just as increased public funding is critical to the health of the national parks, private dollars through partnerships also play a critical role in the support of our nation's parks. To this end, REI is pleased to participate in a number of partnerships with the Park Service, working hand in hand with the agency to provide needed support. Here are a few examples.

Last Year, REI donated $100,000 to support the National Parks Volunteerism and Enhancement Program" through the National Park Foundation. This program was designed to assist parks in their efforts to provide high quality volunteer experiences that strengthen the enduring connection between volunteers and their national parks. The program reviewed and ranked 113 proposals and funded the top 22 projects in 16 states and the District of Columbia. Through our partnership, we directed much needed dollars to volunteer programs across the nation, at parks including Valley Forge National Historical Park (PA), Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens (DC), Voyageurs National Park (MN), Golden Gate National Recreation Area (CA), and here in Washington at Mount Rainier and North Cascades.

Over the last few years, REI has also supported the National Parks Foundation through the sales of the National Parks Pass in our stores, and through co-promotions that have raised awareness of the parks. One promotion we supported in our stores had all employees wearing a specially produced T-shirt with a ranger image on the front to draw attention to the importance of national parks. In a subsequent year, we produced high-tech t-shirts that had graphics and messages unique to outdoor recreation destinations, including Yosemite National Park, Rocky Mountains National Park, and Mt. Rainier National Park. REI made a donation upon the sale of each shirt to volunteer programs dedicated to each respective park location.

REI is also proud to participate in the Japan Volunteer in Parks Program. This past summer marked the 12th summer in a row that the program sent Japanese college students to Mount Rainier National Park to assist with repair and rehabilitation projects.

In addition to coordinating and hosting volunteer projects in parks across the country, this year REI will donate $2.5 million, focused primarily on caring for outdoor areas for recreation, promoting safe and responsible recreating, and connecting young people with the outdoors – this ranges from school courses taught by REI staff in "Leave no Trace" principles, to providing gear to scouts and many other youth groups that organize outdoor outings in the national parks and other public lands.

The public places a high value on our national parks. While REI and other private organizations and philanthropies are more than willing to partner with the Park Service, it must be clear that philanthropy's role should be to provide the margin of excellence, not the margin of survival. The private sector and philanthropy expects to see a return on its investment. For when the private sector sees itself supplanting, rather than supplementing funding for our parks,

they will retreat. If we are to be successful, we must work cooperatively to protect and enhance our national parks for this and future generations.

Economic Benefits of the National Parks in the Pacific Northwest

National parks play a critical role in both the identity and economy of the Pacific Northwest. Having spent nearly 20 years in the finance industry, I understand and appreciate full well the important economic benefits our national parks play in the tourism, recreation, and related industries in the Pacific Northwest.

According to the National Park Service, the national parks generate about $11 billion in economic impacts each year. The parks generate over 226,000 tourism related jobs in local economies, not to mention their additional positive economic impact on communities. Here in the Pacific Northwest, each year more than 8 million tourists visit the national parks. In 2003, these visitors spent over $250 million in the parks and gateway communities, created over 6,700 jobs, and generated over $100 million in income for our communities.

I have included a chart (Appendix 2) showing the economic impacts of the national parks in Washington and Oregon. As you can see, the national parks in the Pacific Northwest have a tremendous economic impact in the region, generating approximately $122 million in personal income. Olympic National Park alone generated nearly $40 million in personal income in and around the park.

The City of Forks, represented here today by Rod Fleck, provides an excellent example of the economic benefits our national parks. In April of this year, the City of Forks City Council adopted a resolution in support of adequate funding for the Park Service, citing the important role Olympic National Park plays in the tourism sector of the local, county, and regional economy.

The City of Forks, the Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and other local communities, representing all five counties around Olympic National Park and more than 1,400 tourism-related businesses, joined with NPCA to host a national park workshop for business leaders on the Olympic Peninsula last spring. More than two-dozen lodge owners, tour operators, chambers of commerce, and business owners and local community members expressed their concern for Olympic National Park, and the importance of a healthy park for their respective businesses. In their eyes, customers will not return to businesses outside the park if the park itself is in bad shape. These businesses rely upon a healthy Olympic National Park.

As the representatives of more than 1,400 area businesses, three of these community leaders traveled to Washington, DC to meet with their members of Congress to share their stories of closed visitor centers, cancelled ranger talks, and express their strong concern over the current status of our national parks.

Conclusion

Residents of the Pacific Northwest appreciate and value the great outdoors. The national parks of the Pacific Northwest protect, preserve, and interpret some of our nation's most treasured natural and cultural resources, as well as provide us with unparalleled recreational and educational opportunities. The parks are a key component to the make-up of the region, providing recreation, relaxation, and economic benefit to the thousands of residents of this community.

Our national parks are special places and deserve our steadfast support. Partnerships are an important component to providing for the parks, and REI will continue to play an active role in this partnership. But partnerships alone cannot solve the problem facing the parks. Government must also do its part. As stewards of these irreplaceable places, we cannot continue to neglect them.

Again, I thank you for holding this important hearing and giving me the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer questions.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Appendix 1

Base Operating Budget of National Park Units in Oregon and Washington
NPS FY 2004 – FY 2006 (all dollar amounts in thousands)

Unit	FY 04 Enacted	FY 05 Estimate	Increase FY 04 to FY 05	% Increase	FY 06 Request	Increase FY 05 to FY 06	% increase	% Gap Between Inflation and Funding Request for FY 06*	Change In Real Dollars From FY 05 Estimate to FY 06 Request**
Crater Lake NP (OR)	4,010	4,214	204	4.8	4,321	107	2.5	-0.61	-27
Ebbey's Landing NHR (WA)	209	285	76	26.7	288	3	1	-2.11	-6
Fort Vancouver NHS (WA)	1,032	1,442	410	28.4	1,472	30	2	-1.11	-16
John Day Fossil Beds NM (OR)	1,278	1,314	36	2.7	1,348	34	2.5	-0.61	-8
Klondike Gold Rush-Seattle Unit NHP (WA)	421	434	13	3	447	13	2.9	-0.21	-1
Lake Roosevelt NRA (WA)	3,967	4,091	124	3	4,203	112	2.7	-0.41	-19
Lewis and Clark NHP (ex-Fort Clatsop NM) (OR and WA)	1,182	1,216	34	2.8	1,248	32	2.6	-0.51	-7
North Cascades NPS Complex (WA)	5,911	6,055	144	2.4	6,230	175	2.8	-0.31	-19
Mount Rainier NP (WA)	9,290	9,869	579	5.9	10,134	265	2.6	-0.51	-50
Olympic NP (WA)	10,128	10,711	583	5.4	11,003	292	2.7	-0.41	-50
Oregon Caves NM (OR)	1,156	1,199	43	3.6	1,231	32	2.6	-0.51	-6
San Juan NHP (WA)	2,533	2,758	225	8.2	2,853	95	3.3	0.2	6
Whitman Mission NHS (WA)	680	701	21	3	726	25	3.4	0.3	2
				7.7			2.6		

*Based on 3.11% rate of inflation.

**The FY 06 request provided an increase of $50.5 million to National Park System operations. The final FY 06 Conference provided an increase of $60.5 million.

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Appendix 2

Washing and Oregon
Economic Impacts of National Park System*

Unit	Recreation Visits	Total Visitor Spending	Average Spending Per Party Day	Total Jobs	Personal Income Generated
Crater Lake NP (OR)	479,183	$33,180,000	$121	931	$12,370,000
Fort Vancouver NHS (WA)	510,383	$12,480,000	$89	558	$9,760,000
John Day Fossil Beds NM (OR)	108,181	$3,340,000	$62	88	$1,220,000
Klondike Gold Rush-Seattle Unit NHP (WA)	64,097	$3,670,000	$115	87	$1,780,000
Lake Roosevelt NRA (WA)	1,356,331	$35,900,000	$55	913	$12,780,000
Lewis and Clark NHP (ex-Fort Clatsop NM) (OR and WA)	255,853	$7,890,000	$62	207	$2,880,000
North Cascades NPS Complex (WA)					
Ross Lake NRA	346,542	$1,250,000	$54	226	$3,160,000
Lake Chelan NRA	35,549	$1,250,000	$63	32	$440,000
North Cascades NP	20,724	$1,130,000	$78	22	$380,000
Mount Rainier NP (WA)	1,262,351	$29,620,000	$66	781	$13,040,000
Olympic NP (WA)	3,225,327	$89,500,000	$86	2,356	$39,240,000
Oregon Caves NM (OR)	94,745	$4,500,000	$93	113	$1,970,000
San Juan NHP (WA)	1,198,105	$52,780,000	$89	1,310	$22,920,000
Whitman Mission NHS (WA)	56,009	$1,730,000	$62	46	$630,000
Totals	**9,013,380**	**$278,220,000**	**$78**	**7,670**	**$122,570,000**

* Economic impacts where estimated using the Money Generation Model (MGM2) 2003.

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Mr. SOUDER. Our next witness is Mr. Russ Dickenson, a former director of the National Park Service. Roger Kennedy was at our last hearing up in Boston, and we appreciate you giving us kind of the oversight of having been in the system and your willingness to speak out today.

STATEMENT OF RUSSELL E. DICKENSON

Mr. DICKENSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Russ Dickenson. I'm retired from the National Park Service. I live in Bellevue, WA. And I might say at my age and with the amount of experience I've had, I'm history. After World War II service as a Marine, I entered the National Park Service in 1946 as a park ranger at Grand Canyon. During my 39 years with NPS, I held many different positions in parks coast to coast as a ranger, chief ranger, superintendent, regional director of two regions, one of which was the Pacific Northwest, deputy director of the service under Director No. 7 and 8 and became the 11th Director of the service for 5 years in 1980 to 1985. As director, I served under two Presidents, President Carter and Reagan.

Following my retirement, I served 4 years on the Secretary of Interior's National Park System Advisory Board and 15 years as the board member of Eastern National, which is a nonprofit operating association which supports the Eastern National park areas and their interpretive and educational projects.

I've been able to keep reasonably abreast of NPS issues and programs. And one of my fundamental beliefs is that the National Parks and historic areas have a special place in our culture and in the hearts and minds of the American people. So it has been really disappointing in recent years that an adequate level of support from the Department and Congress has not always been forthcoming.

When I was director, we had a park restoration and improvement program which devoted $1 billion over a 5-year period to park resources and facilities. It was a magic time. In the 20 years since I've left, the backlog and maintenance and needed improvements have gradually increased I have been told to an estimated range of $4½ billion to $9 billion, and the available operational dollars are also inadequate.

Many visitors are not having a fully satisfactory park visit. Fewer rangers, fewer interpreters, fewer information personnel at visitor centers and reduced hours, trail walks fewer, fewer camp grounds, etc.

An adequate operating budget at the park level at each park is critical to fixing the problem. The Park Service has some of the most talented and dedicated people you would hope to find in any institution or profession, but they need help. The capacity of park superintendents, rangers and staff to do the job that Congress and the American people expect is being steadily eroded and the morale along with it.

There is not a park in the Pacific Northwest that isn't being forced to leave important jobs undone or staff positions unfilled because of insufficient operating income. Despite the fiscal year 2006 increase in $50 million in base funding for total NPS, 13 of the 15

park units in the Pacific Northwest will receive funding that fails to keep up with inflation.

The work Congressman Dicks and others of you have done to direct additional resources to Park Service operations is admirable and sorely needed, but I believe we are at another point in our national history when we must reinvest in our National Park System. We did it during the 1930's depression. Remember the CCC era and the magnificent improvements in National Parks that occurred, again after World War II during the Eisenhower Mission 66 program, and I was very much a part of that, and it gave a boost that we can see to this day.

It is time to consider a reinvestment program again. Anything less simply won't get the job done. The National Parks need the kind of leadership and attention that you, Mr. Chairman, and each Member of Congress may help provide.

I hope that my 10-year-old great grandson with his developing appreciation of the natural world and the National Parks will look back on this time as the turning point when our Nation, despite all our problems foreign and domestic, chose to save and enhance these wonderful world-renowned natural and historical areas keeping these areas unspoiled for generations to come.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dickenson follows:]

Statement of Russell E. Dickenson
For a Hearing Entitled: "The National Parks: Will they Survive for Future Generations?"
House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Bellevue, Washington
September 12, 2005

Good morning, Mr. Chairman. My name is Russ Dickenson and I want to thank you for holding this hearing today to examine the state of our national parks.

I began my tenure with the National Park Service in 1946, as a ranger in Grand Canyon National Park, and was director of the National Park Service from May of 1980 until March of 1985—from the end of the Carter administration, through the tenure of Interior Secretary James Watt, and into the second term of President Reagan. I was the only Interior Department bureau chief to be retained by the Reagan administration in 1981. During the span of my 39 years with the Park Service, I held many positions, including that of regional director for the Pacific Northwest.

