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THE NATIONAL PARKS OF ALASKA

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

SECOND SESSION

AUGUST 14, 2006

Serial No. 109–241

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

35–892 PDF WASHINGTON : 2007

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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THE NATIONAL PARKS OF ALASKA

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2006

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in the Assembly Chamber Room, Loussac Public Library, 3600 Denali Street, Anchorage, AK, Hon. Mark E. Souder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representative Souder.

Staff present: Jim Kaiser, counsel; Mark Pfundstien, professional staff member; and Kimberly Craswell, clerk.

Mr. SOUDER. The subcommittee will come to order. Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. This is the ninth in a series of hearings on the critical issues facing the National Park Service. I would also like to welcome all the people who are here today who care about the parks.

As I have said at many hearings, the national parks are a unique contribution to 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 diversity and breadth and distinctiveness, as our system.

The national parks of Alaska contribute a vast array of unique sites to the National Park Service. Denali National Park, in addition to North America's tallest mountain peak, also encompasses a complete——

COURT REPORTER. Sir, excuse me. I apologize. If you could, please, slow down.

Mr. SOUDER. I can't. That's not going to be easy. I go pretty fast.

Do you have a recorder, for recording it, other than manually.

COURT REPORTER. I'll work with you.

Mr. SOUDER. Also encompasses a complete subarctic ecosystem. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, which is the U.S.' largest national park, includes the continent's largest assemblage of glaciers and the greatest collection of peaks above 16,000 feet.

Lest one think that Alaska is only a spectacular national wonderland, Alaska also features historical sites detailing the settlement of Alaska, the Klondike Gold Rush of the 19th Century, and our nation's fight during World War II.

Alaska's more recent statehood and the development of the conservation movement bring us face-to-face with challenges that the rest of the United States faced over a century or more ago. In Indi-

ana, the reservation of certain lands for educational purposes and State use was settled generations ago. In Alaska, these issues are still being decided. The balance between conservation and the use of vast areas of natural resources, timber, and minerals, is still being worked out. There is no easy solution.

Within the National Park Service as a whole, other issues are also being worked out. The balance between visitation and asset conservation continues to be controversial; especially as park funding becomes further stretched. 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've 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.

I will introduce each of the witnesses, as we do the different panels.

Let me briefly explain what this subcommittee is, as part of the whole. The way Congress was first designed in the Constitution was the House was in charge of appropriations. Shortly after doing appropriations, in the original founding republic, the oversight committees were created, and then later on—actually, many decades later on, authorizing committees were created.

So the way that the Park Service normally works through something like this, is an authorizing committee would hold hearings on additions to your land, whether there should be that—the appropriations committee decides how (Indiscernible) and process in the Senate.

What hasn't happened is, is that the Government Reform Committee, the authorizing committee, hasn't really done many oversight hearings on the Park Service.

The subcommittee that you are appearing in front of today, and that is here, does generally speaking, negative oversight, with some degree of positive oversight. In other words, we get everything from, in the Clinton administration, Whitewater, gaming, gambling regulations, the (Indiscernible) controversies, and that type of thing.

Each witness at this hearing has to be sworn in. We prosecute people for perjury. Mark McGuire (Indiscernible) his testimony for 3 days, before they could serve a subpoena, so he could come and say he didn't want to talk about the past. That's what our committee does.

And we look to see whether what we've been doing in Congress has been implemented in the way that we intended it to be implemented. And secondarily, if there are new things the Congress needs to do, then, if this committee—and as we work through these original hearings on the Park Service—needless to say, every authorizing committee and every appropriations committee objects to every hearing that the government (Indiscernible) conducts. Other Members of Congress think it's their areas to do it. We shouldn't be doing it.

On the other hand, the reason I went through the constitutional guidelines is, we existed before the Resources Committee in the

role of Congress. And it's our job to do that. But ultimately, to pass legislation, generally speaking—we don't do legislation.

The subcommittee that I chair is in charge of narcotics, within the U.S. Government, and there we do authorizing legislation on methamphetamine, for example. We've also conducted 8 hearings—or 10, or however many—on methamphetamine just this year, and we'll be doing another one in North Carolina next week—this week. This week? No, it's next week. So we've been focusing a lot on methamphetamine and other problems with this committee, as well. And we do do authorizing, on the Drug Czar, to the numerous drug laws.

But generally speaking, we're an oversight committee. So anything we learn today has to move to another committee. Therefore, we work with the resources committee, we work with the appropriations committee. But the most important thing we've learned, from doing oversight hearings, is that the changes tend to occur in advance by the executive branch, for the most part.

What I know and have observed is, is that when we go to parks and ask questions—like, to use an example, the border report. Every time I went to a border location, 4 years ago—and we did a series on borders. Mr. Bonner, who was in charge, then, of the combined—what's now ICBP, would go there beforehand, because we would go there afterwards, after (Indiscernible) start implementation of policies so that a timely——

COURT REPORTER. Sir, I'm so sorry to ask you to slow down for me.

Mr. SOUDER. The Federal branch needs to—the Federal agencies make some of those changes prior to us ever proposing or implementing the law. So I wanted to lay out—because this is an unusual process, in the sense we're not in Washington, we're doing field hearings. I intend to get out to the parks, to try and do the hearings in the field, as well as in Washington.

We started this process with a Washington hearing; we'll probably end with a Washington hearing. We met multiple times with Fran Nill and other—with Lynn Scarlett, before we left Washington, and we will continue to work through it. Met with Steve Martin multiple times about what our goals were.

We work closely with NPCA. This is a series of hearings, where we're looking at the challenges the Park Service is facing.

And every agency is facing huge budget challenges, and every agency doesn't know how to deal with their own issues, every agency doesn't know how to deal with their health care questions, every agency doesn't know how to face the new homeland security challenges, with their current budgets.

The good thing about the Park Service is there's been some increases in funding. In fact, all—better than all but a couple of agencies. But the challenges that we face are huge, and when you look at it—and as Congress, we can't just be faced with, "Oh, what happened with the Park Service," and 10 years from now, say, "I wonder why this happened," without knowing what we're voting for, legitimately we're having to debate here.

Does this go to education; does it go to fighting drugs; does it go to check every piece of luggage that's going on an airplane; does it go to, gee, do more mass transit quality and security; does it go to

fight HIV; does it go to national parks? It's a Zero Subcommittee, in that—but we need to have the information, when we do a Zero Subcommittee, where the dollars are going to go and whether there are creative ways to do it.

So I thank you for coming today. This is certainly the most comprehensive series that have ever been done on the Park Service. Each of these hearings comes out as a little book, so that there will be a little book on Alaska.

I would hope, by the end of the year, to have the points, major points from these. And we thank you for being willing to participate in this. I need to do a couple of procedural matters. Before we hear testimony, we need to take care of some of the procedural matters.

First, as of today, all members, have 5 legislative days to submit written statements and questions for the hearing record, that any answers to written questions provided by the witnesses also be included in the record. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Second, as to technical exhibits and documents and other materials, referred to by members of the witnesses, may be included in the hearing record, and that all members be permitted to provide a statement or remark. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The unusual thing about this hearing—we didn't know until the last minute, because I've been up here and staff's been up here, whether Mr. Cummings was going to come. But as you can see, from me being able to conduct this hearing and read those statements, because (Indiscernible) hearing's being conducted in a bipartisan manner.

We don't have a single member of our subcommittee or committee or full committee, or (Indiscernible) or full committee, that's objecting to the hearings. Otherwise, I could not conduct these hearings the way we're doing it. They're, in effect, noncontroversial hearings, with the more or less (Indiscernible) support of our committee in a bipartisan way, which is relatively unusual right now in Congress, even within each party.

So I thank you very much for coming.

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

Opening Statement
Chairman Mark Souder

"The National Parks of Alaska"

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

August 14, 2006

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. This is the ninth in a series of hearings 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.

The National Parks of Alaska contribute a vast array of unique sites to the National Park Service. Denali National Park, in addition to North America's tallest mountain peak, also encompasses a complete sub-arctic eco-system. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, which is the United States' largest national park, includes the continent's largest assemblage of glaciers and the greatest collection of peaks above 16,000 feet.

Lest one think that Alaska is only a spectacular natural wonderland, Alaska also features historical sites detailing the settlement of Alaska, the Klondike Gold Rush of the 19th Century, and our nation's fight during World War II.

Alaska's more recent statehood and the development of the conservation movement bring us face to face with challenges that the rest of the United States faced over a century or more ago. In Indiana, the reservation of certain lands for educational purposes and state use was settled generations ago. In Alaska, these issues are still being decided. The balance between conservation and the use of vast areas of natural resources – timber and minerals – is still being worked out. There is no easy solution.

Within the National Park Service as a whole, other issues are also being worked out. The balance between visitation and asset conservation continues to be controversial; especially as park funding becomes further stretched. 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.

I am pleased to welcome Alaska's Congressman, The Honorable Don Young to the hearing. Congressman Young is a tireless advocate for his state. The task to find the proper balance between conservation and development of resources is not an enviable one, but one that Mr. Young has shown his dedication for years.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives of the National Park Service, Regional Director Marcia Blazsak; Glacier Bay NP Superintendent Tomie Lee; Lake Clark NP Superintendent Joel Hard; Kenai Fjords NP Superintendent Jeff Mow; and Denali NP Superintendent Paul Anderson to the first panel.

Also, on the second panel, I would like to welcome Michael Menge, the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources; James Stratton with the National Park Conservation Association; and Ron Peck of the Alaska Travel Industry Alliance. I would also like to welcome Rick Kenyon of the Wrangell-St. Elias News, who will be talking about inholder issues; and John Shively, the Vice President of Government and Community Relations of Holland America line.

Mr. SOUDER. Our first panel is composed of Ms. Marcia Blaszak, Alaska Regional director—did I say your name, your last name, right?

Ms. BLASZAK. Blaszak.

Mr. SOUDER. Blaszak. All right. We've known each other for a long time, but I'm notoriously bad with names.

Alaska Regional Director of the National Park Service.

She's accompanied by—let me make sure I've got a list of all the superintendents here. I note Tomie Lee from Glacier National Park, Paul Anderson from Denali, Jeff Mow from Kenai Fjords and Joel Hard from Lake Clark.

Thank you all for being here. You'll need to stand, and I need to swear you in. As I mentioned, this committee is under oath. And if you would stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

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

As has been our tradition at each of these hearings, Ms. Blaszak will give the official testimony, that presumably has been cleared by about 15 different people, and then we'll go to questions.

Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF MARCIA BLAZSAK, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ALASKA REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Ms. BLASZAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Welcome to Alaska. We greatly appreciate the continuing support by Congress of parks and programs in Alaska, as well as the entire National Park System.

Your travels introduced you to the Great Land, but our parks are as far flung as the State itself. Geographically, there are 15 units stretched from Sitka National Historical Park in Southeast Alaska, northwest some 1,200 miles to the headquarters of the Western Arctic Parklands in Kotzebue. In all, we manage 54 million acres, approximately two-thirds of the acreage in the National Park System. This includes 33 million acres of congressionally designated wilderness, incredible natural and cultural resources. And, significantly, the parks we manage continue to function, for many Native and rural Alaskans, as areas for homes, subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping.

This year, the region will host about 2.3 million recreational visits, more than double the number from 1986. We believe that the principal mandates of the NPS Organic Act, to protect park units unimpaired for future generations and to provide for the enjoyment of parks by visitors, are being met.

In fiscal year 2005, the Alaska Region operated with a budget of $89 million, with an additional $10.3 million for construction, $2.4 million for roads, and $1.2 million for land acquisition. At the height of our summer operations, we employ about 1,000 people. We also license about 400 private businesses to provide visitor services in Alaska's parks.

We are nearing completion of our Core Operations Evaluations. As we examine our parks and regional operations, the process has reinforced not only the financial realties that we face, but also un-

derscored quite important issues and accomplishments, which I would like to highlight.

The majority of Alaska's park units were established after other Federal land actions, which put millions of acres into non-Federal ownership.

As a result, the park boundaries set in the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act often incorporated non-Federal acreage. In recognition of this and other facts, the Lands Act included unique access provisions.

There are more than 1.6 million acres of non-Federal land within the Alaska parks. The largest amount, nearly 900,000 acres is found in Wrangell-St. Elias.

The town of McCarthey is near the center of this park and celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. Its heyday was in the 1920's and 1930's, as the neighbor of Kennicott, then a rich copper mine. The mine closed in 1938, but the towns hung on, never quite ghost towns, always home to a handful of hearty individuals and families.

Today, the mines are part of the national park and a key visitor destination. The towns are reached by a State-owned road which, along much of its route, is adjoined by State and Ahtna Native Corp.

McCarthy is largely privately owned with an economy that has evolved, in part, to cater to park visitors. The opportunity and challenge we face is to protect the stunning resources of the national park and to provide the necessary access for residents and visitors, while simultaneously ensuring that a century-old community is allowed to continue to thrive.

A second challenge in Wrangell-St. Elias is providing access across Federal land to inholdings. As a practical matter, this access began in many locations prior to the establishment of the park and continues today. In almost every case, the access has never been legally documented.

For the past 2 years, we have worked to change that situation. Public comment ends September 2nd on the draft of a user's guide, which we believe will help guide both park managers and landowners through existing law, regulation and policy. The goal is to document access routes, establish terms for their use that accommodate the owner and protect the public resources, and develop a clear, consistent process for authorizing new uses of park lands to reach non-Federal lands.

Visitation to the Alaska parks has increased from just over 1 million, in 1986, to 2.3 million in 2005, due largely to the growth of cruise ship travel and add-on land tours. This has focused growth on Sitka, Glacier Bay and Klondike Gold Rush, as well as on road-accessible parks, particularly Denali and Kenai Fjords, and most recently, Wrangell-St. Elias.

For the past 2 years, we've benefited from a partnership with the Alaska Travel Industry Association made possible by a $750,000 statutory aid grant. This funding has made possible marketing of lesser-known Alaska parks through a mix of direct mail, magazine advertising, industry and media trips, press, and industry meeting participation.

The State of Alaska is an important partner in the managing of resources and our working relationship has improved over the past several years. While we sometimes disagree with the specific application of certain laws and regulations, overall, we have far greater areas of agreement. We're committed to continuing to work cooperatively with the State to ensure that difficult issues regarding access, subsistence, and resource management issues are resolved. We appreciate the commitment of the Governor's office and his commissioners and their staff in working cooperatively on these legal and policy issues.

Alaska has benefited from the significant capital investments supported by Congress: Investments made to visitor facilities responded to growth and visitation and, to a degree, helped guide them; some $34 million in facilities opened at Denali in the past 3 years, providing visitors a high quality entrance area campus; at Wrangell-St. Elias, NPS investments in a new visitor center along the Richardson Highway, and Kennicott, State investments on McCarthy Road, and private investments in the region are key to the park and its gateway communities being sustainable visitor destinations. We've also completed land acquisition and initial designs for the $17.5 million Mary Lowell Center in Seward, which will serve as the new visitor center and headquarters for Kenai Fjords National Park, and will house Forest Service personnel and a city-operated meeting facility.

This summer, we signed a record of decision advancing a series of phased developments on the south side of Denali.

COURT REPORTER. I'm sorry, ma'am.

Ms. BLASZAK. The $46 million——

COURT REPORTER. Could I ask you——

Ms. BLASZAK [continuing]. Project will——

COURT REPORTER. I need you to slow down. I'm so sorry.

Ms. BLASZAK [continuing]. Will require joint funding by the National Park Service, the State of Alaska, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and others. The plan includes a visitor center, trails, campground and other facilities.

The project has the endorsement of the visitor industry in Alaska, and has been developed with the input of area residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you have of us.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blaszak follows:]

STATEMENT OF MARCIA BLASZAK, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ALASKA REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES, OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE, AT AN OVERSIGHT HEARING CONCERNING "MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND THE PARKS OF THE ALASKA."

AUGUST 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman, welcome to Alaska and thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss several topics -- including access, inholdings, and visitor services -- in the Alaska Region of the National Park Service.

First, on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), I would like to thank Congress for its continuing support of parks and programs in Alaska, as well as the entire National Park System.

Your travels this month introduced you to Alaska, but our parks are as far flung as the state itself. The Alaska Region is home to 15 units of the National Park System and two affiliated areas. Geographically, these stretch from Sitka National Historical Park in Southeast Alaska west some 1,200 miles to the Aleutian World War II National Historic Site, and north another 900 miles to the headquarters of the Western Arctic Parklands in Kotzebue. In all, we manage 54 million acres, about two-thirds of the acreage in the National Park System.

Within these areas are 33 million acres of Congressionally designated wilderness. Here, too, are units of international significance: Wrangell-St. Elias and Glacier Bay are World Heritage Sites. Alaska's parks are home to the tallest mountains in North America, the migrations of hundreds of thousands of caribou, and millions of wild salmon. And, significantly, the parks we manage

continue to function for many Native and rural Alaskans as areas for subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping.

This year, the Alaska Region will host about 2.3 million recreational visits, more than double the number from 1986. We believe that the principal mandates of the NPS Organic Act -- to protect park units unimpaired for future generations and to provide for the enjoyment of parks by visitors -- are being met.

In FY-2005, the Alaska Region operated with a budget of $89 million, with an additional $10.3 million for construction, $2.4 million for roads, and $1.2 million for land acquisition. At the height of our summer operations, we employ about 1,000 people in more than 20 communities. We also license about 400 private businesses to provide visitor services in national park areas in Alaska. These range from large, multi-national corporations to small, family-operated businesses.

We are nearing completion of our Core Operations Evaluations to ensure we meet the critical needs of each park and office, and to improve our sharing of available financial resources. As we examine our park and regional operations in detail, the process has reinforced not only the financial realities that we face but also has underscored the important issues across the region as well as the significant achievements. I would like to highlight several of these key areas:

Inholdings and Access

The establishment of the majority of Alaska's park units came after five other significant federal land actions. These included the disposal of many relatively small parcels through homesteading, mining claims, and individual Native allotments; the Statehood Act which allowed the state of Alaska to select 103 million acres from the federal domain, and the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is conveying 44 million acres to Native corporations.

As a result, the park boundaries set in the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act often incorporated significant non-federal acreage. In recognition of this fact, and the realization that large blocks of federal land might have to be crossed to reach non-federal lands, the Lands Act included unique access provisions.

Today, we find more than 1.6 million acres of non-federal land within the National Park System in Alaska. The largest amount, nearly 900,000 acres, is found in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. While my comments will focus on this park, many similar situations exist in other units in Alaska.

Within Wrangell-St. Elias, we find a mix of land ownership and access issues, of which I will highlight two areas in particular. The first is the town of McCarthy, near the center of the park. This year marks its 100th anniversary. Its heyday was in the 1920s and 1930s as the neighbor to Kennecott, then a rich copper mine connected to tidewater by railroad to Cordova. The mine closed in 1938, but the towns hung on, never quite ghost towns, always home to a handful of hearty individuals and families.

Today, the mines are part of the national park and a key visitor destination. The towns are reached by a state-owned road which, along much of its route, is adjoined by state and Ahtna native corporation land. The towns of McCarthy and Kennecott are largely privately owned with an economy that has evolved, in part, to cater to park visitors. The opportunity and challenge we face is to protect the stunning natural and cultural resources of the national park and to provide the necessary access for residents and visitors, while simultaneously ensuring that a century-old community is able to continue to grow and to maintain its unique place in Alaska.

A second challenge in Wrangell-St. Elias is providing the access across federal land to inholdings as envisioned in Title 11 of the Lands Act. As a practical matter, this access occurred in many locations prior to the establishment of the park and continues today. Other access has developed since 1980. In almost every case, the access has never been legally documented. In other words, while the NPS acknowledges the property owner's right of access, and in many cases an obvious route has been developed across public land, the route's location and the terms of use have never been agreed to and put to paper.

For the past two years, we have worked to change that situation. Public comment ends September 2, 2006 on the second draft of a user's guide to access, which we believe will help guide both park managers and landowners through existing law, regulation and policy. The goal is to document existing access routes, establish terms for their use that accommodate the owner and protect the public land resources, and develop a clear, consistent process for authorizing new uses of park land to reach non-federal lands. We are taking time to meet with homeowners, the

state of Alaska, and Native corporations in an effort to ensure that the resulting documentation of access has broad understanding and support.

Visitation Patterns and Partnerships

Visitation to the Alaska parks is highly seasonal, focused on May to September. While we have seen gradual lengthening of the visitor season across Alaska and parks are open all year, we are primarily a summer destination. Over the past 20 years, visitation has increased from just over 1 million to 2.3 million in 2005. Much of this increase has been driven by the increasing popularity of cruise ship travel and add-on land tours in Alaska. That pattern has focused growth on our three southeast parks -- Sitka, Glacier Bay and Klondike Gold Rush -- and on road-accessible parks, particularly Denali and Kenai Fjords, and more recently, Wrangell-St. Elias.

The investments made in visitor facilities both respond to this growth and help guide where it occurs. In the first instance, some $34 million in facilities opened at Denali in the past three years provide visitors, for the first time, a high-quality entrance area campus at which to both orient themselves to the park and to learn about opportunities to experience Denali in ways other than the traditional bus ride. In Wrangell-St. Elias, investment in a new visitor center along the Richardson Highway, state investments on the McCarthy Road, and NPS and private investments in Kennecott and McCarthy are keys to the park and its gateway communities being sustainable visitor destinations.

For the past two years, the National Park Service has benefited from a partnership with the Alaska Travel Industry Association made possible by a $750,000 statutory aid grant supported

by the Alaska congressional delegation. This funding has made possible the marketing of lesser-known Alaska parks through a mix of direct mail, magazine advertising, industry and media familiarization trips, press kits, and industry meeting participation.

Relationships with the State of Alaska

The state of Alaska is an important partner for the National Park Service in our management of resources and our working relationship has improved over the past several years. While we have sometimes disagreed over the specific application of certain laws and regulations, overall, we have far more areas of agreement. We are committed to continuing to work cooperatively with the State to ensure that difficult issues regarding access, subsistence, and resource management are resolved successfully.

An example of our responsiveness to State concerns is our new process for public review of Superintendent's Compendiums. Beginning in 2001, we began working with the state to rework our Superintendent's Compendiums, the annual documents that implement park-specific openings and closures based on regulations. The state objected to the use of compendiums for restrictions that were more appropriate as new regulations. We followed through with agreed-upon regulatory changes, and retooled the compendium process to include annual public review. A second package of proposed regulations is under review by the Department of the Interior.

In the face of many challenges but also recognizing our many common goals, the day-to-day working relationships between Park Service and State of Alaska employees at the field level continue to be excellent. This plays out not only in park resource issues, but in law enforcement

and search and rescue missions through memoranda of understanding with the state's Department of Public Safety.

Resource Stewardship

The Alaska Region of the NPS has recently completed a broad review of science issues, constraints and opportunities that affect park and regional programs. Key findings and recommendations are contained in our science strategy released in July 2006. Notable among recognized environmental stressors were climate change, increasing human use, development within and surrounding parks, global and local contaminants and exotic species. Although glacier retreat and other indicators of climate change are hardly new phenomena in Alaska, they are harbingers of future challenges for resource managers, particularly in such areas as wildlife, fisheries, subsistence, vegetation and fire management.

The additional funding provided by Congress for the Natural Resource Challenge has had a positive effect here, allowing us to establish inventory and monitoring networks and begin building additional scientific capacity. The more we know about the areas we manage, the better position we are in to make the complex, science-based decisions that effective resource management requires. We are using this information to address complex resource management questions in Alaska national park units.

Major Construction Completed and Under Way

The Alaska Region has benefited from significant capital investments supported by Congress over the last several years. We have been able to build and restore several buildings to help serve the public. Examples in addition to the previously mentioned work at Denali include:

- The $7.6 million Wrangell-St. Elias visitor center, opened in 2002.
- A $3.9 million maintenance facility at Glacier Bay opened in 2004.
- An $8.5 million replacement for Denali's Eielson Visitor Center is under way and expected to open for the summer of 2008.
- A new administrative and visitor center in Kotzebue is under way. This $10 million project is being redesigned, having been reduced in scope and price from an original $14 million project. We expect completion in 2009.

Future Construction

Several large construction projects are anticipated in the years to come for the NPS in Alaska. Topping our construction priority list are projects at Denali and Katmai. The Denali projects include sewage treatment facilities for the frontcountry of the park, an emergency vehicle and ambulance garage, and visitor service improvements near Savage River. At Katmai, we have maintenance facilities proposed for construction.

Also, we have completed land acquisition and initial designs for the $17.5 million Mary Lowell Center in Seward. As directed in Congressional appropriations, the center will serve as the new visitor center and headquarters for Kenai Fjords National Park, and will house U.S. Forest Service personnel and a city-operated meeting facility.

On June 30, 2006, we signed a record of decision advancing a series of phased developments on the south side of Denali National Park. The $46 million project will require joint funding by the National Park Service, the state of Alaska, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and others. The plan includes a visitor center, trails, campground and other facilities. The visitor center would provide a commanding view of Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range, as well as direct access to Denali State Park. Smaller facilities west of the George Parks Highway will provide a jumping off point for visitors to the national park. The project has the endorsement of the visitor industry in Alaska, and has been developed with the input of hundreds of area residents to meet local and statewide concerns.

Subsistence

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 established, designated or expanded park units to provide the opportunity for rural residents to engage in subsistence uses. The National Park Service has responsibility for conserving natural and healthy populations of fish and wildlife and monitoring the taking of consumptive resources on 45 million acres of parkland and more than 18,000 miles of rivers and streams. Our management challenges grew more complex in 1989, as the State of Alaska lost its ability to implement portions of ANILCA, and even more complex in 1999, when the federal program expanded to include fisheries management. The $1.5 million program includes developing management plans, policies and regulations for subsistence seasons and harvest limits, eligibility criteria, and working closely with local advisory groups.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me, first off, a visitation question. You said a pattern of growth is basically where cruise ships come in, say, Glacier Bay and Klondike. Have they increased substantially in the last 2 years or have they been flat, as well?

Ms. BLASZAK. The numbers coming on cruise ships, I think it's been fairly stable, with a little bit of a bump in travel—in visitor industry numbers.

Mr. SOUDER. So they've been fairly flat, the last few years, but the bump occurred over a period of time, that the parks have seen.

Ms. BLASZAK. Yeah. This is what we talked about in the testimony, sir. Was the 10-year increase—or excuse me—20-year increase of 1 million visitors, in 1986, up to 2.3, in 19—or 2006—5.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you think the trends, in the last 3 years, are—they were heading—or what is your kind of internal thinking as to why it's been flat?

Ms. BLASZAK. Well, I think Alaska, in general, saw, after September 11th, as so many places did, a drop in visitation. And I think we've recovered back to the point we were prior to that. And I think we're seeing a marginal growth every year, but it hasn't been huge, significant growth.

Mr. SOUDER. If the cruise ship industry has been the No. 1 reason for increases in, say, Glacier Bay and Klondike, is it because, in fact, unless you increase the number of cruise ships seen, the attendance can't go up much.

Ms. BLASZAK. Actually, the cruise ship industry is putting larger vessels into the mix. And we had a projection, based on information we got from the cruise ship industry, that the potential increase was greater than it actually became. You know, they're positioning ships for this market. I'm sure that others on the next panel probably, in the industry, can better address the actual occurrence of what is going on.

But we've also approved, for the 2007 visitation year, an increase of 10 percent in the cruise ships that will be authorized to access into Glacier Bay proper. And that potentially will provide greater access and numbers to the industry, as well as to the visitors.

Mr. SOUDER. So wouldn't that suggest, though, that visitation at those parks is largely contingent upon passage on cruise ships, not because of September 11th?

Ms. BLASZAK. Yes, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. If I may ask the superintendents at Denali and Kenai Fjords, has your attendance been relatively flat, too? And do you attribute that to the flights?

With September 11th, we saw—is it—do you have—let me ask this—several questions. In some parts, it's European travel that's down. That could be related to flights and some September 11th impact. But then there's another question, whether energy prices are part of this. Which would also, now—because we've seen some recovery in flights. The question is, is energy prices really don't seem to be headed down for the foreseeable future, which may be my lifetime, and if that's the case, on what basis would you be projecting growth in your two particular parks? Then we'll deal with Glacier Bay and Lake Clark.

Mr. Anderson.

Mr. ANDERSON. Mr. Chairman, the visitation——

Mr. SOUDER. Hold your mic just a little closer.

Mr. ANDERSON. Can you hear me now?

The visitation at Denali National Park, over the past 3 or 4 years, has been relatively flat; minor increases year to year. Currently, the visitation overall to the park is about 400,000, a little bit over 400,000.

More than 70 percent of the people that visit Denali National Park come as a part of a cruise tour opportunity, and most of those folks that do come to the park arrive by bus or by train.

I think we've seen a decrease, over the past 3 years, in the—what we call "the independent travel," the non—the traveler that's not associated with a cruise tour opportunity, and that's, then, been offset by the increase in cruise tour passengers coming to the park.

Based on discussions with the industry and our own staff, the belief is that the visitations for Denali National Park is obviously highly dependent on the cruise tour program right now, and will continue to be so.

Given the numbers of people that ride the park buses—and there's three different bus systems that people can ride—what we're seeing is an increase in demand for the tour buses that are affiliated more closely with the package tour industry and a decrease in demand for the visitor shuttle bus, which serves, in large part, the independent travel.

Does the energy crisis have an influence? We thought that it would, and I think it probably has. I don't have specific numbers for this year. But the indications last week, from the folks that I talked with, are that there's probably less of an impact from this year's energy costs than people expected. And I would project that visitation to Alaska is likely to continue to grow into Denali, as well, at a probably small but constant rate over the next 10 years.

Mr. SOUDER. You have similar——

Mr. MOW. Mr. Chairman, at Seward, I think we have a slightly different dynamic there. I think what we're seeing at the park, in terms of our visitation—even though there have been some significant changes in the number of cruise ships coming to the community—our visitation has remained stable and/or had a small increase, actually, going on. I believe, Kenai Fjords National Park, we see more package tours, and particularly, the independent travelers.

And again, you know, we had one of the major cruise ship companies cease to use Seward as their primary embarkation or disembarkation point, a shift over to Whittier. And the actual impact on visitation has been—isn't even perceptible. So——

Mr. SOUDER. Would you clarify what you just said to me, again? You said cruise ships "switch over toward Whittier?"

Mr. MOW. Yes. Up until recently, Princess Cruises, for example, was using Seward as a port for embarking or disembarking passengers. And that ceased, just in—well, I think 2005 was the first year that they stopped using Seward. And there was a lot of concern in the community that there'd be significant economic impacts of that, and those impacts haven't been borne out by the visitor numbers. The impacts have come in other ways, but the actual visi-

tors taking tour boats or coming to our Exit Glacier facility, they've been pretty steady or even a slight increase.

Mr. SOUDER. Would you say they're coming off a package tour from Whittier that would include——

Mr. MOW. You know, we don't have a real good handle on that, how that's, you know, sort of—as that vacuum was created, if the cruise ship companies themselves have made up that—to make up for that, offering Seward.

Generally, Seward is not a port of call for the cruise ship industry. And I think that's kind of the significant element.

I find that our influences are much greater due to things out of Anchorage. Being so close to Anchorage, we tend to be almost the community—Anchorage's backyard. So we really notice—and this year will be interesting, because the schools in Anchorage are going back 2 weeks earlier. And I would forecast that we will see some impact from that because, as I've noticed, that as soon as the schools are back in session and the State Fair begins, things change rapidly in Seward.

Mr. SOUDER. Has your attendance stayed fairly flat?

Mr. MOW. Excuse me?

Mr. SOUDER. Has your attendance stayed fairly flat in the last 3 years?

Mr. MOW. Yeah. Actually, we've had a small increase, overall. And I think a lot of that is due to the increases we've seen at Exit Glacier. We've made some significant improvements there that have really just made it more readily available for visitors.

Mr. SOUDER. Would you tell me a little bit about Lake Clark now? Do you have mostly independent travelers, that come in for a wilderness experience? Do they (Indiscernible) come over? Explain a little bit about that.

Mr. HARD. Sure.

Mr. Chairman, Lake Clark, I think, really epitomizes what Alaska has to offer in terms of wilderness experience. We have three different types of visitors really in the park itself: Back country expeditions, sport fishermen and bear viewing. And our visitation has remained consistent in the park. Those folks that are looking for those experiences haven't, at least in my mind, been impacted too much by the energy crisis or the September 11th crisis; you know, post-September 11th.

Our visitation into the park by our residents' own communities, however, may be diminished as a result of those fuel costs. We have five communities that have relationships, direct relationships with the park, and they have less capacity to meet these energy needs to get into the park probably than the external visitors, I would say.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me, for the record—I know we can—and these just need to be rounded off for anybody to read through this and get a comparison. How many annual visitors would you say at Lake Clark last—2005?

Mr. HARD. We generally average around 5,000. So very, very small numbers when you compare them to Denali, Kenai Fjords or Glacier Bay.

Mr. SOUDER. That's for the year.

Mr. HARD. Yes.

Mr. MOW. At Kenai Fjords National Park, we're reporting approximately 250,000 visitors annually, in 2005.

Mr. SOUDER. And Mr. Anderson.

Mr. ANDERSON. 2005, visitation at Denali was 403,000 visitors.

Mr. SOUDER. (Indiscernible) Glacier Bay.

Ms. LEE. In 2005, we had 360,000.

Mr. SOUDER. And, Ms. Blaszak, what—for Skagway, at Gold Rush, I believe it was closer to 900,000, wasn't it?

Ms. BLASZAK. Yeah. We're bumping up to 900,000. That's primarily because it's a port of call for the majority of cruise ships.

Mr. SOUDER. What about Sitka? Is it similar?

Ms. BLASZAK. Sitka's running at 290,000.

Mr. SOUDER. And——

Ms. BLASZAK. Much fewer of the cruise industry use it as a port of call than the consistent stop at Skagway.

Mr. SOUDER. And would Kobuk Valley and the Bering Straits be more similarly (Indiscernible).

Ms. BLASZAK. Yes, they would.

Mr. SOUDER. Superintendent Lee, at Glacier Bay, I think—did you tell me—I think you said around 90 percent are cruise ships; is that correct?

Ms. LEE. That's correct.

Mr. SOUDER. Do the people that come to the Glacier Bay Lodge, and come into the land and park facilities, as opposed to just doing the experience by boat, are many of them coming in on any kind of package, or are they more independent travelers?

Ms. LEE. They're more independent travelers, sir. We've seen a reduction in our independent travelers and in the small package tours, the non-cruise passengers.

Mr. SOUDER. I know from past experience at Klondike that one of the statements that I kind of heard flying to here was that many people buy a cruise package on the ship and do the—even the historic tour, with a cruise-based guide or cruise-hired guide, rather than the Park Service.

Do you know if that trend's increasing, staying about the same? What percentages there are in Skagway, out of this—the 900,000 that you say visited? That means they came through headquarters? How many of those participated in a tour or——

Ms. BLASZAK. I believe that would be the number that are arriving at the dock in Skagway, which is adjacent to the Park Service facilities.

And you're familiar with our——

Mr. SOUDER. They're not going into one of your park buildings, because you bought a number of the old buildings. So that assumption is there's not a fee.

Certainly—is there a fee to any of the Alaska parks?

