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H.R. 3094, NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL FUND ACT; AND H.R. 2959, NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE FUND ACT.

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

Thursday, August 2, 2007

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LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.R. 3094, TO ESTABLISH IN THE TREASURY OF THE UNITED STATES A FUND WHICH SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL FUND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. (NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL FUND ACT); AND H.R. 2959, TO ESTABLISH A FUND FOR THE NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. (NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE FUND ACT)

Thursday, August 2, 2007
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Grijalva, Bishop, Kildee, Christensen, Kind, Capps, Herseth Sandlin, Lamborn, and McCarthy.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me call the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands to order.

Today, we will hear testimony on two very important bills that have much in common. They both seek to commemorate the upcoming centennial of the National Park Service and to prepare the National Park System for its second century.

I am pleased that there is bipartisan interest in recognizing this important anniversary and, more importantly, a common desire to invest in the future of our national treasures.

We have three panels of distinguished witnesses. I want to welcome the panelists and thank them for joining us.

Established in 1916, the National Park Service has grown to protect and interpret nearly 400 spectacular places across the country. Our National Parks welcome more than 270 million visitors each

year and are a source of tremendous pride for all Americans. Our National Park Service, which employs more than 20,000 passionate and professional employees, is a world leader in conservation and interpretation.

As the centennial approaches, there is a consensus among policymakers and the American people that this milestone must be viewed as an opportunity to recommit ourselves to building a stronger, more diverse, better trained, and better equipped National Park Service.

H.R. 2959

Mr. GRIJALVA. In February, the administration proposed legislation to increase funding for NPS over the next decade, in recognition of the centennial. Two of our colleagues on the Subcommittee, Ranking Member Bishop and Full Committee Ranking Member Young, have introduced that legislation, by request, as H.R. 2959.

H.R. 2959 establishes a Centennial Challenge Fund for private sector cash donations and provides a mandatory Federal match of up to $100 million. Money from the Challenge Fund, authorized for 10 years, will be spent on signature projects or programs broadly defined as "any project or program identified by the director of the National Park Service as one that will help prepare the National Parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment."

In my view, however, the administration's proposal is incomplete, most notably, in that it lacks a way to pay for the increased spending it proposes. Further, I remain troubled by the incentives created by the bill's matching requirement.

H.R. 3094

Mr. GRIJALVA. Therefore, Chairman Rahall and I introduced H.R. 3094, which authorizes mandatory spending expected to total $100 million a year for 10 years. Our legislation builds on the administration's proposal by establishing six specific areas on which this increased funding is to be spent. These areas include education and the parks, diversity programs, an environmental leadership initiative, professional development, resource protection, and capital improvements.

This mix of funding priorities, investing in education, bricks and mortar, and human capital, will ensure that our parks and park employees can meet the challenges of the next 100 years successfully.

H.R. 3094 provides this new spending without requiring private matching funds. While we recognize the critical role private giving has played in creating and sustaining our National Park System, we remain concerned about the ever-increasing reliance on private funds. This bill encourages private giving but makes it absolutely certain that NPS spending priorities are determined by Congress and the administration without regard to which projects might or might not be most attractive to private donors.

Finally, H.R. 3094 is paid for. We are certainly open to discussing the funding mechanism, but we must be clear. Any centennial proposal must have an offset if it is to move forward.

Again, I look forward to our distinguished witnesses today and thank them for their presence and thank them for their testimony.

With that, let me turn to our Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop, for any comments he may have. Mr. Bishop.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROB BISHOP, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am anxious to hear the testimony today. I know that Mr. Tiahrt and Mr. Souder do not want to listen to me, so we will jump right into what they have to say. I appreciate you coming before us.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Let me welcome our colleagues and thank them for taking the time to discuss this very, very important centennial anniversary and their ideas for it. Let me begin with The Honorable Mark Souder for your comments, sir.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARK E. SOUDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Bishop. There are a number of points I want to cover relatively rapidly here, and I would ask unanimous consent to insert a number of documents into the record.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Without objection.