I haven't been very vocal since leaving the Park Service, but I keep a close watch on what's going on. I keep up-to-date on NPS issues and problems, read the clips, and occasionally have advised my successors as director. In recent years I have become more and more disappointed from a distance. The national parks and the Park Service have a special place in our culture and in the hearts and souls of the American people. Yet, our government leaders are not treating them that way.

My major initiative as Director of the National Park Service was the Park Restoration and Improvement Program, which devoted more than a billion dollars over five years to park resources and facilities. But in the 20 years since I left the Park Service, the backlog has ballooned to the point where size estimates now range from $4.5 billion to $9.7 billion. That's on top of the steady deterioration we've seen over the years in operating budgets.

If I would like to see one thing happen in NPS, it would be a renewed commitment to visitor service and interpretation, and an effort to really indoctrinate new recruits to the Service, with team spirit. The operating budget is the most critical piece of this, and I am so grateful to you, Chairman Souder, for the extraordinary lengths to which you are going to raise these issues. These hearings are of enormous importance.

As a people, we have made a significant investment in our national parks, but we're not taking care of it. Like any investment, it can be lost if you don't keep it up. That means paying the bills. That means fixing the shingles before water destroys the roof. That means hiring competent people, paying them appropriately, and letting them do their jobs.

The Park Service has some of the most talented and dedicated people you could hope to find in any profession. It is a professional service that, given the right tools, can preserve the most compelling pieces of our natural and cultural heritage, and can connect the American people to our parks. Only with the true support of the American people and the thoughtful intelligent management of the Service by its dedicated members, can the NPS long endure.

The capacity of park superintendents, rangers and other staff to do the job that Congress and the American people expect of them is being steadily eroded, and the morale of those great public

#5

servants along with it. There is not a park here in the Pacific Northwest that isn't being forced to leave important jobs undone or staff positions unfilled because of insufficient budgets. This isn't a simple matter of efficiency. It's a matter of paying the bills.

Olympic National Park can hire only a fraction of the seasonal rangers they could hire only a few years ago to serve the public and provide interpretation—they lost more than 100 such positions between FY 2001 and FY 2004. Mount Rainier, an active and potentially very dangerous volcano, does not have the funds to hire a full-time vulcanologist. Despite the FY 2006 increase of $50 million in base funding for NPS, 12 of the 14 park units in the Pacific Northwest likely will receive funding that fails to keep up with inflation.

The work Congressman Dicks and others of you have done to direct additional resources to Park Service operations is admirable and sorely needed. But it has been barely enough to stop the bleeding. We are at another point in our national history when we must re-invest in our national parks. We did it during the depression, and again in the Eisenhower-era Mission 66 program. The time for re-investment has come again. Anything less simply won't get the job done.

Even if we are able to tackle the enormous fiscal crisis facing our national parks, however, the change to Park Service management policies that has been widely publicized in recent weeks poses every bit as insidious a risk to the future of our national parks. When I was NPS director, the parks faced many serious challenges. But not even in the most challenging days of the "Watt era" did we face anything as potentially damaging to the national parks. The career personnel in NPS are extremely alarmed about this proposal, but also very fearful for their jobs. I hope you will ask the hard questions of Interior and NPS, and find out from the career professionals in the NPS what the kind of changes reported in the media really could mean. It would be unfortunate if we solved the fiscal plight of the national parks while allowing their overall meaning and fabric to be spoiled.

Mr. Chairman, I spent my professional life in the National Park Service. My interest in the parks was sparked by a college-sponsored geology field trip to Grand Canyon, where I later had the good fortune to work as a park ranger. I was proud to serve my country as a marine, a park ranger, and director of the national park service.

The national parks are still the best places anyone can go with their family, experience our country's natural wonders and learn our history. But it saddens me to think about the future of the parks if our leaders do not wake up, knowing how difficult a task my brethren in the career Park Service have before them as they attempt to carry out their charge to protect the parks for future generations. There is plenty of blame to go around for the fiscal predicament of the parks—multiple administrations, multiple congresses. But it falls to us to fix the problem, and to avoid rewriting policies in a manner that jeopardizes the ideals that became reality in 1872, with the establishment of Yellowstone.

The national parks are crying out for the kind of leadership and attention that your effort, Mr. Souder, may help provide. I hope that my great grandson, with his developing appreciation of the natural world and the national parks, will look back on this time as the turning point when our nation chose to re-invest in this wondrous gift, and redoubled our commitment to keeping these places unspoiled for generations yet to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I need to ask your indulgence. I have to catch a flight back to the other Washington. I would like to just thank the panelists. I regret that I can't be here for any of the questioning, but thank you for your service. And thanks again to the folks who have joined us today.

And thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for hosting this and to my colleagues for their work. Thank you. I apologize I have to step out.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Our next witness today is Rod Fleck from Forks, WA, talking about the community impacts. I appreciate you being here today.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM R. FLECK

Mr. FLECK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee. My name is Rod Fleck. I'm the city attorney and planner for Forks, WA. Mayor Reed, I'm standing in for her. She extends her regrets. She's at a 50th class reunion. She will make it very clear for me to point out it's for her husband, not her.

And I apologize to Sally because the phone that went off. I believe it is my 4-year-old telling me about her first day at preschool.

So it's a great honor, and I appreciate the honor to testify. I have two records in my written testimony that I submit for you in your consideration. I will refer to those a little bit later.

Forks is a wonderful community. It's in a remarkable State. And I will say in one of the longest footnotes you probably have ever seen, I give you my love for this State and all the wonders in it. We are a small rural city out on the Olympic peninsula about 3 hours and a ferry ride away from here. It's 3,200 people there that call it home. We are the hub in a 2,000 square mile area with 12,000 people. We're rural. We are remote. We are unique for our salmon, our salamanders, our forests and our beaches. Oh, yeah, we get a lot of rain, so much so that we measure it in feet.

And as a rural community, we understand the functions of our various land managers. Some lands are for timber production and others are for recreation. And I'm here to talk about the recreation and its role. Tourism is a conscious part of our diverse location efforts and our local economy.

The Olympic National Park sites that we have around us within about 20 minutes include lakes, mountains, beaches and rivers. They're huge draws and have huge economic impact.

On the peninsula alone, the estimates are that there's about $91 million spent by tourists visiting our region every year; $41 million generates jobs and personal income to the families of my neighbors. Diane Schostak, our Forks Chamber of Commerce director, I once asked her, "What is the estimate of the tourism segment into our sector of employment?" She goes, "I would say, minimum, it's 1 out of 10, and it's probably a lot higher than that," in just our little town of Forks.

Up until 2004, though, we took our parks for granted, and we weren't alone. They are always there. And we then started hearing of service local adjustments that would include changes to the Forks Visitor Center. It's a unique relationship that the Park and the Forest Service have and a transit center that was paid for by Federal dollars, and the suggestion was that it was going to have to be closed.

Well, that caught our attention. We are known to be very vocal in our little community. And we started working with the National Park Conservation Association and others to say we're not sure we should have our superintendents having to make these decisions about what do I fund here because I can't absorb the cost of increases in fuel, health care, things like that.

We started to learn a lot about the Park and the Park Service. We also in 2004 watched something that I think every American deserves to be proud of, and that was the bipartisan level of leadership by you, Mr. Chairman, your colleague Representative Baird, Congressman Dicks, Representative Taylor, Representative Inslee and Representative Larsen and others to work across the aisle to find solutions in the leadership and funding. We're extremely grateful in our little community. We don't get to tell you guys that often. You probably hear us complain about things. But we are extremely grateful for that.

But we also learned that NPS has challenges. Now, it is not easy for a citizen to travel the park system, the park service. I will say I am a pretty good researcher in a lot of odd little things. The Park Service is difficult to figure out and ferret information out about.

What I can say is that while the budgets remained relatively stable in Olympic National Park in fiscal year 2001, there are 202 FTE billed there. In fiscal year 2004, there are 177 billed there. They did get additional visitors' support, and Superintendent Laitner uses that very, very wisely. There is no waste. There is no over excess in our National Park Service when it comes to these people's hands in the field. They can take a penny and get you probably 2 or 3 cents on whatever you give them in time and dedication.

But those changes and those shifts in the FTE impact our infrastructures and our visitors. Visitors in their parks expect what I expect in classrooms, smaller tour sizes, safe and clean structures and open facilities, yet the budgets are not meeting all those costs. Superintendent Laitner and others are having to triage maintenance between trails, buildings, roads, camp sites, sometimes just making sure the septic system at the Hoh is functional that week. They are also seeing overloaded staff, and those reductions are having impact on everything from law enforcement to interpretive services.

In that role, you see a reliance on volunteers. I've seen it in the last year. I've been traveling and asking people at parks from Chilcote, OH, to Spotsylvania to Gettysburg to the Olympics. Volunteers are great resources, but we need to caution the NPS to use these wonderful folks to supplement, not supplant trained staff, especially the law enforcement folks. I don't want to criticize volunteers because they are a godsend. They should be adequately noted and given the recognition they deserve, and in my written testimony I talk about a couple examples where that's not the case. I appreciate REI making the effort to overcome that.

In addition, sponsorship should augment but not supplant National Park Service operations and maintenance and avoid costly shifts to local governments and entities. That is one of the questions that came up, could the city of Forks maybe absorb some of these costs or help us cost share this. With all due respect, sir, my

city can just get by. We don't have a luxury of doing that. We would love to. We just don't have that ability. There's a lot of other small little communities like that.

In the letter I provided from the 20 chambers of commerce around the Northwest, there are many little communities just like Forks from Sedro-Woolley to Concrete and others that just don't have those resources, even though we rely upon the parks for its economic development and stability, 8 million visitors in 1 year generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for our little communities.

The other thing I would like to talk about real quickly as an example is the Hoh Visitors Center. It's a neat little place. The staff there are the hardest working people I have ever met in my life. And to be candid, it's a Mission 66 vintage visitors center. It was built during the Kennedy administration. And yes, Superintendent, I can say that it's older than me. It was built for about 15,000 to 20,000 visitors a year. Today it receives 260,000 people a year. In August alone, it received 70,000 people a year.

I don't want to get into septic engineering and all those things, but I can tell you that is a problem at the very base level in the park there.

And it's just not built for the use it gets. I was up there with a person a week and a half ago, and we walked in with 15 people, and it was a crowded facility. I think it's smaller than the open area we're in right now, including the offices, for 260,000 people, 70,000 people in August. Start doing the math by hour, and you can start to see you become very close friends with a lot of people.

It also doesn't have some of the things that I have seen in other visitor centers, a lecture area, a movie area, things like that. I'm not saying it's bad, it just needs some assistance. They are keeping it in wonderful shape. Truly 140 some inches of rain can do damage to a lot of buildings, you can only imagine, and these folks have kept that place up. It is a remarkable effort they undertake.

Our community, our city, adopted a resolution which I have provided you that supports the National Park Centennial Act. We appreciate your leadership on that and Representative Baird. We think that is the way to have the citizens participate and say we care about this. In return, in our dollars we gain back, we would like to take some of that and give it back and say deal with this.

From preserving artifacts at Gettysburg to the Olympic National Park's beach trails, my family will put some small sum in there if we are fortunate to get a return that year.

That money can also deal with invasive species. That hasn't been talked about, but in our area Knotweed is a tenacious weed that has slowly been creeping into the salmon bearing bred areas. We need to deal with those and have additional funding for the Park Service. The Park Service has been a leader in that effort. I commend Mr. Laitner for that, but he needs to have the resources to make that invasive species no longer a part of our problem.

And we need to ensure that we stabilize our Parks as our Nation needs to grow and change over the years to come. We'll stay involved, and you will probably keep hearing from us, right or wrong.

And then finally I just want to point out we brought for each one of you, because we knew you couldn't make it to Forks, a little

token from Forks saying thank you. A friend of mine, Pat Boyle, and the folks at Hoh River wanted to make sure I brought these for you guys and said if you are ever out our way, we'll ensure that you have a wonderful visit.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fleck follows:]

Testimony of
William R. Fleck[i]
City Attorney and Planner

RE: "National Parks in the Northwest"

Before the
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
of the Government Reform Committee of the
United States House of Representatives

Seattle, Washington
12 Sep 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, it is truly an honor to appear before you today. My name is Rod Fleck and I am the City Attorney and Planner for Forks, Washington. I am here today as Mayor Nedra Reed's designee, who truly is sorry that she was unable to attend this hearing, however, her husband's 50th Class Reunion and a family reunion has her in Michigan at this time. To testify before a Congressional committee is a rare opportunity for any citizen, and I am extremely grateful to Chairman Souder for the invitation to be here today.