Ms. BLASZAK. At Denali, we charge entrance fees. We have campground fees at several of the parks. And through legislation at Glacier Bay, we charge $5 per person.

Ms. LEE. Per passenger.

Ms. BLASZAK. Excuse me. Per passenger.

But we have in legislation, in ANILCA, no entrance fees in the new parks that were established with the Lands Act.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you know why that was the case, other than as a trade?

Ms. BLASZAK. I think it may have been part of the compromise.

Mr. SOUDER. I'd just say, for the record, every State would have taken that deal, if it would have been offered. Because no park, really very few parks in American history, have ever voluntarily said, "The State doesn't want the government to say, 'Hey, why don't we make this a park?'" When introduced, it was a huge battle in my home State, and there wasn't such an agreement.

In the visitation, the reason I was kind of going through these numbers is, because as anybody reads these hearing books, Alaska is so dramatically different than any other State because of the cruise ship industry impact, that what I wanted to sort through—and I kind of touched on it there in Skagway—but I heard Superintendent Anderson suggest a little bit of this at Denali—that you said that the cruise ship buses were increasing in their attendance, but the Park Service bus was declining.

Mr. ANDERSON. (Nodding head.)

Mr. SOUDER. What about the lodging? That clearly I've stayed in lodges owned by Princess, in my visit to Alaska; by Holland, in hotels. I've never been to Alaska without walking into some shop or some hotel owner reading me the riot act about foreign firms and their deals that they make with the stores on land. That they become subsidiaries. And it's possible—in fact, on this particular trip to Alaska, I got that a couple times: "The foreigners are taking over the ships; they buy up and get the local businesses, and now we don't have people here in our towns, because this is all kind of a cut deal."

We actually, at a couple places, heard from individuals, who were on the cruise ships, who said, "Boy, they're hard selling these packages, and you're better off kind of wandering away from the dock area a little bit."

I take it that's a fairly common tension. And would you say that the pressure is on the hotels? At Denali, in particular, hotel expansion? I believe two of the cruise lines have expanded their hotel operations there. I don't know how the gift shops are working there. But clearly, at the park entrance, there's a lot of pressure.

And could you comment on that, a little bit, Mr. Anderson?

Mr. ANDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To set the record straight, the Park Service concessioner, Aramark Doyon Joint Venture, operates all the buses in the park, and the cruise tours put their passengers on those buses. And there's three different opportunities in the park, on the park road: To attend the Wilderness Tour, a 6-hour tour into the heart of the park; the Denali Natural History Tour, a tour that focuses a lot on cultural history as well as natural history, not quite as long; and then the Visitor Transportation System, which is the low-cost shuttle system that takes people from the park entrance to the end of the road, drops them off, picks them up, wherever they'd like.

Mr. SOUDER. OK. So what you're saying is that the people buying the package tours, that you still get a commission off of, it's just that they're not doing an independent wander around the park.

Mr. ANDERSON. The Tundra Wilderness Tour and the Denali Natural History Tour are most popular amongst the cruise tour visitors to the park.

Well, and there's some trends happening there that are quite positive, I think. In days past, the cruise industry, tour industry, has spent one night in the hotel outside Denali, took a short tour or a long tour of 1 day, and then left and went on to the next destination. The major operators now have started to expand the time that people spend at Denali, to give them a much higher quality experience and opportunity to do more things there in the park. And then, that's the number of hotel rooms—to accommodate the same level of visitation but twice the time in the park—is increasing, and we expect it to continue to increase over the next few years.

Holland America, Princess, both have expanded their facilities there in the park, and there's several other facilities that are projected to be constructed in the near-term future.

Beyond those major cruise tour facilities, owned and operated by the cruise tour companies, there are also a number of independent facilities right outside the park, both retail operations, in lodging and food establishments. And those are very well used and certainly competitive, if you will, in terms of product, price and quality, with all of the other corporate holdings, if you will, around park headquarters.

And I guess, if there was something I didn't address, I——

Mr. SOUDER. And let me say, one of the reasons is, because most of the people, when you're talking about people coming on cruises, you're talking about most of the people who come from my State to Alaska. That part of the reason they control the hotels and the gift shops the way they do, is not only the profit but consistency of. There's less variety of mattresses at Princess Lodges than there are, I've experienced, at other hotels, and similarly, you know, in other places.

The challenge in Alaska is how, then, to get unique experiences. Because it's kind of like, do you eat at chain restaurants or do you eat at local restaurants? You get more variety at local restaurants. Sometimes really good; sometimes not so good. Or is it going to become more of a "vanilla" experience. And that's the challenge that you all have. Another huge challenge that comes in here is, it's clear, that attendancewise, you have a lot at stake, as to how many cruise ships there are and the capacity of the cruise ships.

I'll ask Mr. Shively, on the next panel, whether the length of time is longer on the cruises or if they're spending less time on the boat. That seems to be a key variable here.

But another thing is, what this means for visitor services, and where your visitor centers are. And this is a huge challenge. Because if the people are basically poking into the park and coming back to Denali, then the pressure is different for visitor services, and the question is, how do you manage that budget?

I've been reading in the papers here about proposals regarding around out—more outside the park, north of Talkeetna, and a whole new visitor center. Does that mean you would close down something in the park? How in the world do you manage your budget when you see this kind of shift at Denali with the visitation

if they aren't, in effect, staying in the park, when visitor services historically have been in the park and not outside, and how do you manage that in your staffing?

I assume that you haven't increased FTEs over the last 5 years.

Mr. ANDERSON. We have had budget increases over the past 5 years, not every year, not consistently. The total number of employees at the park: Approximately 260; about 100 of those are permanent, the rest are seasonal.

And it is a challenge, and I don't have all the answers about how we deal with this changing demographic pattern, changing tourism interest, visitor interest in Alaska.

We're working on it, and we're working with the Alaska Tourism Industry Association, with the cruise ship industry, with the local operators and private owners around the park, to help understand better what the visitors' needs are, what they're likely to be, and then how to respond, how to adjust, to meet those needs consistent with the park mission.

And I recall part of the last question was about the tour companies and opportunities for further activities at the park, and whether or not they were consolidating activities, if you will, at the park entrance versus spreading them out. And I don't know much about the fees that are being charged or collected amongst the operators outside the park, since that's not my jurisdiction, if you will.

I do know, though, that over the past 5 years, there's been a considerable increase in the number of different—the variety of opportunities, recreational or experiential opportunities, provided in the Denali area by other private operators, small operators in Healy, McKinley Village, Denali Park Headquarters area. And I'm certain there's commissions to help make that happen. I'm not part of that, part of the program. But there are certainly quite a diverse range of experiences and a diverse range of providers, and it's an increasingly larger number, it seems, over time.

Mr. SOUDER. Anybody who enters the park pays a concession fee to the park; is that correct?

Mr. ANDERSON. Well, they pay an entrance fee; a member of the public that comes into the park pays an entrance fee into the park.

Mr. SOUDER. If you take Talkeetna Air Taxi into—over the park, they pay you a fee.

Mr. ANDERSON. Yes, they do. Well, if they land, they pay a fee. If they fly over the park, at this point, they don't pay any fees. At this point, if they don't land, they don't pay.

Mr. SOUDER. Any guiding that comes into the park would pay a fee.

Mr. ANDERSON. Correct.

Mr. SOUDER. So if they touch the land, not the airspace.

Mr. ANDERSON. That's correct.

Mr. SOUDER. Superintendent Lee, in Glacier Bay, the concessioner is struggling with how you update a Mission 66 facility. If the attendance is dropping, what do you see happening, or what options do we have, to keep the concessioneer offering overnight services in Glacier Bay.

Ms. LEE. This is one of the issues that we're struggling with right now. And again, we're working with the local community. We have had a number of family tours earlier this year, thanks to

ATIA. We're trying to address that now. We don't, unfortunately, have all the answers.

We're hoping, of course, that some of the trends will change: That we will start to see more independent travelers, we'll start seeing some of the small package tours coming back; but it seems almost across Alaska that we're seeing fewer and fewer of the independent travelers in most of the areas.

Mr. SOUDER. You don't have any direct—the boats that go in on the tours, what other concessioner fees would you get at Kenai Fjords?

Mr. MOW. Well, Kenai Fjords, as an ANILCA park, is a very different situation than, I think, what both Glacier Bay and Denali have. As parks, we weren't tasked with developing our own infrastructure, within the boundaries, we used the existing communities. Plus, the jurisdiction at Kenai Fjords National Park is such that it ends at mean high tide. So as long as the tour boats aren't offloading visitors onto shore, they aren't technically entering the park, and as a result, the tour boats offering, you know, the tours into the fjords don't pay us a fee. They're not concessions.

Fortunately for us, we have a wonderful partnership agreement with them to offer interpretive services for them. And they've found it to their benefit to be able to market their tours with uniformed park rangers to talk about the park resources. And at the same time, they're willing to work with us to offset those costs of providing those additional visitor services.

Mr. SOUDER. Do all the tours have guides?

Mr. MOW. That's correct.

Mr. SOUDER. And how much——

Mr. MOW. Well, again, the number of visitors that actually set foot in the park, along the coast, is very, very small.

Mr. SOUDER. But I mean, do all the boat tours offer park rangers?

Mr. MOW. Not quite. Probably about half of them.

Mr. SOUDER. How much do you get per passenger?

Mr. MOW. It's not by a per-passenger charge. We sit with the tour boat companies and negotiate out the expenses that we would bear in providing the services that they're asking for.

Mr. SOUDER. So basically, it covers the cost of the rangers.

Mr. MOW. That's correct; the rangers, some of the administrative overhead, and we pony up the cost of program oversight and administration.

Mr. SOUDER. At Glacier Bay, you have a similar (Indiscernible).

Ms. LEE. That is correct; and also, with our tour boats.

Mr. SOUDER. And what are the fees there per passenger?

Ms. LEE. The fees are $5 per passenger, by legislation. But we also do the cost recovery, for the cost of the interpretive services on board.

Mr. SOUDER. And is there anything similar at Denali?

Mr. ANDERSON. Yes. There is—through the NIRI Science and Learning Center, the Alaska Natural History Institute's operation—what we call "fee-based education" available to the public, in general, but quite predominantly used by the cruise industry for their passengers. And those fees, depending upon the offering, may range from $40 to $70, for the given program that they take part

in. Those fees then are used to provide the personal services, to hire the people that present the programs, and to support science in the Science and Learning Center.

Mr. SOUDER. Are there other parks in Alaska that have similar fee arrangements with the cruise ship industry already?

Ms. BLASZAK. Actually, this year, for the first time at Wrangell-St. Elias, with the cruise ship industry, we're offering interpreters in Yakatat. And I'm trying to think. That's the newest and most recent. I think it's the bulk of it in these parks.

Mr. SOUDER. And at Wrangell, most of the—Kennicott Lodge is a traditional concessioneer; is that right?

Ms. BLASZAK. Kennicott Lodge is a private business, on lienhold, within the park.

Mr. SOUDER. Does anybody pay concession fees then?

Ms. BLASZAK. We have a concessioner providing guided tours through the mill building. We also have guided hunting in the park, not specifically at the Kennicott area. But the only concession operation at Kennicott proper is the guided mill tours.

Mr. SOUDER. And at Lake Clark, I assume all the facilities are private. Do you pick up any kind of fees in the park?

Mr. HARD. We only have three concessions, Mr. Chairman. They're all sport hunting concessions. And we have about seventy CUAs, commercial use authorizations. But they all have their own facilities. We don't provide any facilities. And we, perhaps, generate somewhere in the neighborhood of $30,000 annually in the fees from all of those sources.

Mr. SOUDER. One of the clear challenges we have here is, that anybody—like I mentioned earlier, every single agency that we have in the Federal Government is looking at going off the cliff to try to meet their health, pension, future obligations, and Park Service is not unique. Individual parks are not used to feeling this kind of pressure, so they feel unique.

But (Indiscernible) Federal Government, I mean, we've known this with Social Security for a long time. Now we're seeing it hit Federal employees, we're seeing it (Indiscernible), we're seeing it hit criminal justice, probation officers. We're seeing it across the board.

But GM and Ford, and our airline industry, are all teetering (Indiscernible) bill before we left. Every single major company in America is having this challenge.

So the question is, in prioritizing where you put your increasingly challenged amount of resources, even if we succeed in getting more dollars to the parks, the question is, where is this going to go?

The good news about visitation is, is that this is one of these classic tradeoffs in the Park Service: If you're getting fees, it's better because you're getting more revenue; if you get more people to the park, they can enjoy it. I mean, that was part of the original mission. And they can spread the word about the (Indiscernible) of the park.

On the other hand, you're more likely to pass a resource off better if you don't have huge increases in visitation. It stays wild. I mean, the big challenge is about that. Is it a (Indiscernible) simplification than a joke. But half the rangers would just as soon no

people came, and half the rangers are disappointed if you're not doubling your visitation, because it depends on what part of the area it is.

But one of the challenges is, if your visitation is flat, and if you don't have an additional source of revenue coming in, and the Federal Government doesn't suddenly become an "old man," so to speak, the question is, are you going to put, at the big wilderness parks—I assume you have challenges for biologists, for wildlife preservation, for all sorts of unique opportunities.

One of my big things that I believe our national parks ought to be doing is hooking up more, through the Internet education systems, math and science programs, throughout the United States. Because not everybody has to visit the park to see the park, with today's advances in technology. I know the Park Service is improving, and each park is working at it, but maybe—other than people in the region, may not get to the parks as often.

But how would we do this? Well, we see big increases at Golden Gate—Gateway or Santa Monica, as people are staying closer to their homes, and they're looking at visitation figures of 14 billion in some of these parks. It's a different mix, to the historic park system, than what we think of the crown jewel parks, and the beautiful wild parks have flat visitation.

The challenge here is how—which I think your "Ranger On Board" programs are a great way to deal with this—is how can you come up with visitor services that are oriented toward a certain type of visitor, around the cruise ships, that becomes self-perpetuating? In other words, the money for those visitor services are paid for by those people who are coming in.

Because if you're facing a declining budget and a squeezed budget, and you're deflecting to the same people more of your resources, the challenge is, if you're going to build another visitor center at Denali, how are you going to pay for it, and if—with the rangers, without having to pull up and scatter your rangers and have them all be doing visitation and none of the park functions? It's a similar challenge of, how can we keep a cruise boat not an option, in gestalts, for the Park Service? Can some of the cruise ship money be transferred over?

Director Blaszak, have you looked at any packaging for concessioneers? In other words, if you get something in the big park, then you get to do something in one of the smaller parks.

Ms. BLASZAK. We actually entertained discussions on that issue, Mr. Chairman. And we're trying to work, I think, collaboratively, with Aramark, specifically, to resolve their losses that they're encountering at Glacier Bay. But we currently don't have a mechanism to package Denali particularly with Glacier Bay. But we have had those discussions.

Yet, you are aware, sir, that the proceeds from the franchise fees collected at Denali, because of their contract, go to the park and their infrastructure needs.

And none of us have enough to fulfill everything we would like to accomplish in the parks, and to take from one to serve another, at this point, would perhaps be more damaging to the park that does have a viable concession operation than necessary.

But we have been discussing that. We haven't reached the solution yet.

Mr. SOUDER. One of the interesting things that we've learned by the parks, about the parks is, is that people are generally willing to give money, if they think it's going to the park. That for all the talk about demonstration fees in the United States, as long as you work out some kind of challenge with a focus—because if they had to pay every time they come into the park, that's a different ball game. But for people coming from Indiana to Alaska, if they think the money is going into the park, rather than to profit, there's not been a resistance to demonstration fees, so-called.

I mean, we need to demonstrate these things for 200 years. Are they ever going to be made permanent?

But the fact is, we hardly have any letters, on record anywhere in the United States, of people objecting if the money goes into the park. They don't see that as a tax, they see that as helping the park. And the question is, is how to do this, so Alaskans, who are used to having access to the land, don't get hit the same way as visitors who are, in effect, (Indiscernible) in their State and seem to be willing to put money into improving parks, which they do in almost every major park now, and even at little tiny stops on the highway in Nebraska.

You know, people are getting more and more used to paying fees to help cover the shortages, if they think it's going to the park. They don't necessarily want to see it go to foreign aid programs, they don't necessarily want to see it go to programs they don't approve of, but they're willing to give to the park, if they think the funds are going to be used in the park.

Now, let me touch on inholdings. As someone who years ago paid $10 to the Pilgrims' park on what turned out to be my land, it is an interesting question of how to handle inholdings, because almost every park in America negotiated and approved some type of inholdings agreement inside the park. It's hard for me to think of a park that hasn't had this challenge. But, generally speaking, they don't have a million acres of inholdings, because there's only one other park that's that big, and that would be Yellowstone.

You said, in your testimony, that you're working on a draft of a guide access. Now, I don't mean to sound this ignorant on ANILCA or on the followups. Wasn't this very clear, from the beginning, on how access was going to work? It looks to me that there's a lot of checkerboard patterns. That sitting on the Resources Committee and on the park subcommittee, I've sat on many hearings arguing about this question. What was the thought of picking a place—if you weren't already living there and subsisting there—of picking a place that didn't have access? And wasn't it discussed what the tradeoffs would be, in the beginning, on the access? Or was that something we were just going to discuss later on?

Ms. BLASZAK. You pointed to the real, I think, issue that's been at our fingertips for the last couple of years in Alaska, in the parks in particular. We believe and have, I think, attempted to better articulate our understanding of Congress' intent, when it came to accessing inholdings in the Alaska parks.

What we see in law, though, has not been carried out in practice by our predecessors. There's been, basically, a "Well, we'll get to that when we get to it" attitude.

And it's caused, frankly, some, I think, unnecessary conflict of intent on our part and inaction on our part in the past.

We realize that we have an affirmative responsibility to recognize access that ANILCA lays out for landowners within our parks, and are attempting to get to that, based—using existing law, policy, regulation, that takes away the unknown factor. We have a number of inholdings that predate the park. We have a number of new landowners, that are perhaps afraid to engage with us, for fear that the onerous process will make it almost impossible. And we're trying to not be at that place.

We have a number of existing access routes that we believe we can fairly quickly document, and we're not looking at this as a we're-giving-you-permission aspect, as much as we're looking at it—agreeing with the landowner that he or she had—we, the Federal Government, with responsibility to ensure protection of park resources, can agree to.

We're making good progress. We're having a number of meetings. And frankly, we scrapped it, after the second version, realizing we hadn't really hit the mark, and decided it was more important to engage and have dialog with the landowners that were particularly affected by this, before we spent much in something that was not going to work. And we're continuing on those efforts, and I think you will hear from members on the next panel, how they perceive our efforts are going.

Mr. SOUDER. Let me ask, because I've tried to understand this, And it's not that I haven't read multiple books on Alaska and on your unusual parks. It's not that I haven't been to multiple hearings and conferences and heard the discussion. "Chairman Souder, I don't understand this." That one thing is, when they were picked, did the parks pick first, or did the State pick first?

Ms. BLASZAK. I'm not a good historian on that aspect of it. There——

Mr. SOUDER. In other words——

Ms. BLASZAK. Well——

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. When Wrangell-St. Elias was picked, if you had (Indiscernible) and you owned it, and you had a cabin there, and you were floatplaning in——

Ms. BLASZAK. Uh-huh.

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. But when the State of Alaska picked multiple things all over, what's now McCarthy, was Wrangell there first, and then the State picked, and then you filled in Wrangell around it.

Ms. BLASZAK. My understanding—and I may have to ask one of my friends from the State to clarify this, Mr. Chairman, is that the Native organizations were able, through the Alaska Native Claims Act, basic—in the early 1970's, initially made claims. But the final adjudication occurred, and is still occurring, quite frankly, with the Bureau of Land Management taking the lead on actual ownership and conveyance of those parcels that were selected. The State of Alaska and the Native corporations all had an opportunity to select

acreage at the same time that the copper mines, if you will, was being adjudicated.

Now, I'll stop there and ask that, perhaps, Mr. Menge can respond specifically.

Mr. SOUDER. I'll pursue that.

But it just seems that, at root, that some of the conflict here—because at Wrangell, for example, the Native corporations are all pretty much along the main road, such as it is. It's the State and the University that has hundreds of thousands of inholdings along McCarthy Road; there are individual landowners there. But the pressure, when you look at whether you're going to develop a park road, is clearly in the hundreds of thousands when you're looking at State agencies, and in the hundreds when you're looking at local individuals.

That on a map, which I just saw the day before yesterday—(Indiscernible) in the office, looking at the map—it just stands out, and every time, it's stood out to me. Furthermore, in talking to the Native corporations, they've been more than willing to concentrate out so they don't go in (Indiscernible). And there obviously needs to be some understanding. So that doesn't mean you have a right to get a bulldozer, like the Pilgrims did. But to have access to your land, if you lived there all your life. That was our intent in Congress. It's always been our intent, in inholdings, to try to work that out, in reasonable ways, to have access to your land.

But the unusual thing about Alaska is people don't live there who bought the land and now want to try to get access that is an upgraded access. Not historically. And the fact that you have the State inside here—particularly when you look at Wrangell. But it's not just Wrangell. That in working—and it's not just the Park Service.

I went with Congressman Young, at Cordova, up into the—I think it's the Copper River Delta, where the Chugach chose woods, and they wanted to cut the woods.

They banked on that income for the Chugach, and they don't have a way to get there. And so the question is, what prompted—and how could there not have been a discussion of "Why would you pick this area that you want to cut trees, if you don't have access to it?" If there wasn't an understanding, then how could—you know, it's just really hard for me to understand, as a business guy, how this type of thing would have happened. Because putting this off till later—it's the whole thing of what kind of access? Is it permanent access; short-term access? Is it not similar to the forest folks' argument, that we have for timber cutting, in forests all over the country? Should they have to put in a wide road? Should the wide road then be kept permanent, so people can camp on it, so they can get to the forest fires and supposedly deteriorate, and then be more a, "wilderness," until the next time they cut timber?

It's not like I'm not familiar with this. It's just I've never seen this massive a scale. And what's unusual here is it's government/government conflict. Because if it was just the landowners, who have been there for a long time, you could have a battle on a cabin, in the Rocky Mountain National park, where a person was supposed to leave their cabin and now want to stay there. You could have those kind of individual variations of landowner rights type

of thing. We have it in all the national parks, but the scale here is massive.

Do you sense that you are going to resolve it? What kind of comments are you getting on this in your report?

Ms. BLASZAK. We believe we can resolve the individual landowner access issues fairly easily. I think our greater challenges are going to be where we have mining claims within the park boundary, that are—for which we receive requests for access for—potentially permanent mining access. And how——

Mr. SOUDER. Let me ask you a question.

Ms. BLASZAK. Go ahead.

Mr. SOUDER. Are most of those mining requests people who really want to mine? I mean, that's a value judgment. I'm not trying to trick you into identifying individuals, but—let me phrase it this way: I know people in my own district, who bought up railroad rights to, in effect, leverage, because they wanted to get into development.

Ms. BLASZAK. I have to take at face value the requests that we are working on. And there's a——

Mr. SOUDER. Has anybody tried to open a mine in the park yet?

Ms. BLASZAK. I think we've had requests for mining, plans for operations. I'm not certain that (Indiscernible).

Mr. SOUDER. Oh. So they've wanted to open an actual mine.

Ms. BLASZAK. Yeah. Yeah.

But back to the question at hand, Mr. Chairman. You know, I have to respect the sincerity of the applicant, that they are sincerely interested in doing that. And frankly, it gives you—you know, it would be beneficial to all of us to know that was their true desire, or if they're attempting to get a higher value for potential mineral rights, and how we might get to a place of agreeing on the value of the property (Indiscernible), should they actually want to sell, and then try and buy. And those are the conversations we need to continue to have.

Mr. SOUDER. And are the rules different in the preserve park at Wrangell?

Ms. BLASZAK. Yes.

Mr. SOUDER. And wouldn't that have been part of the discussion as to whether it was a preserve or a park, in that particular area?

Ms. BLASZAK. Actually, the differences, I should clarify, sir. The differences in preserve lands and park lands, for the sake of money, is no different. For hunting, sport hunting is allowed on preserve lands. There are differences, of course, in wilderness.

Mr. SOUDER. In the wilderness preserves.

Ms. BLASZAK. In Wrangell's, yes.

Mr. SOUDER. So, in that, if there is an inholding that allowed mining in a park, that wasn't wilderness, that there would be usually a statement as to the risks to the park, but would or would not be named, historically, a park of Alaska? What kind of precedence—forget a park of Alaska for a minute.

Ms. BLASZAK. We don't have good precedent. That's our problem. In fact, Mr. Anderson might be able to address that. At Denali National Park, there had been mining in the Kantishna area for many years, that through, I think, the consent of Congress, we were able to buy out the majority of those land claims.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Anderson, I note that the other thing is that—although, Alaska, you tend to circulate a little more in Alaska. And you've all worked in other places, too. And I ask the question broader. In addition, but in Alaska—could you kind of give a little more on Denali, and on any other experience that you know of, and any precedents we have in the park on mining inside the park.

Mr. ANDERSON. Let me speak specifically to Denali for just a minute. When when Mt. McKinley National Park was expanded by 4 million acres and renamed as Denali National Park and Preserve, in ANILCA, it encompassed the Kantishna Mining District, just outside the old park boundary, as well as some other mining claims along the boundaries also in the park.

In the early 1980's, there was active mining activity going on there, and some desire to increase access in mining at the time. Based on a lawsuit, that occurred in the early 1980's, the Park Service did an environmental impact statement on the impact of mining in the Kantishna area on national parks. The outcome of that, a preferred alternative, that was signed off on, I think, in 1985, was that the Park Service would attempt to buy out all of the mining claims in the National Park, including all of those in Kantishna. And from that point forward, we've moved in that direction to purchase mining claims that were available for sale.

We have, in fact, approved plans of operations in Kantishna since that time, but not very many. All of those have been very small-scale, individual mining activity, as opposed to big corporate, large-scale mining activity. And we continue to work on that.

It's been a very acrimonious process, over time, and with the help of the Congress, in the late 1990's, we were—and in cooperation with the landowners in Kantishna, mining claim owners, we were able to acquire the majority of claims through a legislative taking, on a willing-participant basis; so that the owners were allowed to put their land into a taking situation, if they so choose, and then the courts made the determination on the value of the claims.

That eliminated about 4,000 acres of mining claims. There's less than 1,000 acres of private lands left in Kantishna. There is no mining activity occurring at the present time.

Mr. SOUDER. Well, in sorting out how we're going to deal with the inholdings question, long term—basically not in dealing with many people who—native Alaskans, Alaska Natives, either one, who have been on the land for a long period of time, but a lot of which are, for lack of a better word, "absentee landowner" questions of inholdings, which is relatively unique; the scale. The scale is certainly unique, but even the concept is relatively unique in Alaska. Partly because of the timing when you did it; partly the way the process was done.

Is it the Park Service policy that you would trade land?

Ms. BLASZAK. We would always be interested in considering an exchange, particularly when we could consolidate acreage, to make it less difficult for access.

And I'd also like to add, Mr. Chairman, that the number of selections that were made by the Native corporations at the time of the compromise of ANILCA, were selected for their potential mineral or timber value, anticipating that they would produce revenue for

mature elders of those Native corporations who made the selections.

Mr. SOUDER. And the challenge in the—just as an outsider coming in—and let's plunge into another controversy.

I, for example, favor drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I wasn't on the Alaska Delegation. I've looked at it. Clearly, there, that area was a set-aside, consolidating area for potential drilling. It wasn't a bunch of lots. All through, it was set aside. It was marked on the original map what its intent was.

I'm also a mining guy. I have the No. 1 manufacturing congressional district in the United States. You can't make things if you can't get things out of the ground. The question is, is where and when and in what kind of process you do that.

That's originally BLM land. It was Bureau of Lands and Mines. The Forest Service was created to cut the timber, not to make it a wilderness, and this really becomes a wilderness. In my opinion, they should move it to the Park Service. That this, all the time, causes nightmares in the Park Service, because everybody outside the Park Service thinks that's the ultimate goal of the Park Service, to turn every piece of land that they have into a wilderness.

I'm a visitation guy, too. I believe there should be wilderness areas and visitation areas. But increasingly what we're seeing is the Forest Service access to places. And most parks around the United States are becoming recreational areas, and you see the more and more lodging at the edges, the entertainment-type things that people like me would do, that are older and don't hike 15 miles up a mountain. We tend to scatter around the edges of the places (Indiscernible) in.

I'd be more of a cruise ship guy, in that sense, as I get older. Not that I was all that great a mountain climber, when I was younger, but would be more of a cruise ship person, who are at the edges.

But there is an orderly process, as we're trying to move toward it, and I see you making those steps in Alaska. But the challenges here are just so massive, compared to what we've heard at the other parks hearings, partly because it isn't necessarily that nice, orderly forest land abutting the park land.

Do any of you have forest land abutting the park land where the visitation services are, visitor services? In other words, that's the question. That in the wild areas—you have forest land around the back of the Kenai Fjords and elsewhere. But is the forest abutting up, or BLM land abutting up? Do you have any kind of buffer zone that——

Mr. MOW. Well, at Kenai Fjords, along the Exit Glacier Road, the Chugach National Forest and the Park Service are immediately adjacent. We've had some differences on how we manage those lands, particularly camping issues. But we've been working together, more and more, on specific problems that come up, around certain times of the year, to address some of those issues. But, you know, I think you're correct in that it's generally rare. But, you know, this is one example on where we do have day-to-day visitation and visitor services occurring in——

Mr. SOUDER. And as I understand——

Mr. MOW [continuing]. The adjacent areas.

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. Part of your challenge on the water is, is that the water around Kenai Fjords is actually Fish and Wildlife; is that correct?

Mr. MOW. Well, the offshore islands are under the jurisdiction of the Fish and Wildlife Service, as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. And so, you know, again, the tour boats, themselves, don't actually set foot on those lands. But, you know, those choosable islands are the most highly visited portion of that maritime refuge, and so it's our park interpreters that provide the interpretive services for those.

Mr. SOUDER. Because as you look at the maritime wildlife refuge, it's scattered all over the place. Up near Kobuk Valley, isn't it also there that the waters are basically Fish and Wildlife, but the land and park is the Park Service.

Ms. BLASZAK. Because of the large tracts of federally managed land in Alaska, we abut NPRA, to the north, at Noatak and Gates of the Arctic, and BLM manages those lands. We also, in that part area of the country, have, I think, specific national wildlife refuges adjacent to us, and we do collaboratively provide visitor services at the hall, at the Kobuk Visitor Center. So there's a number of places where we intersect.

I think at Denali, BLM—isn't that adjacent to you, Paul, out the Denali Highway? Maybe not directly, but——

Mr. ANDERSON. (Nodding head.)

Ms. BLASZAK. So we do have places where we intersect.

Mr. SOUDER. Well, I thank you very much for your testimony. We may have some additional followup written questions, to get some park-specific data, and have some further followup questions, after the second panel here. We have to be out of the room at 1, so I want to move to the second panel.

But I thank you for your willingness to be open today to talk about questions that are very difficult and very important to Alaska. And I feel very awkward, as a form of presence here. And my friend, Congressman Young, who's an impressive advocate for Alaska—it's really a concern of a lot of us that are asking questions about Alaska, because he thinks they're—it's his State, and he doesn't want us to—and every time we start to probe too much, he says, "That's why I voted against Statehood."

These are huge questions, and to some degree, there is a legitimate feeling in Alaska that—in Indiana, we just cut down all our trees, and we, quite frankly, removed the Native Americans. On the other hand, you learn something from your experience, and you try to balance out how to allow a State the actual economic growth and people growth that they have every right to do, as people who live here.

But the national presence is a tremendous—Seward's Folly wasn't so much of a folly, historically, when you look at it, and it was a benefit to the United States.

And, otherwise, quite frankly, if the U.S. Government hadn't come in, we'd be speaking Russian here today. So the U.S. Government has been a positive presence in Alaska, from the beginning, and an active presence, and it's a very difficult process to work through.

And I appreciate your willingness to each have your respective parks and all of your individual rangers to work through this. It's a beautiful land, and we want to preserve as much as we can and enjoy it, as well. So thank you very much for coming today.

Ms. BLASZAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. If the second panel could come forward.

I presume all of you heard, in the first panel, our five witnesses here are Mr. Menge; is that correct?

Mr. MENGE. Menge.

Mr. SOUDER. Menge, OK.

Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources; Mr. James Stratton, who everybody calls "Stratto."

Is that an official name, or is that a——

Mr. STRATTON. Nah, it's kind of an official name.

Mr. SOUDER. Regional director of the Alaska Office, National Parks Conservation Association. I understand he's going to sing his testimony today.

Ron Peck is being represented today by Dave Worrell, who's the communications director of the Alaska Travel Industry Association. Thank you for coming today.

Mr. Rick Kenyon, publisher, Wrangell-St. Elias News. Thank you for coming all the way over. I just did the drive myself.

And Mr. John Shively—good to see you again—vice president, Government and Community Relations for Holland America. As you've heard, it's a government oversight committee.

It's been our standard practice to swear in all our witnesses. So if you will all stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

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

That probably was our most famous hearing that we've done this congressional cycle was the steroids hearings. You're Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa, with the interpreter in between.

Actually, Canseco, Mark McGuire. Jim, you're in the Mark McGuire spot. You would need an interpreter, because Sammy wouldn't sit next to McGuire.

Then we had a few more. John, you're Rafael Palmeiro. So I bid you say, "And I did not do"——

Mr. SHIVELY. Correct.

Mr. SOUDER. All right. "Then retest the applicant."

That was the most unusual hearings we've done. But we do it on lots of different issues. And thank you for participating. So you can see it's wide ranging. And I'm looking forward to each of your testimony.

You heard the first panel. Your official statements go on the record. That we have a flexible 5-minute rule here. You can go a little over, but I'd like to have time to ask some questions, too.

So Mr. Menge, thank you for coming.

STATEMENTS OF MICHAEL MENGE, COMMISSIONER, ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES; JAMES STRATTON, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR THE ALASKA OFFICE, NATIONAL PARK CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION; DAVE WORRELL, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ALASKA TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION; RICK KENYON, PUBLISHER, WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NEWS; AND JOHN SHIVELY, VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, HOLLAND AMERICA

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL MENGE

Mr. MENGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For the record, my name is Michael Menge, Commissioner of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. I appreciate submitting this testimony, for the record.

I think I will just skip across some of the major areas, and then, based upon your previous practice, it looks like it will be spirited questions and answers. So I look forward to that.

I'm sure, as Congressman Young has pointed out to you on numerous occasions—probably many more than you really necessarily wanted—Alaska really is unique. We were essentially frozen in amber. During the time that the rest of the U.S. infrastructure was being built, we were essentially up here cold.

Our transportation infrastructure system developed along the rivers, the ocean, and there were no highways to speak of. Air travel came along about the time when the eastern and lower continental folks were coming out here to create economic well-being for themselves. Air travel developed partly, at that time, so rather than go through the costly and expensive process of kind of jamming roads into the wilderness, we used the airplane. So Alaska's infrastructure simply never developed as it had across the "Lower 48." And I think, in that, lies the issues that we confront most today.