Mr. SOUDER. Congressman Brian Baird and I, a number of years ago, introduced the Centennial Act, which had, in fact, somewhat of a combination of what the Chairman referred to in his opening remarks, which was an encouraging private sector giving and, at the same time, with target goals each year that the Federal government, through spending, would make up some of the gap of that difference.

In that bill, Senators McCain, Feinstein and Alexander carried it in the Senate. In the House, we had strong bipartisan support, both from the conservative and the moderate flank of the Republican Party and all flanks of the Democratic Party. In fact, we tried to keep the sponsorships relatively even, and, at the end of the day, I think it was up to 55 or 60, including a number of appropriators, which is unusual attention given to something that has increased funding in the National Parks area, particularly, quite frankly, in the Republican Party, we have not been as aggressive.

Out of that, as the Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee that had oversight over the National Parks, we did nine oversight hearings, worked particularly with the National Parks and Conservation Association—Mr. Kiernan will be speaking later today—as well as the National Park Service and different friends groups.

One of the documents I would like to submit in the record is the list of the nine hearings and the witnesses at those nine hearings, which outlined the challenges of the parks, the needs for the additional funding, and where, as we head into the centennial, we need to go. Each testimony is available on the Web site, and I would like to insert the hearing record, where they are and how people can find that.

Another challenge that we had, and I want to speak directly to this because I know, from talking to Full Committee Chairman Rahall, as well as Mr. Grijalva, that one of the questions is, how do you deal with private sector funding not driving the goals of the

National Park Service? This has actually been something that is not new.

My friend, Brian Baird, in particular, climbs Mount Rainier. I read books about Mount Rainier. I have been to 170 parks and historic sites myself, many multiple times. I have read probably approaching close to 80 to 100 books. I love to read books about how parks were formed.

This was a dilemma from the beginning. Two pieces of testimony I would like to put into the record, actually three, from the hearings will touch on this, and people can see this debate more completely. One was in Boston, Ken Olson and the Friends of Acadia. Acadia was put together predominantly, and there is a little book about it by a man named Dorr that talks about basically how very wealthy landowners near Bar Harbor put together that park, and then Rockefeller gave the National Park Service the carriage roads, but he also put in a fund with which to maintain them.

We have always had this challenge. Probably the biggest one we have had in the Park Service is the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and I also want to insert, in addition to former National Parks Director Kennedy's testimony from Boston and Ken Olson's, Brian O'Neal's testimony from Golden Gate. Golden Gate was our biggest challenge in the park system. It had something like four or six percent of all of the historic structures in the entire park system. It was put under a mandate from the Federal government that it had to use a high amount of private sector funding, and it has been an innovative combination.

We discussed this at length at both of these hearings. How does the private sector not do it, when L.L. Bean funded the bus? We could not get a visitors' center in Acadia National Park, so it is outside the park being constructed. It is called the "Bean Bus," and it runs in.

Without that type of cooperation—it is not a matter of putting billboards that say "Yosemite Falls"—it does not say "Yosemite Falls brought to you by GM." But, nevertheless, Yosemite Falls and up doing that area took tremendous private sector involvement. We have done this at Rocky Mountain National Park in public/private cooperation at a visitors' center. It is being done in the new visitors' center, and I would like to put in Governor Thornburg's excellent testimony about how they worked with the private sector in building this new Gettysburg Center that we could not fund through the public.

Nevertheless, what we heard in all nine hearing is if we do not have a hold-harmless in the private sector match, the private sector will not give additional dollars if they think that what that is going to do is reduce the public funding. We have a backlog as well as needs that, particularly, in a lot of the recreation areas where it is actually growing in attendance, cannot be just met by private funding.

I just want to briefly say a couple of things that I learned from my visits and from these hearings. There are several points, in addition to the preparation from the National Park Service. One is that I think the parks need to be a science incubator. The core places around Old Faithful, around Yosemite Valley, around the Grand Canyon south rim, that we are probably not going to be able

to handle that many more people, even with better transportation systems, and the Park Service seems to have had a relatively flat population or attendance at many of the major parks; it will go up and down little bit.