Forks, like Washington, is truly a unique place. It takes about twelve hours to travel across this state from Forks to Clarkston, Washington. Making that trip, a person can appreciate this State's vast expanses, unique landscapes, and remarkable history. I have relegated further descriptions of this state to a very long footnote.[ii] Yet, Forks shares a lot of what makes Washington great - forests, fish, opportunity, and diversity. Forks is a small community of about 3,200 people located about 140 miles and one ferry ride from Washington's "Emerald City" where we are today. My home is in what we refer to as the "West End" – an area shared by Forks with three Tribal Nations within its 2,000+ square miles. The West End is home also to:

- Approximately 12,000 people;
- Nearly 2,000 stream miles;
- 60 miles of Pacific Coast beaches;
- 15 animals found no where else on this planet;
- Some remarkable species of fish such as Chinook salmon, Steelhead, and Lake Crescent's Beardsley Trout;
- Two active Chambers of Commerce – Forks and Clallam Bay/Sekiu.
- The first rural recipient of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's "High Tech High School" grant; and,
- One of the first memorials to the men who lost their lives logging in our forests.

In addition to being the most westerly municipality in the continental United States, we are one of the wettest communities in the state that receives on average 117 inches of rain a year – we measure it in feet where I live.

The economy of my community had been dominated with the use of the natural resources that surround us. Until the late 1980s, Forks boasted of being the "Logging Capital of the World." The maritime industry, centered around the fishing fleet at La Push, was another strong component of our economy. Tourism was a part of the economy as well, but the community's involvement in that industry was not as focused as it is today. That focus came as a result of policy shifts in the natural resource sector significantly curtailing the timber and fishing industries in the Westend. Expansion of the tourism sector was seen as potential means of addressing some of the impacts associated with the curtailment of logging. The efforts of many in the community have focused on marketing the fact that we are literally surrounded by the unique offerings of the Olympic National Park (Olympic)[iii].

Olympic manages the following locations within less than an hour's drive of Forks:

- Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center;
- Sol Duc;
- Olympic Mountain Back Country;
- Mora Ranger Station;
- Pacific Coast Strip;
- Lake Ozette;
- Lake Crescent; and,
- Lake Quinault and the Quinault River Wilderness

Each of these are remarkable tourist attractions drawing hundreds of thousand of visitors to our region each year from all over the world. The tourists stay in our hotels and lodging establishments generating over $80,000 annually in taxes that allow us to promote our region and specifically our central location to these NPS sites. NPS working with the U.S. Forest Service share a visitor's center in our federally funded transit center and transfer point that serves over 18,000 visitors a year. 10,000 more are helped at the nearby Forks Visitor Center operated by the Forks Chamber of Commerce. The employment associated with our tourism sector was estimated to be one worker out of every ten in our community, with a significant portion of that being directly related to the attraction of the Olympic. The economic impacts to the Olympic Peninsula have been estimated to be as high as $91m in total visitor spending and $40m in personal income generated in that region. Yet, our monitoring, our involvement, and our community's understanding of the significance of the Olympic was limited. While established in 1938 and added to over time, we took the Olympic's existence, its operations, and its attractions for granted. That changed in January 2004.

We were told that the National Park Service's adopted budget for FY 04 was such that in order for the Olympic to address core essential services they would have to make "service level adjustments[iv]" that would require the Olympic to leave their partnership at the Transit Center in Forks. The Mayor and I began inquiring about this proposed cut, why it was needed, and how services were going to be provided for the thousands of visitors that would be coming to our community in the upcoming year looking for information and assistance at that location. The more we inquired, the more we realized that we needed to be vocal, engaged, and aware of the critical funding situation that the Olympic, actually all of the National Parks were facing.

As you know, the Forks Visitor Center issue was one of many NPS issues that caught the attention of the nation's press corps. Our delegation reached across the aisle, and across the country, to join with other members of Congress to look at the funding levels of the NPS. In true bipartisanship, Representative Dicks worked with Interior Subcommittee Appropriations Chairman Rep. Taylor to find ways to prevent service cuts. They worked with Chairman Souder and his colleague Rep. Baird and their National Parks Caucus to ensure that the Congress continued to focus attention on the needs of the NPS. Chairman

Souder, Representative Dicks, Representative Baird -- our community has privately thanked you for those continual efforts, now we would like to do so publicly. It is because of that leadership that the Olympic received additional "Visitor Services Increase" in FY 05 that has allowed the management at Olympic to provide additional interpretative and visitor related offerings. Your leadership has been remarkable and has seen results. It is what every citizen can expect and be proud of in an elected official and we are extremely grateful for it. Thank you for that effort and that leadership.

Yet, there remains significant challenges before you and your colleagues in D.C. The challenges are associated with operational positions in law enforcement, interpretation and conservation/preservation that are going unfunded on the Olympic, Mt. Rainer, and at the Whitman Mission. This challenge is not limited to Washington State. No, it is also the case at places I visited with my daughter Anastasia this Summer in Ohio; and, it is also evident at the Civil War battlefields I visited last fall and this past spring. We need your continued leadership in this arena and your continued dedication in the months ahead as the demands on the national budget grow more and more.

In the Olympic, the FY 2001 budget included funding for 202 FTE. However, not all of those positions are filled – even with the increases in the NPS operational budgets. FY 04's budget allocated 177 FTE and that led to our increased concerns. This affects the visitor's experience to the Olympic. There are not enough interpretative rangers to explain the microclimates associated with the Hoh Rainforest's Hall of Moss; or, the creatures in the tide pools along the Coast Strip; or, to talk about the unique characteristics of Lake Ozette and its sockeye salmon. There are similar impacts across the entire park and probably the NPS system. In addition, in the Olympic's West End District, the number of law enforcement employees remains lower now than five years ago. One former employee identified nine former full-time law enforcement positions within our district, but could only identify four people filling those positions at this time. We have hundreds of thousands of visitors; miles of trails, beaches, roads; dozens of campsites and our area's law enforcement is approximately one full time employee per every 50,000 visitors. We are fortunate, however, to have very safe parks due to the diligence of these employees and their part-time assistants.

There are also significant maintenance needs within the Olympic. We live in a harsh climate – 11 feet of rain in Forks can be hard on roofs, pavement, equipment, and yes, at times on people! The Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center gets over 12 feet of rain a year – and each year we face issues associated with trees falling down and blocking trails and/or roads, washouts of trails and roads, as well as wear on the buildings and infrastructure themselves. The wife of one park employee told me how happy her spouse was that he had for the first time in a few years some one to help him with his maintenance duties. Years ago, there were three full-time staff to address maintenance needs, and until this year, there was only her husband. One person cannot maintain the buildings, clean the toilets, patch the roads, fix the trailhead, mow grounds, etc. Our park is blessed with numerous visitors – they are expecting specific things when they visit. When our amazing Park service staff cannot deliver that, it affects the visitor, their experience, and could spread the word that "the Olympic was nice, but …"

A recent visit to the Hoh River Visitor Center gave me the opportunity to see such a situation. The interpretative program was to start in a few minutes. A large crowd of about 20+ people started to gather and continued to grow. This was a rather small group according to the staff – they had taken larger ones on the tours earlier in the week. While that is an experience, and with this interpretative staffer it was probably an awesome presentation and opportunity, but imagine if there was more than one interpretative staffer at that location like there use to be? Small groups, more individual interactions, more learning opportunities – that is the park experience many of us remember having while growing up and are expecting to share with our children.

Some would argue that these situations could be handled with volunteers or corporate sponsorships of additional staff. We have those in the Olympic. Volunteers are a godsend, true gold that deserve not only local recognition but national recognition for their service. But, they may not have the training in areas such as law enforcement and maintenance. While scheduled by park staff, they are volunteers with other things that might take over their lives – kids, work, medical issues and the like. When used for essential services, rather than to augment and expand opportunities, we are taking advantage of their being there. We also may not be utilizing their skills in the way that they had hoped to be used. Don't get me wrong, these folks are remarkable individuals.

Yet, I wonder if all parks treat all its volunteers the same. At Spotsylvania, a year or two ago, a friend of mine and I visited this once bloody battlefield. We pulled up to the Mission 66 era kiosk and noticed a guy reading a book sitting on the back of his "being restored" 1960s muscle car. He approached us and asked if we were visitors to the Park. We were a bit leery, and asked why do you ask that? He, somewhat dejected and a bit defensive, started to explain how in addition to being a full time emergency response employee in the local region, he is also a park volunteer and could fill us in on different things to see. No one had given him something to identify him as a park volunteer and you could tell our initial reaction didn't sit well with this remarkable servant. We had a great discussion with this volunteer and he told us of things to look for in the park when we went into the Mule Shoe and its battlements. He was a great volunteer and should not have been the subject of some suspicions by us.

This past Spring at Fredericksburg and the Chatham Mansion, I learned that the remarkable grounds of that Georgian mansion with its incredible gardens are maintained in large part thanks to volunteers – one of which was out mowing the acres of grass about that place. Inside, a volunteer greeted us – gave us a tour of the downstairs and answered our questions. Here was a local business man giving up his Saturday to help folks appreciate the unique history of that site. He was a wealth of knowledge and a true example of "Southern hospitality." Yet, I don't recall seeing anything indicating his role within the NPS. Each volunteer is a treasure – but every treasure needs to be properly cultivated, protected, and maintained.

Which raises additional issues for the Park's already strapped staff – how to undertake the recruitment of volunteers and how to provide for their training? In talking to one Park employee in the past year, I learned that they constantly have to think each fall about how to recruit the volunteers they will need for the next big tourist season. The work of recruiting volunteers is not easy, and in effect is similar to recruiting employees. In order to rely upon volunteers, Park Staff are learning that it requires a significant level of skill sets from those volunteers in order to reduce additional amount of time needed to train the volunteers. That or the park staff have to be able to have the time needed to fully train the volunteers they luckily find to serve in their part of the park. Even then, the volunteers may not have the skills or training to address such things as law enforcement issues, emergency medical response, maintenance of equipment, and a full understanding of the role of objective park interpretation. Volunteers are amazing additional resources, but they cannot supplant trained professional staff.

The idea of utilizing corporate or private sponsorships to provide for or fill former federally funded staff positions is something that is occurring on the Olympic. Local tourism generated sales taxes are used to provide for visitor information positions – the front line of the National Park Service. These are great opportunities for those individuals who are employed, however, these employees and the provided funds are being used to supplant, not augment, the Olympic's billeted FTE. In 2004, the Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce, local governments and businesses, worked together to provide the funds needed to plow the snow off the road leading up to the concessionaire at the Park's Hurricane Ridge. While this partnership was laudable, it was also a bit disturbing in that those scarce local dollars were in effect undertaking road maintenance that the NPS had for decades undertaken. Not all local communities may have the ability to absorb additional costs to keep the operations of the National Park in their community at the levels they have grown accustomed to being funded by the Service.

Another concern for our community is the state of some of the Olympic's infrastructure in our region. As noted above, the Olympic maintains in its inventory of facilities a host of campgrounds, trails, access points, ranger stations, and one visitor center in our Westend region. The latter, at the Hoh River Rainforest in West Jefferson County, is accessible by a two lane county road that serves about 100 residents, yet is used by some 100,000 automobiles each year. The road terminates within the Olympic at the Hoh River Visitor Center. This facility was built as part of the last great national expansion of NPS facilities referred to as Mission 66 that created 130 new visitor centers between 1956 and 1966. [v]

The Hoh River Visitor Center is a facility that probably was designed for some 10-20,000 visitors during any given year in the late 1950s. When it was built and opened during the Kennedy Administration, it served the Park Service well with its small interpretative area and the modeled dioramas of elk herds and wildlife in the region. However, 40+ years later, the facility is showing the wear and tear associated with 260,000+ visitors that come to the Hoh rain forest each and every year[vi]. It has been maintained by the heroic efforts of the Park Staff – but they are understaffed and are addressing only the most significant needs at this facility. Its septic system is outdated and over utilized, and its visitor center is extremely crowded if more than 20 people are there. Its interpretative displays are Mission 66 vintage, and are the same today as they were 10+ years ago when I first visited it. It's structural integrity is under continual assault by the weather and use of as high as 69,000+ visitors in August. In addition, if a program is scheduled and has to be moved indoors, there is no such location. It is also interesting that there is no movie facility for this visitor center that is common at other locations and used to set the visitor's location in a great context. At a local gathering amongst the residents of the Hoh River, it was discussed and there seemed to be a consensus that the facility needed to be improved and upgraded accordingly. I can say that we will be meeting within the community to determine whether or not to begin making the case for that position in the months ahead. It is a unique location and one that is truly enjoyed by thousands, but the number of visitors is obviously exceeding what it was built for 40+ years ago.

Of equal concern is the continual threat of the Hoh River to the road used by the public to access this visitor center. Repeatedly in the past eleven years that I have been in Forks, my government has been involved in various degrees in addressing the need to repair the road when it has been washed out by the river. If those repairs do not exceed a certain level, $250,000 I believe, Jefferson County has to find those funds within its limited annual road budget. The past and present Jefferson County commissioners need to be commended for their dedication to ensuring the access for both their few inhabitants in that area and the hundreds of thousands of guests of the visitor center. While there are retail establishments on that road, I can also assure you that they do not generate $250,000 a year in tax revenue for the County.