First, let me say that we really appreciate the Park Service today. Back in 1980, when ANILCA was first passed, it was a very uneasy relationship. There were a lot of young, eager folks coming in from the "Lower 48," who had grown up in the traditional National Park System and brought with them a view of how the parks worked in relationships that had been established with the neighbors. And then that relationship grew strained, and there were several incidents that we wish had never occurred.

I must say, under Director Blaszak, and the rest of the panel here, as well, it's a new Park Service that serves in Alaska today. And while we may disagree on some things, we have found, particularly her staff, very amenable to sitting down and working through the problems. And I think that's really one of the biggest issues we have to deal with.

As you've mentioned, there was probably the greatest horse-trading session in the history of mankind that occurred back when ANILCA was being put together. And if you were there, or heard about it, there were a lot of people with black magic markers and huge maps rolled out on the ground. The State was trying to establish an economic basis to grow an economy. They virtually had no existing infrastructure, industry or any structured economy, other

than our fishing, a little timber, and tourism was nonexistent in those days.

Certainly, the folks that you had spoke of, in the "Lower 48," who spent their lives in the conservation movement, had watched with dismay the way resources were allocated across the "Lower 48," and they realized that there was precious little of the special places left, and they were highly motivated to protect as much of Alaska as they could. Because you're hard-pressed to find anywhere in this State that doesn't deserve special recognition.

Speaking of Alaska, I admit I may come across as a little bit overly proud. The truth of the matter is, I've had many opportunities to walk and visit most of State, over my years here, and every place is very special.

And I can't imagine the difficulty of trying to say that one area deserves protection over another. Certainly, Glacier Bay, Denali and Wrangell, those are extraordinarily special areas. But even the run-of-the-mill areas in the State are just spectacular in their size and grandeur.

There was quite a struggle dividing it up amongst the Native corporations. Which was, as you recall, one of the most daring and creative experiments, probably in the 20th Century, was trying to figure out a way to break the chain of the reservations and establish an economic base.

The State was doing very much the same in its selection of lands, and there were many, many dedicated professionals, back in D.C., who also had a vision for Alaska's park system, wildlife system, forest system. So it was a unique experience.

And what emerged out of that—because you were talking about an inholder access. There were a lot of fire system lines, but there also was the concept we call "Title 11," or "access." And we literally did simply say, "We'll deal with that later." ANILCA said the access will be granted, and that was good enough for the time. As we sat down and started working through that, of course, that's the first time the challenges emerged, and challenges that we still face today.

The largest issue that, at least during Governor Murkowski's term, time in office, has been in Glacier Bay and in discussions on what's the appropriate level of visitation. And the Governor felt very strongly that two ships a day was appropriate, and certainly the current administration is moving up toward that number. We haven't reached there yet. But I will say, for the record, that Superintendent Lee and Director Blaszak have been very helpful in working toward those goals, and that really is the biggest issue of the leading base.

The McCarthy issue and the access issue is one that continues being a challenge. We really appreciate all the work that's been going on in that area, because it's a tough nut to crack. Because, as you can imagine, a road-in access is in the eye of the beholder, and seldom does an inholder envision access the same as a Park Service employee, and therein lies the problem.

The uneasy truce that began in the 1980's I think has matured, as most of us have, and as our hair has fallen out and what little we have left is turning gray, we began to appreciate the positive

benefits of the Park Service and the ability to grow an economy associated with that.

Mining in the parks was a tough one. There's probably a world-class composite down in Glacier Bay, but even—it's under a glacier. And you can imagine the challenges associated with putting a mine in the park, under a glacier in that park. So no question of the quality and the quantity of the ore, but the ability to develop and bring it out, that is a challenge.

You can imagine the discussions associated with that. How much is it worth? One person would say, "Well, it's not worth anything, because you can never put a mine in the park," and someone else, a geologist, will stand up, red-faced, and say, "But it's worth billions of dollar," and then the fight was on.

So we still have a fair number of challenges that we have to address. But let me say that we have come to appreciate the contributions that the National Park Service can make to the State. We recognize that these parks will never be the same as the parks in the "Lower 48." Each and every one has a special and unique character that will have to be factored into any kind of resolution. And the only way that we will be successful, ultimately, is through the good will of the participants on both sides.

We put together, while I served in the Senate with Senator Murkowski, now Governor, we put together some funding to put in an ANILCA training course, which had been taken by just about everyone in the Federal Government. It helped to explain how the process evolved, what the promises were, and whether those promises are being kept.

And I think an understanding of the history—and there was a tremendous amount of "trust me," when that legislation was passed, and that "trust me" only lasts so long as the people who drafted it remember. And once they're done, and they've gone down to The Monocle and enjoyed a few libations and congratulated themselves, it's left to others to carry out. And in trying to keep those promises alive, it's a challenge. But the ANILCA course has gone a long way in doing that.

So I'll stop there, Mr. Chairman, saying that it's been a rough road, but it's gotten a lot better in the last 13 years. We have a long way to go, and our success will be based strictly on the willingness of both the State and private parties and the Park Service to work together. Because none of these issues are going to be easy, as was testified in the McCarthy case. And I'm sure you're aware of the case. Those are all just real tough nuts to crack.

But there's no clear-cut statutory authority that anoints a winner prior to the beginning of the process. So we just have to roll up our sleeves and dig in. And I think therein will lie the ultimate resolution.

As you said, the Park Service has evolved significantly across the country. And we will have the cost of energy, which (Indiscernible), will have profound effects on the systems up here, as it does with the Congress.

I think we'd have a whole lot of fun talking about the horror stories of trying to get energy into our rural villages. It's $8 a gallon now and growing. And it's a very difficult social issue to deal with. The same pressures on those villages will also affect the future po-

tential growth for the parks. We're just a long way away from any kind of established infrastructure, and you have to have a few bucks in your pocket to get out.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for coming up and visiting our State. We appreciate your interest in the parks. And the Governor has certainly made his pledge to work with all the Federal agencies. Even if we bark at each other, from time to time, it's a—we'll figure it out.

So thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Menge follows:]

Oversight Hearing: "National Parks of Alaska"
10:00 AM, Monday, August 14, 2006 Loussac Library, Anchorage, Alaska
Congressman Mark Souder, Chairman,
Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources

Testimony by Michael Menge, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for coming to Alaska, home to well over half of the acreage of the entire National Park System. The State appreciates your interest in National Parks, and no analysis of Park Service issues would be complete without an Alaska discussion.

Before touching on specifics, we must remember that most National Park Service activities in Alaska stem directly from the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, which established more than 100 million acres of federal conservation system units. As most here know, ANILCA contains many Alaska exceptions to typical "Lower 48" park management. These special provisions were part of Congress's "Great Compromise" – setting aside areas of *unprecedented size* while providing similarly *unprecedented accommodations* for current and future public use and access. Thus ANILCA challenges federal land managers to balance the national interest in Alaska's vast scenic and wildlife resources with recognition of Alaska's lack of infrastructure and the self-reliant, rural way of life that continues today.

Following its passage, the State developed a program to track ANILCA's implementation to insure that Alaska's unique management provisions were not diluted over time. Keeping ANILCA's promises alive is a constant challenge that we take very seriously.

At the same time, we recognize our national parks' tremendous positive contribution toward diversifying Alaska's economy and improving the health of our many rural gateway communities. Towns like Seward (next to the Kenai Fjords National Park), and McCarthy (in the heart of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve), were teetering in economic doldrums when ANILCA passed and were initially wary and distrustful of the new parks. Now these communities are flourishing and taking pride in their neighbor parks.

The initial bitterness about ANILCA has been largely overtaken by improved mutual understandings and better communication. There are still plenty of ANILCA issues on the table, but dialogue is now more constructive and professional. On the Park Service side, we attribute much of the improved dialogue to Regional Director Marcia Blaszak and Deputy Regional Director Vic Knox. These two, along with other senior managers in Alaska, are actively reaching out to Alaskans of all persuasions to solve a number of longstanding problems. Here are just a few examples of national park issues on Alaska's front burner:

Inholder Access

Based in part on a lack of consistent direction about how to respond to residents seeking access to their inholdings within the Wrangell-St. Elias Park, the Governor sought assistance from the

Secretary of the Interior in 2004. As a result, the Park Service launched a major initiative to identify appropriate means to formally document the access guaranteed to inholders by Section 1110(b) of ANILCA. In the last two years they released two successive draft policy documents and held a number of meetings with state representatives and inholders. Considerable forward progress has been made, although some solutions remain elusive. The ideal approach will result in a permanent access authorization that is not subject to revocation or expiration. The Park Service, under the capable guidance of Ms. Blaszak, is working hard to find creative solutions that document the ANILCA access guarantee while providing enough flexibility to both the inholder and the NPS to respond to changing needs and conditions. State representatives are in close communication with Ms. Blaszak and her staff to keep the forward momentum. We are optimistic that with the additional help of many well-reasoned comments received from affected inholders, an acceptable solution will soon be within reach.

Glacier Bay

Turning to park-specific issues, the Governor continues to press for an increase in the number of cruise ships allowed to enter Glacier Bay to two per day. A partial increase was recently announced for the summer of 2007, and more increases may be forthcoming in the next few years; however, we feel there is sufficient scientific data available now to allow the maximum of 2 ships a day without further deliberation.

On a related Glacier Bay topic, this spring a number of residents from the nearby community of Gustavus were up-in-arms about a proposed Park Service rulemaking that private vessels based in Glacier Bay's Bartlett Cove would be required to compete for a limited number of permits from the park in order to enter or leave their home port. With additional encouragement from the Governor, we understand the Park will soon unveil an alternative approach to make it easier for local residents to come and go when needed. We appreciate the Park's effort to accommodate local vessel operators and are hopeful that the new system will get the job done.

Denali

As you know, Denali National Park is one of the most popular parks in Alaska – yet vehicle access is solely dependent on just one park road for the entire 6 million acres. More people would come if additional access opportunities were available. We have a standing request that the Park be directed to cooperate with the State on long-term access issues affecting North Denali. We have long advocated for new north access, including consideration of an eventual road connection to Kantishna and access to McGrath to the west of the park. Development of these routes would alleviate pressure on existing park infrastructure, enhance tourism, and facilitate access to McGrath, thereby improving the economy of the entire area.

On the other side of the Alaska Range, both the State and the Park Service are extremely pleased with a recent Record of Decision authorizing construction and operation of a new visitor center on the south side of Denali National Park, within the adjacent Denali State Park. This joint project involving the National Park Service, the State of Alaska and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will serve both the state and national parks. After literally two decades of unsuccessful attempts to find the right combination of facility size, type, location, we have collectively

identified an acceptable solution. Follow up funding from Congress for the federal share will be essential to bring this widely beneficial project to fruition.

Federally-funded Programs that Benefit Park Visitors

Discussion of the Park Service's work in Alaska is incomplete without mentioning the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Through partnerships between federal, state and local interests, this popular program fosters cooperative community projects such as riverbank restoration and local trail development. To stabilize and nurture this small but valuable program, we encourage support of the Senate's proposed appropriation of $10.1 million for FY07.

The National Park Service also houses the Historic Preservation Fund which funds the administration of the National Historic Preservation Program in Alaska within my Department's Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. This historic preservation program facilitates state initiatives to protect heritage properties, review federal historic preservation tax credit applications, and implement the Preserve America and Save America's Treasures initiatives.

Other federal programs administered by the State are also critical to supplement the federal and state roles in park and recreation management. These federal matching programs include the Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highway Administration), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (from offshore leasing revenues), Forest Legacy Program (USDA Forest Service), the Alaska Public Lands and Information Centers (inter-agency), and our Alaska Boating Safety Program (US Coast Guard). In a state where most of our 260 communities are only accessible by boat, plane or trail, these programs are not luxuries, but essential to protecting our residents' and visitors' safety and livelihoods. We also encourage your support for funding these important federal programs. While most of these are not funded through the Park Service, they clearly contribute to the experience and safety of all who seek park opportunities in Alaska.

Alaska State Parks

As illustrated by the South Denali example above, the state park system, also administered by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, supplements the national park system with 121 widely-dispersed state park units providing over 2,500 campsites, 128 trailheads, 37 boat launches, 43 scenic overlooks, and over 340 toilets. While most national parks in Alaska are not road accessible, most State Parks are located literally at our doorstep. Our state parks receive over 4 million visits per year, almost twice the combined visitation seen in Alaska's National Parks. Therefore federally funded programs that benefit the State Parks and other outdoor recreation opportunities clearly enhance the value of the National Park System.

In closing, we look forward to continued work with the National Park Service to provide park experiences for our national and international visitors while accommodating the realities of life and economics in Alaska. In the ongoing implementation of ANILCA in particular, new and unforeseen issues regarding the management of Alaska's national parks will undoubtedly arise over time; but we expect continued constructive and professional dialogue to address them. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak today. If we can answer any questions we would be happy to do so.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. I've heard new roads and bridges are expensive to build.

Mr. Stratton, I want to thank you. First off, let me state, for your willingness, at all these hearings, to kind of do an overview of the status of the different parks. I appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF JAMES STRATTON

Mr. STRATTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the national parks in Alaska.

My name is Jim Stratton. I'm the Alaska Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association; lived in Alaska for 25 years. And just prior to joining NPCA, I spent about 7½ years as the Director of Alaska State Parks, actually working, for most of that time, for Mr. Shively, at the end of the table here.

And as the chairman already knows, I also double as a disc jockey on Saturday nights for a show called "The Arctic Cactus Hour." But my day job is with NPCA, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association. We've been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System for present and future generations.

I've submitted written testimony I'm going to try and summarize here today. In addition, I did want to point out NPCA has submitted, for the record, testimony from two hearings that the Congressman intended to hold, but were unfortunately postponed, in Atlanta and Indiana Dunes. I wanted to make sure that was recognized.

Well, as was mentioned in the Park Service panel, most everything in Alaska is different, including our national parks. We have a lot of them, we have more of them than everybody else, and it was greatly expanded, in 1980, with the passage of the Alaska Lands Act. And with all of those new parks, 10 new parks, in 1980, this required an immediate infusion of staff and infrastructure to support these parks, some of which are larger than most eastern States. And this rapid expansion in Alaska created definite growing pains, as the Commission mentioned, as park management strategies and policies, that worked well in the "Lower 48," were found needing improvement and modification to fit both the unique physical environment in Alaska and the unique governing language found in ANILCA.

It's navigating these unique challenges, to meet the intent of Congress to provide for access and subsistence while staying true to the Organic Act and the park protection purposes found in ANILCA, that is the difficult situation.

In many cases, because ANILCA is still a young bill—it's only 25 years old—the Park Service and park advocates are still trying to determine just what Congress intended. "What is a 'traditional activity?' How can you access inholdings and still protect park values? How can we provide for sport and subsistence hunting and also provide for natural and healthy wildlife populations."

These are not easy questions and the answers are still emerging, and moreover, implementing this unique language, however, has created demands on the Park Service's limited operating budget.

Now, when reviewing the base operating budgets of the parks in Alaska, we find a similar trend to parks in the "Lower 48." There's more to do with less money, and base operating budgets just aren't keeping track, keeping up with park needs. So as a result, park superintendents are forced to make difficult decisions about what programs and services to reduce; with the additional strain in Alaska on the budget from those unique aspects of park management that you only find here, made so primarily because of the size and the remoteness of our 15 parks.

One impact that I want to talk about briefly is that on the use of aircraft in our parks. Because of their vast size, remote nature, and lack of road access, parks in Alaska are best accessed by aircraft. Small airplanes are standard park vehicles in Alaska, like pickup trucks would be in the "Lower 48." Airplanes are used for ranger patrols, ferrying supplies to ranger stations, search and rescue, scientific research and monitoring, and basic transportation of staff from one side of the park to the other.

Even Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias, which are primarily—or are the only two natural resource parks with an appreciable road access——

COURT REPORTER. [Requested the witness slow down.]

Mr. STRATTON. I have the same problem as the chairman, you'll find out—which are the two national resource parks with any appreciable road access, require aircraft to patrol and monitor the majority of the park's backcountry, which is not road accessible. This is one of the big differences between Alaska's parks and those in the lower 48 States. Because without aircraft, all of the remote parks, including Wrangell and St. Elias, would not benefit from the natural and cultural resource protection provided by the park rangers.

The recent cost in aviation fuel, coupled with the overall increasing cost of maintaining aircraft, are causing the parks in Alaska to reduce or eliminate the amount of time that they spend in the air, and that's not good for resources.

Now, another of ANILCA's unique programs that has budget implications is subsistence, found in Title 8. Now, with the exception of Katmai and Glacier Bay park lands, the original Mt. McKinley National Park, and Kenai Fjords National Park, Congress made it clear that residents living close to or within boundaries of park units in Alaska would be allowed to hunt and gather subsistence resources necessary to perpetuate a traditional rural lifestyle. At the same time, Congress charged the Park Service to provide for subsistence in a manner that does not diminish the purposes and values for which the park was originally created.

Now, providing for this balance, between perpetuating park resources and providing for subsistence, does have budget implications.

The Park Service has to work with local villages to identify and meet subsistence needs, and then they need to find out the status of those subsistence resources: How many are being consumed and used by the residents. This takes research and monitoring money.

Additionally, Congress also allowed for sport hunting in 19 million acres of national preserves. And though the regulating body is different—sport hunting is regulated by the Alaska Board of Game.

The Alaska Board of Game, ensuring that sport hunting does not negatively impact the purposes and values for which the park was created, such as healthy wildlife populations, has budgetary implications similar to those of subsistence.

Now, I want to say that NPCA does not see hunting as a distinct activity that is a threat to the resources in the national parks. But the Park Service does need to know how many animals live in their parks and how many are being harvested annually, to ensure that the agency is maintaining healthy and naturally occurring wildlife populations, in accordance with ANILCA, the Organic Act and other management guidelines.

And according to an analysis that we've just completed, the Park Service lacks the necessary resources to monitor wildlife populations and harvest levels to make sure that current wildlife harvest is not adversely impacting the ability to perpetuate natural and healthy wildlife populations.

Now, this analysis is detailed in a report that we're just releasing today called, "Who's counting? How Insufficient Support For Science Is Hindering National Park Wildlife Management in Alaska." And I have a copy here that I would like to submit, for the record.

This report demonstrates that timely and scientifically sound population and harvest data, and the ability to analyze the information, is not always available to park managers. Now, the lack of data is not an indication of a lack of interest on the part of the Park Service, but rather is indicative of the funding shortfalls that affect the entire National Park System.

Now, currently, there are two sources of harvest data that are available to the Park Service: One, is the Reporting Data base, developed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, where hunters send in their information; the second, is the Community Harvest Surveys, also developed by the Department of Fish and Game, where rural residents estimate how much has been harvested in those villages through an interview process of people going out to the villages and sitting down with the individual hunters and finding out what that harvest has been.

Now, our new report examines both the population science and the harvest data and looks at the challenges facing the Park Service. And we have three recommendations that we are making to the Park Service to improve this situation. Now, clearly, each of these recommendations will take additional resources. The quickest way to address these problems is to provide additional funding through park operating budgets. We think this is basic scientific data that must be collected as part of each park's basic park operations.

The first is: The National Park should increase support for conducting and analyzing population science in hunted species. Research is expensive, and we recognize that, but we don't think it's nearly as expensive as failing to maintain healthy wildlife populations. For ecologically important and/or heavily harvested species, park-specific plans should be completed that identify what studies are currently provided for in park operations budgets and other Park Service funding sources, or are provided by partner agencies such as the University or the State of Alaska. And then, look at

the gap, where additional wildlife population research needs to be done.

Second: The Park Service should support regularly scheduled Community Harvest Surveys. The available data in the reporting data base from the State of Alaska falls short of explaining the rural harvest activities in Alaska. The Park Service needs to make a commitment to providing additional funds and/or other measures to efficiently conduct Community Harvest Surveys in a timely and in a culturally sensitive manner. Any system that is used must be respectful of rural residents and their long-term tradition with the land. And we think that these surveys should be done every 7 to 10 years as a baseline for the wildlife that is being consumed in each of the 84 resident zone communities in parks and monuments and communities in close proximity to preserves.

Our third recommendation is: That the Park Service should support a new position for a Statewide wildlife data manager, because collecting data is only part of the process. The Park Service also needs the expertise to incorporate the information into a Statewide data base, analyze it, and interpret the results for park managers.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for bringing the committee to Alaska and focusing attention on the national treasures of our State. Alaska has the biggest, the most remote and the wildest national parks in our country. And when it passed ANILCA, Congress intended these preserves to be protected as intact wilderness ecosystems, while also perpetuating the ability of Alaska's rural residents, including those who rely on wildlife and other park resources for subsistence, to continue their traditional way of life; and for visitors from the "Lower 48" to come out, and come up to Alaska and learn and see and experience what our national parks have to offer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stratton follows:]

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Testimony of Jim Stratton
Alaska Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Re: "National Parks of Alaska"

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

Anchorage, Alaska

August 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the national parks of Alaska. My name is Jim Stratton. I am the Alaska Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Prior to joining NPCA, I spent eight years as the Director of Alaska State Parks and 11 years as the Program and Finance Director of the Alaska Conservation Foundation. I serve on the board of the Great Land Trust, a private, non-profit land conservation organization founded in 1995 by residents of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley, which works with willing landowners and other partners to conserve Southcentral Alaska's lands and waterways. I also serve on the board of the Denali Foundation, an education leader in the Denali region established to develop and implement research, education, and communication programs that benefit the Denali bioregion and our state of Alaska.

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System for present and future generations. Today, we have over 300,000 members nationwide who visit and care deeply about our national parks.

Alaska's National Parks and ANILCA

Most everything in Alaska is different, even its national parks. At 54 million acres, Alaska's 15 national parks, monuments, and preserves—more than any other state—represent nearly two-thirds of the entire National Park System and 80 percent of America's national park wilderness.

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While Alaska's first national park was created in 1910 at Sitka, Alaska's park system expanded greatly in 1980 with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) ANILCA created 10 new National Park Service units in Alaska and increased the size of three of existing park units: Glacier Bay, Denali and Katmai. This required an immediate infusion of staff and infrastructure to support these new parks, some of which are larger than some eastern states. There were definite growing pains as park management strategies and policies that worked well in the Lower 48 were found needing improvement and modification to fit both the unique physical environment in Alaska, and the unique governing language in ANILCA that sets Alaska's parks apart from the remaining 375 found in the Lower 48. These challenges include guaranteed access for traditional activities with snowmobiles, motorboats, and airplanes; subsistence use of park resources for food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and fuel; sport hunting on 19 million acres of national preserve lands; the lack of road access to nine of the state's 15 parks; guaranteed access to inholdings subject to reasonable regulations; and a vast expanse of parklands that require different modes of transportation, such as small aircraft, for basic park operations.

Navigating these unique challenges, and meeting the intent of Congress to provide for access and subsistence while staying true to the Organic Act and the park protection purposes found in ANILCA, is difficult. In many cases, because ANILCA is a young bill at only 25 years old, the Park Service and park advocates are still trying to determine just what Congress intended. What is a "traditional activity?" What kind of access to inholdings is really allowed? How can we provide for sport and subsistence hunting and also provide for natural and healthy wildlife populations? These are not easy questions and the answers are still emerging. Moreover, implementing this unique language has created demands on the Park Service's limited operating budget.

Alaska Park Funding at a Glance

Park Operations

When reviewing the base operating budgets of the national park sites in Alaska you find a similar trend to the budgets of parks across the country – the base operating budgets are just not keeping pace with park needs. As a result, Park Service superintendents are forced to make difficult decisions on what programs and services to reduce. The parks in Alaska are all facing a flat budget this year, Fiscal Year 2006, receiving on average an increase of 2.8 percent (not adjusted for inflation) above Fiscal Year 2005 (see Appendix 1 chart). The Fiscal Year 2007 request finds the parks facing an even smaller increase, with Alaska's national parks slated to receive on average only a 1.2 percent increase, far below the rate of inflation. Additional strain is caused by the budget impact of those aspects of park management unique to Alaska, such as the size and remoteness of the state's 15 national parks.

National Parks Conservation Association **August 16, 2006**
Jim Stratton

Across-the-Board Cuts Hurt the Parks

Across-the-board (ATB) cuts mandated by Congress to pass final appropriations bills over the past few years have had a significant adverse impact on our national parks. Overall, two ATB cuts applied to the Fiscal Year 2006 Interior Appropriations legislation cost the National Park Service approximately $25 million in base operating funding, resulting in a final increase to park operations in Fiscal Year 2006 of only $35 million, or 2.1 percent, the smallest increase in memory. Alaska's national parks are not immune from the consequences of these ATB cuts. Over the past two years, these mandated cuts have decreased funding for Alaska's parks by over $1 million. In Fiscal Year 2005, ATB cuts resulted in a loss of over $525,000 to Alaska's parks, and in Fiscal Year 2006 another $569,000 (Appendix 2).

Park Operations Funding Unsustainable

While the parks in Alaska have so far managed to operate under the current fiscal budget constraints facing the Park Service, it is only a matter of time until these insufficient budgets result in severe consequences for both resource protection and visitor services. Already, some of these consequences are beginning to show.

For example, Denali opened its new state-of-the-art visitor center at the park entrance in 2005—a $34 million endeavor. The building was a model in sustainable design, receiving the U.S. Green Building Council's Silver rating, the highest rating in the state. Despite the design of this award-winning building, sufficiently staffing the visitor center is problematic. Fortunately for the park, the Eielson Visitor Center at mile 66 on the Park Road was simultaneously closed for reconstruction. As a result, staff from Eielson were reassigned to the new visitor center at the park's entrance. But how will the Park Service staff the new visitor center when Eielson is reopened next summer?

The parks' core operations analysis, the Park Service Scorecard, business plan implementation, and other means to identify and address efficiencies in the Park Service, while playing an important role in the budget process, do not reverse the disturbing trend of reduced annual funding increases for our national treasures.

The current level of park operations in Alaska cannot be sustained under existing budget constraints. Denali, Wrangell–St. Elias, and Glacier Bay are the first parks to feel the pinch. In the short term, some of the budget strain is being met by reducing the length of "subject to furlough" employees. Park staff that had been working 10 or 11 months are now working seven or eight. As a result, seasoned park staff, many of whom are Alaskans, will not be able to keep those jobs because the positions simply do not pay enough. As seasoned Alaskans leave those positions, they will be filled by less experienced people, many of them from Outside the state. While we do not discourage anyone from coming to our great state and working for the Park Service, our preference is that Park Service jobs, which provide a basic living wage, should be filled be those with experience and the local perspective valuable to working in an Alaskan national park.

National Parks Conservation Association
Jim Stratton

August 16, 2006

You Can Only Get Here by Airplane

Because of their vast size, remote nature, and lack of road access, parks in Alaska are best accessed by aircraft. Small airplanes are standard park vehicles in Alaska – just like pick-up trucks are to Lower 48 parks. Airplanes are used for ranger patrols, ferrying supplies to ranger stations, search and rescue, scientific research and monitoring, and basic transportation of staff from one side of a park to another.

Even Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias (WRST), the only two natural resource parks with any appreciable road access, require aircraft to patrol and monitor the majority of the park's backcountry—which is not road accessible. This is one of the big differences between Alaska's parks and those in the lower 48 states. Without aircraft, all of the remote parks and much of Denali and WRST would not benefit from resource protection provided by park rangers. At risk are park resources like wildlife, clean streams, and the signature scenic beauty that draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to Alaska's parks each year. At risk is the ability to perpetuate subsistence, another unique aspect of parks in Alaska, for those residents that live close to or within park boundaries.

The recent cost increase in aviation fuel, coupled with the overall increasing cost of maintaining aircraft, are causing parks to reduce or eliminate the amount of time they spend in the air. This is yet another increased cost affecting the operating budgets of Alaska's national parks.

Business Plan Shows Critical Funding Shortfalls

One example of the funding shortfall facing Alaska's national parks is found in a 2004 Business Plan for Denali National Park and Preserve, which concluded, "Our current funding is not sufficient to meet our operational needs." At the time, Denali was operating with a $14.1 million budget, yet $18 million was needed to meet existing operating standards, resulting in the park facing a $3.9 million (28 percent) annual funding shortfall. The report found that the funding shortfall was having the greatest affect on aviation services, science and wildlife research, programs in visitor services, and the maintenance of roads, trails, utility systems, and buildings in the park—all critical components to the day-day operations at Denali. The report found that over the past 20 years, Denali's appropriated base budget had grown at a compound annual rate of only 1.8 percent, after accounting for inflation. As a result, the park was forced to increasingly fund park operations with potentially non-recurring funding. This unsustainable practice decreases the financial stability of the park, as well as its ability to engage in long-term strategic planning.

More Funding for Science Needed: Hidden Treasures

Because Denali and other national parks do not have adequate funding to conduct needed science and research, treasures such as dinosaur tracks go routinely unnoticed and unprotected. Just this past spring, a second fossilized dinosaur track was found in Denali National Park. This follows on a roughly 70 million-year-old dinosaur tract discovered in June 2005 by a University

of Fairbanks student. These exciting discoveries emphasize the need to fund programs like the Park Service's Natural Resource Challenge, a program intended to increase science in the parks and provide park managers with the information needed to understand and measure the condition of resources in the parks. Five years ago, the Natural Resource Challenge was funded at approximately $20 million annually; the program is currently slated to receive only $1 million in the Fiscal Year 2007 budget.

More Funding for Science Needed: Sustaining Subsistence

Congress made it clear that residents living close to or within boundaries of park units in Alaska (with the exception of Katmai and Glacier Bay park lands, the original Mt. McKinley National Park, and Kenai Fjords National Park) would be open to the hunting and gathering of subsistence resources necessary to perpetuate a traditional rural lifestyle. This includes resources not only to eat, but also for clothing, firewood, medicine, and shelter. At the same time, Congress charged the Park Service to provide for subsistence in a manner that does not diminish the purposes and values for which the park was originally created.

But providing the balance between perpetuating park resources and providing for subsistence has budget implications.

The Park Service has to work with local villages to identify and meet subsistence needs and then participate in the Federal Subsistence Resource Commission, the entity that sets subsistence guidelines. The Park Service needs to know the status of subsistence resources and how much is being consumed and used by local residents. This takes research and monitoring funds. In the case of wildlife resources, NPCA has identified that the Park Service has insufficient funding for gathering even the most basic wildlife harvest data. Without this data, there is no way of knowing the health of hunted wildlife populations, such as moose and caribou. There is a potential threat to the long-term sustainability of local subsistence if too many animals are harvested. The only way to ensure Congressional intent to manage for both natural and healthy wildlife populations and provide for subsistence needs is to know how much of the resource is being consumed.

State of Denali: Underfunded Cultural Resource Protection

NPCA's 2003 Center for State of the Parks assessment of Denali National Park and Preserve found that the park's overall stewardship capacity—the Park Service's ability to protect park resources—rated 64 out of a possible 100. The park needs money for critical staff positions as well as natural resource studies, inventories, and evaluations of Denali's important cultural resources to better protect the park. The report revealed that Denali's cultural sites, which hold may hold clues to how the Americas were populated, are largely unknown and unprotected. Denali's often-overlooked cultural resources, like the above-mentioned dinosaur tracks, received a "poor rating" of 56 out of 100. Of particular concern are the park's archaeological sites. Without a full-time archaeologist and adequate funding, most sites remain unexamined, unprotected, and unappreciated by visitors. According to NPCA's assessment, Denali also lacks a full-time museum curator, so 88 percent of the park's 340,000 archival documents, including

historic photographs, are not processed and are inaccessible to researchers, staff, and park visitors.

Funding Park Infrastructure in Alaska's National Parks

Prior to 1980, Alaska only boasted three natural resource parks, Mt. McKinley, Katmai and Glacier Bay, and two cultural resource parks, Sitka and Klondike Gold Rush in Skagway. All totaled, these five parks encompassed about 7.6 million acres. When President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act on December 2, 1980, the number of parks increased to 15 and the acreage soared to 54 million.

Although many of these park units were established as remote parks, monuments, and preserves, and they carry the added designation as Wilderness with the intent that there would be no facilities constructed, managing park operations, protecting park resources and administering the unique aspects of Alaska's parks requires some facility development in order to provide some level of recreational access and interpretation to the visiting public.

Twenty-five years ago there were no park headquarters, visitor centers, or ranger stations in Wrangell-St. Elias, Gates of the Arctic, Yukon-Charley Rivers, Lake Clark, Bering Land Bridge, Noatak, Kobuk Valley, Cape Krusentstern, Aniakchak, and Kenai Fjords. And, with the passage of ANILCA, the visitor demand increased with the expansion of Denali, Katmai and Glacier Bay, causing the facilities at those three older park units to become inadequate. The infrastructure necessary to support management, access, resource protection, and visitor services in Alaska's national parks had to all be built at once. Senator Ted Stevens, recognizing that national parks are a viable addition to the infrastructure of a young and growing state, has consistently provided funds for such things as new visitor centers at Wrangell-St. Elias, Denali, and the Western Arctic Parks. He's provided administrative facilities at Port Alsworth for Lake Clark and Bettles for Gates of the Arctic. And staff housing has been improved – including the removal just last year of tent cabins at Lake Clark and finally replacing them with real cabins for permanent summer staff. Funding was also made available for permanent staff housing in Eagle for YukonCharley.

The level of capital construction funds available to Alaska parks is appropriate given the number, young age, and growing visitation to Alaska's parks. Still, the job isn't complete.

Kenai Fjords is in dire need of completing its Mary Lowell Visitor Center. Land has been secured, agreements have been signed with partner agencies such as the Forest Service and Alaska State Parks, and the design has started. But it can't happen soon enough—Kenai Fjords is one of the most visited parks in Alaska.

After years of discussion, a decision has been reached on where to site a new visitor center on the south side of Denali National Park. Partnering agreements have been signed with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Alaska State Parks, but construction funds are still needed.

Reconstruction and reuse of the historic buildings in the popular Kennecott Copper Mine in Wrangell-St. Elias is making the mine safer for visitors and is also bringing welcomed employment and helping local residents benefit from living in a national park. Funding this important historical reconstruction needs to continue.

Transportation Needs in Alaska's National Parks

Senator Stevens was successful in bringing additional Park Road and Parkway (PRP) funds to Alaska in SAFETEA-LU, the last version of the federal highway bill, but the Park Service seems stymied by its own internal policies, which they claim are restricting their ability to work on McCarthy Road, which provides the primary access to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. .

In this case, special attention must be given to developing a partnership with the state of Alaska, as the park's primary access along the McCarthy Road is owned by the state, not the Park Service. But the Park Service needs to be given the permission to participate as a partner with the state of Alaska to improve this road.

While it seems to be the policy of the Park Service to limit the use of PRP funds to only Park Service-owned road assets, we cannot find anything in our reading of the Section 204 (b) that would prevent the Park Service from using its funds on a non-NPS road. In fact, our reading of 204(b) of the U.S. Code's Title 23 is that it was precisely written so that situations like the McCarthy Road could be addressed with PRP funds. Congress gave the Park Service, and other federal agencies, the authority to use their funds to provide access to their areas, regardless of road ownership.