But it should be a science incubator, and as we look at science, our park system, as well as our fish and wildlife and other areas, are a key thing.

Another thing is we ought to have more educational interaction with our schools. Local areas around the parks have tremendous interaction, but it is not extended across the country. I believe that you ought to be able to see a ranger fireside chat and be able to be, as we get bigger screen TVs and connections, you ought to be able sit at home and choose which ranger talk you want to see. That is how we extend the value of each ranger. To do that, that brings the next question: technological innovation in the parks. And then, of course, the parks should be the environmental model.

Those are a number of things that, I think, can bring the parks toward the centennial, in addition to, which the Subcommittee Chair related to, is that we need some kind of a baseline of whichever bill passes, and I support basically all of the different concepts. But there needs to be a Federal investment that is not reduced and is increased, in addition to the private sector investment if we are going to meet the needs of the National Park Service. It is a legacy we want to pass to our kids and our grand kids, and to do that for the hundredth birthday, even with all of our other financial pressures, this is our big chance to do it. Thank you for our tolerance.

[NOTE: Documents submitted for the record have been retained in the Committee's official files.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, sir.

Let me turn to the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Tiahrt, for any comments he might have.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TODD TIAHRT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS

Mr. TIAHRT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop and Members of the Committee.

As Ranking Member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I have come to be familiar with not only the programs of the National Park Service but, more importantly, the joy our National Parks bring to Americans each year.

As you consider the needs of the Park Service, and especially the Centennial Challenge Initiative, it is wise for you to garner the perspective of those who use and promote the parks, as well as the National Park Service.

I am especially pleased that Mr. Gary Kiedaisch, president and CEO of the Coleman Company, Inc., is here today. Mr. Kiedaisch has a vision of partnering corporate America together with the National Park Service Centennial Celebration in hopes of encouraging Americans to recreate in our National Parks and enjoy all that the National Parks have to offer.

I am proud of the fact that the Coleman Company is located in my congressional district. Mr. Kiedaisch has more than 25 years of

leadership experience building global brands and guiding complex international companies to profitability.

He began his career in his family's sporting goods store in Lexington, Massachusetts, where his love for the outdoor recreation industry began. As president and CEO of the Coleman Company, Kiedaisch has grown the base of business, improved operations, launched new products, reinvested in the company's brands, and created a platform for acquisitions. He has also renewed the company's commitment to the outdoors and is inspiring people to get outside.

Representative Bishop, I am pleased to note that, under Mr. Kiedaisch's leadership, Coleman hosted an outdoor summit in 2006 in Park City, Utah. The purpose was to pull customers together to grow the industry by recognizing each has a different role in the process of inspiring people to go outside.

In the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, we heard extensive testimony on the need to encourage children to spend more time outdoors, a concept known as "Leave No Child Inside." Kiedaisch is championing this idea of emphasizing the social responsibility of the industry to get young people outdoors to learn lifetime skills and benefit from the outdoors experiences and create memories that last a lifetime.

He has also been working vigorously with the administration to aid in the campaign of enhancing our parks and help formulate their proposal to encourage recreational activities in our National Parks. Back in February, Mr. Kiedaisch was invited by the president to attend a roundtable on the National Parks Centennial Initiative, along with Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne; National Park Director Mary Bomar, who is with us today; and ARC's Derek Crandall, who is also here, to brainstorm and advance this effort.

Mr. Kiedaisch attended New York University and the Calvin Coolidge College in Boston. He has served as a state chairman of the United States Olympic Committee, chairman of the New Hampshire Tourism 2000 Commission, lottery commissioner for the State of New Hampshire, board of directors member of the United States Ski Team Foundation, and National Ski and Snowboard Areas Association, and of the Vermont Institute of Science, Math, and Technology.

He is a current board member of the Outdoor Industry Association, American Recreation Coalition, and serves on the board of directors of Students and Free Enterprise.

No stranger to the outside, Mr. Kiedaisch is a former nationally ranked, competitive skier and continues to enjoy the outdoors with his wife and family through alpine skiing, mountain biking, hiking, rowing, and sailing.