The Olympic has a list of additional maintenance needs beyond that which is needed to make it through one more season. They include trail repair, signage, camp ground repair or upgrades, etc., in the Hoh, Sol Duc, Lake Ozette and Lake Crescent areas. We have come to realize that the Olympic could a tipping point to where the maintenance needs overwhelm the already "maxed out" Park staff. If that unfortunate point is reached, both the visiting public and the tourism sector of our economy will suffer.

These specific concerns were the basis for the Forks City Council adopting a resolution in the Spring of this year supporting Chairman Souder's and Congressman Baird's National Park Centennial Act. My government believes that this is an innovative means of having those who care about parks, and who obtain a tax return each year, show their willingness to augment existing NPS funds to address non-road maintenance backlog issues and address operational needs. On the Olympic Peninsula, there is a collective concern about a noxious weed that is starting to invade our salmon-bearing rivers and streams – Japanese Knotweed. A bamboo-like plant, this tenacious plant is being found within the borders of the Olympic and could undermine the gravel spawning channels used by our many salmonids. The National Park Centennial Act, if adopted, would provide additional funds to the Olympic to help in their current

efforts to remove this threat from the Park. The proposed act would also help the Olympic with the preservation of its historical buildings and artifacts.

In this regard, the Olympic is not unique. I would guess that nearly every National Park has specific maintenance projects it has backlogged, as well as conservation and/or preservation projects that are triaged on a daily basis. I know that to be the case in Gettysburg, Saratoga, and other similar battlefield sites. Imagine the legacy that could be left to future generations if the maintenance backlog was reduced in a partnership between the citizenry donating their own tax returns and the Congress continuing its appropriation based funding for the Service. If it is enacted, you can be assured my family will check the box and place a portion of any meager return we receive into the effort to augment the NPS.

Our populations will grow, our public will continue to see the National Park Service as its place to learn, relax, experience and recreate at those sites that have made this country what is today. The National Park Centennial Act may just be the vehicle to ensure the Service's ability to meet future demand and expectations. Mr. Chairman, Rep. Baird, Rep. Reichert and Rep. Inslee, we are grateful for your efforts to push forward this important legislation and hope to see its enactment into law in the not too distant future. I submit with this testimony a copy of the joint letter to you, Mr. Chairman, by over 20 chambers of commerce of the Northwest. Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, these business leaders know the value of NPS within this state. Their voice of support for the Act, as well as your and your colleagues' leadership for NPS funding, is a significant endorsement of the importance of these issues to our state.

Our community will remain proactive and engaged in these issues. We have already spent, and will continue to spend, for us what are significant sums on marketing to the world our region and its access to the Olympic. We have begun meeting with our communities and chambers of commerce directly impacted by the Olympic's presence and attraction. Working together, we hope to increase our voice about these issues. In what was the first, of what I hope will be a reoccurring twice-a-year event, the Olympic's remarkable superintendent Bill Laitner presented his approach to this current tourism season in the Olympic. This first time event, and with the help of the National Parks Conservation Association, was very educational and informative dialog. From such activities we can begin to further understand and support the needs of the jewel in our backyard, and no longer take it or its attraction for millions of visitors to the Olympic Peninsula for granted.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate the time you took to travel to this distant location when there are significant national and world issues that are pressing in the Nation's Capital. It has truly been an honor and a privilege. In addition to my testimony, on behalf of my community, a friend helped make the small token of appreciation I am leaving with each of you and your staff. Hopefully, the two pins will inspire you to someday make the journey to Forks and the nearby Hoh Rainforest. It's an awesome place to live and raise a family. Thank you again for your concern and leadership on these issues, that too is greatly appreciated by our rural community and by the men and women working in the tourism sector on the Olympic Peninsula.

END NOTES

[i] Rod is the City Attorney, Prosecutor and Planner for a rural community of 3,200 people located on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. His duties range from annexation review, to criminal prosecution, to labor relations, to natural resource policy review, to zoning code interpretations. After serving in the United States Air Force Rod received his BA in history from the University of Washington. While living in Seattle, Rod became very active in local politics. Rod received his J.D. from Seattle University School of Law, graduated in 1994 and was hired by the City of Forks shortly thereafter. In 1985, he married his high school sweetheart, Cheri Tinker, and they have been married for 19 years. They have three children and the family lives in Forks. He is, when time permits, a lecturer on German Genealogy; an officer in the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War; and, active in his community.

[ii] I will put in what will undoubtedly be the longest footnote in this hearing, or maybe any hearing, some of the highlights of "a corner to corner" journey across this remarkable state.

It takes about twelve hours to travel from Forks to Clarkston, Washington. Making that trip, a person can appreciate this State's vast expanses, unique landscapes, and remarkable history. One begins the journey on the rain-kissed Forks prairie – named for being at the "forks" of two remarkably intact rivers and past Lake Crescent's ten miles of tree lined shores. From there it's over the Elwha River where one of the largest salmon recovery projects is underway with the congressionally funded removal of the Elwha River dams and into the City of Port Angeles. Here one can visit Hurricane Ridge, shop in its cozy downtown, or catch a ferry to Victoria, British Columbia across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Port Angeles is the headquarters of the Olympic National Park and from here Superintendent Bill Laitner manages some 933,000+ acres of beaches, trees, lakes, streams, rivers, hills, mountains, and all the services associated with a Crown Jewel of the National Park Service.

Leaving Port Angeles, you come into Sequim (pronounced Sqwim) which is the "rain shadow" of the Olympics getting only a foot of rain a year and which is ideally situated for the growing of lavender. From Sequim, one has to cross the Hood Canal and in doing so one crosses one of a couple engineering marvels in our state – floating bridges and specifically the Hood Canal Bridge. The Hood Canal Bridge is a floating mass of concrete pontoons and roadways that still amazes me with each trip across it. As you leave the Bridge, you pass Port Gamble – a National Historic Site which was one of the early settlements in Washington, burial site of the state's first military casualty, and still a "company town" owned by Pope Resource. From there you would make your way into the ferry port at Kingston where one can take a 45 minute trip across the Puget Sound – one of the prettiest and active waterways in the Nation – into Edmonds voted one of the friendliest towns in our State and part of Congressman Inslee's 1st Congressional District. From Edmonds you head down Interstate 5, and if the skies are clear, you have the opportunity to view the majestic peak of Mt. Rainer hovering in the distance.

On your way into Seattle, you will notice that you pass the well known University of Washington – not only my alma matter but also that of Congressmen Dicks, Inslee, Smith and Congresswoman McMorris – they obviously did much better than I in college and thereafter. But, the "UW" is also known for its innovations and discoveries in the fields of medicine, forestry, marine biology, foreign language, and technology. Coming into one of the prettiest cities in the West, you are greeted with views of what Congressman McDermott calls home – Mt. Rainer, Lake Union, the Space Needle, and the Seattle waterfront. From the waterfront, adventurers headed north to Alaska as part of the 1897-98 Klondike Gold Rush – with as much wild enthusiasm in their hearts as the beat to Elvis Presley's song of the same name who visited the Space Needle and made a movie about the World's Fair held in the early 1960s. The National Park Service maintains the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park within a historic landmark building where one can learn about the expectations, risks, triumphs and tragedies associated with the Alaskan Gold Rush. A traveler can find some great things to do in Seattle – visit the world famous fish mongers in Pike Place Market and watch "flying salmon," get a glimpse of "hammering man" at work paying tribute to the working men and women of this traditionally blue collar region at the Seattle Art Museum; or, get some famous Ezell's fried chicken to go with you as you continue on your trip. You are also in King County – the former "beat" of former King County Sheriff now Congressman Reichert – and it's the home to one of the largest corporations in the world – Bill Gate's Microsoft® – whose programs were used to put this testimony together and represents the technology sector that is part of the entire State's economy. While the "boom" in tech stocks and companies "busted" in the late 1990s and chilled

our region in the first half of this decade, already we are seeing a rising growth in this sector of our region's economy.

If your schedule permitted, you could also go into Tacoma ,which is a part of Congressman Dicks' 6th Congressional District, to see world renowned glass sculptures by Dale Chihuly lining the bridgeway to the Tacoma Glass Museum; visit the University of Washington's Tacoma campus; and, learn why Tacoma is "the Wired City" in both technology and international trade circles. Tacoma is a vibrant City undergoing a significant renaissance and expansion.

Your trip eastward could allow you to run over to Mt. Rainer from Tacoma and visit its Alpine meadows, gaze at its snow capped glaciers, and see why this mountain is known as a part of "Paradise" by so many people around the world. The Mt. Rainer National Park staff would also be willing to tell you about the geology of this active volcano – Big Sister to Mt. St. Helens to the south – and give you directions on how to eventually find your way to Yakima through the Cascade Mountains via White Pass. Early exploration of this area was undertaken by the federal explorers lead by Isaac Stevens, who went from surveying to becoming the first Territorial Governor of this State, only to die rather young at the Battle of Chantilly in the Civil War.

From the mountain meadows, you come into the "fruit belt" of the Yakima Valley and begin crossing through the southern portion of Congresswoman McMorris' 5th Congressional District. Here apples, hops, and cherries have been grown for decades made possible using the waters of the Columbia and Yakima Rivers. Today, one of the growing crops is grapes and Washington's southeastern corner is home to dozens of wineries and thousands of acres of world renowned grape vineyards. As you head eastward, you are not far from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation and the Hanford Reach National Monument. Here are lands that once made the "Fat Man" nuclear bomb deployed at Nagasaki over 60 years ago that ended World War II and ushered in the Atomic Age, but are now in the process of intense clean up and decontamination. Yet, are also being conserved and restored as a wildlife area for the enjoyment of future generations.

Your trip would take you through Kennewick, past the site of where the Kennewick Man was found along the mighty Columbia River and into Pasco. From Pasco and Kennewick, wheat and other crops are off loaded from rail cars into large barges for the trip down the river and to such places as Japan, China, and India. Pasco, home to Congressman Hastings and part of his 4th Congressional District, is part of a growing region referred to as "the Tri-Cities." My wife, Cheri, grew up here, we attended school here and our families still live here and so this part of the journey is "common" for the Fleck household when go to visit our little one's grandparents.

Leaving Pasco and heading to Walla Walla, you are now following the path of Lewis and Clark who nearly two hundred years ago made their historic journey through this same region. Where they saw prairie grasses, sage brush, and rolling hills, you now see wheat fields, wind mills generating power, and yes sage brush – lots of sage brush.

Just outside of Walla Walla – known for its remarkable sweet onions – you can visit NPS' Whitman Mission Historic Site. Here Marcus and Narcissa Whitman undertook their missionary work while trying to carve out a settlement in what was then disputed Oregon Territory. A poignant part of the Whitman story includes the loss of their two year old daughter, Alice, who drowned in the river along the mission site where she was born. In 1847, as a measles epidemic broke out amongst the mission and the neighboring Tribe of Cayuse originating in one of the wagon trains of settlers to the region, tensions rose to the boiling point as nearly half of the Cayuse tribe died from the measles. It was this tragedy that lead to the massacre also commemorated at this small, solemn, windswept site.

Passing through Walla Walla, one sees the mix of history and modern development. Here veterans receiving treatments at the VA's medical facility mingle with tourists exploring Walla Walla's wine country. Students attending Whitman College mingle with farm laborers working in the agricultural industry. Windmills and fields of wheat, asparagus and other vegetables blanket the landscape as you continue to head north/northeast around the Umatilla National Forest and its Ponderosa Pine covered Blue Mountains. Eventually, you come into Clarkston, located across the Snake River from Lewiston, Idaho. Obviously, these twin cities were named for the two explorers that with the Corps of Discovery floated on this same spot nearly two centuries ago.

If you made all of the stops on this trip, obviously, it would have taken you more than 10-12 hours to drive the 480 miles that make up this snapshot of Washington. But, if you did make the trip – truly it would illustrate the vastness of the West, the beauty that is Washington, and the richness that imbues every

community and town along the way. While biased, I truly can say it is one of the most uniquely beautiful places on earth.

[iii] Olympic National Park consists of more than 922,000 acres of which 95% was declared wilderness during President Reagan's second term. Within its borders are the headwaters, and estuaries, of the rivers associated with the Westend. In FY 2004, NPS reported 3,074,147 visitors to Olympic. Olympic's budget was as follows: FY 2001 enacted $10.09m with 197 FTE; FY 2002 saw an increase resulting in 202 FTE; FY 2004 enacted $10.13m with 177 FTE.

[iv] As reported in the media in March of 2004, this phrase was coined within NPS HQ to characterize these cuts. *See* Joel Connelly *In the Northwest: Bush seems intent on clearcutting park funding*, Seattle Post Intelligencer, 19 March 2004.