We've done further investigation into the use of PRP funds beyond the language in 204(b) and found in the Park Service Transportation Planning Guidebook, which is the Park Service's policy for spending federal highway funds, further evidence of NPS discretion to use PRP funds as we suggest. In Chapter 6 on page 100, the list of PRP eligible projects includes "Any project providing access to or within a National Park or other federal lands." It does not limit projects to only Park Service owned access. It says "ANY project...TO or WITHIN a National Park." And it provides further guidance by saying funds can be used for construction of "public road facilities (i.e. visitor centers)." Toilets, picnic tables, and interpretation clearly fit the description of "public road facilities."

In the case of the McCarthy Road, NPCA has advocated with the Alaska Region of the Park Service that they use their PRP funds for roadside amenities rather than using Park Service funds to actually work on the road surface. The Alaska Department of Transportation has allocated funds to improve the road and is working on an Environmental Impact Statement for a wholesale road upgrade. Instead, we are advocating using PRP funds to improve the road experience, hence the park experience, by investing in toilets, picnic tables, and interpretation. Some of this work has been funded through other Park Service funding channels and several waysides are being planned. But we feel more discretion can be given to the Alaska Region to

use PRP funds to make a significant improvement in access to Wrangell-St. Elias along the McCarthy Road.

Unnecessary Access Proposals

But not all forms of access being proposed into Alaska's parks are needed or wise. The Governor of Alaska continues to push for a second road to Kantishna on the north side of Denali National Park and for a boat dock at Bartlett Cove in Glacier Bay. Both of these proposals are not necessary and if they were completed, would put an additional burden on the park's operating budget with no additional benefit to park visitors or resource protection.

In 1997, a North Access Feasibility Study estimated that construction costs of a road or railroad from the current end of the Stampede Road to Kantishna in Denali National Park & Preserve to cost $87 - $213 million. This excludes the cost of railroad cars or the construction of any support or visitor facilities. At the time of this study, the Park Service calculated they could pay for all their high-priority construction projects in all Alaska national parks for 10 years for less money than this one project. Taxpayers for Common Sense, a national organization based in Washington, D.C., listed Denali North Access as one of America's most wasteful highway projects.

In 1998, former senator, now Governor Frank Murkowski, succeeded in dedicating $1.5 million in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) to *"construct North Denali access route."* In 2001, the State of Alaska approved the necessary match and the latest round of planning has begun. NPCA continues to oppose this road because of its redundant nature, the impact it would have on park resources, and the expensive draw it would have on Denali's annual operating budget. The Park Service is also on record as opposing this road saying that other projects for improving access to the park, like the recently agreed-to new visitor center on the south side, are more beneficial investments in park infrastructure.

A challenge facing Glacier Bay is about where to best locate a dock for the local gateway community of Gustavus. The local community is eager to repair and expand the old, existing dock at Gustavus to provide for barge and ferry service. The National Park Service, NPCA, and others think the new Gustavus dock should be in Gustavus where it can directly serve the needs of the local community. However, Governor Frank Murkowski has historically advocated meeting Gustavus' ferry service and barge needs with a new Bartlett Cove dock that is 12 miles away from Gustavus and inside a national park. The Governor's desires would require demolishing the existing Park Service campground and placing an industrial port facility immediately adjacent to the Glacier Bay Lodge and Park Service Ranger Station. Should this concept come to fruition, it would add an increased burden on the park operating budget and greatly diminish the natural area around the park's only concession lodge, thus creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to visiting one of Alaska's premier national parks.

National Parks Conservation Association
Jim Stratton

August 16, 2006

Acquiring Inholdings in Alaska's National Parks

There are millions of acres of inholdings within the boundaries of national parks throughout the nation. Funding to acquire these inholdings is critical for the long-term protection, management, and interpretation of our national parks. Unfortunately, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the principle source of funding for federal land acquisition, has seen a dramatic decrease in funding levels in recent years. Despite accumulating $900 million annually from designated sources, primarily oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), amounts appropriated through the LWCF have been far below this authorized level. According to a July 2006 Congressional Research Service report, "*Land and Water Conservation Fund: Overview, Funding, History, and Current Issues*," only half of the $29 billion accredited to the LWCF from its inception in Fiscal Year 1965 through Fiscal Year 2005 has been appropriated. This funding is critical to making our national parks whole and acquiring inholdings is an important part of protecting and managing many of the 390 park units. Managing parkland that is checkerboarded with private property can often be more burdensome and expensive than caring for a uniform and contiguous area.

LWCF funding for the National Park Service has dropped significantly in recent years, from $130 million five years in Fiscal Year 2002 ago to only $34 million today (Fiscal Year 2006). The Fiscal Year 2007 request further decreases this funding to only $22 million and includes acquisition funding for only one national park unit. This hinders the ability of the Park Service to acquire and protect significant and strategic parcels of land from willing sellers across the nation. As a result of insufficient LWCF funding appropriated, a significant land acquisition backlog has developed. According to the July CRS report, the Park Service estimates the cost of its acquisition backlog after Fiscal Year 2006 at $1.8 billion.

There are about 3.3 million acres of inholdings remaining in Alaska's national parks. Many of these are in critical locations for both natural and cultural resources and it would be in the best interest of the Park Service to secure them, if possible. Many inholdings in Alaska's parks are available from willing sellers. All it takes is funding and a little flexibility with appraisals.

One example of a national park in Alaska in need of significant LWCF funding is Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, America's largest national park. Bigger than Switzerland, the three mountain ranges that make up Wrangell-St. Elias cause it to be referred to as "the mountain kingdom of North America." Nearly $5 million in LWCF appropriations have been secured over the last three years ($2.5 million in Fiscal Year 2004, $1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2005, and $750,000 in Fiscal Year 2006) toward the acquisition of inholdings at Wrangell to provide for increased public access and protection of lands. However, future funding needs are estimated at $175 million to acquire over 730,000 acres within the boundary of Wrangell-St. Elias.

NPCA's Alaska regional office has completed a comprehensive inventory of all inholdings in the 13 natural resource-based parks (historic parks in Sitka and Skagway were not

included). The study identified more than 3.3 million acres of privately held land within existing park boundaries. NPCA is now working with land trusts such as the Conservation Fund to develop a campaign to seek public and private funding to secure the most critical of these inholdings from willing sellers.

One key LWCF program important for the acquisition of inholdings throughout Alaska's national parks is the Emergency Hardship, Deficiency, and Relocation Fund. The Hardship Fund is used effectively by the Alaska Region to secure critical inholdings in Alaska's national parks from willing sellers. The sellers are primarily Alaska Natives who secured 40, 80, or 160 allotments through the Alaska Native Allotment Act of 1906. Through the Hardship Fund, remote parcels have been secured, thus removing the threat of heirs of original allotees subdividing and selling their lots for commercial use in the middle of Alaska's premier wilderness parks. Currently, the Hardship Fund is funded at $2.4 million.

Valuing Inholdings

The remote nature of inholdings in Alaska's national parks makes valuing them difficult. There are appraisers with some experience in calculating the raw land value of remote properties in Alaska, but they lack the experience to include the value of protecting natural and cultural resources on those lands. This resource value, be it cultural or natural, is not included in the appraised price. Unfortunately, the Park Service cannot offer a landowner more than the appraised value of the land, so when a landowner knows that the property is worth more because of its un-assessed national and cultural resources, they ask a higher price than the agency can pay.

The Park Service in Alaska needs to be given some flexibility to negotiate with a landowner should the appraised price not include the value of the resources. In addition, the Park Service needs flexibility to include in its negotiating calculus the cost of park resources as well as its operating budget of NOT securing the property should a non-compatible development be built on that could have become parkland.

Moreover, when determining the price being paid for a park inholding, the cost of NOT securing the property also needs to be included in the equation. Many times paying a bit more than the officially appraised price, which often doesn't include park values, would save the Park Service much more money in the long run.

For example, the Park Service recently had to take legal action against the Hale family in McCarthy, located in Wrangell-St.Elias National Park & Preserve. The Park Service, limited by the appraised price of the property could not meet the price asked from the original owner, so he sold it to the Hales, who then illegally bulldozed a road to their inholding property. The resulting damage to park resources and the cost of the investigation and resulting litigation was far in excess of the difference between the appraised and asking price.

It is not the intent of NPCA to suggest that the National Park Service buy every inholding. Given the magnitude, that simply is impossible. But willing sellers need to be given a fair price. Oftentimes the ability to add just a few thousand dollars to the price would make the deal happen. But the existing restriction to paying ONLY the appraised price is constricting the Park Service's ability to buy critical properties from willing sellers. NPCA would ask that Congress consider changes to the authority of the National Park Service to secure lands so that it can negotiate to pay more than the appraised price when park values are not included in the appraisal or the cost of NOT securing the property threatens park resources and would be burden on the park operating budget.

Accessing Inholdings

Access to inholdings is one of the biggest issues facing the National Park Service in Alaska. Section 1110(b) of ANILCA sets forth the access provisions. It is important to remember that, while recognizing the right of access "shall be given," that right is modified by Congressional direction to the Secretary to promulgate "reasonable regulations to protect the natural and other values" of our national parks. And it is also important to remember that the right of access is further modified to be that which the Park Service determines is "adequate and feasible." That does not necessarily mean that whatever an inholder requests, they will receive. It is the responsibility of the National Park Service to negotiate on behalf of all Americans an access solution that is adequate and feasible for the inholder and protects park values. Setting forth how this discussion with a potential inholder should occur is the topic of a draft report, *Users Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska.*

NPCA supports the process as set forth by the Park Service, while also encouraging the Park Service to work closely with park residents to find terms of a potential access permit that are not unduly burdensome. We also recognize that access to inholdings for commercial ventures, such as mining, timber harvest, or lodge development, requires a different set of permit stipulations than access to a private home.

Managing access to Alaska national park inholdings, as envisioned by Congress in 1110(b), has budget implications for the Park Service, and park operating budgets need to reflect this ongoing need.

The Cost of Wildlife Management

One of the differences ANILCA created in Alaska's parks is the ability to sport hunt in Alaska's 19 million acres of national preserves, and subsistence hunt in all of Alaska's park units with the exception of Glacier Bay and Katmai national parks, the original Mt. McKinley National Park, and Kenai Fjords National Park. These hunting privileges were created in large part to preserve traditional ways of life that have evolved in Alaska. Congress emphasized this point by including subsistence in the purpose statements that established several specific national park units.

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Hunting is not a threat to resources in Alaska's national parks. But the Park Service does need to know how many animals live in their park units and how many are being annually harvested in order to ensure that the agency is maintaining healthy and naturally occurring wildlife populations in accordance with ANILCA, the Organic Act and other management guidelines. According to NPCA's analysis, the Park Service lacks the necessary resources to monitor wildlife populations and harvest levels to make sure that current wildlife harvest is not adversely impacting the ability to perpetuate natural and healthy wildlife populations.

This lack of necessary resources is detailed in a new report released today by NPCA: *Who's Counting? How Insufficient Support For Science Is Hindering National Park Wildlife Management In Alaska.* This report demonstrates that timely and scientifically sound population and harvest data, and the ability to analyze the information, are not always available to park managers. The lack of data is not an indication of a lack of interest on the part of the National Park Service, but rather it s indicative of the funding shortfalls that affect the entire National Park System.

In Alaska's national preserves, land mammal harvest by sport hunters is managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game under the same regulations that apply to lands owned by the state of Alaska. The state regulates hunting to provide for "maximum sustained yield" while the Park Service is charged with maintaining naturally occurring "healthy populations." This difference in management philosophy does not necessarily pose a threat to the wildlife populations living in Alaska's national preserves. However, only through sound wildlife science and data gathering can we be absolutely certain that state wildlife harvest goals do not inadvertently affect the purposes for which Alaska's national preserves were established.

Over-harvesting Threatens Katmai Bears

For one of the best examples of why the Park Service's needs sufficient wildlife science and research, we need only to look at the over-harvesting of brown bears now happening at Katmai National Preserve.

Sufficient harvest data is available at Katmai. In our opinion, this data indicates that the level of sport hunting for brown bears allowed by the state of Alaska is impacting the park's ability to meet its specific congressional mandate in Section 202 of ANILCA, which establishes the purpose of Katmai National Park & Preserve to include protecting "habitats for, and populations of high concentrations of brown/grizzly bears and their denning areas…"

Although hunting is allowed in Katmai National Preserve, NPCA feels the adverse impact of high harvest levels of brown bears is in direct contrast to the reason why the park was created. Two years ago, 42 bears were killed in the preserve; biologist's say 14 to 18 is a sustainable number of animals that can be killed biennially. Last fall, an additional 27 were killed. NPCA is deeply concerned that the current level of hunting, which is set by the state of Alaska, is reducing high concentrations of grizzly bears in Katmai Preserve.

These are the same bears incidentally, that are observed by thousands of visitors to Alaska each year. These visitors generate significant sums of money for the local economies of Homer and Kodiak when they hire local guides to take them to Katmai National Preserve and adjacent state viewing areas at McNeil River to view the bears. Of course, the bears' acclimation to humans makes them more vulnerable to hunters.

This over-hunting of bears at Katmai is just one indicator of the potential impact on park wildlife by actions taken by the state of Alaska to fulfill its mandate from the state legislature to intensively manage wildlife for species like moose and caribou, which can be hunted. The state's intensive management program also includes predator control – killing high numbers of wolves and bears to increase the survival of moose and caribou calves. The National Park Service was successful in rejecting aerial wolf control in units of the National Park System. However, the state is continuing to increase the harvest opportunities of wolves, bears, foxes, coyotes, and wolverines on national preserve lands as a form of covert predator control.

The state is doing this in a number of ways, including extending seasons, raising bag limits, increasing motorized access and same-day hunting, allowing the sale of animal parts such as bear skins, and hunting over bait. It is also done by pushing official predator control areas up against the boundaries of national park units so that when park wildlife travel out of a park unit, they are immediately subject to aerial hunting (map in Appendix 3) This very scenario occurred at Yukon Charley Rivers National Preserve last year when several collared wolves strayed out of the preserve and were killed, thus ending almost a decade of continual wolf research data.

We know the Park Service is concerned about these threats to its wildlife, but without basic populations and harvest level data, the agency's ability to recognize where a problem exists, such as Katmai Preserve, and successfully argue for a solution is greatly diminished. Without this data, the Park Service lacks the tools to adequately protect our national parklands for future generations.

Currently, there are two sources of harvest data available to help park managers understand park wildlife harvests in Alaska's national parks: the Reporting Database and Community Harvest Surveys.

Reporting Database

The Reporting Database, developed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, contains harvest data submitted by hunters. Information about the hunter, such as where the hunter resides, is attached to data about the specific animal harvested, including date and location of the kill. But the reporting database is not a dependable tool for wildlife managers because the information is not complete. Although harvest rates over time are provided, not all species of interest are included. Moreover, rural hunters generally don't report the majority of their harvests for a variety of cultural reasons. The database is fairly accurate for urban and non-local users and provides a relatively accurate picture of sport hunting trends.

Community Harvest Survey

The Community Harvest Survey program, also developed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, provides community harvest estimates for rural residents based on interviews. Survey teams go door-to-door in remote communities asking residents about their harvest activities during the preceding year. After sampling a statistically significant portion of a community, a total community harvest is estimated for individual species.

Recommendations For Improving Wildlife Research and Monitoring

NPCA's new report examines this challenge facing the Park Service and identifies where data are lacking and the reasons behind it. NPCA also makes several recommendations to improve the availability of sound science and harvest data. Each of these recommendations will take additional resources. The quickest way to address these problems is to provide additional funding through park operating budgets. This is basic scientific data that must be collected as part of each park's basic annual operations. Funding this science from special Park Service programs, such as the Natural Resource Challenge, does not guarantee sufficient support over the long term, because as discussed earlier, this program has not received consistent annual funding. Like funds needed to clean restrooms, safe roads, and quality interpretive programs, Alaska's park managers must have the necessary funding to collect scientific data upon which to make sound wildlife management decisions.

1. **The National Park Service should increase support for conducting and analyzing population science for hunted species.**

   Research is expensive, but not nearly as expensive as failing to maintain healthy wildlife populations in the national parks of Alaska. For ecologically important and/or heavily harvested species, park specific plans should be completed that identify what studies are currently provided for in park base operations budgets, the Natural Resource Challenge, other Park Service funding sources, or are provided for by partner agencies such as the University of Alaska or the state. A gap analysis needs to occur between those wildlife populations that are regularly studied and those that are not, but need to be. The Park Service should also develop a plan for the unmet gaps in basic wildlife population research needs. This information would provide a road map to ensure that proper data exist for wildlife management decisions.

2. **The National Park Service should support regularly scheduled Community Harvest Surveys.**

   The available data in the reporting database available from the state of Alaska falls short of explaining rural harvest activities. The Park Service needs to make a commitment to providing additional funds and/or other measures to efficiently conduct Community Harvest Surveys in a timely and in a culturally sensitive manner. Any system that is used must be respectful of rural residents and their

long-term tradition with the land. While the reporting database, in many instances, fails to account for most rural harvests, it is collected every year. Testing the accuracy and validity of the reporting database requires that data must also be gathered using Community Harvest Survey, a proven and effective measure of rural hunting success. Providing funds and encouraging collaboration with other agencies could help the Park Service collect more of this valuable data and focus it on the resident zone communities most closely associated with parks.

Comprehensive Community Harvest Surveys should be conducted every seven to 10 years as a baseline for wildlife being consumed in each of the 84 resident zone communities in parks and monuments and communities in close to preserves. Immediate targets should be those communities that have never had a survey or where survey data is at least 15 years old. More frequent surveys could occur on species of concern—those primarily hunted—in the interim.

3. **The National Park Service should support a new position for a statewide wildlife data manager.**

Collecting data is only part of the process. The Park Service also needs the expertise to incorporate the information into a statewide database and analyze it. A statewide wildlife data coordinator could provide valuable expertise for all parks in Alaska and provide a centralized place for harvest data analysis and data interpretation for each park unit. This will save the time of individual park biologists and allow them to focus on conducting their own park-specific projects. This data manager, in addition to analyzing harvest on a statewide basis, could also analyze Fish and Game reporting data for each unit and answer park specific questions. A single person to review and understand the statewide harvest data would provide significant assistance to parks in conducting research tasks by managing a clearinghouse of historical data and providing holistic analysis of park harvest science in Alaska over time.

Economic Benefits of Alaska's National Parks

In summary, Alaska's national parks need continued investment. Not only do the parks protect Alaska's priceless natural resources, but also provide significant economic development.

Tourism is the second largest contributing industry to the Alaskan economy, and national parks play a critical role in this tourism economy. Alaska's 15 national parks comprising over 50 million acres of land provide tremendous recreational opportunities for visitors to the parks, and revenue to the local Alaskan economy.

According to a 2003 Michigan State University study, the 2.2 million visitors to Alaska's national parks generated $104 million for the local and state economies, which supported 2,370 Alaskan jobs. Additionally, in 2004 the Park Service spent $83 million in agency expenditures,

employing 650 Alaskans annually, approaching 1,000 in the peak summer season. Finally, Park Service construction expenditures have accounted for on average, $5.8 million annually, further contributing to the local economy. The cumulative annual economic impact of Alaska's national parks totaled nearly $200 million.

Seward & Kenai Fjords National Park – A Case Study

To see the direct economic benefits a national park can have on a local economy, one need look no further than Kenai Fjords and the city of Seward. Initial support for the park by the local community was limited. In 1975, the Seward City Council passed a resolution condemning the formation of Kenai Fjords National Park. However by 1985, five years after the creation of the park, the City Council recognized the positive impacts of park visitors and rescinded its resolution and embraced the park. Between 1985 and 1993, Kanai Fjords saw a 278 percent jump in visitation, twice the statewide increase. Increased visitation to the park resulted in increased revenue to the city of Seward. In 2000, the Kenai Fjord tours attracted 145,000 people to Seward, generating $13 million. The largest tour operator alone employs 100 people on an average annual basis and nearly 200 in the summer season.

A 2001 report by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage concludes that since Kenai Fjords was created: "... the Seward economy has expanded and strengthened... there is now widespread agreement among the residents of Seward that the creation of the Kenai Fjords National Park has been good for the visitor industry, the economy, and the community. The standard of living is higher, there are more job opportunities, local public revenues have grown, and the economy is more diversified."

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing the subcommittee to Alaska and focusing attention on the national treasures of our state. Alaska has the biggest, most remote and wildest national parks in the country. When it passed ANILCA, Congress intended to preserve these vast, intact wilderness ecosystems, while also perpetuating the ability of Alaska's rural residents, including many who rely on wildlife and other park resources for subsistence, to continue their traditional way of life.

But like many national parklands across the country, Alaska's 15 parks are facing financial strain. Funding shortfalls are affecting the experiences of visitors, the preservation of wildlife and other natural resources, and the Alaskan way of life. As the nation counts down to the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, we must work together to ensure the future of these majestic places and preserve our national heritage for generations to come.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Appendix 1

Alaska NPS Budgets
($ in thousands)

NPS Unit	FY03 Enacted	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Estimate	FY07 Requested	% Change FY06-FY07	Change FY03-FY07	% Change FY03-FY07
Denali NP & Preserve	10,949	10,687	10,842	10,549	10,685	1.3	-264	-2.4
Gates of the Arctic NP & Preserve	1,962	1,912	2,477	2,513	2,540	1.1	578	29.5
Glacier Bay NP & Preserve	3,485	3,627	3,751	3,826	3,878	1.4	393	11.3
Katmai NP & Pres, Aniakchak NM & Pres, and Alagnak WR	2,457	2,464	2,891	3,010	3,051	1.4	594	24.2
Kenai Fjords NP	2,455	2,704	3,150	3,192	3,210	0.6	755	30.8
Klondike Gold Rush NHP	2,249	2,198	2,247	2,433	2,464	1.3	215	9.6
Lake Clark NP & Preserve	1,841	1,788	2,048	2,077	2,106	1.4	265	14.4
Sitka NHP	1,564	1,528	1,565	1,672	1,688	1.0	124	7.9
Western Arctic National Parklands - Bering Land Bridge NPres, Cape Krusenstern NM, Kobuk Valley NP, and Noatak NPres	3,143	3,080	3,105	3,151	3,189	1.2	46	1.5
Wrangell-Saint Elias NP & Preserve	3,860	3,780	4,003	4,050	4,089	1.0	229	5.9
Yukon-Charley Rivers Natl Preserve	1,268	1,242	1,257	1,286	1,307	1.6	39	3.1
Average						**1.3**		

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August 16, 2006

Appendix 2

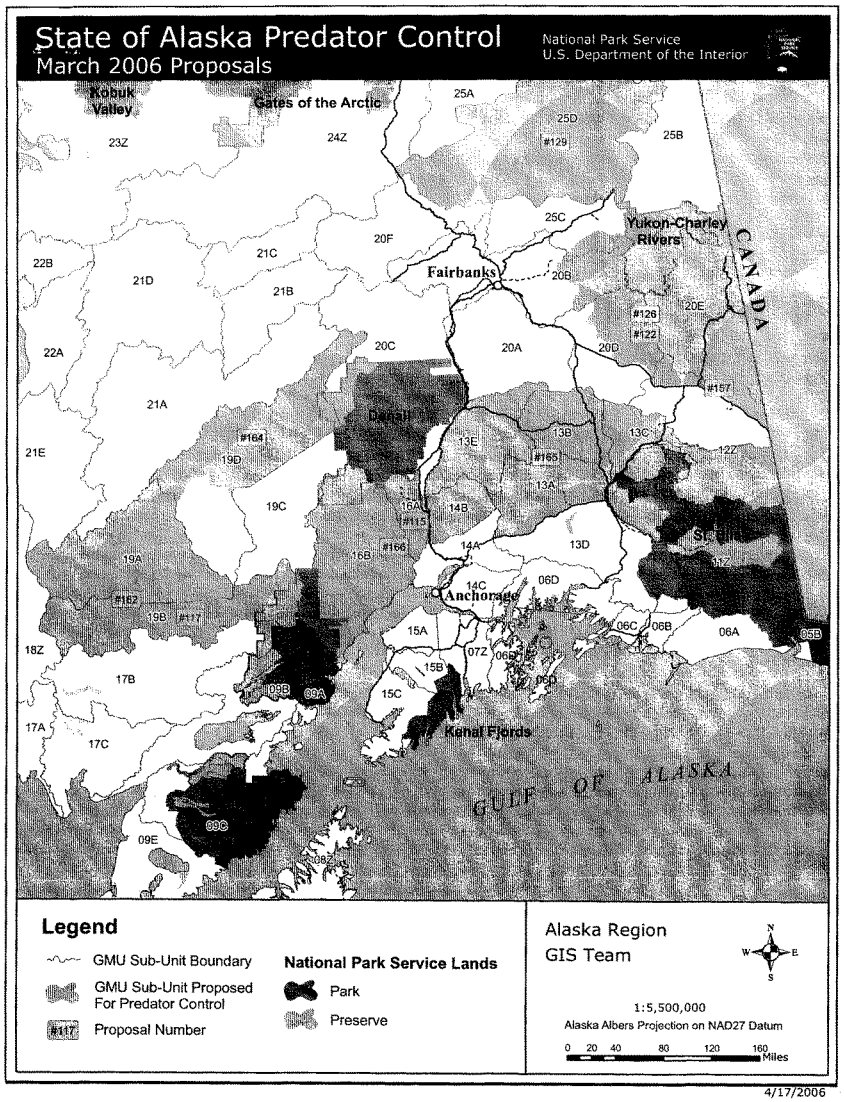
Effect of Across the Board Cuts FY05
($ in thousands)

NPS Unit	FY 2004 Final $	FY 2005 Increase $	Other Reductions $	Across-the-Board Reductions $	Final Increase $	FY 2005 Enacted $
Denali NP & NPres	10,687	435	128	152	155	10,842
Gates of the Arctic NP & NPres	1,912	328	28	31	269	2,181
Glacier Bay NP & NPres	3,674	148	18	53	77	3,751
Katmai NP & NPres and Aniakchak NM & NPres	2,464	493	25	41	427	2,891
Kenai Fjords NP	2,704	110	10	39	61	2,765
Klondike Gold Rush NHP	2,198	89	8	32	49	2,247
Lake Clark NP & NPres.	1,788	73	23	25	25	1,813
Sitka NHP	1,528	62	3	22	37	1,565
Western Arctic National Parklands- Bering Land Bridge NPres , Cape Krusenstern NM, Kobuk Valley NP, and Noatak Npres	3,080	125	57	43	25	3,105
Wrangell-Saint Elias NP & Npres	3,780	153	33	54	66	3,846
Yukon-Charley Rivers Npres	1,242	50	17	18	15	1,257
TOTAL	35,057	2,066	350	**510**	1,206	36,263

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Effect of Across the Board Cuts FY06
($ in thousands)

NPS Unit	FY 2005 Final $	FY06 Pay Cost Increase $	FY 2006 Increase $	Other Reductions $	Across-the-Board Reductions $	Final Increase $	FY 2006 Enacted $
Denali NP & NPres	10,842	217	156	18	164	191	11,033
Gates of the Arctic NP & NPres	2,477	40	36	3	37	36	2,513
Glacier Bay NP & NPres	3,751	84	54	6	57	75	3,826
Katmai NP & NPres and Aniakchak NM & NPres	2,891	69	153	5	45	172	3,010
Kenai Fjords NP	3,150	49	45	5	47	42	3,192
Klondike Gold Rush NHP	2,247	51	175	3	37	186	2,433
Lake Clark NP & NPres.	2,048	34	29	3	31	29	2,077
Sitka NHP	1,565	25	110	3	25	107	1,672
Western Arctic National Parklands- Bering Land Bridge NPres , Cape Krusenstern NM, Kobuk Valley NP, and Noatak Npres	3,105	53	45	5	47	46	3,151
Wrangell-Saint Elias NP & Npres	4,003	57	57	6	61	47	4,050
Yukon-Charley Rivers Npres	1,257	32	18	2	19	29	1,286
TOTAL	37,336	711	878	59	**570**	960	38,243


State of Alaska Predator Control
March 2006 Proposals
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Kobuk Valley
Gates of the Arctic
Yukon-Charley Rivers
CANADA
Fairbanks
Denali
Anchorage
Kenai Fjords
GULF OF ALASKA
23Z
24Z
25A
25B
25C
25D
#129
20F
21C
21D
21B
22B
22A
21A
21E
20B
20C
20A
20D
20E
#126
#122
#157
#164
19D
19C
19A
#162
19B
#117
18Z
17B
17A
17C
09E
09C
09B
09A
13E
3B
13C
#165
13A
15A
#115
14B
#166
16B
14A
13D
14C
06D
15A
07Z
06B
06C
06B
06A
05B
15B
06D
15C
Legend
GMU Sub-Unit Boundary
GMU Sub-Unit Proposed For Predator Control
#117 Proposal Number
National Park Service Lands
Park
Preserve
Alaska Region
GIS Team
N
W
E
S
1:5,500,000
Alaska Albers Projection on NAD27 Datum
0 20 40 80 120 160
Miles
4/17/2006

Mr. SOUDER. And I also have a statement from the Denali Foundation to put into the record, that we'll put in at the end of this panel. You refer to the statements for the Atlanta and Indiana Dunes hearings that we were going to do. We're going to hold this record open a little longer, to see whether or not those—the Atlanta hearing may actually occur yet this fall, depending on how things are going down in the park, the historic park. And some of the documents down there, at Indiana Dunes, may actually shift up to Michigan. But depending on what we're going to do, we'll put the statements in this record, if those don't get confirmed, because we don't want to lose the testimony in the parks process.

Also, because, at the very least, you and I talk so fast—one of the things, we'll have a little longer for this process, that when the staff gets each of the statements back, then get them out to the individuals and do a review—because I know it's hard to keep up with our rapid rate. But then we can probably ask any witness that gets a statement back to—not fundamentally change what we've said, but, at least, that would help a little bit with the accuracy of the hearing.

Now, next, we'll move to the travel industry. Thank you for coming today.

STATEMENT OF DAVE WORRELL

Mr. WORRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We sure do appreciate this opportunity to participate. Ron asked me to express his regrets. He had to leave town for a family emergency. He prepared this presentation, and I'm going to try and follow his notes a little bit. So I will also be brief.

The first thing I wanted to cover was a little bit of just basic visitor numbers for the State of Alaska. And what's interesting here is, this is a 10-year look at visitation in Alaska.

Ten years ago, in 1996, we had a roughly equal number of cruise visitors and what we call "other" or "independent travelers." As you can see, the cruise visitation has grown substantially over the years, whereas the independent visitation has remained roughly consistent.

Tourism is very important to Alaska's economy. We provide roughly 31,000 jobs. And that's the State of Alaska Department of Labor statistic. We're a big contribution to the State of Alaska's economy: Roughly $1.6 billion, in direct and indirect expenditures, for the industry; and a total sales, when you include the multiplier effects, of $2.4 billion. We're just behind the oil industry, tied with the commercial fishing industry, and ahead of timber, mining and agriculture for the State of Alaska.

All of our marketing for the State of Alaska is based on research, and we did some research in 2002, following up on previous research.

People come to Alaska for three things; mountains, glaciers and wildlife. You can go back to 1899, to the Harriman Expedition, and they came to Alaska for the same reasons; mountains, glaciers and wildlife.

44 percent of our visitors indicate that they went to Denali National Park. 76 percent of the highway travelers mentioned visiting

national parks or scenic wonders in the State of Alaska. The national parks and park units play a vital role to tourism in Alaska.

I want to mention a few of the challenges and obstacles the tourism industry faces. Clearly, public lands access is a crucial issue for the tourism industry. Infrastructure quality, it's very important for our industry to have a quality experience for visitors to partake in. We want to improve the dispersal of visitors. It's important for people, to have a good experience, to get to a variety of different locations.

And finally, we want to increase recognition of all of Alaska's public lands throughout the State. There is 15 park units, and people really only know of two; Denali and Glacier Bay.

So, the last couple of years, we've had a program, that was funded by Congress, of $750,000, to market Alaska's national parks, particularly parks other than Denali National Park. And the object of that program was to increase awareness of the parks, to encourage visitation to Alaska's lesser known parks. And we believe that was a very successful program, and it's one we hope to use as a model for other areas.

In closing up, we've got a few priorities that we'd like the committee to look at. And probably one of our biggest priorities is the south side of Denali National Park, development at Curry Ridge. There is a Record of Decision, signed on June 30th. Now we hope that there—it's a cooperative venture between the State of Alaska, the National Park Service and local communities, and we think this will be a great addition to spread the visitors to Denali National Park out of that core-entrance area.

We think it's time for road improvements at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. And we are working with the State of Alaska and the National Park Service in hope that happens sooner rather than later.

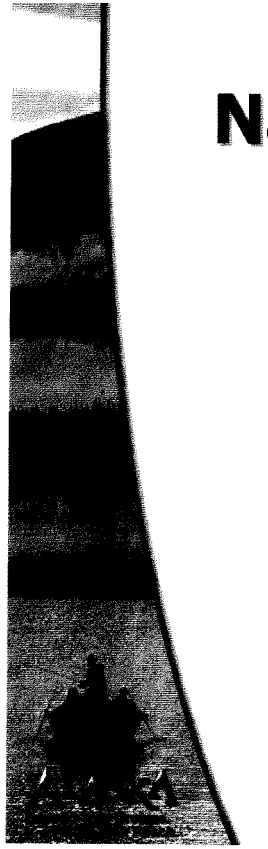
And once again, we believe it's important to expand our marketing efforts to market all of Alaska's park lands.

And we have established a great relationship with the Park Service, over the past several years, and we certainly hope that to continue, and also, incorporate other public lands management agencies, as well.

And with that, I'll close my testimony. Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peck follows:]



National Parks Alaska

ATIA Presentation

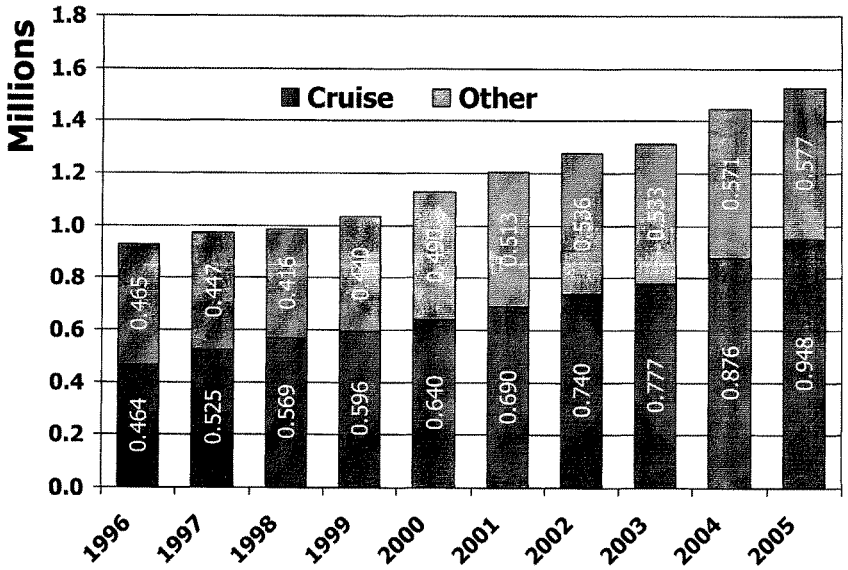
August 14, 2006

Ron Peck, President & COO

ALASKA TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Alaska's Visitor Numbers
(May – September)



Economic Contribution

- **Jobs = 31,000**

  (State of Alaska - 2005)

- **Contribution to Alaska's Economy:**

  (State of Alaska - TSA Report 2002)

  - Economic Contribution = **$1.6 Billion**
    - *Direct & indirect expenditures*
  - Total Sales = **$2.4 Billion**
    - *Including multiplier effect*

ATIA Research

Branding Research

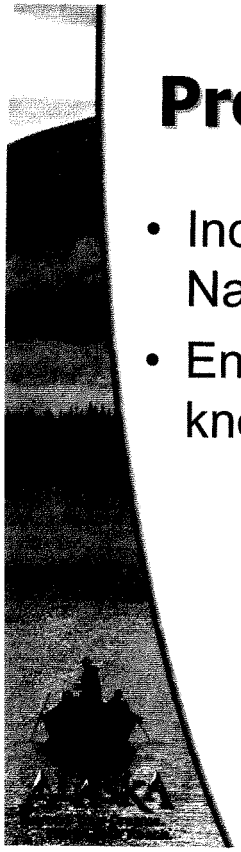
Key Words / Attractions consumers associate with Alaska – Wildlife, Mountains, Glaciers

- 44% of all visitors indicate they visited Denali
- 76% Highway travelers mentioned visiting our National Parks and scenic wonders

Source: State of Alaska, DCCED - TSA Report

Challenges and Obstacles

- Public Lands Access Issues
- Infrastructure Quality
- Improved dispersal of visitors
- Recognition of all Alaska's Public Lands



Program Goals Objectives

- Increase awareness of Alaska's diverse National Parks
- Encourage visitation to Alaska's lesser-known parks

Priorities

- South Side Development of Denali
- Road Improvement of Wrangell St. Elias
- Expand Marketing Efforts to promote all of Alaska's Park lands

Mr. SOUDER. And Mr. Kenyon.