His presence here today is testimony to the partnership that this bill is intended to foster. I am pleased that Mr. Gary Kiedaisch is able to testify before this Subcommittee on this very important initiative.

I just want to say, from the experience that I have had over this last year, that getting kids outdoors is really a high priority that this nation needs to focus its resources on. Obesity is one of the big problems that our children face today, and getting kids outside helps them get beyond this problem of not having exercise. It

makes them healthier, and, hopefully, they can overcome the obesity problems.

But obesity contributes to diabetes, and, by getting kids outdoors, we will give them a healthier outlook, plus, I think, reduce the medical costs for them that they will face as they age. But also, people in poverty, the number one problem they face today is obesity.

So we need to figure out a way to have our National Park System encourage people, regardless of their financial status, to get involved in the Park Service.

I think that this program of combining our national resources and our tax dollars with individuals' and private companies' investments is a good way to get not only kids in the outdoors but also those who are challenged financially. It is a great way to get out in the parks.

One of the things that Coleman has done is stick coupons in their coolers to encourage people to get outdoors, to get into the park system, and I think, by having this corporate/government partnership, we can achieve the goals that all of us want to meet, and that is getting people outdoors so that they are healthier, they live longer, and it gives them more time to contribute to our society.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify, and I hope that you will give Mr. Kiedaisch a wonderful opportunity to express his vision of how we are going to get people into our park system and make a healthier America. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much.

I am waiting for the last remaining colleague, but we are going to begin the questioning. I have no questions for my colleagues, but I did want to comment briefly, Mr. Souder. I think your point is very, very well taken about the hold-harmless, maintenance-of-effort concept that you spoke about, as well as the technological needs of the future for our Park Service.

I appreciate those comments very much, and, Mr. Tiahrt, I think, as we move forward, I think the working relationship and the cooperation between the authorizing committee and the appropriators is going to be critical to putting something together that is good and lasting.

With that, let me turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. I appreciate both of you being here again today, Mr. Tiahrt.

Mr. Chairman, I thought we had a rule about talking about obesity in front of me here.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes. I take it a little personally myself.

Mr. BISHOP. We are just nutritional overachievers here.

I appreciate you coming here. I appreciate the witness who will be speaking in a minute. The next time he has a conference in Park City, I would appreciate it if he would leave more Republicans there. I am trying to get above that 70-percent ceiling in my district.

I do have a question for Mr. Souder, though, that is legitimate. You actually had some bills that were introduced in the past.

Do you want to wait for Mr. Baird before we go with these questions?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. All right. I will withdraw that. I am going to ask you about the funding mechanism you had in your bill, but let us let Mr. Baird speak first.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me welcome our colleague, Mr. Baird, for his comments and testimony, sir.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRIAN BAIRD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. BAIRD. Thank you very much. I was literally testifying just up the hallway, and I had to run here, but I am grateful for your indulgence, and it is good to be with my friends.

I appreciate you holding this important hearing on the National Parks Centennial. As you know, Congressman Souder and I are co-chairs of the National Parks Caucus within the Congress. Our purpose is to educate colleagues on National Parks issues. The caucus has organized briefings, advocated for funding, and worked to raise the profile of the parks in Congress. We have 50 bipartisan members from all across the country.

As we approach the 2016 centennial anniversary, it is imperative that Congress, the administration, and the people renew their commitment to the great treasures that are our National Parks.

I would like to congratulate both the Chair and the Ranking Member for introducing their respective bills to establish a new Centennial Fund to help prepare for the centennial. The administration should also be credited for seeking a change. The president, Secretary Kempthorne, and Director Bomar have initiated an aggressive National Parks Centennial Challenge that deserves to be commended.

As the Subcommittee knows, our National Parks face chronic funding shortfalls. There is a current annual operating deficit of $800 million and a maintenance backlog estimated between six and $12 billion. This means our parks are understaffed, sites are closed to the public, facilities are growing older and outdated, and roads are not maintained.