[v] Mission 66 was initiated in the Eisenhower Administration by then NPS Director Conrad Wirth. According to Director Wirth, the objective of the Mission 66 program was "to overcome the inroads of neglect and to restore to the American people a National Park System adequate for their needs." Wirth believed that there would be an increase in the travel to and visiting of the nation's National Parks and felt that efforts should be made to plan and provide for such growth. His plan was ambitious, and not without its detractors and controversy. However, during the ten years of the program NPS saw its visitors rates more than double from 60 million visitors to over 130 million. See http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/pugsley/Wirth%20Conrad.htm, biography of Conrad Wirth.

[vi] Visitor counts and federal budget numbers were found in the National Park Service's ***Green Book*** which is their proposed budget and explanation to the federal budget writers. Most of the numbers came from the FY 2006 Budget Justifications portion of the Green Book found at: http://data2.itc.nps.gov/budget2/fy06gbk.htm Some of the specific Hoh Visitor Center information was obtained from a request made of the Olympic's Park Superintendent's Office. They informed me that the Hoh Visitor Center received 261,666 visitors in FY 2004. The visitation to the center fluctuated from a low of about 400 visitors in December to a high of nearly 70,000 in August. One side comment, the NPS could make data associated with its operations and maintenance activities easier for the general public to access and become familiar with if they are so interested. NPS has a remarkable website for its park visitors, but it is extremely difficult for individuals interested in how any specific park operates to find detailed FTE data, site specific visitor service information, etc.

September 7, 2005

Chairman Mark Souder
Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Souder:

Thank you for bringing your subcommittee to the Pacific Northwest to hold a public hearing on the state of our national parks. We hope you are able to visit one of our many beautiful national parks while you are in our area.

As business leaders in the gateway towns and cities to national parks in Washington and Oregon, we are well aware of the vital role played by our national parks in supporting and maintaining strong and economically vibrant communities.

As your Subcommittee holds a public hearing on national parks in the northwest, we hope that you look for ways to repair our declining national park visitor centers and trails, stop park ranger shortages, and reverse cuts in visitor services. At parks like Olympic, staff shortages mean fewer ranger walks talks and shortened visitor center hours. At Mount Rainier, an enormous backlog of maintenance projects means trails, bridges and historic building remain unrepaired year after year. More staff are needed to keep the new fossil museum and learning center at John Day open to the public. When visitors realize that our national parks are not as well cared for, they may stop coming to our areas. This is particularly important to tourism-dependent communities like ours.

Each year, more than 8 million tourists visit the national parks in the Northwest. In 2003 these visitors spent over $253 million, created over 6,700 jobs, and generated over $105 million in personal income for our communities. We cannot afford to ignore the importance of these parks to our regional economies. Unfortunately, annual budget shortages are pushing our parks further into disrepair. National Parks not only need enough money to keep pace with the increased cost of personnel and operations, but also enough funding to cover the mounting backlog of facilities and trails maintenance projects.

It is our belief that your bill, the National Park Centennial Act, co-sponsored in the northwest by Rep. Brian Baird, Rep. Dave Reichert, and Rep. Peter DeFazio, will address many needs of the National Parks upon which our economies so heavily rely. We appreciate this bi-partisan, innovative approach to funding our national parks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cathy Rigg
Executive Director
Enumclaw Chamber of Commerce

Pola Kelley
President
Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce

Skip Hauke
Executive Director
Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce

Kasey Cronquist
Executive Director
Shelton-Mason Chamber of Commerce

Dan Hodge
Executive Director
Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce &
Visitor Information Center

Paul Stewart
Executive Director
East Lewis County Chamber of Commerce

David Keeley
President
Kettle Falls Chamber of Commerce

Tim Cooley
President
Concrete Chamber of Commerce

Sandy Hemenway
Manager
Tillamook Chamber of Commerce

Lori Smith
President
Greater Eatonville Chamber of Commerce

Jean Kurtz
Director
Roseburg Visitor and Convention Bureau

Susan Miller
Manager
Grand Coulee Dam Area Chamber of
Commerce

Grant I. Griffin
Executive Director
Kitsap Peninsula Visitor and Convention
Bureau

Bill Danekas
President
Colville Chamber of Commerce

Jeremy Faust
President
Mount Rainier Visitors Association

Arlene McGitrick
Manager
Grant County Chamber of Commerce

Russ Veenema
Executive Director
Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce

Bill Drath
President
Clallam Bay-Seiku Chamber of Commerce

Diane Schostak
Executive Director
Forks Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

David A. Pickenpaugh
Executive Director
North Cascades Chamber of Commerce

Resolution No. 336

A resolution supporting the National Park Centennial Act (109th Congress' H.R. 1124) and Requesting continued adequate funding of the National Park Service

WHEREAS, The City of Forks has been actively engaged in issues associated with the region's natural resources and public lands;

WHEREAS, we understand the distinct differences associated between National Parks, State Parks, Federal forest lands, state trust lands, and private lands;

WHEREAS, The City recently participated in a series of efforts to bring attention to the operational and maintenance funding needs of the Olympic National Park;

WHEREAS, The Council has articulated the important role that the Olympic National Park plays in the tourism sector of our local, county and regional economy;

WHEREAS, our colleagues at the National Parks Conservation Association have noted that the Olympic National Park continues to have unmet operational and maintenance needs;

WHEREAS, U.S. Representative Norm Dicks lead a bi-partisan effort to increase operational funding for the National Park Service with the help and support of U.S. Senator Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell;

WHEREAS, there remains a need to address both the operational budget of the National Park Service while also addressing the nationwide multi-billion dollar maintenance backlog that includes restoration and repair to storm damaged trails, improvements to the aging Hoh River visitor center, and such historic buildings as the 105 year old Kestner-Higley Homestead near Quinault; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Representatives Mark Souder (R-IN) and Brian Baird (D-WA) introduced the National Park Centennial Act (H.R. 1124) that would allow U.S. taxpayers to make a voluntary donation to the National Park Centennial Fund through simply checking off a box on their federal tax returns thereby creating a means of providing additional supplemental monetary support to the National Park Service to address maintenance backlogs and operational challenges;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORKS, THAT

1. The City of Forks voices its support for the Souder-Baird proposal to create a voluntarily donation system through a federal income tax return check-off box to generate supplemental funding available to address the National Park Service's maintenance backlog and operational needs;

2. The City of Forks further requests the support of United States Representative Norm Dicks, United States Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, as well as others in Congress, for

H.R. 1124 or similar such legislation creating a source of supplemental funding the National Park Service's maintenance back-log in the Olympic National Park and across the nation;

3. The City of Forks further requests that the Congressional Delegation continue to actively work to restore funding to the Olympic National Park that: (1) ensures a staffing level similar to the 202 FTE the ONP had funded in FY 2002 as part of the President's "restore and renew" America's treasures campaign; and, (2) does not reduce services or public opportunities to access information, educational programs, ranger programs, or facilities; and

4. The Council endorses and further authorizes the Mayor and staff to continue to pursue this issue in the manner that they deem best for the benefit of our community.

Passed this 11th day of April 2005 by the City Council

Nedra Reed
Mayor

Attested and Authenticated to:

R. Daniel Leinan
Clerk/Treasurer

Approved as to Form:

William R. Bleck
Attorney/Planner

Mr. SOUDER. Let me make a couple comments. I have a few questions, I will yield and then finish up with some follow-up to my initial comments here.

First off, on the question of whether or not volunteering private donations, demonstration fees are replacing or supplementing, it's been interesting. I have never heard, Jay may have heard here and there, and quite frankly it's mysterious to almost everybody exactly how the appropriations process works, even members of the Appropriations Committee and the Speaker's office. But I've never heard a discussion of anything replacing.

In fact, one of the biggest challenges when we do our annual letter where we ask them to increase Parks funding, and I think Congressman Lewis has been one of the leaders of that, but we kind of work together with NPCA in trying to target what is a workable number that can be just higher than they will possibly go but then try to leverage it, and Congressman Dicks does the best he can inside appropriations to make that happen on the Democratic side, and we work with our leadership.

The pleading we usually get is from the Fish & Wildlife Service and from other agencies inside Interior. Quite frankly, any vote we take for Parks, it will just come straight out of the Department of Interior, that our challenge is not so much—I've never heard, "Oh, they are getting all these funds," it's that, "If you don't put those funds in, the parks just won't have those people. There won't be volunteers. There won't be as many visitor centers open. Without the demonstration fees, we wouldn't have the dollars."

It's not like we're making a calculation saying, "Oh, we can cover this in the private sector." It just isn't there. But putting up markers that show how short the Park Service is helps keep that from happening because it's, I believe right now, a theoretical problem. But we're so panicked. It's much like in New Orleans, the fact that private relief is going in isn't supplanting what we are going to do in the Federal Government because we can't possibly meet all the needs combined together. And I think that's more of a question there.

I have some strong personal frustration with local and State leaders, and I'm just going to say this flat out. Don't talk to me about your problems with revenues. Your total deficits together in all of America don't equal ours. Don't ask the Federal Government to increase taxes if you won't increase taxes. The fact is that there are the same revenue sources at the local level as there are with us, and that's to raise taxes.

It is a terrible problem we all have. Nobody wants to elect anybody from either party, with the exception of Jay, who is going to increase taxes, and he is targeting his to a small group. A broad group does not want to pay tax increases. They all think they can get something for nothing.

And that we're in this together, and we're going to have to jump together, but the fact is our deficits are bigger proportionally. The only difference is we can print money, which inflates it and causes interest rates to change.

So when we look at what is happening in the world, we'll just appropriate the money and print extra dollars so we can backdoor

a tax increase, which you all can't do at the State and local level. But in these partnerships, we have to figure out how to do this.

Now, one thing in Washington that is kind of interesting, you have more visitor centers at Mt. St. Helen's I think than you have at the whole rest of the State, which is another challenge. It's not the Park Service, but it is an illustration of some of the challenges we face based on how many access points there are.

The pass system, I was just amazed this summer when I saw first in Oregon that different agencies were actually cooperating in a pass because as we put these fees in, if we don't work together, the average consumer in the United States is just appalled because they pay one fee and then they pay another fee and then they pay another fee, and the systematic way of working together is great.

I would like your brain power to be put in this. We don't have to do this today, and we are going to put anything you want to submit for the record, your full testimony will go in, in addition to what is indeed the longest footnote I have ever seen in Mr. Fleck's testimony, but if you want to submit anything else. But we're looking for suggestions.

And one of the problems with these fees is how to address this with lower income people because in my opinion the public support for the fees is there as long as they see it being used actually for the parks. The authorizing committee already signed off on trying to address these free for low income, as have the appropriators. The problem is nobody can agree on how to do this without having, you know, what do you have to do, present a student free lunch card there showing that you are getting AFDC? How do you do this in a fair way?

At our last hearing, it was suggested that one possibility would be that in your tax form, if you are at, pick a figure, $35,000 or less, you could either check, which probably won't work, or have it automatically go over where you get sent a parks pass.

The question is, resistance may come from IRS because we are using them for something other than just taxes, but how to do this in a simple way is our challenge because this isn't going to go down less.

The Park pass is an incredibly good bargain, and it shows people will pay fees or taxes if they believe it's going to be used wisely. But we've got to figure out how this doesn't disproportionally impact low income people's access to it.

Now, what I wanted to start with in this question time is with Mr. Dickenson. We've heard this management policy question, and I don't want to plunge into too much detail because I think it's a good point that's going to evolve, but this has hit all of us in a different way as we've more or less been stalemated in Congress from any major changes in either direction.

Are management policies, what has been proposed here, are they followed closely by superintendents? Are these binding? What would policy changes out of the Department of Interior mean as a practical matter? Did you work through any of this type of thing before to fight off some——

Mr. DICKENSON. The management policies at the time give guidance to field personnel in terms of the operational problems that

may arise and also to express the values and the long-term philosophical operational approach to dealing with the park problems.

From time to time, there are events and situations that arise that cause a change, be it popularity of snowmobiles and whether or not those should be admitted to all areas and have the winter use program, etc.

But I've never in my time, in my time, have never seen anything as insidious as what is being proposed now by the Hoffman paper. My understanding of this thing is that it would change the entire approach of superintendents and others who make policy decisions at the park level which would be tragic in terms of the long-term effect on the national park system.

So not to minimize, not to minimize the effect of those management policies because they are followed, and I would predict, however, that the rank and file of the National Park Service, if somehow these changes came about, there would be a rebellion.

I think that the people in the service are so deeply committed to the preservation of these National Parks into the future for use by future generations that you will probably see a mass exodus. I don't think a lot of people would continue to support the parks.

Mr. SOUDER. You were parks director under Secretary Watt.

Mr. DICKENSON. Yes.