STATEMENT OF RICK KENYON

Mr. KENYON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to testify about the important issue of community and National Park Service relations.

It's apparent that you have a strong desire to see our parks become better places to visit, and that's a desire that my wife and I share.

Before I start, I want—could I just clarify—I know you've talked a little bit about the time we have for additional testimony, by—this hearing was not well publicized here, in Alaska, and I know there are some that would like to submit testimony.

Mr. SOUDER. Yes. We'll take, within reason—any written testimony will—obviously, when people—in questioning, it's under oath and has a different meaning——

Mr. KENYON. Sure.

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. Than written testimony. But as long as it's reasonable and well thought out, I would be happy to take written testimony from anybody who presents written testimony.

Mr. KENYON. Is there—the 5 days, 10 days.

Mr. SOUDER. Generally speaking, we do have 2 weeks. But if it takes longer than that, we're going to leave the hearing record open (Indiscernible).

Mr. KENYON. Thank you very much.

My name is Rick Kenyon. My wife, Bonnie and I, have lived full time in the McCarthy area since 1977. You might imagine, I'm very much out of my element here today. We've been contract weather observers for NOAA and the FAA since 1983. We operate a bed and breakfast near McCarthy. Since 1992, we've published a news magazine called the "Wrangell St. Elias News. Each spring we publish "A Visitor's Guide to Kennicott and McCarthy," which is given free of charge to area visitors. We also pastor the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. And finally, we're both volunteer interpretive rangers at the Park Service, staffing the McCarthy Road Information Station on Friday nights from 5 to 8 p.m.

For 26 years, we've watched the interaction between the rural Alaskan communities of McCarthy and Kennicott and the Park Service. For the majority of those years, it must be characterized as adversarial. Fortunately, much progress has been made, during the past 2 years, under Director Blaszak.

When Park Service historian Jeff Bleakley wrote the official administrative history of Wrangell-St. Elias, he unfortunately had to title it, "Contested Ground."

In the spring of 1994, a hearing, similar to this one, was held here in this same building. Anchorage Voice of the Times Reporter Dennis Fradley summed the meeting up this way, "One after another, each individual told of how he or she was being mistreated by the Park Service. They painted a picture of an agency gone amok—a Federal bureaucracy that has become an arrogant despot, trampling individual, property and State rights at will."

I wish I could tell you that things changed for the better right after that hearing, but unfortunately, they got worse.

Nearly 10 years later, during the summer of 2003, community relations between McCarthy and the National Park Service hit an all-time low.

In April of that year, the Park Service suddenly and unexpectedly posted and closed a historic mining road that the communities of McCarthy and Kennicott had used for 80 years. The Park Service suddenly said it did not exist.

After the townspeople loudly protested, the Park Service then modified the closure. They said that any resident could use the road for subsistence, except for the people who actually lived up the road, because they might be using subsistence as an excuse to actually travel from their home to the nearest town, which was McCarthy.

Within a few months, armed, flak-jacketed rangers were in the family's yard, with a host of scientists, in an apparent attempt to prove that the family had somehow damaged park resources by using the road that served as their driveway.

We sent a reporter to the scene, a neighbor and a mother of five. She was able to observe, unseen, from the family's home.

When she returned to McCarthy, she got off the plane and burst into uncontrollable sobbing. She said she had never believed that her government was capable of such actions.

It is my firm belief that only prayer and the grace of God averted bloodshed in the Wrangells.

Fortunately, the Alaska Regional Director that allowed this atrocity is gone. The Superintendent and the Chief Ranger who engineered it are both gone.

Unfortunately, the Superintendent was rewarded with the prestigious Stephen T. Mather award shortly after this incident. There was no question but that he was being rewarded for his attacks against inholders at Wrangell-St. Elias. Also, unfortunately, the Chief Ranger's assistant was promoted to the current Chief Ranger position at Wrangell-St. Elias.

Alaska's current National Park Service management has made moves in the right direction. Director Blaszak appointed the very capable Jed Davis as Superintendent at Wrangell-St. Elias. Great strides toward understanding and cooperation between the Park Service were made under Jed's leadership. Much progress was made toward healing the wounds. Sadly, cancer claimed Jed's life this last spring. It is hoped that the next superintendent will display Jed's commitment to working fairly and honestly with the communities in the park. Sadly, some of the gains made have already eroded under interim management.

There's much to say concerning access to inholdings, particularly the use of the National Environmental Policy Act, which has been, in the past, used to deny access to inholdings. However, time is short, and these things are covered in my written testimony.

The May 8th edition of the Anchorage Daily News published an Op-Ed by McCarthy resident and business owner Neil Darish, who pleads for understanding of the importance of rural communities within Alaska's national parks.

Yesterday, Sunday's New York Times reviewed Dan O'Neill's book, "A Land Gone Lonesome." This noted Alaskan historian describes how the Park Service eliminates people from Alaska's vast

parks. New personal stories cease to be created and tradition dies. All of this is completely unnecessary. Even at the height of human occupancy of these areas, 100 years ago in the gold rush, only tiny parts of these parks were ever occupied.

And I have a copy of the book I'd like to give to you, Mr. Chairman, if I could.

We urge the committee—excuse me.

Nature and thriving pre-existing communities are not mutually exclusive concepts. Around the world, administrators of protected areas have proven this. In Ohio, Cuyahoga Valley National Park Superintendent John Debo has begun to implement these better management concepts.

We urge the committee to look at our situation here in Alaska's parks, and we are confident that you will see that a break from past aggressive practices against park landowners and communities will deliver far better value for the government budget while maintaining resource protection and enhancing visitor enjoyment.

We have appreciated the unprecedented outreach from Director Blaszak and her deputy, Vic Knox these past months, and we see commitment and leadership that can, indeed, put the "service" back in the National Park Service. It will, however, not be easy.

My desire—and I believe that Marcia and Vic share that desire—is that instead of "contested ground," residents and park managers will find "common ground" and learn to work together. I believe that all Americans will benefit from this effort.

Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you for your willingness to testify today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kenyon follows:]

Testimony Before
US CONGRESS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

NATIONAL PARKS OF ALASKA

August 14, 2006
Anchorage Alaska

by Rick Kenyon
McCarthy #42
PO Box MXY
Glennallen, AK 99588
(907)554-4454

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to testify about the important issue of relations between the National Park Service and residents who live within the boundaries of and the Gateway Communities to the parks.

It is apparent that you have a strong desire to make our nation s parks better places to visit and enjoy, a desire that my wife and I share.

My name is Rick Kenyon. My wife Bonnie and I have lived full-time in the McCarthy area since 1977. We have been contract weather observers for NOAA and the FAA since 1983. We operate a Bed & Breakfast near McCarthy. Since 1992 we have published a news magazine called the *Wrangell St. Elias News* 6 times a year. Each spring we publish *A Visitor s Guide to Kennicott and McCarthy*, which is given free of charge to area visitors. We also pastor the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church.

For 26 years we have watched the interaction between the rural Alaskan communities of McCarthy and Kennecott, and the Park Service. For the majority of those years it must be characterized as adversarial. Fortunately, much progress has been made during the past two years.

When Park Service historian Geoffrey T. Bleakley wrote the official Administrative History of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve, Alaska, 1978-2001, he unfortunately had to title it *Contested Ground.* [1]

In short, Alaskans and inholders believed their small parcels of privately-owned land were theirs to use and manage, while the NPS viewed them as threats to the park and to park resources. Landowners and residents were often treated as lower-class citizens, not capable of managing their small holdings. Not surprisingly, as his paycheck came from the Park Service, Bleakley laid blame for the conflict at the feet of the inholders and the State of Alaska.

Also not surprisingly, the miners were the first of the inholders to go. Mostly small-scale

operations, many of them recreational placer claims, they gave up after years of constantly changing regulations and hostility from park managers. They learned that what had sounded like protections in ANILCA often meant little or nothing. Official park history says that these individuals donated their claims. Often the people themselves say their claims were stolen. Usually no compensation was given.

One unusually patient individual, Wallace McGregor, has waited for 26 years hoping for just compensation for the taking of his Orange Hill property. The Orange Hill property was a 3603-acre parcel of patented (363 acres) and unpatented (3,280 acres) mining claims enclosed within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST). It appears that Mr. McGregor s efforts have been in vain. [2]

Some inholders merely wanted to live their lives in harmony with nature, in what became known as the subsistence lifestyle. A number of them lost the access to their property or their property itself. For the most part the remaining small minority has been left alone, as long as they have been careful to get the proper permits and agree to the official NPS interpretation of subsistence rules and regulations.

Others saw increasing tourism as an opportunity to serve the visitors through small mom-and-pop businesses. Before the creation of the park, the Nabesna area was home to over a dozen of these small family enterprises. Visitors to the area were served by a host of small restaurants, gas stations and lodges. Now most of them are gone. Many of those affected blame animosity and lack of cooperation on the part of NPS personnel for the economic failures in their small community. A very few prospered, getting what was seen by their neighbors as sweet-heart deals from the Park Service. Visitors to the area suffer as those goods and services are no longer available, or the few that remain have no competition.

In the spring of 1994 a hearing similar to this one was held here in this same building. *Anchorage Voice of the Times* reporter Dennis Fradley summed the meeting up this way:

One after another, each individual told of how he or she was being mistreated by the Park Service. They painted a picture of an agency gone amok a federal bureaucracy that has become an arrogant despot, trampling individual, property and state s rights at will.

I wish I could tell you that things changed for the better after that hearing. Unfortunately they got worse.

Part of the problem has been that inholders who challenge NPS management decisions have been punished. They have been badgered by park service airplanes flying low over their remote property, had their access challenged, or denied, sometimes threatened with large fees just to use the driveway to their homes. And they have been dragged into federal court on what many perceive to be trumped-up charges.

On the other hand, federal managers who acted badly were rewarded.

Take, for instance, former WRST superintendent Karen Wade.

In May of 1994 the *Wrangell St. Elias News* published an article entitled NPS superintendent says inholdings threaten park resources.

WRST Superintendent Karen Wade had recently testified before Congress that inholdings were threatening park resources, that she needed more money for trained backups to ride shotgun while they patrol for poachers and contact locals with frontier mentalities who scoff at rules and regulations...

Alaskans responded with understandable outrage, and Wade was forced from her position as WRST superintendent in less than a week.

Far from being punished, however, she was rewarded by being made the superintendent of Smoky Mountains National Park in July of that same year.

Wade was given the prestigious Superintendent of the Year Award in 1998.

In 1999, Wade was named to head the Intermountain Region as regional director.

Throughout her career, Karen Wade has been a strong, energetic leader, and has demonstrated innovation and wisdom in handling many challenges, said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. She also has shown courage in standing by tough decisions to protect parks under her care while building strong community support for conservation goals. We are very fortunate to have such a capable manager to fill this very challenging position.

By April of 2003, the infamous NPS War in the Wrangells was underway under WRST Superintendent Gary Candelaria and Chief Ranger Hunter Sharp. For the next year, the Park Service gained international notoriety as an estimated quarter-million dollars was spent in an apparent effort to force the Hale family from its land near McCarthy. The Hales are still in federal court with NPS, largely because of misapplication of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by Candelaria and Sharp.

During this same time, the troubling story of Doug Frederick was nearly lost in the furor over the Hale situation. [3]

Doug Frederick, an inholder at Slana, was hounded and forced into federal court when he tried to repair an ATV trail in the same area where the NPS is currently being sued for mismanagement of ATV trails. His crime was to put a wooden pallet in a wet spot that had a soft bottom an area that was becoming braided and damaged.

Alaskans soon rallied and presented a petition to Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton, through her representative in Alaska, Cam Toohey.

The petition "PROTESTS the outrageous criminalizing by the National Park Service and the federal courts of a public spirited man, Doug Frederick, of Slana, who was undertaking a volunteer trail improvement demonstration. It continues, The National Park Service claims to be a good neighbor but its actions abusing this family speak louder than words. The $500 fine imposed by Magistrate John Roberts is not against Doug and Judy Frederick. IT IS AGAINST THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY and it is obviously intended to send a message that if anyone tries to protect the public's ANILCA rights, they will be punished by the system.

THE COMMUNITY SENDS THIS MESSAGE BACK TO THE NPS: What has been done is unjust, oppressive, not correct, not credible, and not honest. We have collected all of the fine

money here tendered among us. We resolve that the Fredericks will pay none of it."

Chief Ranger Hunter Sharp finally took an early retirement (along with his wife Devi, who had been the park s Resource Manager, working under her husband).

His assistant throughout these episodes was Ranger Marshall Neek, who was promoted to his current position as Chief Ranger at WRST. Neek s wife Vicki works alongside her husband as the park s Chief Planner. [4]

Candelaria was moved to Harpers Ferry, and rather than being chastised as probably the most unprofessional superintendent that WRST had ever had, he was instead awarded with the prestigious Stephen T. Mather Award by the National Parks and Conservation Association. [5]

A Park Service press release dated November 16, 2004, said this about Candelaria:

Former Park Superintendent Receives Award

Superintendent Stands Up for National Park Protection

Washington, D.C. The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) today bestowed its prestigious Stephen T. Mather Award on former Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Superintendent Gary Candelaria for his unwavering dedication to the protection of Wrangell-St. Elias, his commitment to park staff and volunteers, and his overall efforts to ensure that the thousands of visitors who visit the park annually enjoy a memorable experience.

The release failed to mention that Candelaria had closed the McCarthy Road Information Station and cut back on other visitor services in order to help pay for his campaign against the Hales and Fredericks. He also had distributed to visitors a very unprofessional letter that defamed the Hale family. Hardly the actions that would ensure that the thousands of visitors who visit the park annually enjoy a memorable experience.

There was no question but that Candelaria was being rewarded for his attacks against inholders at WRST.

Alaska s current NPS management has made moves in the right direction. Director Blasak appointed the very capable Jed Davis to replace Candelaria at WRST. Great strides towards understanding and cooperation between the NPS and locals were made under Jed s leadership. Sadly, cancer claimed Jed s life this spring. It is hoped the next superintendent will display Jed s commitment to working fairly and honestly with the communities in the park. Unfortunately some of the gains made have already eroded under interim management.

Since access to inholdings had become such a contentious issue with the Hale and Frederick cases, Governor Frank Murkowski requested that NPS write a Handbook for Access to Inholdings in Alaska. Draft One of the handbook was a disaster. It called for revokable permits, fees and other restrictions that landowners and the State of Alaska found intolerable.

Draft Two was somewhat modified, dropping the fees and setting forth a 30-year term for the permits. However, most of the comments on Draft One went unanswered.

In the past two months, considerable progress has been made as Director Blasak and Deputy

Director Knox have taken the reins of the project and met with affected parties to hear their concerns, and to openly convey the concerns and goals of the NPS.

Somehow, rules were written in 1986 that do not accurately reflect the intent of ANILCA particularly when NPS chooses to interpret the rules in the strictest sense.

Senator Ted Stevens, in a letter to Regional Director Marcia Blasak has asked that NPS begin a rule-making change to reflect that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not apply to access to inholdings in Alaska parks. NEPA has been used to effectively deny access to inholders at WRST. I wholeheartedly agree with the Senator. Several other areas of the rules pertaining to access to inholdings should be addressed at the same time.

During the 26 years since the establishment of WRST, one of the more frequent comments I have heard made by Alaskans is that they view the parks in Alaska as being managed primarily for the use and pleasure of NPS employees rather than the public at large.

In large part I have to agree. In 26 years of development, the vast majority of public funds have been spent at WRST on infrastructure used for the primary or even exclusive use of NPS employees. Millions of dollars were spent on the park headquarters located at Copper Center, many miles from the nearest entrance to the park.

Early on in the park s history, several million dollars were spent at May Creek, 10 miles east of McCarthy, on what many call a private resort for NPS employees. Accessible only by aircraft, the housing and lodge facilities are off limits to the general public. Even a well-drilling rig was flown in at a reported cost of $25,000 so that employees could enjoy a shower after a day of hiking or riding ATVs in the park.

Currently, the Kennicott support facility on the west side of the Kennicott River has consumed several millions of dollars with a large $65,000 solar array, diesel backup generation, satellite communications, and laundry facility. Without question it provides better accommodations for temporary park staff than what is enjoyed by the average inholder in the park.

Right across the road is the McCarthy Road Information Center which is the contact point for visitors who have just driven the McCarthy Road from Chitina. It has only one small solar panel connected to a car battery and a cell phone and one propane light. I know. I work there on Friday nights as an unpaid volunteer interpretive ranger.

The visitor contact point at Chitina is staffed only with community volunteers and only a few days a week.

We recently agreed with NPCA when they requested that the NPS help fund some basic toilet facilities along the 60-mile road from Chitina as visitors face a two to three hour drive with no rest stops.

Rural Alaskans find it hard to work towards promoting more funding for the National Parks when they see such abuse, much of which is likely never seen beyond the local area, let alone in Washington, D.C.

The May 8 edition of the *Anchorage Daily News* published an OPED by McCarthy resident and business owner Neil Darish. [6]

Darish pleaded for a new understanding of the importance of rural communities within Alaska s National Parks.

Nature and thriving pre-existing communities are not mutually exclusive concepts. Around the world, administrators of protected areas have proven this. Current access issues, visitor kiosk closures and lawsuits reflect a need for a more inclusive agenda. Management actions reflecting the 1960s philosophy of man is a threat to the wilderness instead of the worldwide standard that the residents are a resource are counterproductive. Marcia Blaszak, the new Alaska regional director for the National Park Service, could set the tone for better cooperation between local residents and managers of Wrangell-St. Elias. Why move to Alaska if not for the love of nature? Who better to partner with than those who choose to live a wilderness lifestyle?

What is needed is a clear statement from our Park Service Alaska regional director that her philosophy allows the residents in this park to thrive.

I have had the privilege of working with Director Blasak and her deputy Vic Knox these past months, and have confidence that they will show the strong leadership that can indeed put the *Service* back in the National Park Service. It will, however, not be easy.

My desire, and I believe that Marcia and Vic share that desire, is that instead of *Contested Ground*, residents and park managers will find *Common Ground* and learn to work together. All Americans will benefit from the effort.

1. http://www.nps.gov/wrst/contestedground.htm
2. http://wsen.net/JA2006/free/page9.html
3. http://www.landrights.org/ak/wrst/Frederick.htm
4. http://www.landrights.org/ak/wrst/rangers.htm
5. http://www.nps.gov/wrst/pressreleases/candelariaaward.htm
6. http://www.mccarthy-kennicott.com/JA2004/page9.html

Mr. SOUDER. Our last panelist is Mr. Shively. Thank you for coming today.

Mr. SHIVELY. Yes, sir.

STATEMENT OF JOHN SHIVELY

Mr. SHIVELY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for having me.

I will say, for the record, I never have used steroids, nor do I intend to. So let's get that out of the way first.

The other thing I'll say is, going last is great, because everybody's already said everything you wanted to say, pretty much. And I think that there's a lot that's been said here today that I certainly support but will not repeat for you.

I've been in Alaska over 40 years. Among other things, I have served as—in the same position that Mr. Menge currently holds. Also, I spent a fair amount of time in Washington, DC, working for a Native corporation during the D2 debates. So I do have some experience there.

What I want to talk to you about a little bit today is sort of how the cruise industry interacts with the national parks. And particularly, for Holland America Line, which I represent, how important the park system is to us and to our program, and also, to our guests. Therefore people that come to Alaska on Holland America lines can visit a whole host of national parks. Of course, Denali and Glacier Bay are the two that people most often think about, but Kenai Fjords, Gates of the Arctic, the Klondike National Historic Park in Skagway, and the Klondike National Historic Park in Seattle, Wrangell-St. Elias, the Sitka National Historic Park, Kenai—and would also have people that can see the Yukon-Charley National Preserve, the Kenai National Wildlife Preserve and Misty Fjords National Monument. Not that you'd probably do it all in one trip, but all of those are possible.

We have spent a fair amount of time trying to work with the park system, particularly in places where there's a large impact, to develop interpretive programs, so our guests have a better understanding of the national parks and what they're about. And we continue to grow that program.

This year alone, we started a new program in Seattle, with the Klondike National Historic Park, where we have rangers coming on board during the day, while the ship is loading. So the passengers can get an idea about the Klondike park, what role Seattle played, and how that all fits together, before they even take off.

Also, we added an interpreter, in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, for those ships that visit Hubbard Glacier. I think you had an opportunity last week to see the interpreter program that has been developed on our ships in Glacier Bay, something that we're particularly proud of.

We think that our working relationship in Glacier Bay, I think, stands as a model for what can be done between what some people refer to as the "industrial side of tourism" and the national parks. And of course, our impacts on Denali have also been talked about.

I think a couple things, just briefly.

Access will always be an issue. There's certainly been a debate in Glacier Bay about how many cruise ships. And our experience

with the Park Service is that they have given, certainly recently, a thoughtful consideration to that. They are moving slowly to look at how that might be increased. There are some people, I think, in this that believe that there probably can be unlimited traffic there, and we don't believe that would be good for the park or, as a matter of fact, even good for us. But we think the process that's been set out there is an excellent one.

Certainly, access to Denali, as the number of people that visit Denali grows, will continue to be an issue.

We also support the south side development. And as an Alaskan, I'm somewhat embarrassed at how long it has taken to get even as far as we've gotten today. There have been numerous studies on that. It's certainly something that I think most people, that look closely at it, would agree should take place.

Education is important. I was talking to Nancy Sears this morning. And as part of what's being done now in Seattle, at Klondike National Park, they're asking people that are going to Glacier Bay if they know it's a National Park. And actually, she says it's only averaging about 5 percent. I mean, they know they're going to see glaciers, but they don't know it's a park. I think after they've been there, they know it's a park.

And I think that's something that's an important part of what our industry does; it brings people to these places that may not understand how many parks we have in Alaska and what those parks stand for. So that's a very important part of what we do.

I think something else that's very important, is that a study that was done several years ago by ATIA, showed that 27 percent of the people that returned to Alaska first came on a cruise. So we can't show the whole State, particularly in the short time allotted that our guests are with us, but we can give people a taste of what's here, and they can come back. And that's when they can see some of the parks that are very difficult to get to, or some of the ones that are easy to get to, that they missed the first time.

We recognize that the Park Service faces funding challenges. As you've mentioned, I think, all of government does these days.

We're pleased that you're holding these hearings. We think that it gives an opportunity for people to talk about specific problems here. We think that we have a very good working relationship with the Park Service. It's something that has not always been a relationship where we agree on everything, but I think we've been able to work together, to work most of our problems out, and we look forward to making that a better relationship as time goes on.

And we really appreciate the opportunity you've given us to testify. Thank you very much.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shively follows:]

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Government Reform
Criminal Justice Subcommittee

Hearing on National Parks in Alaska
August 14, 2006

Testimony of John T. Shively
Vice President, Government and Community Relations
Holland America Line

Chairman Souder, Thank you for the invitation to appear at this Hearing. My name is John Shively. I am Vice President of Government and Community Relations for Holland America Line. I have been a resident of Alaska for over 40 years. I had the privilege of serving as Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for six years. The Alaska State Park system is part of that department, and I worked closely with Jim Stratton, who is also testifying today.

We at Holland America Line understand the importance of the National Parks in Alaska. We know that open communication with the Regional Office and Superintendents is critical. We appreciate that the Park Service officials in Alaska are open and communicative. This provides the opportunity to discuss concerns and priorities. It give is an opportunity to plan our businesses accordingly.

In my present role I have come to appreciate even more the relationship that the National Parks have with the visitor and travel industry. For residents and visitors alike, experiencing the beauty of National Parks is a central part of the Alaska experience.

Many visitors to Alaska choose to come on cruise ships. Most visitors to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve experience the Park as part of an Alaskan cruise. Glacier Bay is a good example of how to offer a large number of visitors a low impact means to see that remote and spectacular ecosystem. Using state-of-the art vessels, with strict concession criteria which are competitively bid, the Park Service maintains a high degree of quality control and the guests experience a connection to the National Park, including NPS interpretation, special children's programs, and one-on-one interaction with Park staff.

The cruise lines have invested in both facilities and marketing to offer guests National Park experiences in many regions of Alaska. These include lodges in Denali, Wrangell St. Elias, and near Kenai Fjords. We have programs that include Gates of the Arctic and Kluane National Park in the Yukon Territories. We also provide support for interpretive programs in some of the parks.

Denali National Park remains the number one icon of Interior Alaska. The ability to provide a positive experience to visitors in Denali is critical to the travel and visitor business in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. The effort to expand and improve access within Denali is vital to the Alaska tourism economy. We welcome the current process to review impacts and possible solutions to the capacity constraints on the existing park road. We support efforts to develop a South Denali facility and hope that this long delayed project may soon be a reality.

We are grateful for Senator Ted Stevens' longstanding support for access to quality Park experiences in Alaska. Senator Murkowski and Congressman Young have always been supportive of efforts to find responsible ways to improve visitor access and experience. It is the support of our congressional delegation that has assisted the Park Service in constructing and operating the numerous visitor centers that serve our national parks in Alaska, among other support that they have given the system.

However, we recognize that a system as vast and diverse as the national parks in Alaska has unmet financial needs. We are pleased that the visitors we bring to some of these parks, particularly Denali and Glacier Bay, help provide financial support for the parks. We also appreciate the working relationship we have with the National Park Service staff that allows us to help participate in the process of determining the priority for future funding requests for the system here in Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. SOUDER. And I appreciate the opportunity to go on board, in Glacier Bay, to see how most people see it aboard a ship, (Indiscernible) too, unfortunately, because I wasn't real high. And also, the next day, was able to go out with the rangers on some of their business and see it from a little boat perspective and, as well as, (Indiscernible) a third (Indiscernible) the actual environmental code. And it's real interesting because, depending on how you look at the park, it looks different, just as it does in the Wrangells, when you're seeing it from the air or on the ground, or trying to drive the road.

Each park has multiple visitations. I think part of the reason—as someone who's visited here a number of times—that people are confused is, is that, generally speaking, if we had anything—I mean, I have to say, for the record, I'd rather have glaciers retreating than advancing, because Indiana used to all be under glaciers, and I wouldn't be here. At the same time, if we had any sign of anything like a glacier in the State of Indiana, it would certainly be a national park. And people are used to seeing these dramatic features be under a park item.

When you come into Alaska, some are national parks, whether it's at Kenai, with Exit, or other similar State parks. Multiple ones are State parks that I visited. Mendenhall is Forest Service.

What's Tracy Arm?

Mr. STRATTON. Forest Service.

Mr. SOUDER. Forest Service.

You approach it from so many different ways, as a visitor, it's very confusing, as to what's a national park, what's a State park, what's Forest Service, what's a hoot, in a sense, other than you know it's pretty dramatic.

There are multiple ways to start this. But, Mr. Menge, let me start with you in this, probably. Well, to a number of you.

I'd like to talk about Glacier Bay a little bit. That's where I just was. One of the debates is how to get more, kind of, land visitors there, or a way that some people would stay at the park, in addition to staying through a ship.

This is just my personal opinion. I wouldn't put a lot of big boats in the park part of the cove. It's already tight, and it's (Indiscernible) in the park. But advocates that study this—they're already having problem with their dock. Is there any possibility that something can be worked out with their dock, either for a marine ferry or other landings there? I know one thing that restricts it is, is you have to fly over from Juneau. Right? Any thoughts on it?

I know that there's some discussions going on. And don't disclose anything you can't disclose, but maybe you can submit it after you've worked some of these things through.

I know this has been of particular interest to Senator Murkowski—Governor.

Mr. MENGE. Yes. They have been following this, and I think he's shared his views with the Park Service for many years now related to this.

Alaska has a never-ending series of trying to find a way to accomplish a task. Certainly, there are discussions on their two State ferries (Indiscernible) trips. The residents of this State have used part of the cove to—as a marine facility out on the Stavis side.

There is nothing specific that's being worked out, yet we're constantly working.

I think the Governor's initiative, with Superintendent Lee, to bring the State ferries into Glacier Bay, that was new this year. And there are a couple of earlier sailings and a couple of late sailings. So that was an attempt to try to make it more affordable to get in and out of there.

We're always looking for new and better initiatives, but it's just so expensive. It's expensive to get to Juneau, and then it's expensive to get to the Stavis. If you want to get into the backcountry, then it's expense upon expense upon expense. So that's going to be our biggest challenge.

I think you pointed out earlier, the cost of energy is making that difficult climb even more difficult. But we don't give up. And as long as the Park Service is willing to work with us, we have no shortage of entrepreneurs with good ideas. And we will continue to discuss those whenever they emerge, to see if any of them make sense and are compatible with the Park Service.

Mr. SOUDER. Is there a physical reason why the Stavis dock and harbor area is not able to take boats?

Mr. STRATTON. No, not that I'm aware of. It's been a long time since I've been there. So Tomie Lee probably has a much better answer to that question than I do. I do know that it's a challenge, given the marine approach there, too, to provide those services. But since she is a resident, I would certainly defer to her.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you know any physical reason why that port—geological reasons? Is it less protected? Do storms hit it harder? Why that would be—not work, as opposed to boat (Indiscernible).

Ms. LEE. The dock has been there for decades, and it has outlived its useful life. And I believe that there is—well, I know that there is a Memorandum of Agreement that's been signed, between the State and city of Gustavus and the National Park Service, to look for funding and to replace the dock there at its present location.

Mr. SOUDER. It's not a dock question—it's a dock question, not a depth-of-water——

Ms. LEE. That's correct.

There are some issues with that particular location. There is a long fetch, with the westerlies, when they're blowing. However, those are things that have been there long before the dock, the original dock was put in. And it's managed to function there for, as I say, a number of decades; over 40 years. And so we don't believe that there's the issue why the dock cannot be built there. Otherwise, we wouldn't be working with the State and the City to put one in, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. Shively probably would be best for this question.

Earlier, on Denali, I was sooner going to ask, by the way, one followup question. I wanted to ask, for Denali, that we get into this climbing, because—if we can get data on the climbing, pressures that climbing puts on the park, and where that's heading—I got distracted, and I wanted to ask that. Clearly, people are staying longer around Denali. Does that mean people are taking longer

cruises, they're staying on the land more, that they're staying in Anchorage less? What is exactly happening?

Mr. SHIVELY. Basically, an Alaska cruise is a 7-day cruise. And there are basically two different, sort of, itineraries: One, leaves either Seattle or Vancouver and just makes a round trip and goes back to where the people started; the other is, leave Vancouver, go through Southeast Alaska, and come across the gulf, and the passengers disembark at either Whittier or Seward, and then new passengers get on and go the other direction.

Most of the land tour business comes from cross-gulf sailings, for the major lines. And now I've forgotten the question.

Mr. SOUDER. Why would people be staying overnight——

Mr. SHIVELY. Oh, I'm sorry; it——

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. At Denali?

Mr. SHIVELY [continuing]. Was the light.

Well, what's happened is, as a marketing tool, I think first Princess, and now we've followed—I'm not sure about Royal Caribbean—have gone to a 2-night Denali.

It probably, may mean a longer cruise tour, that's one option; it also may mean less time in a place like Anchorage, or it may mean not going to Fairbanks. I think there are a variety of different things that happen as a result of the two nights in Denali.

Mr. SOUDER. Is the travel industry looking at this to figure out what kind of shift is occurring? Obviously, the Fairbanks Chamber and the Anchorage Chamber are not interested in promoting people not going to their towns and going up to Denali longer.

And one of the debates here is, from the Federal Government's standpoint, if we're going to invest dollars, our dollars shouldn't be dollars that are shifting resources within the State.

The question is, is there an issue—are people staying longer in Alaska? Is it the man that's coming up, or citizens around the United States, to come in and say, "Look, we want our tax dollars mutually shared for things in Alaska"? That's one of the——

Mr. WORRELL. Over the years, the average length of stay has increased. I think over the last decade, we've basically increased the length of stay for about a day, a day and a half.

You know, about 60 percent of the folks who come to Alaska take part in a cruise, and of those about 30 percent do a land tour. So, you know, you're looking at a large number of people who do that circular trip up and down Southeast Alaska, and then roughly 30 percent do the cross-gulf and then participate in land tours.

Now, some of those are provided by the tour companies, and other folks do something independently, whether it be taking a day to fish the Kenai River or any number of different options.

Mr. SOUDER. Alaska is such a huge challenge to outsiders. And since I'm an outsider, I can say this. I know, in Alaska, this would be heresy, but—even if we drill in ANWR, which is hardly a done deal, that oil revenue's going to decline. Your figures on what's going to come from visitors is going to increase, presumably, and continue to increase, and your amount from oil is likely to decrease. That if you continue to give the oil revenue to the citizens of Alaska constantly, as opposed to having a fleeting source that wasn't reinvested.

If we had done that with our rail lands, for example, in Indiana, I mean, instead of putting them into the universities, had given all as rebates, we would be in a real pickle right now. And then the rest of the taxpayers in the United States are only going to do so much of bailing out, of Alaska not taking charge of some of their own responsibilities here.

And that's what I say with that is, I know we get resources out of Alaska, but we got resources out of Texas, and we got resources out of Oklahoma, and we got resources out of Indiana. And that now what we see is many of our young people moving out west and moving to other States because they have more wilderness areas, more areas to hike, and we're paying for much of that.

Now, there—so visitor services, the travel industry, which is obviously of huge benefit to Alaska, and is basically people coming from my State and other States to Alaska, it's a favorable type of thing. It seems that fishing is obviously—I presume, you—there's two types of fishing. When you said fishing is a—other than oil, is a huge industry for tourism, is the commercial fishing, presumably, is declining.