As you know, Congressman Souder and I have reintroduced for the Third Congress our own proposal for the centennial, the National Parks Centennial Act. The bill has 45 co-sponsors, including 11 Members of this Subcommittee. I would say, parenthetically, by the way, that I think there are no Members of this Congress who have more affection for the parks than my friend, Mr. Souder. He has a personal goal of visiting every single park in the country and is a tireless advocate, and it is a pleasure to work with him on this worthwhile effort.

Our bill creates a National Parks Centennial Fund that specifies that 60 percent of the money will be used to eliminate the maintenance backlog, 20 percent for natural resource protection, and 20 percent for cultural resources. It would also allow taxpayers to designate a portion of their repayment or overpayment for the fund. This would not replace regular congressional appropriations but would allow individuals to directly show their support and contribute to the revitalization of the park system.

There is a $200 million target specified for 2008. The goal would increase by 15 percent annually, ending up with $612 million in

Fiscal Year 2016. Our goal is nothing short than to redress this backlog in our national treasure.

I know you have heard from our colleagues and have questions, so I will keep my remarks relatively short, at this point. I thank you for considering this legislation, and I thank you for your leadership on this issue and look forward to chatting further about this and urge support for this or, possibly, some hybrid bill that would reflect the best of the various three pieces of legislation, which all have great merit to them, I think. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Baird follows:]

Statement of The Honorable Brian Baird, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington

Thank you, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop. I appreciate you holding this important hearing on the National Park Centennial. As you know, Congressman Souder and I are co-chairs of the Congressional National Parks Caucus. The purpose of the Caucus is to educate our colleagues on National Parks issues. The Caucus has organized briefings, advocated for funding, and worked to raise the profile of the National Parks in Congress. We currently have 50 bipartisan members from all across the country.

As we approach the 2016 centennial anniversary of the National Park Service, it is imperative that Congress, the Administration, and the American people renew their commitment to the great treasures that are our National Parks.

I would like to congratulate both the Chairman and Ranking Member for introducing their respective bills to establish a new Centennial Fund to help prepare for the centennial. The Administration should also be credited for seeking a change. The President, Secretary Kempthorne, and Director Bomar have initiated an aggressive National Parks Centennial Challenge that deserves to be commended.

As this Subcommittee knows, our National Parks face chronic funding shortfalls. There is a current annual operational funding deficit of $800 million and a maintenance backlog estimated between 6 and 12 billion dollars. This means our Parks are understaffed, sites are closed to the public, facilities are growing older and outdated, and roads are not maintained.

As you may know, Congressman Souder and I have re-introduced, for the third Congress, our own proposal for the centennial, the National Parks Centennial Act. The bill currently has 45 cosponsors, including 7 bipartisan members of this Subcommittee.

Our bill creates a National Parks Centennial Fund. It specifies that 60% of the money in the Fund will be used to eliminate the maintenance backlog, 20% for natural resources protection, and 20% for cultural resources protection.

It would also allow taxpayers to designate a portion of their tax refund, or overpayment, for the Fund. This would not replace regular Congressional appropriations, but would allow individuals to directly show their support and contribute to the revitalization of the Park System.

The legislation specifies a $200 million target for Fiscal Year 2008. The goal increases by 15% annually, ending with $612 million in Fiscal Year 2016. If contributions from taxpayer designations fall short of this goal, they will be made up of deposits from the General Fund.

Our legislation also requires a biennial report by GAO on the progress of eliminating the annual operating deficit of the National Park System.

Finally, our legislation requires the Department of Interior to submit four reports about the current state of the Parks and their future. This includes:

- A report on the historical, cultural, and environmental resources currently represented in the National Park System and recommendations about what gaps exist that the National Park Service could fill.
- A report on the National Park Service's outreach efforts to raise interest in the Parks among young people and different ethnic groups, including an analysis of local partnerships and recommendations for improving these programs.
- A report on the condition of roads and bridges in the National Parks and recommendations for repairs, replacements, and additions.
- A report on alternative transportation systems in the National Parks and recommendations for repairs, replacements, and additions.

I hope that the Committee will give serious consideration to the elements of our bill as it considers and develops legislation to address the funding challenges at our National Parks.