Mr. SOUDER. Did you see any similar proposal? The most controversial words are "would irreversibly harm." Did you ever hear that proposed under Watt or under Reagan?

Mr. DICKENSON. Not in those terms. There were efforts from time to time to enlarge the kinds of permissible uses in National Parks which included oil drilling, a more favorable view toward leasing minerals, etc. So I can say that it didn't occur. Why didn't it occur? Well, it didn't occur because I fought it, a lone voice in the wilderness at times, but I fought it. There was strong support on the hill to maintain the status quo.

Above all, I always felt that I could rely upon the citizens of the United States of America to fight such an insidious proposal to change—to radically change the way we operate parks.

If you start opening it up to the kinds of uses which I think are being proposed, you will no longer have a National Park System, per se. The kind of purpose that it serves now is renowned worldwide. And while there are different standards in different countries regarding parks, one of the basic things is the preservation of these natural features and cultural features for the use of future generations. That's constant throughout.

Mr. SOUDER. And irreversible harm, would that term with the possible, I mean, certain cultural resources, like, if basically the Declaration of Independence were destroyed, it wouldn't be there, but wouldn't almost everything else be reversible? It would almost just be a question of the time? In other words, isn't that almost like a double standard?

Mr. DICKENSON. If you want to talk about cultural resources.

Mr. SOUDER. But take a natural resource that you had that the only thing that would limit something is irreversible harm, most things will bounce back. It's a question of whether it's 10 years or 100 years or 200 years, so wouldn't that almost, in effect, be any-

thing is allowable under a standard of the only things that are banned is if it does irreversible harm?

Mr. DICKENSON. Not in my view because the visitors to the National Parks System of the United States expect to find a certain standard of performance. And one of the long-running battles that has occurred is timber extraction of the National Parks. Sure, it will come back in 100 or 200 years, but what is the immediate effect upon the visitor who comes to have a recreational experience in the park to see a series of clear cuts next to Old Faithful?

I have great difficulty reconciling the irreversibility argument. I think that we went through a lot of policy discussion about the extinction of force fires. There's great natural value in having natural burns. Allowing for natural succession depends on it.

I always felt, however, that those fires, those fires, which are in the vicinity of public use areas or those that may impact the quality of the visitor experience, need to be extinguished now promptly because of the scarring. That is something that the visitor doesn't expect.

And I believe the expectations of the American people are that they do not want to have damage inflicted even on a short term or long term basis on National Parks. Let the natural processes work.

Mr. SOUDER. So your definition of irreversible harm would also be relative to what the expectations are of the visitors, what their expectation is to see and that harm isn't just conceptual, kind of like, well, this will bounce back in 200 years because most of you will be dead in 200 years who are visiting the parks, and it says not only to preserve, but for the enjoyment thereof.

And you believe it would be irreversible harm for the enjoyment thereof for the people coming to the park?

Mr. DICKENSON. Precisely. I just cannot reconcile the short term impact. For what purpose? Is there a commercial motive involved here, you know? And commercialism inside the park isn't allowed. That's why the whole system was set up as it was from the outset in the event the multiplication of facilities all competing for the tourist dollar.

And so I just believe that any kind of change in the basic policy governing the long-term maintenance of the park would be tragic.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Inslee.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you, Mr. Dickenson. I very much appreciate your service in those past decades. I'm glad your voice is still active, and that of Mr. Watt is in the dustbin of history, so I appreciate you are still here.

Mr. DICKENSON. Those were busy years.

Mr. INSLEE. Yes. You faired very well through those years. We appreciate your courage in those difficult times sometimes. You mentioned this Mission 66, and it spurred a thought. Is there some grander vision that we should be thinking about here? You know, listening to our discussion, I was thinking, you know, we're fighting for appropriations, we're fighting to keep up with inflation, sort of dry account is the types of terms.

For those of us who are real believers in the parks and the grander vision of the parks, should we be thinking in a different

image or statement or campaign? Should we be thinking about a new birth of the American park system? Should we be thinking about some other nomenclature or package to wrap up our vision for the parks that is grander in scope that may connect more with the American people?

Do you have any thoughts in that regard? I don't have any. I would love to know yours.

Mr. DICKENSON. The 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service comes in 2016. And some people have thought in terms of a renewed reinvestment effort tied to that. That has some merit, I believe. It's quite a way off, but in view of the multiple problems facing the United States now and the drain on the budget, etc., probably some long-range thinking ahead of time is desirable and that is one of the things that is being considered by some.

Mr. INSLEE. Great idea. We should start thinking about it.

Ms. Jewell, you come from a business perspective, and I have not heard at least anything of any significance of criticisms of the Park Service for their managerial skill. In other words, the typical reaction is you get funding issues, No. 1, either you are not spending it well enough, you are wasting it or you don't have enough revenues.

And I haven't heard much criticism of the Park Service of massive waste, fraud and abuse. I think I heard of a $600 outhouse somewhere that made the headlines briefly, but from your organization's standpoint, is there any specific suggestions in that regard as far as sort of managing and approving management from a fiscal perspective that we ought to consider besides the revenue side?

Ms. JEWELL. Well, I think that overall there is no criticism that's appropriate to level at the Park Service for mismanagement of resources. I think they are doing a very good job under the circumstances. I think as Dave Uberuaga talked about, when you are dealing with national registered historic structures, that automatically increases your cost. When you are dealing within the Federal contracting arena, that automatically increases your costs.

One of my frustrations as member of the Board of Regents of the University of Washington is having to deal within the structure of State regulation and how that increases costs relative to the private sector. So I think the extent that we might think about how those regulations impact the efficiency of our spending are important.

One of the areas the NPCA has been involved in that I think has been generally welcomed by the Park Service is something they call the Center for Park Management, which is actually using MBA students as well as professionals, bringing them into the parks to work alongside the Park Service staff to help identify areas of perspective enhancement to the efficiency of their spend.

You know, one of the examples I've heard at our board meetings is about fleet maintenance and how you do that in a more efficient basis compared to what the private sector might do. And I think that there is—I have seen a complete openness on the part of the Park Service to find better ways of doing things that are less expensive so that they can put resources where they need them most. So, you know, this is not a situation where as a private citizen or

a business person I've seen evidence of irresponsible spending. I think that we have people that are scrambling to spend money as wisely as they possibly conclude.

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you.

Ms. JEWELL. Can I add something to your question earlier of Mr. Dickenson? You talked about the irreversible damage. One of the things that he didn't mention, but I know, I'm sure, is in his mind, is that of wildlife. When you put roads or you put motorized vehicles into areas that have previously not had traffic, it absolutely impacts the wildlife habitat.

And when you are dealing with some critically endangered species which we have in a number of places, you run the risk of not having that habitat sufficient to sustain those species, and that is a reversible.

One of the things that I learned at the last NPCA board meeting that I attended in Glacier National Park was really how much better job we're doing in the United States relative to Canada on contiguous habitat for grizzly bears. And, of course, everybody is not necessarily fond of grizzly bears, but as with so many other critical indicator species, if they go, other things go as well. You've got, you know, an increase in other populations which begins to impact the wild and scenic areas. And I think Yellowstone is one which has received a lot of attention——

Mr. DICKENSON. I appreciate that.

Ms. JEWELL. Yeah, the motorized traffic, even if it is not by putting in additional roads, but just putting access into some of that back country, does have irreversible damage on the wildlife populations even if the natural environment might regenerate itself. I think that's just an important thing to add.

Mr. INSLEE. One comment. I think one of the reasons people are so concerned about National Parks is that we have similar funding issues in our recreational use in our Forest Service budget and others. There were two mountains I was going to go up this year, Mt. Constance and Glacier Peak. Both of the roads to those places are closed, and there are no plans that I'm aware of to re-open them because of Forest Service funding issues to allow this recreational access to national land.

At the same time, the current plan of the administration is to scrap the roadless area rule which would allow the administration to spend taxpayer subsidized dollars to go build logging roads to clear cut in our most pristine national forest lands, at the same time the Forest Service doesn't keep existing roads open to get hikers and fishers and hunters to go up to existing Federal lands, and those roads are also used to access the national park. You go into the Buck Horn Road and other roads, and they give you access to the national park.

I just mention that because the problems we're experiencing in the backlog, which is $11 billion, there's an $11 billion backlog for keeping recreational roads open in the Forest Service, and I just think that's an important point when we talk about how dire this problem is.

Thank you.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Fleck wanted to say something. I'm not going to go into the roads and timber, but I do want to leave that for an-

other hearing at another time, sir. But the big issue you raised about the lower income people having access to the parks, that's a huge one. In my community, one out of four kids live in families that meet the Federal poverty level, one out of four. That's a huge one. The park is all around us.

There's some innovative things Olympic does when they have their fee in place, when they don't, that allow access to those parks. For a lot of folks and having grown up in the Tri-Cities when WPPSS failed, the parks were the place for those of us who didn't have money could go do things with our family. And so I really think that is a tough one to crack, but it's one of the most commendable ones to take on.

Mr. SOUDER. I wanted to comment briefly on Ms. Jewell's comments relative to Mr. Dickenson's. He made a really fascinating point because I don't think—we know for sure the management plan isn't going to survive the way it is. It's just a question of what it will look like.

And this irreversible argument is fascinating because it has been underneath here for some time, and it is not an easy one to handle because unless a species is so far gone and they have no habitat, it is amazing how they bounce back. The grizzly bears are, in fact, a good example of that and wolves are a good example of when you reintroduce them, they do come back.

But if we have a different standard, then whether they theoretically could come back in 50 or 100 years, this will be an easier debate to have. Because even in the fish and wildlife law, I understand what you were driving at, if we get rid of the habitat, they'll leave different areas, but it's amazing even in wetlands how habitat can come back if you concentrate on it and work on it. It's just far more expensive, it takes a long time, and you lose in the interim a question of the value.

But he put a little bit different spin on this because underneath it, we're always debating that fundamental question whenever there's a new housing development, whenever there's a new anything in a community. And these are tough tradeoffs in the margin of where the young people who love to hike and love to be in the outdoors are increasingly looking at areas around the national forests and national parks, these zones, and even responsibility of the cost to the taxpayer of forest fires when people go up against these zones. It's a huge, huge challenge.

I mean, sometimes—and in the end I have a different challenge. We have 3 percent public lands counting township, counties and State and Federal. It is a totally different challenge. And the way many people look at it from Indiana is that we pay, send our tax dollars that we work for out west so that then people can have nice homes right up against all these forests and everything, and then they catch fire, and we're supposed to cover to rebuild their home in, say, Malibu Canyon for the third time or other places, and then our kids want to go out and live next to those forests, too, so we lose the best of our areas.

And we have to figure out kind of where these interact areas are. And it isn't just a question of whether there's irreversible damage, it's a question of how are we going to have logical buffer zones and feeder zones with that.

Mr. Reichert.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Jewell, you mentioned the reduction of interpretive rangers and the contracting. Do you know who the contract is with?

Ms. JEWELL. No. It was Yellowstone is what I was referring to. That's just personal experience. But I don't know who the contractors were.

Mr. REICHERT. That would be a question for the first panel.

Ms. JEWELL. We can come up with the answer I'm sure through NPCA.

Mr. REICHERT. OK. Do you know if there's any arrangements with the National Archives or the Smithsonian or Department of Education partnershipping with the National Park Service as to provide some of that educational opportunity? I just think that's an important piece that we need to focus on.

Ms. JEWELL. I don't have an answer.

Mr. REICHERT. Does anyone on the panel know.

Mr. DICKENSON. There's a long-term arrangement between the National Park Service and the Library of Congress for the recording of historic structures which has been most valuable through the years, I think well over 50 years.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you.

Ms. JEWELL. I will get an answer to that, though, through NPCA if there are any such arrangements and let you know.

Mr. SOUDER. Can I make a comment on that.

Mr. REICHERT. Sure. You are the chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Because one of the things that we need to look at, which I have really stressed because it's clear that the Park Service is pretty effective at responding to local schools right around a given park. But as I've watched through my daughter who is an elementary school teacher, she was teaching third grade, and they had a bat class, and she hooked up with the superintendent down at Carlsbad Caverns who got her bat information, and she was able to do that.

Well, the question is with the Internet now, and the Department of Education ought to be taking a lead with this, how can they make education more alive for kids like hooking up with the tremendous resources we have on volcanos right now, what happened at Mt. St. Helen's. You have a whole volcano row from Lawson to Baker. You know, the history of how Lawson has come back versus others that are kind of in between with Mt. St. Helen's still smoking now, you know, how can this get integrated into our curriculum shouldn't have to be borne just by the Park Service, but they ought to be interconnected. So I would love to work with you on that.

There are some, but interestingly it's stove pipe. Just like we see with Homeland Security stove pipe, it's like education. It's like somebody does education in this and this and this and nobody is interconnecting.