Mr. WORRELL. Well, basically, tourism and commercial fishing are basically tied, in terms of economic impacts to the State.

Mr. SOUDER. Canneries, as a traditional business, is that declining?

Mr. WORRELL. You know, I'm not a fish expert. I will——

Mr. SOUDER. (Indiscernible)——

Mr. WORRELL [continuing]. Tell you that——

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. Stated that commercial fishing, as opposed to people coming up to Alaska to fish, is increasing.

Mr. WORRELL. Prices are down for commercial catches of salmon. So presumably, that means something. I'm not a fish expert.

Mr. SOUDER. Do any of you know anything—Mr. Menge.

Mr. MENGE. Mr. Chairman, I can say that commercial fishing is increasing, and it's been through the development of additional fisheries, and also, a huge amount of effort is now being put into upgrading the quality of the fish. We're competing with the farm-raised salmon around the world. So we're shifting into a value-added market because of the Alaska's clean waters and seas. So it has increased slightly over the last 3 years, as commercial fishing has been developed.

And sport fishing——

Mr. SOUDER. Sport fishing (Indiscernible).

Mr. MENGE. Sport fishing is certainly at a steady pace, as well.

And of course, you can imagine the conflicts between those two. So, you know, we're working that out.

But because of the new processes and the new additional fisheries, like the bottom fisheries, we have seen an increase.

Mr. SOUDER. As you look at where Alaska's going to get it's sources of revenue, that you're going to have marginal increases in fisheries.

Mr. MENGE. That's correct. Marginal increases of the fisheries and in forestry.

Mr. SOUDER. In timbering, you're not going to get a big——

Mr. MENGE. No, it's not going to be significant. Of the——

Mr. SOUDER. Oil, there's not going to be increases. Hopefully, it can sustain, as one declines.

Mr. MENGE. We would hope to be able to lower the decline in oil.

But one of our huge efforts right now is—I've focused, almost all of my life, over the last 3 years on getting the gas line built. Because the North Slope has 35 trillion cubic feet of reserves and probably an additional 250 trillion cubic feet in mineral resources.

So getting a gas line built is consuming almost all of our waking time over the last 3 years.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

I think it's fairly safe to assume that there would be people who would be upset if you tried to mine in Glacier Bay National Park. But beyond that, in mining, is that—how does that factor into——

Mr. MENGE. Mining, of course—yes, mining is a huge part of Alaska, always has been, and I hope always will be.

In the past 3 years, we've brought the Pogo Mine into production. We have just completed the permitting and are under construction of another mine, the Kennington Mine, down in Southeast Alaska. And just yesterday, Friday, I signed Alaska State permits for the Rock Creek Mine in Nome.

So mining is always going to be a big part of the State. It makes a significant contribution to the local economy. It does not provide for a large inflow of cash to the State treasury. So the real benefits from mining are going to be secondary to (Indiscernible) associated with mining in the region.

But we're faced here with—the biggest challenge we face here is no infrastructure. Each of these mines that's brought on has to be so robust as to essentially be able to provide the fuel that it needs to generate its own electricity and fly the commodities out. So you can imagine the challenges associated with that.

So if we had roads, other than from our mining infrastructure, it would be significant enlargement to a huge mineral base.

Mr. SOUDER. In your opinion, when you look at the inholdings in the—do State parks have inholdings, too; I presume.

Mr. MENGE. Certainly.

Mr. SOUDER. When you had all these maps out, with the magic markers, and since we have both you and Mr. Shively, and Mr. Stratton—were all—presumably, had magic markers that day, or were around people who did, in a variety of positions. I don't know who was with senators or Governors, or where, but at different times. Let me ask this question first.

Are most of the inholdings, where mining requests come, or are likely to be mined, are they individual native Alaskans or Alaska Natives, who were looking at smaller development of their own land, or were these speculative corporate purchases? And then, without even getting into the secondary question, of should an individual have a right to sell his land for a profit to the larger corporation.

Mr. MENGE. I would start this out, but since I was always the pretty one and John was the smart one, he was involved a lot more in the actual process with the ANILCA lands. I was just a young geologist looking to find oil in the ground.

Most of the inholding issues, or significant inholding issues, were prior existing rights. They were mining claims filed in the 1872

Mining Law and had been carried through to a patent. So that represented a huge bulk of the inholdings.

I would say that a large majority of those inholdings are related to the smaller placer mining operations. Everyone recognized the challenge, even with a small placer mine. And while the mineralization, under the national parks, is staggering in it's proportion, I think most of the larger companies recognize that, under the best of the circumstances, it takes 10 to 15 years to permit of a mine. If you were to try to permit a large world-class mine in a park, a national park, you would find the challenges far more daunting.

So I think that, by virtue of the heighth of the hurdle, people should move toward State land and toward Native lands. Not that the mineral content is less on Federal land, but it's just that the challenges associated with permitting a mine is daunting.

And John, I'd ask you to fill in the blanks there, a little bit.

Mr. SHIVELY. Mr. Chairman, I mean, clearly, in the late 1970's, when ANILCA was being debated, people realized there were a variety of inholdings.

And you asked earlier, you know, sort of what was the order of things. And of course, the Statehood Act was passed first, and so the State started selecting lands certainly before ANILCA. Then, the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act came along, which gave the Natives the right to the title of about 44 million acres. They were able to—basically, they had to stop the State selections, as a result of a land freeze. Then they actually, then, sort of came ahead of the State.

But also, as part of the Claims Act, there was the provision that the Secretary was to withdraw up to 80 million acres. He actually withdrew considerably more for consideration of what eventually became ANILCA. So those sort of came third in time.

But the State, actually, I think, just kept getting pushed aside. I mean, what they had, they had. But they couldn't get any more until the Natives had resolved their issues. And the parks, once the boundaries were established, if it was still Federal land, it was going to remain Federal land.

My impression is, although I must say I've never really looked at it, specifically, that the vast majority of the mining claims were individual placer miners, not large corporate stakings.

Mr. SOUDER. And if there was anywhere that the State thought that major mines could be developed, with reasonable access, would the State have claimed those areas? Like, I assume, the oil companies were speaking up early on, in ANWR, that would have led to a destination in that, that says, "potential future oil development."

Was that done for any other kind of mineral?

Mr. SHIVELY. Well, I don't want to get into a huge debate here about who wanted what.

I think that certainly people that were interested in the parks and the wildlife refuges, and the other conservation system units, looked at where they thought there was mineralization, tried to put some of those places into the conservation system units, and in other places, tried to block access out.

And if you look, particularly at the Gates of the Arctic boot, I think you can see there was a mining area near Shungnak and

Kobuk, on the upper Kobuk River. And clearly, that was designed to make difficult mining—getting access to the ore out difficult. It was a whole part of the debate.

On the other hand, the Red Dog Mine was originally part of one of Secretary Morton's withdrawals. That was a result of work done by the mining industry and by NANA, part of what I did, that area was eventually removed from what became a preserve and did become a mine and access issues. Those access granted by Congress across the Krusenstern National Monument.

But I think, clearly, there were people in the conservation movement that would have just as soon not seen any more mining. And then the other side people, the mining industry and the circuits at the State, tried to protect some of those opportunities. And ANWR, of course, is the one that's the most famous.

Mr. SOUDER. I have a couple other subjects, before we go back to Wrangell and before I get into the wildlife.

Mr. Stratton, I wanted to ask you, from NPCA's perspective, you've been State parks director. You've clearly worked with NPCA. Well, this was an interesting—that is a very helpful discussion. Because it wasn't just that the State said, "Where are the best potential mines that we might develop future revenue," it's also that—you're suggesting that the—those with environmental interests were also doing the same thing, trying to claim the same land, to keep the mining from occurring.

How does—given that you're an Alaskan, given the kind of mixed picture of how the economy in Alaska has been developing, how does the NPCA look at, one, the inholdings question; two, where mining can be done in Alaska? How do some of these things work through? Because that's undergirding and vague. If that wasn't there, the whole debate would be a whole lot easier.

Mr. STRATTON. I look at the national parks in Alaska as a resource that, as the world gets smaller and as the world gets more populated and resources get used up in other parts of the world, our national parks are going to become scarcer and scarcer as a representative of what the planet used to be like. And the value of those areas, to people who want to experience that kind of, you know, wildlife, glaciers and mountains, the reason that people come to Alaska, Alaska is going to have a corner on the market, if you will, on those kinds of resources.

So I see our national parks as a savings account for future economic opportunities, and they're only going to get more valuable, as we go out in time, as those kinds of lands in the rest of the world disappear.

Now, recognizing there are valid existing rights within some of these parks—and I think ANILCA made it clear that the owners of those rights had access opportunities—then it becomes a discussion, if you will, facilitated by the Park Service, between the owner of the inholding and the American people to say, "How can we provide that access in a way that meets the needs of the inholder and still protects the purposes for which the park was created?" And as you can well imagine, that sometimes is a very lively debate.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Kenyon, let me ask one other question before you—on that. Maybe Mr. Shively.

Wrangell is really unusual, because there's 500,000 or 700,000 State acres of inholdings inside of the national park preserve, and like 200,000, I believe, are University of Alaska, much of it concentrated along the McCarthy Road. Which, in my opinion, after ANWR's over with, Wrangell's going to be the big debate. Because there are several dynamics here that suggest that Wrangell and Glacier Bay are too big a basis to expand the tourism industry. The question is how do you expand the tourism industry. That the travel association listed south park and—are you talking about the road to McCarthy? Is that the road you were speaking of.

That Wrangell is the biggest collection of wilderness in the United States, inholdings are going to be as big as the next biggest park. But that what's unusual about it, most of the inholdings aren't individuals, they're the State. So what does the State have, as kind of its intention of picking that? Was it pre the park? Was it attempting to develop the road? What was the thought, do you know?

Mr. SHIVELY. Mr. Chairman, I've never looked at it. It had to be pre the park, because if they didn't have the title, at the time the park was established, they weren't going to get it. So I'm positive that's where it was. And——

Mr. SOUDER. So much of it's so close to that road, there had to be some kind of original——

Mr. SHIVELY. Well, my——

Mr. SOUDER [continuing]. Thought. Unless it was a huge mine, why would you have picked hundreds of thousands of acres along that road?

Mr. SHIVELY. My guess is it was for the mining potential. I'm——

Mr. SOUDER. Do you know, Mr. Menge?

Mr. MENGE. Yes. Recognize that we were working off of almost a blank piece of paper, as related to preserves, and particularly, hardrock. We knew about Prudhoe. We had some ideas about Bristol Bay and natural gas. So we had a little bit of a handle there.

On the hardrock, we were looking at historic mining districts, and certainly, McCarthy was one of those. And I mentioned earlier, infrastructure. That the world-class mine, that's 300 miles of road, is not worth a whole lot.

So the combination of the road and the historical mining district was well in the front of their minds when they made that selection.

Mr. SOUDER. OK. Now I'll move to Mr. Kenyon.

It seems to me there's two kinds of questions as relating to inholdings: How do the individual longer-time people, like yourself, feel about, all of a sudden, developing that road, and potentially developing all along that road.

Mr. KENYON. Well, the inholders in the park are like human beings everywhere. They don't agree. There's a lot of division about whether the road should be developed, whether the park should be developed, and there's no consensus.

Mr. SOUDER. In the cases that you were talking about—and let me move to a couple in particular. In the access question, from your perspective, and the people who have been there and have land in the park, how would you propose to accommodate the access question to your property? Any way you want to do it, do it? If it's only been historic, then it stays historic? (Indiscernible).

Mr. KENYON. Well, most—and I don't know the percentage. But I'm going to say 90 percent-plus of the cases established—I mean, the access was established long ago. In most cases, prior to the park, and so there's been ongoing use. It's really almost a no-brainer. I mean, it's just there; it's been used; it's not causing damage to park resources.

And I think Marcia's doing a good, good job here of trying to put that in a document. That certainly the inholder shouldn't be using six different routes to his house, but the one that he's been using for 20 years shouldn't be contested all that much.

Mr. SOUDER. And I'd never been to this road area until, I think it was—this is Monday, so it must have been Sunday, coming back. From Tok, we—I drove into that area—that's including a couple of bed and breakfasts—before you get to the park. It's the only place in the country where I've ever seen park this side or this side. Once you get down on the other side of the road, parks on both sides. So I presume it's preserve on both sides. So it's a very unusual junction. As you go on the road a little bit, there's a camp that's disappeared. Is that one of the camps that you were talking about? You suggested written testimony.

Mr. KENYON. Uh-huh.

Mr. SOUDER. That there were some benefits, if you were at the edge of the park. I presume, the ones that we've talked, got squeezed or something, were down the road a little farther.

Mr. KENYON. Right.

Down the road a little farther were a number of small businesses, "mom-and-pop businesses," we call them, and most of those are gone. A few still struggle on, but there are very few.

Mr. SOUDER. It was hard for me to sort out, from your written testimony, what you felt that the prevalent reasons—it just wasn't—obviously, you didn't feel it was enough traffic. You felt some condition changed with the Park Service. Was it a question of (Indiscernible).

Mr. KENYON. Well, that's 150 miles from where I live, and I'm not that familiar, so I based that on what people up there told me.

Mr. SOUDER. When you say you're going to get some—I heard a little bit of that, even in the brief time I was there. When you said you were going to let a few people know, if you could see if somebody can present that, and then I'll also try to get a counter. And this would be good, because once the subject gets raised in a hearing, it's good to, kind of, play it out a little bit. Because, here, we're not trying to have a confrontation, we're trying to allow good discussion on very, very difficult issues.

And what was, kind of, your reaction to some of Mr. Stratton's comments about the wildlife, difficulty in the management? How do you feel? I mean, that's a specific proposal to increase the number of National Park Service people who are monitoring total animals, so——

Mr. KENYON. This was the first I'd heard of it. I was, frankly, quite surprised. In the Wrangell-St. Elias park—it's basically unit, what, 13, I guess.

On the whole 13 million acres, there's less than 30 moose taken a year. There's, what, 300 killed here, in the Mat-Su Valley, acci-

dentally by cars. And I would think that the State would provide, certainly, adequate harvest reports.

I guess, I just didn't understand. It's a confusing issue to me.

Mr. SOUDER. Then, Mr. Stratton, could you elaborate? How much of that do you think is actually in some of the big parks, and just that we don't know what's in the big parks?

I have to admit that, A, I've been here for 2 weeks, moving around the State, and I think I've gone 2,500 miles, and some of that in Canada, and over to Haines and Skagway. A lot of it in Canada. In the other business here, I have to confess, that I have seen lots of moose but I haven't seen moose in the parks.

How do you respond to the fact that the—here, to the challenge of the moose in the Mat-Su Valley? Does that make it more important that we protect the moose in the park, because we're not going to be able to do anything about the Mat-Su Valley?

Mr. STRATTON. Well, our concern that we've raised in our moose counting report is that we don't know. We've done some investigation into what is reported to the State of Alaska, you know, by hunters, and then, in some of the parks, we correlated that, then, to the amount that was reported in the same park through the community harvest surveys, where people actually go into the communities and ask people, "How was hunting last year?" And we found a huge discrepancy. In some parks, as little as 3 percent of what the community harvest surveys told us was being taken was reported through the State of Alaska.

That just set off alarm bells to us. We're not saying that there is a problem. What we're saying is that we don't have enough funding in the Park Service to do the adequate data collection in order to make sure that we don't ever have a problem. Because Congress made it very clear that you can do subsistence activities in most of the parks, you can do sport hunting in national preserves, but at the same time, it also said you have to protect the wildlife populations. And so that is a balancing act.

If you're going to be doing that balancing act, it would seem to me that you would want to have the best data available, to make sure that the scales didn't go too far one way or too far the other. And what we saw, in just, you know, kind of scratching the surface on this, was that the Park Service needs more information, to make sure that they don't get out of balance.

So all our report is calling for is an increase in support. We think funding is the easiest way to do it. But I know, in discussions with Marcia, that she's looking at some other, more creative ways to get at that problem.

We just think that data needs to be brought forth and given to the park superintendents, in a way that they can understand it, so that they know what's going on in the parks so that we don't have a problem down the road.

Mr. SOUDER. I spent the last couple years working on the Southwest border (Indiscernible).

Mr. Menge, do you have any comments on that or——

Mr. MENGE. No, I don't. You know, a good geologist shouldn't. Other than the fact that moose tastes pretty good with braised potatoes, I don't really know a lot more. It's probably never a good

idea to opine before a congressional committee on something you don't know a thing about.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you for that honesty. Many people don't feel that way. Usually, they're not in a committee, where they're under oath, either, there's no question that if—well, let me ask. The most fascinating difference—and one of my friends in Congress and I got to chatting. I don't think he was sold on what I told him, and that is: History may not repeat itself, but often it rhymes. And in our national parks here, it appears there's a lot of rhyming.

But this is the only State where people have said that of the national park visitors, the bulk are coming through the cruise ship industry. Either they're coming directly in, like up Glacier Bay or they're coming indirectly, through Denali or Skagway. So this is just kind of a unique wrinkle in this.

Where do you see the best place is for the cruise ship industry? Getting bigger boats and more in Glacier Bay, is one. Where else do you see the extension?

Mr. SHIVELY. Well, I think we're always looking for new opportunities. I mean, we clearly, I think, see that the Wrangell-St. Elias park has some spectacular scenery. It's a great place. It has lots of land. Our sister company, Princess, has put up a lodge in Copper Center, to sort of start that. And so that's clearly a place.

We, this year, started a tour along the Kenai Peninsula, that we haven't had before, that does include the Kenai Fjords park, because a lot of the passengers that do get off in Seward don't go to Kenai Fjords.

I think, probably, for us, going—we do take people to Prudhoe Bay, so we do go up through Gates of the Arctic. There's probably some opportunity for expansion there, not a lot. And clearly we think that, you know, there's opportunity in the two big ones, too; Denali and Glacier Bay.

Mr. SOUDER. It's always dangerous to ask a question you have no clue what the answer is. How do you interact with the Native corporations? I mean, clearly, like any other business—some people fault this, but it's any other business.

If you have a basic rate, "Here's the cheapest cabin, here's the basic food," and then you want to upgrade your cabin. But if you want to do some of the extras, those are extra. And you want a (Indiscernible) quality, because of a bad experience; it wasn't exactly on the cruise, even if it wasn't (Indiscernible). If you contract with somebody who delivers a bad product, they're going to complain about the whole cruise, not about the person who delivered the bad product to you. That's your business challenge.

Do you work with the Native corporations, on some of their lodging, on these things? Or more particularly, for example, I was told, when we were going to go up—it was recommended to me strongly that I go up and see Kotzebue, and then over to Nome; that the Native corporation there had a package, that it was cheaper to get the package than it was to get the air flight and then the hotel.

Do you work with Native corporations on the packages like that? And do you see any kind of packages, or do you see yourself, at some point, getting an air wing (Indiscernible)?

Mr. SHIVELY. What was that, the last—I didn't get the last—I'm sorry.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you have an air wing, or do you see yourself purchasing an air wing, like the hotel business, that board or move people to the proper points in Alaska? Are you going to have an airwing?

Mr. SHIVELY. No, I don't see us producing an airwing. And actually, I don't think we would really like, all that much, to be in the hotel business. One of the reasons we aren't is that we found that it was very hard to find people that had enough capital, that would risk putting up the kind of facilities we need for hotels, for what, years ago, was about a 3½ month business and now is 4 to 5. And that's why we're in this business. And the same with the rail cars.

Now, to answer the original question. We interact with Native organizations and corporations in a number of ways. We have a relationship with the Alaska Native Heritage Center here, where they place Native artists on our ships. We also have a relationship with the Hoonah tribe, through the Native Corp., where, as you saw the other day, we have a Native interpreter in Glacier Bay. We do the same thing for our ships that go into Hubbard Glacier, with the tribe in Yakatat. And other lines use local Native people.

A number of the people we do business with, for shore tours, are Native organizations; Saxman, Goldbelt, Huna Totem. Of course, Huna Totem has developed their own venue in Hoonah. And while Caribbean started there, and actually came to an agreement with them about usage, we started sending a ship there this year.

In terms of going further north, we do sell the Kotzebue-Nome trip, as an option, as you—I think I may have mentioned to you last week, I did work for NANA, for a number of years. We had a relationship with the cruise industry for some time.

I think the problem for the Arctic Tour now is the expense, combined with the fact that there are a lot of alternatives now, in Southcentral Alaska, that didn't exist 10 or 15 years ago, when the Arctic Tour was more popular.

Mr. SOUDER. Because one of the challenges is, is that there's a slow rise in visitation to Alaska. To a degree, it's disbursed. One of the fundamental questions is, "Where are the wildest areas of Alaska going to be."

And if you move into the wildest areas, with larger operations, much like Wrangell maybe, the next big question, do you develop that road? Do you develop all the way along the road? Do you change the nature of McCarthy.

You're not really going to threaten the whole park. But you're in the, kind of the core center of the accessible part of the park—other than the air—and you change that experience. And how much should you change it? Similar questions on Glacier Bay. Those are kind of in the range. If it was disbursed more, you wouldn't have as much pressure on those areas; on the other hand, it would be more disbursed. What kind of a tiered structure.

Because there's always going to be a percentage of the visitors—not only is it one of the unique places of the world left that isn't overdeveloped, but it is increasingly rare in Alaska. And there are going to be visitors that want to experience it, without hearing an airplane, without hearing other types of things. Backcountry people, who are part of your visitation group, you know, often your

younger group, who then will come back for an older experience later on.

In fact, a number of them may be introduced through a cruise, and then come back and want to get out into the wilder places. There's interaction. That if you cutoff all your wildest places, then you're not going to—it's kind of the symbol that draws the next and that draws to the areas closest.

Let me ask a question about Curry Ridge. That clearly the National Park Service has multiple visitor centers. And as I'm sure the NPCA research has come up with, well, the challenge in all the parks around the country in—there's only some money—there isn't any money to staff that.

The cruise industry has been very creative in how to deal with the ships, with the—Skagway, now.

Is that something that, as part of a package, if the Federal Government—because the problem here is—the Alaska Delegation is tremendously—Senator Stevens and Murkowski and Congressman Young do more proportionately for getting dollars to Alaska and arguing for Alaska than any other delegation in the country. They're just very effective. I wish we were even marginally that effective in Indiana.

There's everything from employability to—took us over to being—that—been in a long time, to being very subtle in their questioning of other members, that whole thing is very aggressive. But they may be able to get a visitor center. But they're not likely to get a plus out of your community resources.

So that the challenge comes is, do you think that there are options here, that if something was developed, that, in effect, the interpretation of the visiting center or managing of the visiting center—because—because, generally speaking, the concessioneer part of the visitor center is contracted out. There might be a little bit for food. There might be—the Alaska History Association manages a bookstore, so it's not like what we worked through at Gettysburg, where, in fact, the park was able to pay, to some degree, because they managed to work out higher concession fees with it. It's a very deep kind of concept.

If it's very important to the travel industry, particularly the cruise industry, to get something developed, do you think that something might be worked out in that manner? Is that something even worth pursuing? Or have you talked about it.

Mr. SHIVELY. Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure we've actually talked about it. But certainly, we've tried to work on developing and helping pay for interpretive programs. So I certainly think we'd be more than willing to sit down with the Park Service and discuss that. I mean, we're——

Mr. SOUDER. Because you've run an agency. You know the difficulty. It often isn't building something, it's manning it.

Mr. SHIVELY. Building is the fun; operation is the problem.

Mr. SOUDER. Do you have any thoughts on that, Mr. Menge, on Curry Ridge?

Mr. MENGE. I do. I——

Mr. SOUDER. I did, by the way, get a chance to see—I think it was the Anchorage paper 1 day, in the time I was here, pages on

the history of this. It's just amazing how long this has been debated.

Mr. MENGE. Mr. Chairman, we——

Mr. SOUDER. Not to say you've experienced it at all.

Mr. MENGE. The challenge we face here is, "If you build it, they will come." It requires a large, very large cash infusion.

I think Mr. Shively talked about the capital investment in those hotels. Those are spectacular hotels, but they would never have been built without corporate backing and the vision of that company to do it.

The same thing with visitor centers. We're not going to be able to develop the clientele to support a visitor center until a visitor center is there. And we are painfully aware, particularly in running the State parks, the challenges with maintenance.

Most of—I have a State legislator that—coming up all the time, volunteering or offering to build legislation to acquire more land, to acquire another facility. But I go back to those same legislators a year later and try to defend a maintenance budget, and it's a different story.

So those of us who are charged with actually running the facilities must keep in the front of our mind the maintenance. That's why we hope that any of these facilities would come with an operational plan associated with it and could talk about how it would be managed and manned and financed after. They are critically important to—to draw the—provide the opportunity. So those are the—that's the challenge we face.

Mr. SOUDER. Mount St. Helens is an area where they have seven visitor centers, and now none of them have enough to really support—some are private; some are State; some are Forest. And how—how to coordinate something like that, and have a (Indiscernible) development process and then go through the parks. You know, the—the—around the country, there's always this tension between when you develop a new area, what's going to happen to the people at the old area, too, and their—their residents and facilities.

Mr. Stratton, let me ask you this question. I appreciate you bringing out and releasing the wildlife report today. Clearly, Alaska is unique, in the sense of—we have reintroduced wolves into Yellowstone, and we have some grizzly bears in a few places that—but you have a whole ecosystem here, including wildlife, as a—as a critical component.

As the country—and I think one of the—as we look toward the 100th birthday of the park system, which is part of what's behind, I think, this, "Where should the National Park System go?" The Mission 66, was having visitor services supporting it. Where are we going? How are we going to sustain the Park Service for the future.

This is actually the 90th birthday. It's my understanding the Park Service is wisely going to and soon announce that next year we'll be celebrating the 90th and putting some proposals on the table, of which I'm thrilled. It's one of the biproducts of all the work here.

Secretary Kempthorne is taking the bull by the horns and is hopefully about to announce a proposal that will start them on a process toward the 100 years, here in the 90th. That as we look at

this, understanding that we have this unbelievable resource of science, of wildlife, of fish, of all the earth, in addition to cultural resources in the Park Service, that ideally could be interrelated with education. I very much appreciate that.

But beyond the wildlife, what would you say, from your perspective, are the two other biggest challenges you think we're going to face when we look at Alaska? As—because this is—is it 60 percent of the Federal funding in Alaska.

Mr. STRATTON. Two-thirds.

Mr. SOUDER. Two-thirds.

And I think I understood, from Fish and Wildlife, it's about 70 percent of the Fish and Wildlife.

So as we move this debate beyond the better data on this wildlife, what do you think the other two biggest challenges are going to be?

Mr. STRATTON. Well, I think the other biggest challenge, it revolves around the larger access discussions, and access to inholdings, whether they're driveways to people who live in Wrangell-St. Elias, which NPCA has been supportive of resolving that as quickly as we can, following the Park Service, in support of the folks out along the McCarthy Road.

But the big question with access, to us, is access to places that don't have access right now. There's still pieces of private property in places where there is no road built to it, or where someone might want to do that in the future. I think that is a big discussion that we need to have down the road.

I think the opportunity to acquire inholdings, from willing sellers, is an opportunity that we need to take advantage of more in Alaska. There are people, who own land inside national parks, who will be very willing to sell to the National Park Service, because they recognize that, you know, giving their land to the National Park Service protects it, you know, into a larger protected area.

But as we all know, you know, Federal funds, through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, haven't been appropriated at quite the level they've been accumulating in that fund. And I'm not sure how you get your arms around the fact that, you know, you've got some authorization, in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to use primarily offshore, Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas moneys to do those kinds of inholding acquisitions, but the money seems to be going someplace else rather than to help WCS.

Because that number has been coming down, you know, year after year, both for acquisitions of inholdings in national systems, but also the land and water, that money that comes into the State of Alaska, which when I was Director of State Parks, we used for some of our, you know, inholding acquisition opportunities there, again, from willing sellers.

So I think, you know, trying to figure out how you can bring more, you know, private money, you know, more outside interest in helping to—you know, to partner with what little Federal money there is, to try and take care of some of those inholding concerns. Because the easiest way to not have a fight over how you get an access to an inholding is to have the government acquire it, and then that discussion goes away.

Mr. SOUDER. I thank you all. I took us right up to 1.

I may have a couple additional questions that I didn't—dealt fully, on the inholding question, Mr. Kenyon. And if you could do some more talking to other people regarding that.

My own—my own position is, the Federal Government's been appalling, in the sense of willing—willing to buy land. They restrict the use of land and tell people they can't do this, they can't do that, and when they say, "OK, we'll sell it to you," they go, "Well, we wouldn't have any money."

That has been—do you want to comment on that, Mr. Kenyon?

Mr. KENYON. Well, yes, I would like to give you our latest issue of our news, which has the story of the Orange Hill property, in Wrangell-St. Elias, and how the owner, Mr. McGregor, has been trying to work with the Park Service for 20 years to get bought out, and he's been unsuccessful. So that's included in here.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you. We'll make sure we have that.

Mr. KENYON. I would say, however, one of—one of the fears, I guess, of the little—little guy in the parks, is that he'd be coerced into becoming a willing seller, by unreasonable access regulations, by other things that diminish his, either property value or his ability to sustain a lifestyle in the park. Also, I read in Mr. Stratton's written report that he would like the Federal Government to buy 700,000 acres more in the park. And that, frankly, is very, very frightening to the little guy in the park. Most of that land, by the way, it's my understanding—and Marcia would correct me, maybe, but—I think there's like 600,000 acres that are Native corporation land, and the remainder—I don't think there's a whole lot of State land left.

Is there, Mr. Menge?

Mr. MENGE. I haven't looked at it.

Mr. KENYON. I don't believe there's very much State land left in the Wrangell-St. Elias.

Mr. SOUDER. (Indiscernible).

Mr. KENYON. Pardon?

Mr. SOUDER. Other than—other than the Native lands, the State is still the largest. But that could be a little dated.

Mr. KENYON. Perhaps. But it's certainly less than a couple hundred-thousand acres. I know 12,000 just went to the University.

Mr. SOUDER. But we'll get that—my figures would have been State and would account for the University.

I know a couple years ago that when there was 1.2 million acres, nearly 800,000 of that was State and University, together. The Native lands were, I think, 200,000 to 250,000, and then the smaller percentage, because they're smaller lots, were the individual.

Natives—is it Alaska Natives, as opposed to native Alaskans; is that right? And that—that most of the native Alaskans, historic peoples, are along the main road, which are much easier to deal with than the pockmarked-type internal.

And how to work these questions out to—that—that—I think that there is a sincere desire, in Congress and in the Park Service, to try to work out things with—with—generally speaking, with—with the isolated inholders. And that we have those all over our parks in the United States.

And when you start to mine, which is a more complicated question, how to do that, and what laws are going to apply, becomes

difficult. How big and what type of access is clearly worked through. But those—I think, it's the sense of Congress is to try to work those out.

Absentee speculative landholders is another question, And how to work it out with the Native peoples, and can you consolidate those around a couple areas and leave the rest wild, with these few pockets, I think is where we're headed.

But this is—this is a huge question that we've got to work through.

Mr. KENYON. Well, we've been looking into it recently because of the access question. And again, I could be wrong, but I think that those isolated parcels that you refer to are very few and far between in the Wrangells.

Mr. SOUDER. OK. We'll get that, specifically, for the record.

Well, thank you very much for your testimony today. It's been very informative. As we move through these hearings, as we move to the end—and, in fact, this may be the last hearing, other than the Washington hearing later this fall, that then we'll move into the next cycle of Congress. That—it's been very helpful.

Clearly, we know that the Park Service is strapped for money, that the—that we have visitation demands here. There aren't as many Homeland Security demands, but in many other areas of the country, the Homeland Security demands are putting additional pressure on the ability even to keep up roads, a clear demand, is a huge challenge upon many of our supports (Indiscernible). Kind of the biggest example I found in Park Service is Glacier National Park; how to handle sewage systems in the Park Service. That Alaska had different challenges. It's been very helpful to get the information today.

I strongly believe that there's a reason national—a reason park rangers are the highest rated profession. Not only are they good people, not only are the people on vacation when they see park rangers, but the people really value national parks. There's not a poll taken where this doesn't rank up with what people want us to focus on, and they want us to be able to both use them and pass them to the future generations.

I also know that I have never met anybody from my district, and many friends and so on, who visited Alaska—usually through a cruise ship—ever come back and say that they had a bad experience. That they really love the State. And how to build on that preserve, the natural beauty, to have people see what—at least, a form of the wild, it's like—it's a tremendous opportunity. And hopefully, we can continue to do that.

Thank you for participating and trying to work through both the particular details in Alaska that are different and putting it into context, as the biggest part of the National Park Service, "Where am I heading in the future?"

With that, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional information submitted for the hearing record follows:]

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Testimony of Benjamin A. Shaine
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to the
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources
of the House Government Reform Committee ,U.S. House of Representatives
Oversight Hearing on "National Parks of Alaska"
Anchorage, August 14, 2006

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding challenges and opportunities facing our national parks in Alaska. I have lived year-round or seasonally in the McCarthy area of what is now Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve most of my adult life. My wife Marci and I enjoyed our first Alaska winter living in a remote cabin at the entrance to the Chitistone Canyon in 1975-76. Sixteen years ago, we completed our present home on private land we purchased near Kennecott, where we home schooled our children through a good part of their education. I was active in the efforts of our local non-profit group Friends of Kennecott to support federal acquisition of the Kennecott National Historic Landmark and am now president of that organization. Marci and I were among the co-founders of The Wrangell Mountains Center, an institute for education, research and the arts based in McCarthy, and presently serve on its board. This testimony expresses my personal opinions, rather than a position of these organizations.

It is a privilege to live in the middle of a national park. Every day that I wake up in our home in a meadow overlooking the Kennicott Glacier, I am reminded how fortunate we are to be here. We walk from our front yard up through timberline to alpine ridges and passes that extend beyond the horizon, all within the park. A short stroll on another trail takes us to downtown Kennecott, where the Park Service is preserving Alaska's history. In a National Historic Register building owned by our institute in McCarthy just three miles down the road, I teach students who come from across the country to learn about this place.

Living in this incredible land would in any circumstance be a special opportunity. But it is made more special by two additional factors: First, its management is guided by the commitment to its protection made by the American people through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. It is extraordinary to live in a place where the vision of preserving a national treasure for future generations is a guiding principle. Second, through provisions of that act, through congressional intent expressed in the Kennecott National Historic Landmark acquisition appropriation, and by actions of skilled staff of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve working with members of our community, this vision is carried out as a partnership between the federal government and residents,

local businesses and non-profit groups. Wrangell-St. Elias is both our most magnificent mountain wilderness park and a place where a human community thrives on private land in its midst.

Overall, this partnership has been very successful. Since designation of the park, the McCarthy area has been reinvigorated with its first economic base since closure of the Kennecott mines in 1938. While diverse, the various aspects of this still modest economy rest on the natural and historic environment of the place and on its recognition and preservation within a national park. Local hire for the Park Service Kennecott maintenance crew is the largest single source of local employment. Unlike in most parks elsewhere, local businesses operating on private land provide the array of visitor services. Local residents work as park rangers. Local contractors provide construction services for cabin and home building, much of it on land sold by the University of Alaska near McCarthy to new owners attracted by the area's protected natural beauty and national park status. The Wrangell Mountains Center, our institute in McCarthy, partners with the park to host an arts and lecture series that both serves and includes local people. And the park provides scholarships that enable Alaskans to participate in our curriculum workshops for teachers, writing workshops and other programs.