Each of the proposals that we are discussing today has good features that are worthy of inclusion in the eventual Centennial Act. While I do not want to prejudge the outcome, I believe a proper blend of the approaches set forth by all parties will have the strong support of Congress and the American people.

Regardless of what the final Centennial package looks like, I believe there are two key points:

First, we must invest serious resources into our National Parks. These are America's most cherished places. I would challenge anyone to visit Mt. Rainier, Zion National Park, or Yellowstone and not only be amazed, but also inspired, by the magnificence and beauty. We must also remember the lesser known, but equally worthy sites. My district is home to the Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve and the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. While not as famous as the Grand Canyon, these sites are visited by thousands annually. Unfortunately, they have not been funded at a level that allows them to realize their full potential. The entire National Park System is worthy of our protection and investment.

Second, we must bring more Americans into the Park System. The Park-going population is aging. We need a renewed focus on bringing younger and more diverse individuals to these sites so that future generations will continue to appreciate the Parks and engage in all the activities they have to offer. To achieve this, we should review current outreach programs and consider new ones. Additionally, the Park System can and should partner with more local schools and engage in national education programs.

Preserving our National Parks takes a commitment on our part that all Americans need to understand. It requires careful environmental stewardship and hard work. But I am optimistic that we can make significant progress toward addressing the current problems facing our National Parks.

Again, I thank the Subcommittee for holding this hearing. I look forward to working with this Subcommittee to craft Centennial legislation that supports our National Parks.

Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Mr. Bishop?

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Souder, the funding mechanism you had in your bill; it ran in my mind that it was some kind of a checkoff system. I may be inaccurate with that. Can you just tell me what the funding mechanism was or is?

Mr. SOUDER. What most people focused on, quite frankly, in the co-sponsorships was the checkoff mechanism and—it is more buried in the bill, which not every Member is noted for reading every detail of the bill—that we actually set in the bill a targeted amount that the Park Service needs to reach if they are to take care of the backlog and meet the demands that we need to maintain rangers and Park Service quality. In fact, it says in the bill that if we do not meet it through the checkoff, the Federal government would make up the gap.

We always knew that there would probably be some sort of a hybrid bill, that we set our goals high. We have achieved some of those in this last appropriations process to increase the funding, but it is still not enough. I believed one of the compromises might be, in fact, matching funds combined with some baseline increase in regular funding.

I believe there are additional dollars to be gained if the Parks Centennial can become a Hollywood celeb, a high-tech guru's kind of thing, like Farm Aid did, like different crusades become, because this is a lasting legacy to take some of the new wealth in the United States. They are already putting it in the Park Service, but by having a match with that, I think we can stimulate bigger gifts into the Park Service to meet some of these needs that are being raised.

The bottom line is that, in fact, there needs to be protection, so we do not have what happened to, for example, the Hoosier Dome becoming the RCA Dome and this type of thing. There needs to be some sort of restrictions as we move through this. There needs to be public input as to what the projects are going to be.

So, ultimately, ours was a checkoff, combined with Federal-supplemented funding, but I believe a match that the administration has is where we were likely to head as the legislation moved forward.

Mr. BISHOP. Did you ever gain, from either the CBO or your own estimations, a rough ball-park figure of how much could be generated from a tax checkoff approach?

Mr. SOUDER. I will let my friend, Congressman Baird, address this more, but, as I recollect, the battle here is that, given that there was not a match, and given that we had a target figure that we were trying to reach annually, that the amount that was going to be generated from the checkoff was less clear. It did not have quite the match mechanism. It had a Federal government thing.

So we had a target on the bill, and we know what that target was over the course of the bill, and I will let him say the target.

Mr. BAIRD. Well, it is very difficult to guesstimate exactly how much people will put forward. Congressman Souder and I are of the belief—I think we all are—that the American people love their parks, and if they believe that they are contributing something, and they know exactly where it is going to go, and we have an occasion like the centennial, we think that alone will be pretty stimulative. But we also think that a matching kind of program, such as that put forward by the administration and some of the other proposals, would further stimulate that.