Ms. JEWELL. Can I just use an example here to illustrate this? Because I think your point is very, very well taken. One of the critical things that REI has been working on for some time is how do we connect kids back to the outdoors? And I think we all know challenges of sedentary lifestyles, you know, distractions, video games, over scheduling, whatever the reasons are that don't get

kids playing outside or appreciating nature, this is a critical issue going forward in the parks.

If we don't make them attractive and they don't—whether it's through their schools or otherwise, don't have the experiences that we had, we aren't going to have the advocates for the future.

So for Russ's great grandson, that's amazing, and others, if they aren't having a positive experience so they aren't having something that engages them, whether it is a ranger or whether it is a school teacher, we're in trouble.

One of the things that we've done at REI is take a backpack that is chalk full of curriculum and Leave No Trace principles and take it out to schools. We'll touch 50,000 children just with our employees going out to school to teach Leave No Trace principles.

And I think those kinds of efforts that are going on will make a difference, and I think that the parks have been very willing to work with us and with others in engaging youth groups.

I took a young woman up to do some back country camping on Mt. Rainier, and there were 100 Boy Scouts up there at that time. And they are allowed into the park to participate in winter camping experiences in exchange for doing volunteer service projects there in the summertime.

So those are the kinds of things that I do think go on that stretch those resources to young people, and I think to the extent the National Parks would work with outside organizations, that would just supplement that.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you. I just think that is so important. And Mr. Fleck's question or response to a question on, you know, how low income families or lower income families may be to enjoy the parks reminded me of the days that my family of nine rode to Mt. Rainier and were accessed to the park for free, and it was a place that we could go as a low income family. Great memories and a great opportunity for us to learn.

And that brings me to Mr. Dickenson's comments. I thought that you spoke with a lot of passion and a lot of feeling, and you can tell that you enjoyed your career very, very much. Even though the challenges were there, of course, you had great experience not just with history, but you speak with a lot of wisdom, and the people in this room and the people on this panel certainly should pay close attention to the words that you shared with us today.

I identified with your remarks to a certain degree having been a sheriff in this county for 8 years and having to make those $1 to $2 million cuts to a $110 million budget a year and trying to prioritize your resources and really what is your core business function and how do you provide those things like interpretive rangers or school resource officers or DARE officers where the connections through our young people are so critical.

And to me, that's been a passion, and I know the people in the community know that, you know, working with Green River and working with kids on the street, prostitutes and kids on drugs, they need to get out into our parks and see what this world is about other than the streets of downtown mega cities across our country.

I want to just take the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to share a story that I think really draws it to the point Mr. Inslee was also

making is what kind of vision should we really have for our National Park System and preserving our parks.

I don't have a great grandson yet, sir, but I have six grandchildren, and my oldest grandson will soon turn 11, and his sister is 8. And a few years ago, I think they were 7 and 5, and we were on the east side of the mountains, and we were walking through an area that was sort of a high desert area. It was in the spring, and the snow was beginning to melt. And as we walked, they were holding my hands. And I just have to share this story. I'm sorry. I'm proud of my grand kids, too, but it's just a picture of really what we need to preserve here.

And if you can imagine a grandfather and a 7-year-old grandson and a 5-year-old granddaughter. I know you can. And some of you in the audience, I see there's a few of you out there, and as we're walking through the snow that is melting and bare patches of grass, we come along a track of some deer, a couple of deer. And so we stop, and we point out the deer track, and the excitement in their face, their eyes, you know, get wide and bright and excited because there's a possibility we could see a deer.

And so I pointed it out, and I said, "Let's go on. Let's see if we can find a deer." And they said, "Yeah, let's go on." So we walked a few feet further, and around this—it was sagebrush, and we came across another track that all of a sudden joined the deer track, and it looked to me like it was either a bobcat or a cougar. And so we stopped, and I said, "You know this, Caleb, Timmery, this looks like it could be the track of a big cat," you know. Their first thought was big kitty cat, and I said, "No, this is like a cougar, you know." And I said, "But let's go on."

And I tried to move forward, and they are stuck in the snow. They aren't going anywhere. And my grandson tugs at my right arm, and he says, "Papa, correct me if I'm wrong," and this is a quote, I never talked like this when I was his age, believe me, "correct me if I'm wrong, but don't cougar eat deer?" And I said, "Yes, Caleb, they do."

And so we walked or I tried to. I said, "We should go. We should move, go on." He yanks back on my hand one more time, and he said, "Papa, do you really think it wise we continue on?"

And it's just—I tell that story often to groups because I do think it wise we continue on. This is a tough problem we have ahead of us. And I really appreciate so much both panels being here today and the work that you do. And I know everyone in this room has a passion for this and a great desire to see that we preserve our lands for the enjoyment of our kids, our grand kids and my great grand kids eventually, sir, and congratulations on your great career.

And I just wanted to tell the community here since we're in the 8th District that I'm committed to this project, too. I am committed to protecting our lands here, and, as you can see, the panel members are all quite passionate about this. And it's just an honor to be here today, and I thank you so much for your help and everything.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. I want to just do a few more questions here before we finish up so I can make sure I get a couple of these things right.

First, I thank you for your work with NPCA. There are lots of different groups with lobbyists, but the key thing is to get accurate information and comprehensive data. And I very much appreciate their involvement with these hearings and with the data on the hill with the Parks Caucus, and the testimony you gave today will just be very helpful.

Each year we come out with a hearing book, and we're going to do a final year end report like they do. Ours will have the official congressional report, and we can work together, but thank you for your work with that, too, because I know having come from the business community, you never know when you get mail from all these different groups which ones are actually working and which ones are mostly raising money. They have been a tremendous help.

One of the problems, I wanted to ask Mr. Malmberg this and then Mr. Dickenson, one of the problems we have is no matter what we do here, let it be even in working with the Centennial Act, it won't be enough money that there are going to be serious structural changes in how we do things. The Park Service is already probably the most contracted out agency in the Federal Government. We're clearly using supplementary funds, that the same thing that is hitting Northwest Airlines and every airlines and GE and Ford and GM are both struggling with pensions and how to deal with healthcare costs. As a society, we just plain make more promises than we can meet given the economic growth.

The Park Service has been systematically getting better at kind of an architectural inventory, a cultural resources inventory, trying to do core ops, trying to do different things of how do we prioritize because one of the problems is that the only management problem I have ever seen is lack of willingness sometimes to make hard decisions because everything is important. And if everything is important, nothing is important.

And how are we going to do this? I'm on the board of the Indiana Landmarks, and one of my frustrations is that if you say every old bridge needs to be preserved, every old school needs to be preserved, the cost to do this right is about impossible.

At the Lewis & Clark sites, I got to see the archeological site. Archaeology is one of the things that gets kicked out early. And, quite frankly, if we don't do the archaeology, 50 years from now we may decide something was important that we didn't do at the time, as we have learned from some of the world's most famous archeological sites that these things tend to go over the top of each other. And it is one of the hardest to sell.

Then the next thing is the buildings which is a huge problem because if every building has to be preserved in the way it was originally made and every building is deemed archaeologically significant, there's just no way that we're going to be able to keep up. I mean, whether it's trying to keep up adobe buildings or how to preserve Native American things, then this also leads to the question of do we focus on a particular era theme at a park, what is its primary and what is its secondary?

We just saw this on the Lexington Concord Road that the Park Service in trying to make it somewhat similar, you get into all kinds of questions here. There weren't any trees, they had cut down the trees to farm, so now if you cut down all the trees on the Lexington Concord Road, much like at Gettysburg, people will holler because it's mostly really a bike path right now. Most people who are using that park are using it as a bike trail not to try to, you know, see the Lexington Concord. What is the park mission here?

Furthermore, they have now wound up with a bunch of buildings that are historically significant, but weren't there with the mission of the park, and yet they have to use the same kind of nails, the same kind of window panes, the same kind of paint to try to redo this.

And what I fear will happen with this Centennial Bill is if we don't kind of figure out, OK, which ones are going to be maintained at the purest level, which ones are we going to maintain at a mid level, and which ones are we going to just basically let go to rot, what we're going to do here and NPCA, and we have discussed this intensively, even in trying to address the operating as opposed to backlog, the danger here is people are going to say add nothing, which is the position of the Park Service.

Basically, for the last 8 years they've opposed every new proposal we came up with, didn't like the Lewis & Clark proposal initially, particularly at the Washington side or for that matter the trail because we have a backlog, we can't keep our personnel here, why should we add that?

Angel Island is a huge challenge. Here's arguably the Ellis Island for the Asian area. The State of California hasn't put the funds in. It's falling down. If the Federal Government doesn't intervene, it may not be there.

Plus the whole new concept, which Lewis & Clark is a classic example of, the historic example is a contiguous kind of solid park together as opposed to five different, say, historical, cultural or some green space which is really what's happening more east of the Mississippi because most of the funds in the Park Service have been dedicated to the west.

Now you see a rising desire for this in the east, which is somewhat compromised in a sense of environmentally compromised land, sites that aren't necessarily contiguous and to try to buy up the land in between is impossible. And we're going to lose those sites if they are built over. It's not irreversible. You can always tear down 50-story buildings, but you are not likely to, or huge condo developments.

But how do we, in effect, make these decisions on the archaeology, on preservation of the building and the prioritization of the land?

And I wanted to ask you, Mr. Malmberg, because clearly, and I'm going to raise the second part of this with Mr. Dickenson, and that should be the last of my questions, but we'll see, because in Washington State, and Oregon less so because they appear to have a fund built in for their parks a little different than others, but I saw this in the California Redwoods, we are increasingly doing more partnerships and let me describe this as it now ties in with the

first, at California Redwoods, the Redwoods are actually predominantly State parks and were there before the Federal Government got involved. The Federal Government interconnected in between.

When we started this process, the Federal Government had a few rangers and the State was the dominant. Now there's 120, I believe, NPS employees, and we're down to 20 State employees.

The State has lowered and lowered, much like you were worried about the private sector being replaced. What in fact has happened is the States are not keeping up proportionately even with the Federal increases.

You talked about the additional money coming in in the State of Washington, but this is going to be a challenge as we look at the Washington side of the State park, that as we look at California, another thing that has happened is the State, the Federal boundary line is drawn around Redwoods, but the State has added some more watershed area.

Now that the Federal Government is taking about, what, 80 percent of the staff there, the Federal rangers can't go in to protect this watershed area, and it's not in the Redwood park.

But since most of the people are now Federal people, what we've come to understand is if we say we're just going to deal with backlog, we're just going to deal with the current staff, what has happened is we've all understood more that, hey, the watersheds to our existing parks are pretty critical, and not everybody has forest land up against them, and we're going to have to get more buffers, and it is very hard to get this into the National Park.

I'm raising a number of these things because, as you know, as you told me and as I have been told earlier, the State of Washington has five interpretive rangers in the State is my understanding, and you've got them all. And three of them are at Lewis and Clark.

Are they going to stay at Lewis and Clark? Is the State, now that we have a partnership and this is a national park, is the State also going to come up to the table or are those going to get transferred out after the anniversary is over, and the Federal Government is going to do it?

How are we really going to work these partnerships? How are we going to partner and prioritize? Because as you are digging those archeological sites there to move the area, we're finding other things. And there's a couple of sites there, the one on your coin, that's a Washington site that is on private land that you are distributing a nickel, isn't it, to the whole world, and people are going to want to go see it, and they can't?

Now, I understand that this needs to be worked out long term, and I know this is not something probably anybody from Washington wanted me to raise, but at some point that needs to be worked through so people can go through there.

But if you are adding new land, I'm raising that this has another complexity because we don't want to kind of freeze the Park Service, and yet what we're saying is we don't have enough money to freeze the Park Service, even with the additional money, but we are going to always have new things, and how are we going to deal with this? And I just kind of wanted to pick your brain.

Mr. MALMBERG. That was a very long question.

Mr. SOUDER. It was a short question. It was a long buildup.

Mr. MALMBERG. Well, unfortunately, the State park systems have emulated the national park system in a number of ways and deferred maintenance or maintenance backlog is also a major problem in our agency, as I'm sure it is in Oregon, too.

We're continually looking at different ways to keep these funded. If you want to specifically talk about Lewis & Clark State and national historic sites since that is in my region, I can very well tell you we are not looking at dropping out because the National Park Service has come in to help us run the park.

Cape Disappointment is one of the largest parks in our State system. It happens to earn enough revenue to support itself at this point. We put a million dollars into that Lewis & Clark interpretive center. We don't look like we are going to back out and say, "OK. Now you can send people over."

What we're looking at is trying to provide, as we said, a seamless service because the public doesn't understand the difference between my flat hats and the National Park Service flat hats. They don't understand the difference between the arrowhead logo and our logo and Oregon State Parks logo. All they want is to come to enjoy the resources, have a good time, spend time with their grandkids, and we're committed to that.

And the nickel that you mentioned that has an ocean view happens to be a view of Cape Disappointment, which happens to be under my management, so you can get onto it.