The restored Kennecott recreation hall is a visible result of park-community partnership. Cooperating with Friends of Kennicott, the National Park Service repaired the structure of the long-neglected building using federal funds. Our Friends group combined private donations with grant support from the Rasmussen Foundation to pay for restoration the interior to historic standards. The Park Service local-hire maintenance crew did the construction. Today, this beautiful building is jointly managed by park and Friends staff to house both park and community activities.

In planning and policy matters, as well, the Park Service has been a community partner. For example, cooperating with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the Park Service participated in development of a scenic corridor plan for upgrade of the McCarthy Road, a state-owned highway which is the main access into the park. This plan incorporates design concepts advocated by the McCarthy Area Council. And the park's interim management plan for Kennecott includes a shared vision statement defining purposes, goals and objectives, developed through local community discussions.

Even given such partnerships and commonalities, the National Park Service and the local community have had and will always have their differences. In part, this is proper and right: The Park Service bears the responsibility for the national interest; we locally appropriately place relative priority on our community, homes, and opportunities for our children. At its best, this is a creative tension which produces results more imaginative than possible in a traditional national park or in a community not blessed by park designation. In part, the disagreements between us arise from our lack of skill in resolving difficulties, the perhaps inevitable bureaucratic style of a federal agency, and the limitations of governance in an unincorporated little Alaska town, where virtually all of us appreciate doing without rules and regulations. At present, the contentious inholder

access issue appears to be resolving to a positive solution through the collaborative efforts of regional director Marcia Blaszak, Wrangell-St. Elias park staff, and local landowners. Hopefully, this resolution will build mutual trust that leads to further successful cooperation.

A challenge for the future is for us all to live constructively with the tension between the local and the national interest, focusing on opportunities where these interests overlap to yield partnerships. For the Park Service, that requires vigilance to avoid segregating from the local community in separate housing and facilities, to place priority on staff participation in local community organizations and discussions, to seek local knowledge and expertise in planning and policy, and to rigorously maintain a policy of local hire, even when that is not the normal agency practice. At the same time, the agency has to remember its national and global constituency as well as its responsibilities to future generations and not yield that perspective to avoid local controversy. For us in the local community, one challenge is making the effort to participate effectively in bureaucratic processes we'd rather avoid and likely see as cumbersome, with people who cannot fully understand our ways of life. Another challenge is to appreciate that this place where we live is not ours alone; that by both questioning bureaucracy and yet choosing to accept some limits on our behavior and freedom, we make a contribution which is larger than ourselves.

For the Park Service, a key is appointing staff to Wrangell-St. Elias skilled in meeting these challenges and retaining them here long enough to gain the local knowledge necessary to do their job well. From what I've observed, it usually takes three years for a new superintendent just to get his or her feet on the ground here. For Congress, the responsibility is to provide the funding the park requires to assign staff to work in the field with local partners. This is a priority item not found in most other park budgets. For us locally, a key is continuing to develop our capability to work together through our network of informal organizations, such as the McCarthy Area Council, and our non-profit groups that substitute for and in some instances do better than formal government, so that we can be effective advocates and partners.

As a result of park designation, for the first time since the 1930's a second generation is now establishing itself in McCarthy, including my and my neighbors' grown children. We anticipate the possibility that their children, our grandchildren, will continue to love this special place and enjoy the fine work of offering its experience to others from across the nation and around the world. Dealing well with the complexities of mixed land ownership, multiple interest groups, and a town within the borders of a national park isn't easy, but is worth the effort we are making together.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Supplemental Comments from Jim Stratton
Alaska Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association

Re: "National Parks of Alaska"

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

Anchorage, Alaska

August 14, 2006

At the hearing held in Anchorage, Alaska on August 14, 2006, several negative comments and statements were made regarding the National Park Service and its position and actions relative to access to inholdings, especially in Wrangell - St. Elias National Park & Preserve. Such access is provided for in Section 1110(b) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA). We appreciate the invitation by the Committee to provide a counter perspective and clarifying information based on our participation in access issues and from a recent 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision.

At Wrangell-St. Elias, the conflict between the National Park Service and some local residents is very real. This animosity began with the creation of the national monument by President Jimmy Carter in 1978 and continues today. But, contrary to the representation made at the hearing, this adversarial interaction cannot be totally blamed on the Park Service. Some local residents resist any attempt by the National Park Service to require permits or review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and that disregard for NPS authority can lead to conflict, as it did in 2003. We do agree with comments made at the hearing that communication with locals living in and near Wrangell - St. Elias is improving as a result of leadership provided by Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszak.

The National Park Service has an obligation to protect the public's resources and when ANILCA recognized the opportunity for access to inholdings in Section 1110(b), it did so with the qualification that such access is subject to reasonable regulations. In a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Opinion filed on August 25, 2006 (Hale v. Norton), the court found that ANILCA "provides limited access rights for inholders such as the Hales." (Hale v. Norton 9th Circuit Opinion, 8/25/2006, p. 10211)

In 2003, the Hale Family challenged the "adequate and feasible access.....subject to reasonable regulations" part of the statute (ANILCA Section 1110(b)) by bulldozing a road across national park lands to their 410 acre inholding just outside of the town of McCarthy. The bulldozed

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route was along a trail that was originally a roadbed until it was "abandoned" in 1938 by the Alaska Road Commission. At the time of the bulldozing incident, "All of its bridges have washed away, and the effects of vegetation and erosion have reduced it to little more than a trail." Id. At 10207.

The National Park Service responded to this illegal activity by closing the trail to all but subsistence access by snowmobile. In July 2003, the Hales contacted the Park Service to request a permanent access to their inholding, at which time the Park Service offered to assist with the necessary applications. Nothing happened until September 2003 when the Hales requested an "Emergency" access permit to move building materials onto their site before the ground froze. Again the Park Service responded requesting additional information about what kind of "emergency" it was, as most people in the area prefer snowcover for moving materials to a remote site. It was at this point that the Hales filed suit in Federal District Court on two primary claims: 1.) The Park Service had no right to require the Hales to get a permit for access to their inholding because the road was a state right-of-way and 2.) such a permit was not subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Federal District Court ruled against the Hale Family and made it clear that the National Park Service has every right to seek a permit from anyone seeking access across publicly owned national park lands to their inholding, even if the inholder held a valid existing right-of-way. The District Court found that "the existence of that right-of-way would not shield them from reasonable regulations by the NPS." Id. at 10213. In the Hale case, the family had claimed an existing right-of-way, but the court declined to rule on that issue.

The Park Service moved forward and prepared an expedited Environmental Assessment, at no charge to the Hales, on their emergency request and found that access over adequate snowcover would meet the needs of the Hale Family. The Hales never accepted the permit. Instead, they appealed the District Court decision to the 9th Circuit where the lower court's findings were reaffirmed.

This latest Opinion, submitted with this letter for the record, was in response to a request from the Hale Family for rehearing. That rehearing was denied on August 25, 2006 and a new opinion on the merits of the case was filed. This new opinion finds that "the incorporation of NEPA into the permit-granting procedure is consistent with ANILCA" and the opinion makes it very clear that "conducting a NEPA analysis is consistent with the 'adequate and feasible access' right of ANILCA." Id. at 10215. NEPA has not been used "to deny access to inholders," as some claim. Rather NEPA is exactly what the courts have told NPS they need to do.

While this protracted court case attempted to take away all discretion from the National Park Service for how it would review and permit access requests under ANILCA Section 1110(b), the courts found just the opposite. The Park Service has the authority to require a NEPA reviewed permit. Throughout the early part of the case, including the original decision to close the road and work with the Hale Family to seek access through the proper process, the Superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias was Gary Candelaria. The statement of Mr. Rick Kenyon is wrong when it attributes language from a press release dated November 16, 2004 and titled "Former Wrangell-St. Elias Superintendent Receives Award" to the National Park Service. That press release came from the National Parks Conservation Association. A copy of the release is also attached.

During what the supporters of the Hale Family portrayed as "War In The Wrangells," Mr. Candelaria did the right thing, as affirmed by the 9th Circuit Court Of Appeals, to protect park values by requiring an access permit and evaluating that permit in an Environmental Assessment. During this process, Mr. Candelaria was ridiculed and personally attacked by some members of the local community, yet he did not waver in his commitment to protecting park resources for future generations. Because he successfully weathered these attacks and stood up for park values, NPCA did indeed recognize Mr. Candelaria with its Stephen T. Mather Award.

While the court has affirmed the need for a NEPA reviewed permit for anyone seeking access across national park lands to private property, the Park Service has also learned a valuable lesson. It can do a better job of communicating its process. As a result, it drafted a guide to help inholders better understand who needs a permit and why, and NPS describes the access permit application process. The "Users Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska" will soon be released in its third draft as the Park Service continues to improve the understanding of what's required for an access permit. NPCA has participated in the development of this Guide through our comments and we look forward to its completion as a positive step forward in reducing the historical animosity that has occurred between the Park Service and some residents living in and near Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Testimony for Souder Hearing at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

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 for present and future generations. Today we have more than 325,000 members nationwide who visit and care deeply about our national parks. The objective of this testimony is to highlight the state of national parks in the Great Lakes region, including Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

On October 30, 1916, just two months after the National Park Service was officially established, Stephen Mather, the first Park Service director and a founder of NPCA, held hearings in Chicago to assess public sentiment on a Sand Dunes National Park. Four hundred people attended, and 42 people spoke in favor of the park proposal; no one opposed it. It was to take another 50 years, though, with two world wars and the Great Depression intervening, before Congress enacted legislation authorizing the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in 1966.

Four subsequent expansion bills (1976, 1980, 1986, and 1992) have increased the size of the park to more than 15,000 acres. Indiana Dunes State Park encompasses 2,182 acres within the national lakeshore that are managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

For many residents of Chicago and its environs, Indiana Dunes provides an accessible respite from city life and provides the kind of experience and memories that bind families and generations together. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore runs for nearly 25 miles along southern Lake Michigan, with miles of beaches, sand dunes, bogs, wetlands, and forests. The dune lands of southern Lake Michigan are renowned for stretches of uncrowded beaches and towering, whistling dunes created when wind blowing off the lake lifts grains of sand and transports them inland. Trails surround a heron rookery, where flocks of the birds roost every year. The park

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includes Hoosier Prairie, the largest tract of ancient prairie in Indiana. These diverse environments, formed during the Ice Age, support a unique combination of plant life. Dr. Henry Cowles, known as the "father of plant ecology" in North America conducted his landmark ecological studies in the Indiana Dunes, which is ranked 7th among national parks in native plant diversity. Research conducted over the past two decades has revealed 1,418 vascular plant species within park boundaries, more than 90 of which are threatened or endangered.

The presence of American Indians, early settlers, and links to the Underground Railroad add significant cultural and historic components to Indiana Dunes' rich natural legacy. Native Americans traveled the dunes between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. The Bailly Homestead, built in 1822, established a trading post along the traditional Indian trade routes near the Calumet River, where blankets and guns were exchanged for furs supplied by trappers from the Miami and Potawatomi tribes. Chellberg Farm, begun in 1872 by Swedish immigrants and farmed for more than a century, provides a picture of early agriculture. That such a confluence of resources could exist in a national park located within a 30-minute drive from downtown Chicago is truly remarkable.

This unusual and richly varied repository of both natural and cultural history could easily have been lost in a rapidly growing industrial area, had many people not fought the long battle to establish and preserve Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Chief among them was Dorothy Buell, founder of "Friends of the Dunes." The mission of preserving this biologically and culturally rich place is still greatly complicated by the industrial, urban, and growing suburban development that divides and surrounds the national lakeshore and affects the Great Lakes themselves.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is one of 18 national park units in or near the Great Lakes watershed. In addition to Indiana Dunes, they are: Voyageurs National Park, Grand Portage National Monument, Isle Royale National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore,

Keweenaw National Historical Park, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Saint Croix National Scenic River, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, North Country National Scenic Trail, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, First Ladies National Historic Site, James A. Garfield National Historic Site, Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, Women's Rights National Historical Park, and Fort Stanwix National Monument. Each has an important place in the natural and cultural heritage of the United States.

Great Lakes Basin

The Great Lakes basin, a vast region defined by its waters, geology, and forests, boasts nearly 5,500 miles of shoreline, has a wide array of plant and animal species, and supports a diverse regional economy. The waters in the five massive lakes that make up the Great Lakes have shaped the region's history, giving life to wetlands and boreal forests, while supporting commercial agriculture, industry, and fishing. The Great Lakes constitute more than 95 percent of America's surface fresh water. Forty million people depend on them for clean drinking water. Yet, the entire ecosystem is facing serious threats to its sustainability.

Around 1960, people began to recognize that emerging threats to the watershed typically fell into three broad categories: pollution, habitat loss, and introduction of exotic, non-native species. Today, these issues persist and are now accompanied by a litany of other pressures. Pollution comes from many sources but most consistently from waste discharges, agricultural and urban runoff, oil and chemical spills, and the effects of mining on groundwater. Many toxic pollutants (certain pesticides, for example) are biomagnified as they pass up the food chain, leading to toxic concentrations millions of times greater in predatory fish and birds than in aquatic herbivores. Extensive habitat loss and sedimentation during the last 150 years of development has forever altered the basin's hydrology. Major causes have been dam construction, conversion of wetlands, peat mining, extensive logging, and intensive agriculture. Finally, hundreds of non-native introduced species have dramatically altered historic plant and

animal communities. Common exotic plants now include purple loosestrife and European buckthorn. Zebra mussels, carp, and sea lampreys have invaded the lake waters, released by European freight ships dumping their ballast water. These problems also severely affect national park units in the region where swimming and use of the water features is an integral part of the visitors' experience. Zebra mussels have been a particular problem at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, for example, and beach and swimming closures because of high levels of pollution from such things as sewer overflows threaten all of the waterfront parks. Beach closures because of high concentrations of PCBs, toxic metal, e-coli bacteria, and pathogens have been a recurring problem at Indiana Dunes.

Great Lakes Initiative

In May 2004, President Bush issued an executive order that designated the Great Lakes as a national treasure and created the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC). The goal of the GLRC was to craft and implement a comprehensive Great Lakes restoration strategy. Headed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the GLRC is composed of a federal cabinet-level task force, regional governors and mayors, Native American tribes, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Following its first meeting in December 2004, the GLRC identified seven critical issues requiring immediate attention and funding: aquatic invasive species, habitat conservation and species management, toxic pollutants, coastal health, contaminated harbors, reliable environmental information and indicators, and sustainable development.

After an initial draft and comment period, the GLRC issued its final plan on December 12, 2005. This plan calls for initiatives such as increasing the number of wetlands, preventing the introduction of additional invasive specie, and eliminating toxic discharges into waterways. All told, the plan calls for some $20 billion in funding over five years and provides detailed recommendations and cost estimates for completing its goals in each of the seven critical areas.

Throughout the process, NPCA has been a strong advocate for the Great Lakes and the park units in or near the watershed. NPCA recognizes that the health of the national parks in the region is tied to the health of the lakes. Since 2004, NPCA has co-chaired a coalition called, "Healing our Waters – Great Lakes". The coalition, composed of 85 member organizations has used the GLRC action plan as a blueprint to seek the state and federal dollars needed to implement it. On April 5, a bipartisan coalition of more than 30 House members introduced the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act, HR 5100. A companion bill, S. 2545, was introduced in the Senate. The bill puts into action the recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, and if enacted, would be the nation's largest environmental restoration project ever.

This robust restoration proposal will create jobs, improve the quality of drinking water and edible fish for millions of people, and restore crucial wildlife habitat throughout the basin. Without it, the Great Lakes as we know and love them will slowly continue to die, and the national parks that depend on them will deteriorate. With each passing day, the problems become worse and the solutions more costly. We commend the bill to you for your consideration, and we encourage your support.

Ground Zero for Air Pollution

Unfortunately, polluted water is not the only serious environmental challenge facing the Great Lakes and the parks that surround them. The 18 parks of the Great Lakes region find themselves at "ground zero" for air pollution. The larger Midwest region contains the highest concentration of outdated coal-fired power plants anywhere in the United States. Hundreds of older coal-fired plants operate in the region without modern emissions controls. These plants account for the vast majority of air pollution that fouls our parks, including sulfur dioxide, which creates fine particle soot, nitrogen oxides, which contribute to ozone smog formation, and mercury, a highly toxic metal that contaminates fish and endangers the animals and people who eat them.

Nearly every national park unit along Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario lies within an area that fails to meet federal air quality standards for ozone and/or fine particle soot, meaning that the air in those parks can be unhealthy to breathe. One of the great benefits of national parks is, of course, that they provide families with opportunities to participate in healthy outdoor activities together. Unfortunately, visitors to these parks might arrive to find "code red" advisories discouraging strenuous activities such as paddling, hiking, and biking that could damage their lungs. The same pollution that threatens our lungs can also ruin scenic views that are a signature feature of many national parks. At Voyagers National Park in northern Minnesota, for example, natural views should extend to more than 100 miles. However, on the haziest of summer days, fine particle soot cuts views to only a third of that distance.

In addition, high concentrations of mercury have been found in the Great Lakes Watershed as a result of coal-fired power plant emissions. For example, at Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior, dangerously elevated levels of mercury have been found in water and soils.

Clean Air Program

NPCA now has an active clean air program to address the main causes of air pollution that fouls our national parks in the Great Lakes region and other parts of the country. Chief among them are those same coal-fired power plants that have been allowed to operate up to 50 years without modern pollution controls. Although some progress is being made to clean up these plants, current programs will address only about half of the outdated plants. To keep the Great Lakes parks clean, clear and healthy, we need to finish the job. We urge Members of Congress to oppose proposals that would weaken current clean air protection for the parks and to support measures that would speed the modernization of power plants in the region.

Funding Challenges in the Great Lakes

It is impossible to talk about any of the National Park System's now 390 units without addressing the funding shortfalls that have beset the system for years. To say they are at a point of crisis is inadequate. Decades of insufficient investment by successive Congresses and administrations is being exacerbated by new demands and responsibilities, such as homeland security, increasing energy costs, unbudgeted cost-of-living increases for personnel, and the non-reimbursed costs of severe storm damage.

According to a new GAO report issued in April of this year, the National Park Service has had to absorb more than $300 million in fixed costs over the last six years, which means they have had to defer spending on daily operations and services such as visitor center hours, educational programs, supply purchases, and custodians. As a result, less attention can be paid to protection of both natural and cultural resources or to visitor safety. According to agency estimates, the cumulative cost of salary increases the Park Service has had to absorb has been $482 million. New homeland security costs since September 11, 2001, amount to from $30 to $50 million annually. The GAO found that operational appropriations for the parks rose only about 1.3 percent from 2001 to 2005 and have not kept pace with inflation.

Budget shortfalls affect the quantity and quality of public education programs and school outreach that the National Park Service can provide. Last January, the Park Service was forced to place three members of Indiana Dunes' talented education staff on unpaid leave. Over the last four years, Indiana Dunes has let 23 full-time equivalent staff positions lapse, which means fewer opportunities for school groups and other park visitors to participate in ranger-led programs. One-quarter of the school groups requesting educational programs at Indiana Dunes had to be turned away. There are 192 projects at Indiana Dunes that remain unfunded—everything from replacing hazardous trail treads and structures and replacing outdated search and rescue equipment to preserving the historic Bailly Brick House from collapse.

The same kinds of problems and conditions exist in park units throughout the region. Here are just two examples:

- At Voyageurs National Park, the ability to maintain trails has eroded, despite a new volunteer program. Although no trails have actually been closed, visitors have been advised not to use some of the worst ones. Visitor center hours have been trimmed back and the seasons at Kab Lake and Ash River have been shortened. Key maintenance positions have been reduced—including the only employee with expertise in preservation work on historic structures.
- Seven fewer ranger/interpreters will be available this summer at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and the visitor center and Little Sand Bay will be open only when volunteers are available to staff it. Without staff, the historic buildings at the Manitou Fish Camp are locked up for the season. Critical monitoring of invasive species will be reduced because of the loss of a staff biologist.

Assessing the Damage

Undoubtedly, more examples will emerge when NPCA's Center for the State of the Parks completes and publishes its thematic report on national park units of the Great Lakes, work that is now under way and slated to be completed within a year. Conducted in partnership with Southern Illinois University, this project will assess resources at Isle Royale National Park (MI), Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (MI), Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (WI), Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (MI), Keweenaw National Historical Park (MI), and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IN). By providing objective, fact-based information to the U.S. Congress, the National Park Service, and other federal government agencies and affiliated organizations interested in the country's national parks, the Center for the State of the Parks provides an important service—one that contributes to NPCA's goal of protecting the parks now and for future generations.

One thing we know for certain is that the longer the decline in park services and resource conditions is allowed to continue, the more difficult it will be to correct the situation. In some instances, that may not even be possible.

Increasing Funding for the Parks

One of NPCA's priorities is to significantly increase funding for the Park Service. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the President's FY07 budget for the Park Service would result in an overall decrease of a little more than $100 million from the current spending level. The President's requested increase of $23 million for operations of the National Park System is well below the rate of inflation and would further reduce critical Park Service functions, including resource protection and visitor services. We have requested an increase of $150 million above the current FY06 levels, $127 million above the President's request, for a total of $1.86 billion for operations of the National Park System.

We are also urging a significant increase in funding for National Park Service land acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation fund. The President's request of only $22 million for land acquisition, a cut of more than 50 percent from enacted levels, and more than $100 million below levels only five years ago, hinders the ability of the Park Service to acquire and protect significant and strategic parcels from willing sellers across the nation. An estimated 6 million acres within our national parks are owned by private citizens and organizations. Acquiring certain of these in-holdings is an important part of protecting and managing many of the 390 park units.

At Indiana Dunes, the lakeshore surrounds Indiana Dunes State Park. The national lakeshore's jagged boundaries and co-jurisdictions with the state park and abutting communities, including 11 municipalities and three county governments, can cause confusion. The parks'

location in a highly developed area requires extensive communication and partnerships with the public regarding controversial issues, including air and water quality, deer management, and land use. Indiana Dunes has an acquisition backlog that includes some 45 tracts, amounting to about 260 acres. Last year, Congressman Visclosky introduced the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Corrections Act, which would clarify the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of lands contiguous to the park. We support that bill, which is designated as H.R. 1625. Developing and maintaining the national lakeshore's identity and partnerships are vital, both in terms of protecting the parks' resources and securing funding, and maintaining a reasonable funding level for land acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The argument is often made that with limited budgets, the Park Service should be focused on managing and maintaining the land it already has rather than adding new land to its responsibilities. Managing a checkerboard of parkland, as we have seen at Indiana Dunes, can often be more burdensome and expensive than caring for a uniform and contiguous area. Acquisition of strategic in-holdings and other important tracts of land is not done for acquisition's sake, nor should it be opposed merely out of opposition to federal land ownership. As in all aspects of park management, a thoughtful and reasoned approach is needed that takes the specific situation into account.

We realize that we are not asking for increased funding for the national parks in a vacuum. It is an unfortunate but simple fact that discretionary programs such as national parks must compete for federal dollars among many other important priorities during extraordinarily difficult and turbulent times. But NPCA's role and challenge is to remind federal policy makers and appropriators that the national parks are still a priority of the American people and should be one of their priorities as well. Americans strongly support our national parks. A Harris poll released in December 2005 found that national parks topped the list of federal government services with the strongest public support—85 percent—ahead even of Social Security.

Editorial after editorial from every part of the country calls for adequate and increased funding for the National Park System. A sampling of these editorials will be submitted for the hearing record. Mr. Chairman, your personal leadership in circulating the letter signed by a record number of your House colleagues from both parties this spring asking the Appropriations Committee to adequately fund the national parks is invaluable in helping make that case. We thank you for underscoring for the appropriators that parks are a national priority.

We also greatly appreciate your support for the National Park Centennial Act, which represents a real attempt to provide a concrete means to facilitate sufficient funding for the national parks on an ongoing basis. Not only would the tax check off feature of the bill produce revenue for park use, it would also give the American people the opportunity to participate and make a statement in support of the National Park System. The number of co-sponsors is up to 65 in the House, and seven in the Senate. NPCA is also working on other innovative and creative ideas for addressing park funding issues and alleviating the $4.5 billion to $9.7 billion maintenance backlog. Our lofty goal is to achieve that before the National Park System's Centennial in 2016.

Opportunities and Solutions

Mr. Chairman, you know NPCA primarily as an issue advocate, helping to shape federal policy relating to the National Park System through an active government relations program. That is certainly an important part of our work, but it is not the only thing NPCA does. In addition to the Center for the State of the Parks, which is working to assess the health of several Great Lakes parks, NPCA's Center for Park Management is also working in the region.

Although more money would improve the National Park Service's ability to protect our national treasures and serve the millions of visitors who enjoy them each year, NPCA also recognizes that park managers need the right tools to more efficiently manage park finances.

During a seven-year partnership with the Park Service, the Business Plan Initiative helped more than 60 national parks—from Acadia in Maine to Denali in Alaska—develop business plans. Graduate students from some of the county's finest business schools assisted park managers in gathering and analyzing data. They examined the standards required to meet park responsibilities and the gaps between existing funding and the justified need. Once the analysis was complete, parks produced business plans that identified and strategically addressed funding shortfalls.

One of the lessons learned was that the parks could not be fully protected, and NPCA could not succeed in its mission to "protect our national parks for future generations," unless park managers had the tools and training to manage parks effectively. To help the Park Service do that, the Center for Park Management (CPM) works with NPS managers to implement strategies for improved park management. The center is currently working with two national parks in the Great Lakes Basin to improve operational and financial management capacity.

In 2005, CPM began a series of management projects with Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Projects completed to date include an updated analysis of operational budgetary shortfalls designed to help the park communicate its funding story to the public and an in depth analysis of costs and benefits of a wide variety of potential fee options for the park. In May 2006, the Center for Park Management will begin a project with Cuyahoga Valley National Park. From a list of more than a dozen potential ideas that will help the park stretch is budgetary dollars, CPM will likely start with an analysis of the costs associated with operating the parks fleet of vehicles. **Using CPM's fleet management software**, recommendations will be made for cost saving measures. CPM will also work with park staff to improve the efficiency of its ranger dispatch center. Better management means improved visitor experience, provides stronger resource protection, and makes the national parks more enjoyable for everyone. It is essential for national parks that have been operating on a starvation diet for years. Providing concrete ideas and steps designed to improve management at specific parks is a service NPCA is proud to be able to provide. NPCA and its Center for Park Management will continue to assist parks in implementing money-saving strategies and developing new tools to improve efficiency so the

Park Service can better achieve its mission of protecting park resources and providing for visitor enjoyment.

Conclusion

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing the subcommittee to this unique national park and for focusing attention on the issues facing the parks in the Great Lakes region of the country. The health and survival of the parks depends in large measure on the rehabilitation of the Great Lakes themselves and on addressing the clean air issues that trouble the region. Their future also depends on providing an adequate level of funding that ensures these special places are preserved to continue protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the United States. Perhaps it is indeed these times that make the national parks, the places that inspire us as a free and democratic nation, so important.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Protecting Parks for Future Generations

Testimony for Souder Hearing at Atlanta, Georgia

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 for present and future generations. Today we have over 325,000 members nationwide who visit and care deeply about our national parks. The objective of this testimony is two-fold. First, the document will provide an examination of the prominent role the Park Service plays in interpreting, protecting and preserving African American history, and second highlight the state of national parks in the southeastern United States.

In assessing the connection between the National Park Service (NPS) and African American history this testimony stands out from previous discussions of the challenges facing our national parks. Recognizing the role national parks currently play in highlighting the African American experience and assisting the Park Service with the creation of an even more inclusive National Park System will be vital to securing the future of these most special places, especially with the nation's changing demographics. Fortunately, the Park Service, with a little help from their friends, has been largely successful in establishing a variety of sites, programs, and outreach tools that have increased public knowledge of black history in very tangible ways.

From Mary Mcleod Bethune to the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, from Civil War to civil rights, the cultural contributions and legacies of black Americans dot the Park Service landscape like stars in a clear night sky. In fact, the Park Service is one of the largest custodians of African American history simply by virtue of the sites they manage and the stories they help interpret and preserve. It is for this reason that all those who have a vested interest in broadening public understanding and appreciation of African American history must also have a vested interest in the health and well being of our national parks.

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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Of the 390 units in the National Park System 18 directly celebrate the African American experience. There are, of course, the "crown jewels" of African American heritage, such as the Frederick Douglass Home National Historic Site (DC) and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site (GA). But less well known are the hidden treasures of the park system that feature some small but valuable piece of black history.

For example, Park Service interpreters at Gettysburg National Military Park tell the story of Abraham Bryan, a free black man from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Bryan's farmhouse was located on Cemetery Ridge near what would become the climax point of Pickett's Charge. Bryan fled Gettysburg in late June 1863 with his family and scores of other African Americans who feared they might be captured by invading Confederate forces and sent south into slavery.

A display at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park describes the tale of a whaling ship captain named William Shorey. Shorey guided his vessel the *John and Winthrop* on a year long voyage to the Sea of Okhost where the crew took 4 whales before setting sail back to the Bay area. On the return voyage Shorey successfully piloted the ship through two fierce typhoons. Sailors on the *John and Winthrop* noted for reporters upon their safe return that Captain Shorey's "coolness and clever seamanship" had saved the crew from almost certain disaster. The sub-heading of the 1907 newspaper account of the voyage of the *John and Winthrop* stated that the ship was the "only vessel on Coast [sic] having a colored captain."

In 1906, members of the Niagara Movement gathered on the Campus of Storer College, in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, for a historic meeting. Led by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, the Niagara Movement called for an end to racial discrimination and lynching. On the third day of their meeting the "Niagarites" made a silent pilgrimage to John Brown's Fort (then located on the Murphy Farm property) to pay homage to the man whom they believed had helped bring about freedom for millions of enslaved African Americans.

Although Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is often better known for the exploits of John Brown or Stonewall Jackson, the park (which encompasses Storer College) may be rightly

regarded as the birthplace of the modern civil rights movement. For when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established in 1911, veterans from the Niagara Movement formed its core. In August 2006, the Park Service, in conjunction with the Jefferson County branch of the NAACP, will celebrate the centennial of the Niagara Movement meeting at Storer College once again demonstrating the integral role NPS plays in promoting black history.

The Park Service also plays a key role in determining how we think about the history of people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* and *Common Ground* are two NPS publications that help drive the intellectual debate regarding the latest developments in cultural resource management and scholarship. A summer 2004 article in *CRM* entitled "Presenting Race and Slavery at Historic Sites," advised readers that staff and visitors at national historic sites were much more open to discussing the subject of slavery than had been previously imagined. Such information can strengthen the resolve of park staff to develop interpretation around "third-rail" issues such as race and slavery.

The Park Service works with professors and professionals in the fields of history, science, anthropology, architecture, historic preservation, public history, landscape architecture, and maritime history. State historic preservation officers, tribal historic preservation officers, and community experts, all benefit from and influence Park Service cultural resource management practices. In many ways, the units of the National Park System that deal with African American history and culture are just the tip of an iceberg that includes, unseen beneath the surface, a host of scholars, researchers, technicians, and experts, that make sure the stories shared by San Francisco Maritime, Gettysburg, and Harpers Ferry, are accurate representations of our history presented in a respectful and inclusive manner.

When our parks are chronically underfunded, face a burgeoning maintenance backlog, and suffer from the ill effects of air and water pollution, all Americans lose. But it is black history that can take an especially significant hit. For every visitor center that gets placed on reduced hours, for every lapsed interpretive position, for every unit in the system that must make

do with fewer seasonal employees, the possibility that visitors will not learn about Abraham Bryan, William Shorey, or the Niagara Movement increases exponentially.

Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park System once said "He or she is a better citizen who has traveled in the national parks." Implied in that statement is the idea that he or she who has traveled in the national parks will be a more informed citizen, a person transformed by the experience of standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, or in front of the pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. swayed capacity crowds with his oratorical prowess. Our national parks have the power to awake and inspire, to captivate and compel, to heal and unite. Yes, our parks can do that. But not without adequate support from Congress and the people of the United States.

In their preamble to the July 2001 report "Rethinking National Parks for the 21st Century," the National Park System Advisory Board, appointed by former Park Service Director Robert Stanton and chaired by the distinguished historian Dr. John Hope Franklin, stated, *"The creation of a national park is an expression of faith in the future. It is a pact between generations, a promise from the past to the future."* Our parks are also an opportunity to learn from the past and honor those who have gone before as we trod the yet uncharted path into our own future. We should do our utmost to ensure that this promise does not become a dream deferred.

Southeast National Park Funding At a Glance

Americans strongly support our national parks. A Harris poll released in December found that national parks topped the list of federal government services with the strongest public support (85%), ahead of even Social Security. Unfortunately, while there is a strong public support for the parks, this has not translated to a corresponding level of sustainable federal funding.

The funding challenge facing national parks in the southeast are comparable to those across the system's 388 park units throughout the nation. The budgets of Georgia's national parks today (FY 2006) received on average only a two percent increase from last year[1], and are not keeping pace with inflation and other demands placed on the parks, including the costs associated with repairing hurricane damage. Furthermore, an across-the-board cut of one percent to all federal programs was recently enacted by Congress to pay for the final FY 2006 appropriations measures and will further harm the parks.

In recent years, some parks were fortunate last year to receive significant increases to their operating budgets. For example, in fiscal year 2005 the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site received $1 million to support the MLK, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The park works with the Center to preserve and interpret the legacy of Dr. King and the history of the civil rights movement. That same year, the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Alabama received $139,000 for interpretive and educational program for this new site. Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site was established in October 1998 and not operational with staff until fiscal year 2001.

While the MLK and site and Tuskegee received important funding increases in last year's budget, they were the exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, MLK and Tuskegee, as all of the other 390 units of the Park System received no programmatic increases in their operating budgets in the current fiscal year 2006 budget. As a result, park superintendents across the country are faced with difficult decisions on what services to cut back, or what projects to defer.

1. The African American experience in southeastern national parks

The Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (AL)

In January 1941, news that the U.S. Army Air Corps was forming a segregated unit of black aviators and support crew was greeted with skepticism. Despite the successful record of black aviators of the 1920s and 1930s such as Bessie Coleman, William Powell, and Willa

Brown, many still reasoned that African Americans lacked the equilibrium required to fly; especially combat missions in wartime. When Secretary of Defense Henry L. Stimson declared that the program would "produce disaster" he captured the sentiments of many Americans. Undeterred, scores of African American men made their way to Tuskegee Institute's Moton Field in rural southeastern Alabama to undergo basic pilot training.

The cadets who would become Tuskegee Airmen were initially recruited to join the Civilian Pilot Training program. With Europe already embroiled in conflict and the United States vying with Japan for control of resources in Asia and the Pacific, the Roosevelt Administration well understood the need to prepare the country for war. The German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Battle of Britain in May 1940, had proven to observers in the United States just how crippling a lack of trained pilots could be. Still, despite the nation's need for trained flyers, racial prejudice almost kept the Civilian Pilot Training program an all white affair.