So the hope would be that, with publicity for this, publicity at the parks themselves, publicity elsewhere, of if you have a refund coming to you, or you have made an overpayment in your taxes, you can actually designate where a portion of this goes and not only know, as in the initial draft of Congressman Souder and I, that your money will be there, but there will now, hopefully, possibly, also be matching funds.

Mr. BISHOP. I find it an interesting concept and something we should pursue.

I just wondered if there was ever a range of possibilities that people were looking at.

Mr. BAIRD. Well, we have the target numbers we have identified, but——

Mr. BISHOP.—no one ever came up with something.

Mr. BAIRD.—we do not have any empirical data from surveys or anything that I know of.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you.

Mr. SOUDER. If I may take one more stab at that, because it sounds like we are being evasive, but because we put the total number in——

Mr. BISHOP. I would never say you are evasive, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. Because the total number is in the bill, we did not need a CBO scoring, and we did not really plunge into that, and because we did not have a direct match.

What our assumption is, is that by the administration setting, say, a $100 million target, that you can probably reach the private sector target. The question is, would that be sucked out of other funds that are already in existence, and if we do not have some way to address that? For example, Yosemite Fund, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone have huge, already donation-based, Acadia; how do you make sure that that money is going there, that it is new money? My assumption is that whatever you set a match, that is what you are going to be able to raise.

Mr. BISHOP. All right. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Bishop. I understood your question perfectly, but, then again, you know, English is my second language.

Mrs. Christensen, any questions?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I do not have any questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Kind?

Mr. KIND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Mr. Bishop for holding this important hearing, and I also want to thank my colleagues for the obvious passion that they bring to this issue, and I share that.

If we get out of here at the end of this week, I am going to get home as soon as I can, grab my two little boys, and head over to the Teddy Roosevelt National Park and try to spend some quality time with them inside the park.

We have been doing that on an annual basis; during the August recess, trying to hit a different National Park. Last year, it was Grand Teton's Yellowstone; the year before that, Glacier; we were in the Black Hills the year before that. These are truly our monuments to civilization as a nation.

Some countries have the Great Wall. Some have pyramids. We have our public lands, our National Parks, our refuge system, that we have to live up to in regard to the stewardship, that we have responsibility over, and pass it on to the next generation.

As I go into the parks and meet with the park personnel, I am so impressed with the level of professionalism and dedication and the hard work that our park personnel bring to their job and the volunteers who are going in there each and every day to make it work. But each park is faced with their own unique challenges. When you sit there, and you listen to it, and they are unique from park to park to park, but also common themes, and I think you all have identified the backlog in maintenance and repair, between $610 billion or so and counting, that we have to be concerned about.

I think, given the Centennial celebration coming up in a few years out, we have an opportunity really to focus a lot of attention, and that is why I appreciate, Brian and Mark, you guys forming this bipartisan park caucus to help the rest of us get educated and up to speed on these issues as we approach this centennial celebration, and also the various ideas, Todd, yourself, the ideas that you are bringing with regard to what we might be able to put together, whether it is the checkoff, whether it is a private contribution match that the administration has been proposing, what responsibilities we might have operating under the pay-as-you-go budg-

eting, which is always a challenge around here to meet these challenges.

I am concerned with some of the trend lines we see out there: a huge drop-off in visitors to our National Parks; we do have an aging population; a greater effort for outreach, trying to get the youth and younger people more excited about these visit opportunities; that we are going to have to be creative in trying to figure out.

I think, Mr. Souder, you referenced the fact that we also need to be careful in regard to the private match or the private contributions because I do not think anyone would particularly like to see "Yellowstone McDonald's National Park" or the "Grand Google Tetons National Park" at the end of the day. But I think the administration's proposal, in trying to get private partnerships and maybe corporate America to step up, too, and see if they can ante up. All of this is an idea worthy of further exploration and merit.

So we will look forward to working with all of you on that as we move forward and certainly appreciate your testimony here today. But if any of you have a thought, and I will just leave this to any of you who might want to address it, is the serious concern of the trend line right now the drop-off in visitors that we have seen in recent years and the impact that is going to have on the park system, but also the response we are seeing, which is increased park fees now—they are going to be kicking in—and whether that might be acting as a deterrent in the future for more visitors going to the parks.