Mr. SOUDER. My understanding is the land where the view is from is privately held, and it's not even clear precisely where that is, but either choice is privately held.

Mr. MALMBERG. You can take a picture, and I can get you into the spot where you can take that picture. But, yes, and we are continually looking at buying that. We just bought about 20 acres in that particular area to add to that park, so we're committed to that.

But we also have the same problem of deciding what's important. Which one of your children do you give up to raise the other one up to maturity? It's a tough—it's tough. You just asked the toughest question in any kind of parks management because there are no resources that are worth it.

Mr. SOUDER. So you wouldn't, and, Mr. Dickenson, maybe you can address that, so you wouldn't, say, prioritize under the Antiquities Act, the Landmarks Act or so on and just say some of these things are higher priority?

I mean, to some degree the Park Service is doing that, but to some degree you are mandated to protect everything once it reaches a certain year. It's just a matter of——

Mr. DICKENSON. Well, there's some leeway. Just as an aside, I might mention that when I became director, there had been a recent surge in authorization of new areas, a very dramatic surge, and so there was essentially during my time a 5-year moratorium on adding new areas to the system in order to, what we call, catch up, to use the resources in the best possible manner.

Every time that you authorize a new area for the system, that impacts every other unit within the existing system, and if the budget doesn't take into account the arrival of this new child, well, then, somebody has to pay the price.

Now, I think the system must expand. There's always a need to honor the achievements of our fellow citizens, our heroes and heroines, and so in the historical field, the cultural field particularly, there's room for growth as the years go on in order to recognize the flow of history.

I have a personal belief that most of the outstanding nationally significant natural areas in the United States have been recognized. And I would think that Congress ought to look pretty carefully at any new proposal to add new areas. There are other—I would have to be convinced personally that there is a high degree of national significance and no other agency in a position to provide the kind of sensitive oversight that needs to be given to these areas.

Regarding how you make judgments regarding what you preserve and what you do not or to what degree do you say you are going to preserve, this is a judgment that has to be made by a thorough study of the historical personage or background. Every outhouse doesn't need to be saved on Mt. Vernon, for example. The same is true in any unit of the system where you have cultural resources. Judgments have to be made as to whether you will give it the highest degree of protection faithful to history, faithful to the architectural values or whether there shall be elimination.

Historical property can be exposed of depending on the kind of advice that you receive from the professionals or benign neglect. It's perfectly within the purview, I think, of the managers that serve to make these kind of judgments with professional advice.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me followup on one thing on the additional land. An argument could be made that of the crown jewel parks, they were pretty well done like in the 40's with a few exceptions, that past the crown jewels, you get into a now more difficult question, and then you get to the next tier, and the same thing could be said of cultural arts, Gettysburg versus the home of an artist or the Longfellow house where it was both Longfellow's and Washington's headquarters, but it's been altered multiple times, and you have one house inside of another house, that part of the political problem is that, bluntly put, I don't believe the State parks have in fact kept up with the National Parks. I don't believe that's a fact, that we've increased the Federal funding at a faster rate nationally taken over 10 or 20 years than the State parks.

Back in the days of Roosevelt and others, Indiana, Iowa, a few other States were at the cutting edge, and you had a phenomenal State park system in the country. And if you look at the additional units to the State parks in the United States, it is far less than the additions to the units of the Federal park proportionally.

And what has happened is that has put more pressure on the national park system to pick up things that are regionally significant because if they aren't doing it, there won't be any green space.

So what may have been a second tier green space in terms of looking at it compared to Rainier, it's the only green space left, and it's very expensive in the east, and this is a political challenge that many of my Republican colleagues from the west who always complain about the Federal Government approach and how much Federal land they have, so I, when Chairman Hansen was head of the committee, proposed that 67 percent of any new dollars go east of

the Mississippi and challenged some of my western colleagues to say, "Look, we'll take the money." They decided initially they were kind of leaning toward it, but then the sagebrush rebellion wasn't that much of a sagebrush rebellion. They liked the money.

But the rug hits the road almost every week right now in Congress with something coming up from the floor. At the Brandywine Battlefield, the heart of the battlefield was going to be donated by a convent, not donated, but was going to sell at about one fourth the market value. It was going to be sold to a condo developer, and we would never have it. It also happened to be some of the only green space contiguous to the Wyath and then I think there's a fish and wildlife area to keep some open space in suburban Philadelphia.

This is the kind of real world tradeoff we're making. It's a historic site. The Brandywine was not—it was important, but not overwhelmingly important. We had a headquarters. We had some other stuff. Yes, it was the heart of what was a sprawling battlefield, but it's also green space. Now, historically that might have been a State park, but the State doesn't do anything about it. It would have just been built over. And yet the majority of Congress, in fact, lies east of the Mississippi.

My friend Jim Ridenour tried to come up with national recreation areas or heritage areas, I should say, to try to head this off. You've got a moratorium, the moratorium is about to end, and so he says, "OK. Let's stop this park barreling, you guys, by putting heritage areas in."

Now what happens is we have, I think it is, 40 some heritage areas that we've authorized in Congress, and they can only manage eight a year in a study over the Park Service.

And, literally, we're going to have 200 heritage areas where the Park Service is going to have to put their sign up, where they are going to have to have their staff there, but won't have any control over it because, guess what, the same demand that started with the park in Oklahoma, with Mackinac Island, with the hot springs in Arkansas. They may not have been if you look at the first five things in the Park Service. One of them is out, one of them has been reduced and Mackinac Island is back to a State park, that park barreling and adding additional things started from the beginning is just not going to stop.

So the question is how do we accommodate what is a—whether it's the State's issue, whether it's other types of things, I know the heritage areas are one way and the recreation areas are another.

I mean, another dilemma we have in looking at this is Santa Monica, Gateway and Golden Gate have 12 to 14 million visitors a year compared to—what does Mt. Rainier have, 3?

Ms. JEWELL. 1.2.

Mr. SOUDER. 1.2. So the people are voting with their feet. Now, the interesting phenomenon here, as Brian O'Neal challenges everybody to point out, is that furthermore if you take the 100—I think it's the 120-mile radius around Yosemite, more people go to Golden Gate from farther than 120 miles away than go to Yosemite, yet we think of Yosemite as people take one trip, but it's mostly used by locals.

It's because New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco are the biggest convention centers and tourist areas in the United States, so people go over to a unit of the park.

Even our concept of what are the crown jewels not in an environmental sense, but in exposing people to it, where are the Hispanics going to go to the parks? It's not likely that in the first generation, it's going to be Yellowstone. Some will. But it's going to be like San Antonio missions where they are not even going to see the missions, but they're having a picnic there. And the Park Service is trying to figure out that 90 percent of the people in their park are having a picnic and then they go over and see the missions. These are in our core challenge of who we are and how we fund this.

That said, I just wonder if you have a reaction to that? Because you are in the middle of this. You saw this in effect. Now that the Bush administration is in, like Reagan, they basically wanted to have a moratorium on any new lands, and it isn't working. And, therefore, all we do is add more units and not increase the funding enough.

Mr. DICKENSON. The development of the urban recreation system in New York City and San Francisco just essentially in my view came about because of the failure of the cities to provide recreation. They were looking for an alternative. The Federal Government gave them that alternative. That's not to say that there haven't been some good results and some real benefits derived from the urban recreation concept system.

Georgia, for example, has a marvelous downtown largely natural Chattahoochee River. The benefits that flow from that are tremendous. But the question was then and I guess still is, is that a proper responsibility of the Federal Government and the National Park Service to run that sort of thing, especially when you are dealing with a very prized possession. The National Parks have been called crown jewels, and why that is is because they are so unique. There is nothing unique about downtown Atlanta. And I will probably hear from that.

And Golden Gate and San Francisco have marvelous assembling of recreation. But in the long run, is that a proper responsibility of the National Park Service and the Federal Government versus the row of the city? That's a pretty fundamental question there.

But you might say it's already been decided, but there hasn't been any expansion of that concept now for over 20 years. So at least you would think that somebody has given some consideration to it.

If you dilute it, if you dilute the National Park System by putting in what might be called inferior, substandard or not nationally qualified areas, you can destroy it because it's a concept in the mind of the American people that makes the National Park System such a success, the idea that this is unique. There's only one Grand Canyon. There is only one Yellowstone. There is only one Mt. Rainier, per se, and so on.

And if you dilute this by bringing in what I won't call substandard areas, but areas which ought to be managed by others perhaps, and put this on the National Park Service, I think it weakens the entire system.

Mr. SOUDER. All right. I appreciate those comments. It's a huge question. My friend Congressman Markey from Massachusetts, every time he puts in an oil derrick in the Arctic National Refuge, I always ask him the question because I don't think it's correct that there's been no new concepts.

One of the new concepts was the Boston Islands National Park area where the Federal Government owns nothing, and inside of that is Logan Airport. And I asked him whether he wants to remove Logan Airport from the national park because their city sewer system is in the national park area, their airport is in the national park area. It does have the first lighthouse, but that is under the Coast Guard, and it has a fort that is under the State, but it was put into the Park Service, basically, to try to get an excuse to do an environmental cleanup.

Now, those islands are beautiful, and they could be restored, but they are not going to take these back to pristine standard of even Yellowstone because you have a big city around it with their airport in it and their sewer system in it and big oil distribution tanks in it, yet it's now part of what's a new term, the only one I believe in our service, called a National Park Area.

We are also increasingly getting national park reserves, which is another new term to basically try to manage and to expand to try to keep people farming next to a park to try to keep high rises out so we pay through the Park Service kind of a sustaining thing which is a variation of what we have done which is really proliferating because we can't afford to add the land, but we work with nature conservancy with these kind of things.

And this is going to continue to evolve, but these are the real world things we are trying to deal with in the budget is every time you do a heritage area, every time you do a park area, if we say we're increasing funds at 3 percent, but the payroll is increasing at 7, and then we add all these new areas, this doesn't work unless we change something internally and/or get more money from outside.

All that to say, I don't think you have to worry about substitution of funds. We have some really structural problems that we're trying to deal with, partly because people love the parks so much they want everything to be a national park. And then unless the State and local try to help with this, we're in a whole heap of trouble.

Mr. DICKENSON. There's a couple of things I want to add. I worry about the impact of commercialism as a reason for establishing a park, and while this has not been blatantly done in recent years, at one point in our history, one of the things that local groups pushed the Congress is to establish areas because they had an impact upon the local economy. And that leaves the door open for less than nationally significant areas coming into the system.

We haven't seen much of that in recent times and thank goodness because that really could be the death of the system as far as I'm concerned. You have to have those high standards maintained, and if the standard of service at the areas themselves that are already established isn't up to snuff, the public is turned off, and the value of the national park system for people in the United States is simply going to go down when that happens.

Mr. SOUDER. Maybe we can mix some of the dark brown with some of the light brown, and that will really start a political battle.

Mr. INSLEE. Just commenting, there is a unique place in my district on Bainbridge Island. It's the first place in the United States where Japanese American citizens of the United States were interned by the Executive order of the President. We have an effort now to add a very small park to the Minidoka or other complex National Park Service.

When that happens, Mr. Dickenson, I hope you will join us when that—at the celebration where I can honor your service when we finally get that done.

First, I want to thank Mr. Chairman. I want to tell—Mr. Reichert told one story. I just want to tell one story in parting. My dad was working on Mt. Rainier in the SCA program back in the 60's, and they were going to build an outhouse facility. And, of course, a quick way to do that is with dynamite rather than shovels, of course.

And so they were using some dynamite. And my dad said, "Well, let's just throw in an extra stick there and get this done fast." So they threw an extra stick in, and, of course, they didn't think properly because they had the outhouse, a very nicely constructed outhouse, and they had actually sawn from timber they had taken down themselves, and, of course, they blew out the outhouse.

And I just tell that story because I think you can be confident we're going to take a renewed effort not to blow up the Park Service budget, not to destroy our National Parks, and we are going to do everything we can to make sure of this fulfillment for future generations, and we are going to be fiscally responsible in doing it.

No one has brought up the fact we have a $400 billion deficit today. There's no money in Washington, DC. We're going to make sure there's money available to take care of these parks.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. REICHERT. I would just add one thing. Thank you to Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing and again thank you to all of you for being here.

Mr. SOUDER. I thank all of you. I mean, it's interesting even in New Orleans, I think it's the John Recede Park, took a pretty bad beating, but yet as you look at what they were trying to do out there, much like in the Everglades, if you destroy some of the ecosystem, the floods can hit the city quicker. And it's going to be interesting to see even the Park Service pressure on trying to rehab four parks down there in New Orleans that they are trying to put together. And we're still getting the inventory.

But ironically the Park Service and/or other Federal Government may have to look at the wetland system going into New Orleans as a buffer, and those kind of things were never asked of the Park Service years ago.

Mr. DICKENSON. Right.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you each for your testimony and your time. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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