First lady Eleanor Roosevelt secured a place for Tuskegee in military aviation when she visited Moton Field in March 1941. As Roosevelt watched black pilots take off and land she mused to one of her guides that she had been told "Negroes couldn't fly." The first lady then selected C. Alfred "Chief" Anderson, who had founded the Civilian Pilot Training program at Howard University before coming to Tuskegee, to take her up in an airplane, much to the alarm of her staff and attendants. Anderson later wrote that,

> When we came back, she said, 'Well, you can fly all right.' I'm positive that when she went home, she said, 'Franklin, I flew with those boys down there, and you're going to have to do something about it."

The first class of Tuskegee Airmen graduated in May 1942 and formed the 99th Pursuit Squadron. The 99th were stationed in North Africa where they provided close air support for U.S. forces during the assault on Anzio. The 99th was later assigned the duty of escorting American bombers on their long-range runs over targets in Poland, Hungary, and Germany. The Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber under their escort to action by enemy fighters.

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[1] Please see the Appendices for the complete funding tables.

The Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group (subsequent classes of Tuskegee Airmen created three new squadrons in addition to the 99th) flew 15,000 sorties, 1,500 missions, and received 150 distinguished flying crosses and legions of merit. The performance of these men, along with their counterparts in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army infantry, played a valuable role in the success of the Allied war effort and paved the way for President Harry S. Truman's 1948 Executive Order that desegregated the military. One Tuskegee alumnus, Daniel "Chappie" James, would become the country's first African American Four-Star General.

But it would take some time before the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen would gain full appreciation in the public conscience. At the conclusion of the Second World War, the black pilots, support crew, and nurses assigned to the 332nd returned home not as champions of democracy but as second class citizens in a nation divided by jim crow laws and racial inequality. The authorization of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site was one more significant step in the drive to share the compelling history of these American heroes with the public.

The Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site was established by Public Law 105-355 in November 1998. Congress authorized $29.1 million to support the development of the site and, as of January 2006, $7.5 million has been appropriated. To date, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site has weathered the annual appropriations process relatively well. Funding for stage 1a and 1b projects mostly related to the restoration of Moton Field to its historic 1940s appearance and to provide for visitor services (parking, restrooms, pedestrian access) has been approved. Although across the board cuts in FY 06 and anticipated cuts to the FY 07 budget will weaken actual spending power, the Park Service expects to complete all stage 1 projects.

The park is, however, still attempting to secure funding for stage 2 projects, including the exterior reconstruction of Hanger #2, the rehabilitation of the control tower, and the construction of a visitor center and museum complex. Along with the oral history project, which was completed in 2005, the stage 2 projects are key to the development of strong interpretive programs and displays that will inform visitors about the history of the Tuskegee Airmen. The

park has requested $7,481,469 million to complete its stage 2 work. A close monitoring of future appropriations will be required to ensure that the Park Service receives sufficient funding to help the Tuskegee Airmen complete their last mission.

The Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

The Underground Railroad was the name given to the informal network of roads, trails, waterways, and safe houses used by enslaved Africans to make their escape from slavery to freedom in the decades prior to the start of the American Civil War. The railroad ran not just from southern to northern states, but also west to Mexico and California and south into the Caribbean.

In July 1998, Congress established the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program (NTF). The Park Service was given management authority and directed to create a network of partnerships and then provide technical expertise and financial assistance to NTF members. The NTF was initially authorized to receive $500,000 a year to support operations and an additional $500,000 annually for grants. The NTF program is currently running in 26 states and the District of Columbia and has over 250 members (sites, individuals, and programs).

The Network to Freedom was perhaps, the most innovative program ever created by the National Park Service. At the core of the NTF was the bold concept that not only should support and recognition be provided to local experts on Underground Railroad history, but that such support should be aimed at helping those experts retain control over their resources, structures, artifacts, and archives. By not requiring members to ship their collections to some far away museum, the NTF empowered communities across the nation to more ably tell their piece of the Underground Railroad story within the actual context where that history played out.

In 2003, the NTF received $250,000 in grant money to disburse to members. The program made 14 grants to projects in 11 states funding historic preservation planning in Kansas, the Mary Meachum Freedom Crossing site in Missouri, and a project at Fort Donelson National

Historic Site (TN) entitled "Understanding the African American Experience at Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson." The Fort Donelson grant totaled just $1,250, but when matched with other funds, helped the Park Service create interpretive materials that added information about the history of black freedmen and women who sought refuge at the fort after General Ulysses S. Grant's 1862 victory. Initial reports have indicated an increase in the number of African American visitors to Fort Donelson, which park staff attribute to the new interpretation.

Unfortunately, cutbacks in funding have seriously undermined much of the progress the NTF has made since 1998. In 2003, the $500,000 authorized for operational support for the NTF was reduced to $482,000. At this level the Network to Freedom cannot cover the salaries of its 6 staff or support any other programmatic costs. In that same year the grant money for the NTF was eliminated from the program budget.

Although the lack of funding adversely impacts the NTF nationwide, budget shortfalls have had an especially chilling affect on the functions of the program's southeast regional coordinator. A popular Junior Rangers booklet on the Underground Railroad, created by the southeast office of the NTF, and widely disseminated to teach young people about this important period in American history needs to be updated and reprinted. Yet the program cannot afford the $5,000 it will take to publish 25,000 copies of the new version of the booklet.

Partners from across the southeast region who joined the NTF in order to become eligible for financial assistance have waited in vain for help as grant money has either been stricken from the program's budget or allocated in smaller portions. In Mississippi, an NTF member representing the Forks of the Road Enslavement Site has prepared an 800-page manuscript that will form the basis of a book, a high school curriculum on slavery, and interpretive materials for the former slave market. NTF funding was to provide the project with a base against which matching funds could be added to help complete the manuscript project. Currently, there is not one penny of funding available to assist with this effort.

The Network to Freedom program needs a relatively small infusion of money to make it once again viable. NPCA has concluded that an additional $1.5 million added to program's annual budget (raising the total to just under $2 million) would provide enough funding to support staff, programmatic costs, and grants. Funded at this level, this dynamic program would still be the biggest bargain the federal government has seen since the Louisiana Purchase.

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

The residents of New Orleans, officials from local, state, and federal government, and citizens from across the nation remain engaged in the work of recovering the Crescent City from the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina. The restoration of New Orleans and proper care for the people of that city are understandably and unmistakably high priorities. Within that context, however, NPCA believes that New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park's proposed "jazz complex" could serve as the jazz center for both the city and the nation. A cursory review of current redevelopment plans appear to exclude the Park Service and New Orleans Jazz altogether, promoting instead the development of a private jazz center, archives, and performance space.

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park was established in 1994, to "preserve jazz resources and disseminate information about the history, development, and progression of jazz…" The city was home to many influential jazz musicians including Louis Armstrong, Buddy Bolden, and Sidney Bechet. The music they created in the streets, clubs, and halls of the Crescent City helped define the "New Orleans sound."

With the creation of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park the Park Service was poised to play a leading role in the interpretation of this indigenous American art form. In 1999, the park drafted a jazz complex plan, which outlined steps and costs for expanding the park and enhancing the Park Service's ability to more ably share New Orleans' musical legacy with the world. Thus far, the project has received 25 percent of the estimated $10 to $11 million of required funding.

Although all plans for the rebuilding of New Orleans are tentative, it must be noted that the mayoral commission's vision does not include mention of New Orleans Jazz or the Park Service. In fact, the Park Service may well be viewed as a large part of the problem. After all, New Orleans Jazz rents deteriorating buildings and has suffered from the same budgetary constraints and staff reductions that plague other units of the National Park System. Without a full understanding of park funding needs, and the true potential of the site, it is understandable that the residents of New Orleans incorrectly regard New Orleans Jazz as only a partially achieved success.

Jazz music, or the rhythms and dances that would become jazz, were born in the improvised songs of enslaved Africans who gathered in Congo Square. These men and women had been removed from a dozen different homelands, spoke a dozen different languages, and knew a great deal about the triumph of the human spirit and the suffering of human flesh. In a September 2005 message, Superintendent John Quirk of New Orleans Jazz wrote,

> The great paradox of the uniquely American art form called jazz is that it continues to progress, even as it remains rooted here in New Orleans. Somewhere each day an old jazz song is played in a new way. Somewhere each day a new jazz song, reflective of contemporary mood, emerges. And yet, the origins of traditional jazz in New Orleans remain the immutable bedrock, the substrate of the primordial ooze from which the music emerged, and to which the new artists all must pay homage.

No matter what new tributes the Big Easy creates to celebrate its musical legacy, the Park Service and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park should be in that number.

2. "Time long past, to preserve..." The Moccasin Bend National Historic Site and the Trail of Tears: Commemorating American Indian Heritage in Our National Parks

In addition to being one of the largest custodians of African American history in the country, the Park Service also manages a number of sites directly relevant to American Indian history and culture. This is especially true in the southeastern United States, where Indians established communities and ways of living on lands thousands of years before they would become sites in our National Park System.

Moccasin Bend

The Moccasin Bend National Historic Site consists of 900 acres tucked into a u-shaped, north-south running bend along the Tennessee River. Described as a "constellation of human habitation," Moccasin Bend contains traces of human occupation dating back 12,000 years. Archeology studies have confirmed the presence of ancient tribes who hunted for mastadons and mammoths. And in the 1860s, soldiers from both Union and Confederate armies were stationed there. It is Moccasin Bend's link to American Indian heritage, however, that forms a vital component of the history and significance of the site.

Evidence of Paleo (Stone Age - 12,000 to 8,000 bce), Early and Middle Archaic (8,000 to 4,000 bce), and Woodland era (1,000 bce to 900 ce) Indian sites, including a late Woodland burial mound complex, has been documented at Moccasin Bend. The area also served as a point of contact between Mississippian Indian and Spanish cultures, a Creek occupation site, the location of Cherokee and Chickamauga towns (1776 to 1838), and a staging point for the forced removal of Indians on the "Trail of Tears." The Chattanooga Inter-Tribal Association (CITA) regards Moccasin Bend as a sacred place and has stated its very strong support for the "absolute preservation and protection of the cultural and natural resources…" therein.

The first efforts to protect Moccasin Bend by adding it to the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park came in 1949, when the House Committee on Public Lands unanimously approved the transfer of 1,400 acres to the Park Service. The effort generated no tangible results and by 1959, the Park Service was refusing overtures to acquire the Bend because commercial development in the intervening years had made the area unsuitable for the needs a uniform park. The mid-1960s witnessed a growth in academic and public interest in the American Indian legacy at Moccasin Bend and several surveys revealed rich evidence of Indian life on the peninsula. In 1984, Moccasin Bend was designated as an Archaeological District and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In October 2001, Congressman Zack Wamp (R-TN) led the effort to establish the Moccasin Bend National Historic Site. H.R. 980 called for the creation of a park that would

"preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of the public the nationally significant archeological and historic resources located on the peninsula known as Moccasin Bend." The development of this national park unit was also closely tied to economic initiatives designed to reinvigorate the city of Chattanooga and spur sustainable riverfront development. H.R. 980 passed with bi-partisan support and the endorsement of the five civilized tribes of Cherokees.

The recent addition of Moccasin Bend has provided the park Service with an opportunity to establish a cultural interpretive center that examines and explains Indian links to the site. The Park Service is also required by H.R. 980 to produce a General Management Plan that will chart the course for the management of Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park and Moccasin Bend over the for the next several years. With solid support from its political champions and backing from friends and allies, Moccasin Bend National Historic Site is poised to become a leading center for the advancement of public knowledge of American Indian history and culture. Congress must provide the Park Service the funding necessary to move forward with the protection and interpretation of this culturally significant site.

Trail of Tears

The forced removal of the Cherokee began with a promise from President Andrew Jackson. "You shall," Jackson told tribal representatives gathered in Washington, " remain in your ancient land as long as grass grows and water runs." The Cherokee had largely made their peace with living among European settlers, but a significant number of residents of the southeastern United States viewed the Indians as obstacles to westward expansion and progress. In 1838, a military invasion of Cherokee lands was launched and the displacement of an entire people began.

The Cherokee were gathered in forts to await expulsion from their homeland. The conditions were horrible, with shortages of food and shelter contributing to deaths of many. Disease and death followed the Cherokee as they moved west and the route they traveled became known as the Trail of Tears.

In June 2005, Representatives Zach Wamp (R-TN), Marion Berry (D-AR), and 18 cosponsors introduced HR 3085. The bill called for an amendment to the National Trail System Act in relation to the Trail of Tears that would extend the trail by 2,000 miles through Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama. The changes are based upon new research conducted by the Park Service and members of the Trail of Tears Association that identified many of the routes used by the Cherokee during their forced removal. Prior to publication of the new research historians had been uncertain as to the exact course taken by the Cherokee and their military escorts.

The Trail of Tears has been referred to as a "tragic tale of force winning over decency." Inclusion of this story in our National Park System does justice to the victims of the policy of forced removal and confirms the willingness of this country to examine the more sinister elements of its past.

3. "You don't miss your water 'til your well run dry": Archives & artifacts in southeastern parks

Nearly every national park preserves artifacts of some cultural or historic significance. All told, more than 105 million museum objects in 350 parks help to interpret the cultural experiences, diverse stories, and scientific phenomena that form the fabric of our national heritage. Of even greater significance, the artifacts maintained by the Park Service remain in the exact context where they were first defined in our culture.

For example, if funding allows the Park Service to complete plans to open a permanent visitor center at the Tuskegee Airmen's Memorial in Tuskegee, Alabama, visitors will be able to see the bright blue and yellow PT-17 Stearman biplane on which African American cadets trained to become United States Army Air Corps fighter pilots. To be able to stand on that field, literally in the footsteps of these American heroes, and imagine the roar of the engine and the rush of the wind as these young pilots soared up from an Alabama field and into history, is to have exactly the kind of unique experience our national parks have excelled at providing visitors since the founding of the system.

Although the value of artifacts in our national parks is well defined, the quantity, scope, and condition of these treasures remains less clear. NPCA's 2005 report *Faded Glory: Top 10 Reasons to Reinvest in America's National Park Heritage* found that, due largely to inadequate funding, a full 54 percent of the items in Park Service museums and archival collections have yet to be catalogued. When the prized possessions in NPS museum collections sit gathering dust in rooms that are inaccessible to the public, no one benefits.

Ocmulgee

Designated in 1936, Ocmulgee National Monument (Macon, GA) preserves a 12,000-year record of continuous human life in the Southeast. The park contains seven earthen mounds as well as artifacts representative of several distinct American Indian cultures, from nomadic tribes to the agrarian Mississippians that thrived on the banks of the Ocmulgee River. The Muscogee Creek regard Ocmulgee as the site where their ancestors "first sat down" thus making the site the spiritual and geographic capitol of their nation.

Ocmulgee National Monument is also the home of one of the five largest archaeological collections in the entire park system. Unfortunately, the park does not have a museum curator on staff to monitor or catalog the collection. As a result, unique artifacts such as a Mississippi-era (700 AD to 1300 AD) copper sun disk are not adequately preserved. With in excess of $700,000 in unmet annual operations funding needs Park Service staff at Ocmulgee are unlikely to alleviate the most pressing threats to park resource protection at any time in the near future.

Great Smoky Mountains

Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established in 1934 to protect some of the last remaining old growth forests in the eastern United States, and the species that thrived therein, from intense logging. More than 10,000 species have been documented in the Great Smokies to date, but scientists estimate that as many as 100,000 may actually live in the park. Great Smoky

Mountains National Park is also known for its 19th and early 20th century log houses, mills, churches, and archaeological sites that tell the story of the region's earlier residents.

An April 2004 *State of the Parks* report for the Great Smoky Mountains revealed that the park's archival and museum collections contain more than 357,000 items, including tools, equipment, clothing, and household furnishings that belonged to the people who once lived in the region. Biological and geological specimens, as well as documents that detail park development, land use practices, and family histories of former inhabitants, are also included in the collection.

In 2004, nearly 99 percent of the park's cultural and historical museum objects were moved to a storage facility 100 miles from the park headquarters, where the objects can be protected but not viewed by the public. The park has requested funds to build a new storage facility within park boundaries but Congress has not yet approved this request. In the meantime, the Smokies employs just one museum technician to catalog and care for over 310,000 objects, and even that job is a term position subject to loss if reliable long-term funding is not secured.

As of 2002, cultural resource protection received roughly 6 percent of the overall Park Service operating budget. According to business plans that NPCA and the Park Service have completed in nearly 100 parks, cultural resources are typically among the most poorly funded and poorly staffed segments of the national parks. The Park Service is entrusted with the nation's keepsakes and Congress and the administration must do all they can to make sure these national treasures receive adequate funding now in order to ensure they are well preserved in coming years. Years ago, Congress established the Natural Resources Challenge to specifically fund Park Service efforts to protect plants, animals, and the natural environment in the parks-now it's time for a historic and Cultural Resources Challenge to preserve America's shared heritage.

4. Vanishing treasures: The state of historic structures in southeastern parks

It's alarming to think that any structure in the National Register of Historic Places might have a roof caving in because of a lack of funding and preservation expertise. But according to

NPCA's *Faded Glory* report, the unfortunate reality is that the Park Service now finds that two-thirds of the structures in its care are in need of repair. In 1993, the Park Service launched its "Vanishing Treasures" program to provide project funding and the technical expertise required to preserve prehistoric and historic ruins in nearly 50 national parks. Unfortunately, this initiative has also felt the impact of chronic annual budget shortfalls, receiving "only a dribble" of the $60 million (over ten years) that Congress had originally allocated.

As a result of inadequate funding, many national parks in the southeastern United States have been forced to adopt a policy of management by crisis. While some units have faired well, others have suffered under the tight-budget philosophy, if its not funded, don't fix it! For example, the Oscar Blevins Farm, the most intact farmstead in Tennessee's Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, is boarded up and closed to visitors because the Park Service cannot afford to maintain, preserve, or interpret the 1870s farmhouse for the public.

Andersonville

Andersonville National Historic Site, officially known as Camp Sumter during the American Civil War, held captive more than 45,000 prisoners of war and was one of the largest and most notorious Confederate military prisons. Beginning in 1864, and throughout the camp's 14-month existence, 12,912 Union soldiers died within Andersonville's walls as a result of poor sanitation, disease, malnutrition, exposure, overcrowding, and hostile action by guards. Andersonville National Historic Site was established by Congress in 1970 to "provide an understanding of the Civil War prisoner of war (POW) story, to interpret the role of prisoner of war camps in history, and to commemorate the sacrifice of Americans who lost their lives in such camps…"

Various historic structures enhance the visceral experience at Andersonville. These structures include nine earthen fortifications, a 19th century brick wall encircling the national cemetery, 13,000 marble Civil War cemetery markers, and the Providence Spring memorial. According to NPCA's *State of the Parks* report, of the 38 structures that are listed in the park's

official inventory of Classified Structures, 87 percent are in good condition. Park monuments are cleaned and waxed on a regular cycle, but additional training is needed to educate staff about the proper techniques for stain removal and stabilization of the 13,000 marble headstones.

The largest and most vulnerable historic structure at Andersonville is the cemetery wall. Since its construction in 1879, the wall has suffered significant deterioration. Due to its size (4,780 linear feet) park staff are faced with an endless task of repairing defective or deteriorating portions of the wall, maintenance that is both time and labor intensive. Although the current condition of the wall rated a score of "fair" from a May 2004 *State of the Parks* report, the assessment nonetheless concluded that Andersonville would benefit from the creation of a separate wall maintenance plan and the hiring of a full time bricklayer and assistant (both knowledgeable in historic materials). These additions would enable the park to establish a preventive maintenance schedule for the wall instead of being forced to react to the latest structural crisis.

Great Smoky Mountains

Visitors to Great Smoky Mountains National Park have the opportunity to step back in time by touring historic 19th and 20th century log homes, gristmills, and community churches, as well as park buildings constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. More than 200 historic structures, dating from the 1830s through the 1930s, remain intact throughout the park. In fact, Great Smoky Mountains has the largest collection of log homes in the United States, structures that provide a rare glimpse into the lives of some of the region's 19th century inhabitants.

Great Smoky Mountains encompasses 521,490 acres and receives approximately nine million visitors each year. Ensuring the preservation of 200 historic structures spread across such a great distance and accessible to the public on an almost daily basis is a monumental task. To its credit, the park has a four-person historic preservation crew to accomplish high priority

preservation and protection projects. Additional support, however, is needed to ensure that proper attention can be given to all of the park's historic structures.

The current planning process related to the general management plan for the Elkmont Historic District will also have an impact on the preservation of historic structures in the Great Smokies. In 1982, the park published a GMP that included a proposal to remove all structures from Elkmont, allowing the area to return to its natural state. In early 1994, however, 49 of the 74 structures in Elkmont were placed on the National Register of Historic Places, thus requiring any management decisions affecting them to satisfy the requirements of the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA) as well as standards set by the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office and other interested parties.

While NPCA and many state and local organizations support the idea of restoring elements of the Elkmont Historic District as a purely interpretive center, others have proposed adding commercial franchises into the mix. NPCA strongly opposes the reintroduction of food or lodging concessions in Elkmont on the grounds that such developments would increase traffic at an already congested location and further tax the already limited capability of the Park Service to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources in their charge.

NPCA's State of the Parks report for the Great Smoky Mountains identified an $11.5 million annual budget shortfall and the need to hire an additional 108 full-time staff positions as key challenges that hinder the ability of the park to protect its resources. The report found that the largest staff shortfalls are in the Resource and Visitor Protection, Resource management and Science, and Maintenance and Operation of Facilities programs. Proper care and monitoring of the historic structures at Great Smoky Mountains National Park begins with adequate funding and staffing levels of the Park Service departments and programs tasked with that work. The preservation of Park Service cultural resources is not a luxury but an obligation we owe to future generations.

5. Worse than Los Angeles? Air quality in southeastern parks

Americans expect our national parks to have the cleanest air in the country. Congress recognized the importance of excellent air quality when it created the National park Service in 1916. Under the Organic Act, the agency was directed to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein… as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Today, visitors expecting to enjoy clean, clear air in our national parks may be sorely disappointed. Hazy skies, unhealthy smog, toxic metals, and acid rain threaten park visitors, staff, plants, animals, and historic structures at some of our most recognized and beloved national parks.

National parks in the southeastern United States are located downwind from hundreds of older, coal burning power plants. These plants operate without the use of modern emissions control technology and, as a result, emit thousands of tons of sulfur dioxides and nitrogen oxides, which are the primary cause of hazy skies and unhealthy ozone pollution in our parks. Motor vehicles also contribute to the unhealthy mix. As a result, national parks in the southeast suffer from some of the most polluted air in the country.

Haze

The most noticeable and widespread effect of this pollution is an unnatural haze that ruins majestic views. Emissions from power plants, industrial smokestacks, and motor vehicles can reduce hundred-mile views that should exist from the ridge tops of many southeastern parks to just a few miles on the most polluted days. According to the Department of the Interior, "Visibility impairment is the most ubiquitous air pollution-related problem in our national parks and refuges…" with all areas that are monitored for such impacts recording "frequent impairment" by regional haze.

For example, at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky, views have been reduced to a mere 17 miles on average throughout the year due to regional haze. Ironically, the park was

created in part to serve as a "breathing spot available to every man, woman, and child of our large industrial centers…"

In the Great Smoky Mountains the current average visibility range of 25 miles is much less than the estimated natural (pre-industrial) range of 113 miles. The visibility during the humid summer months is even worse, averaging only 15 miles. According to NPCA's *State of the Parks* report, air pollution in the Great Smokies has reduced park views by 60 to 80 percent, at the same time that 84 percent of visitors surveyed said that clear scenic views were an "extremely important" factor in determining the quality of their park experience.

Particle Pollution

According to researchers associated with the Harvard School of Public Health, the same particulate pollution that causes haze in our parks is also associated with tens of thousands of premature deaths in the United States each year. There were two days in 2005 when park rangers at Great Smoky Mountains had to issue health advisories to visitors because particulate pollution levels had exceeded the range considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency. If two days of dangerous air quality doesn't sound like a crisis, it's worthy to note that the EPA recently affirmed that no level particle pollution can be considered safe. And according to Director Mark Wenzler, of NPCA's Clean Air Program, the Great Smoky Mountains experience "some level of particle pollution year round."

Ozone Pollution

On many summer mornings, a trek in Great Smoky Mountains can expose hikers to more air pollution than can be found in major American cities such as Los Angeles and Washington, DC. Between 1998 and 2004 the park recorded 175 bad air days (when ozone levels were sufficiently high enough to harm human health). This same ozone pollution can damage park plants. Already thirty plant species in the Great Smoky Mountains have shown foliar damage as a result of heightened ozone exposure, and sensitive spruce-fir forests found on Clingman's

Dome, the highest peak in the park, can be as acidic as vinegar, with rainfall pH levels as low as 2.0.

Toxic Mercury

NPCA's Center for State of the Parks found that the Smokies ranked in the top 10 percent of all monitored sites in the United States for mercury deposition. Recent studies have found significant mercury contamination in animal inhabitants of Mammoth Cave national Park, including the endangered Indiana Bat. Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of mercury emissions in the United States.

Acid Rain

Sulfur dioxide from power plants is the leading cause of acid rain in the Eastern United States. Although there are currently no visible effects of pollution on Andersonville's historic structures, there is concern that acid rain could damage the park's limestone and marble monuments. Such damage has been noted in the region and Andersonville's proximity to a mining operation that uses coal-fired kilns increases the potential threat to cultural resources and historic structures posed by acid rain. NPCA's State of the Parks report for Andersonville recommends that Congress fund an acid rain monitoring station in the park to document any changes in deposition of sulfur and other pollutants.

6. Undermining water quality in southeastern parks

Big South Fork

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area is a 123,000-acre park, encompassing 90 miles of the Big South Fork and its tributaries, designed by the Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Park Service. Authorized in May 1974, the park was designed to provide access and recreational opportunities along the spectacular Cumberland Plateau. According to the Park Service, "The free-flowing Big South Fork of the Cumberland River and

its tributaries pass through 90 miles of scenic gorges and valleys containing a wide range of natural and historic features." The park offers a variety of recreational opportunities including camping, whitewater rafting, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting and fishing.

The park also plays a significant role in the protection and enhancement of water quality in the New River watershed, which drains into the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. In creating the park, Congress called for coordinated efforts by federal and state agencies to minimize water quality impacts, including siltation and acid drainage, from mining occurring beyond the park boundary. Despite some progress towards recovery, the Big South Fork is now under threat from newly intensified mining operations and weak to non-existent enforcement of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

Coal mining is on the rise in Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. The Tennessee Valley Authority, for example, is assessing the potential of leasing an estimated 82 million tons of coal from the Koppers Coal Reserve in the Royal Blue Wildlife Management Area; a portion of which lies in the New River watershed. By comparison, only 3 million tons were mined in the entire state in 2002.

Mountaintop removal, including cross-ridge mining, has become the industry's preferred method for extracting coal. While blasting the tops off mountains to expose the underlying coal seams is cheap and efficient for industry, the practice has devastating impacts on the environment, including impaired water quality in rivers and streams, and loss of critical forest habitat. A 2004 study by the U.S. Geological Survey identified the continued deposits of silt and coal fines washing out of the New River drainage into the Big South Fork as substantial impairments to the water quality at Big South Fork.

Reclamation, even when done according to the law, too often fails to prevent damage to the environment. A 25-acre landslide of reclaimed strip mine in Scott County in January 2005

continues to deposit sediment into Smoky Creek, creating a plume that was visible 11 miles downstream at the Big South Fork's confluence with the New River.

Even so, the Big South Fork is beginning to recover from mining activities that took place 50 years ago. This recovery trend will, however, be reversed if mining of the scale and intensity seen in recent permits is allowed to continue without a comprehensive review by the federal Office of Surface Mining.

Conclusion

Homeland security costs, natural disasters and inflation are all contributing factors to the chronic funding shortfall that adversely affects our national parks. Although these challenges are great, they are not insurmountable. If Congress and the administration make an adequate investment in preserving these most special places, then our national parks will continue to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the United States, and educate and inspire people from all across the nation and all around the world.

http://www.adn.com/opinion/story/5049703p-4977528c.html

Let national park residents thrive

By NEIL DARISH

(Published: May 8, 2004)

Many people dream of living in the wilderness. Residents inside Wrangell-St. Elias National Park are examples of "self-reliant living" made real. The National Park Service is mandated to preserve not only wilderness but also heritage and culture. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park contains a remote wilderness culture, deep within America's largest national park. Should this community be allowed to continue?

In the 1960s, conservationists considered man a threat to the wilderness. Old Park Service management philosophy marginalized or eliminated locals. New Park Service management ideas incorporate cultural assets, and some parks are "run with, for and, in some cases, by local people." Management by Park Service is changing to better realize the value of indigenous cultures and local residents as stewards. Man is not always a threat to preservation, especially when communities are part of the landscape.

The George Wright Forum is a Park Service institution. It acts as a think tank, a place where ideas about conservation and managing national parks are developed. By publishing studies on "evolving living landscapes" where residents are "inclusive and constructive elements" to protected areas, they help mold the future of our National Park Service. In Europe and much of the developing world, "living landscapes" and residents are embraced as an essential part of their national parks; and it has been that way for the last 50 years. America's Park Service still struggles with thriving cultures as a resource worthy of preservation.

In the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio, there is fresh thinking about the notion of a "lived-in" park. The superintendent, John Debo, views continued occupancy, in certain circumstances, to contribute to the purposes for which the park was created. He uses the terminology "residents" and "partners" rather than "in-holders," the latter implying something to be eliminated. Debo emphasizes that each park must carefully evaluate how the natural and cultural resource protection mission of that park can best be accomplished, and that a "one size fits all" approach is the antithesis of good park management. By the 1980s Cuyahoga had eliminated most of its residents, condemning and burning down their houses to bring the land back to wilderness. Today the Park Service regrets those actions.

The Alaska Native Interest Lands Conservation Act enshrines Alaska's preservation of the cultural elements of remote living. The Park Service did not welcome private property in parks when Wrangell-St. Elias was formed. Congress created ANILCA to protect against the old Park Service management objective of eliminating all private land. Alaska, with its huge distances and lack of paved roads, has a flourishing remote culture, dependent on motorized vehicle trails like any other community on Earth. Locals aren't asking for new land or roads, just continued use of private land, roads and trails pre-dating the park, thus safeguarding a uniquely Alaska lifestyle. For 100 years residents have "broken trail," and "subsistence" has required driving funky vehicles somewhere unpopulated. Today these same trails and access seem lined with unbreakable red-tape.

Park Service rangers share with local residents the love of nature, local history, the appeal of self-reliant living and the importance of preserving this for future generations. The Park Service can become our hero if we as resident stewards are treated with respect by the Park Service -- here and in Washington, D.C.

Nature and thriving pre-existing communities are not mutually exclusive concepts. Around the world, administrators of protected areas have proven this. Current access issues, visitor kiosk closures and lawsuits reflect a need for a more inclusive agenda. Management actions reflecting the 1960s philosophy of "man is a threat to the wilderness" instead of the worldwide standard that "the residents are a resource" are counterproductive. Marcia Blaszak, the new Alaska regional director for the National Park Service, could set the tone for better cooperation between local residents and managers of Wrangell-St. Elias. Why move to Alaska if not for the love of nature? Who better to partner with than those who choose to live a wilderness lifestyle?

What is needed is a clear statement from our Park Service Alaska regional director that her philosophy allows the residents in this park to thrive.

Neil Darish is owner of the McCarthy Lodge in McCarthy and homesteaded outside of Fairbanks in the early 1990s.

My name is Neil Darish. I own McCarthy Lodge in McCarthy Alaska, located in the very center of Wrangell St. Elias National Park. I have lived here year around since 2001.

I wish to submit the attached commentary, published in the Anchorage Daily News on May 8th, 2004 and add the following two comments to this testimony:

1. For a community to exist, so must a free market be free of coercion. The whole concept of free enterprise as it relates to the intent of ANILCA and the NPS's use of market coercion must be addressed. "Concessions" are the opposite of American culture and have no place in this park except as a weapon. What good is access if your business is unfairly regulated and offered to others - this is how concessions have been used in NPS units in the lower 48.

Instead of controlling the Mill building in Kennicott as a guest experience, allowing many companies to offer tours, the NPS has chosen to restrict the playing field to just one company. This company offers tours inside the buildings and their compitition can not survive without some access to this guided trip. So when someone picks a company to guide them, they most often go with the company that can offer the Mill building tour and the ice hikes. The smaller player is locked out for the 10 years of the concession. This local company (who had been giving Mill Building Tours for many many years) was shut out. Most residents believe this was clearly NPS "punishment" given out to Kennicott Wilderness Guides - because they are the largest employer of local resident guides. Another approach is offered for hunting guides. The NPS offers several "zones" in the park to offer several "concession areas" to competitive hunting operators. In the case of controlling the Mill Building !
experience, the NPS could have easily set the standards of dress, story outlines, hours of tours etc, and then offered 3 or more tour-times per day, 7 days per week, and had up to 21 "concessions". Instead, we have a park planner who can not seem to comprehend the role "merchants" and businesses play in the ability of a community to thrive.

2. One Million acres of Wrangell St. Elias National Park is private land. About 600,000 acres is Native owned. To level the playing field regarding acceess, the NPS must stop claiming our land as theirs. They must be honest with the American people. They must release their claim on our land by stating that this park is 12.2 million acres NOT 13.2 million acres as published in all NPS literature. If they want this community to thrive then the government (NPS) must not use the park as a way to claim private land as theirs. To call us "inholders" is bad enough - it implies we don't belong here - to add that "inholders land is part of the park", when it clearly is not, makes congress and the American public more likely to think of private landowners as the intruders. Bottom line is the intent of ANILCA is to provide for Alaskans the access needed to not be considered intruders on their own land.

Kind regards,
Neil Darish
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Dear Kimberly, will you please forward my complaint to the proper authorities on the poor performance of the National Park Service in Alaska. I would have liked to testify at the upcomming meeting at the Library here in Anchorage, but I was not given reasonable notice in time to do so. Thus this letter will have to suffice.

I have been unable to utilize any of the National Parks here in Alaska for over 25 years. Those in charge of the parks have chosen to preserve the parks by locking me and many others out entirely. Restrictions on Motorized travel mean many of us with age or infirmity are simply locked out. Only the physically fit and therefore usually young have the ability to enjoy the parks. I understand the balancing act to accomplish two diametricaly opposed functions is difficult. But that is the job Park supervisors are supposed to do and they are not doing it. They have chosen to preserve the park to the abosolute exclusion of reasonable use. This is not what they are supposed to do according to my understanding of the act. They are supposed to allow a reasonable amount of access and accept a reasonable amount of "wear and tear" on the parks. There should never be any natural feature of any park that is ever closed, or limited in the amount of visitors. Period. Only man made attractions in the park should ever be closed, and then, only with good cause. There should never be any restriction on any variety of access by any vehicle of choice.

Limiting the type of access to those who enjoy walking, detracts from the ability to enjoy the park for those who do not enjoy walking. There is no distinction between the two groups in the National Park Organic Act which is supposed to be the guiding document.

Please consider a wholesale removal of all upper management of the Park Service. Put real people, not just yuppies in charge. I want to be able to access and enjoy my parks.

Sincerely yours

Daniel L. Apted
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