If any of you have thought about how we can counter that with any specific proposals or programs, we would be interested to hear from you.

Mr. SOUDER. I actually have a number of thoughts. I tried to work with former Chairman Regula on this. I believe there needs to be some kind of a tax offset for people below a certain income to pay for the fees. The problem is how to identify that at the gate or whether they would get it through the National Park Service directly through application and would address some of that.

The fees for parks, while we are not getting complaints, there is not any sign that there is actually deterrence, but we do not know what the indirect is, and certainly for lower-income families, it could become a challenge. This is hard to say. We do not necessarily want more people in Yosemite Valley. We want everybody who wants to go there to be there.

The potential growth here are the places like Santa Monica, Golden Gate, the gateway parks in Cayuga, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, places near population areas which will have the long family vacations, the traditional-type things that are there. That is likely to stay relatively stable.

When you go to Great Falls—that is the closest one here—but also San Antonio Missions, you will see large populations of Hispanic families not going to actually see the mission necessarily or the falls but to picnic and to use that open space, and then some go look at the falls. It is much like any other new group, as they get exposed, and as their income goes up, and as they start to appreciate the nature, we need to encourage things like Angel Island in California to reach out to those different groups to make sure that it is affordable, where there is a blockage.

It is very hard to count at these national recreation areas people coming in. We do not have counters. So it is not necessarily true that the total people visiting historic sites and others are dropping. Apostle Islands; how in the world do you count Apostle Islands? They are coming in by sailboat. But we do know that the crown jewels are relatively flat.

So I do not think it is as big a problem, but I would also like to see this technologically move forward.

If I can make one other thing that I have this burning desire to get into the record, and that is, part of the funding challenge here, particularly for the baseline funding, needs to be the Park Service has had tons of Homeland Security missions dropped on them. Much like in the highway, we cover a lot of the park roads through the highway bill.

Some of the other appropriation subcommittees need to take up some of the burdens as we move to broaden this. If it is Homeland Security mandated by other agencies, there needs to be in the budget not all of that borne within the Park Service because then it means a reduction in traditional Park Service things.

Similarly, in "No Child Left Behind" or in science bills, we have the greatest incubator of art, of education programs, of wildlife, of science, and we need to try to get a little more less stove piped by committee and try to look creatively how we are heading into the next centennial. Thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. Congressman Kind, if I may, Mr. Chairman, just very, very briefly address that in light of this legislation.

If you look at the history of our parks, as you have said so eloquently, our parks were, for Americans, a source of great national pride. From the early days of inception, people looked at Europe and said, You have cathedrals, you have the Colosseum, you have all of these other things; we have our natural resources. There have been various times, as we all remember, of national campaigns celebrating the parks.

I think something like that would be worth investigating, but I also think our legislation might help that. People tend to value things that they have paid for, and if you make a checkoff on your taxes and say, even if I am not seeing this particular park this year, I want to know it is being taken care of so that one day, as you are going to in a week, if we get out of here, you are going to visit a park with your family, you will know you helped preserve that park.

So I think, and what may, to some, be paradoxical but makes sense to me, by giving people the opportunity to pay for the maintenance of their parks directly through a checkoff, I think you enhance the awareness of the parks and the commitment to the parks and their values.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Let me just say, I could not agree with you more, Mr. Souder, that representing various parks along the border, 30 to 40 percent of park services are diverted toward security and enforcement activities that are mandated by Homeland Security.

There has to be a mechanism down the road to reimburse or make whole some of these expenses that are diverting from the

real enjoyment and the real preservation of those parks. A point well taken, sir.

Let me turn to Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Tiahrt, actually any one of you could answer this question. We have two bills with worthy and great goals before us. However, the Bishop bill has a component that I really like, and that is the opportunity for the private sector to contribute.

In your experience, Mr. Tiahrt, on appropriations and dealing with the dollars and for the other two of you as well, do you feel optimistic that it would be successful, that asking the private sector to step up and meet this Centennial Challenge would actually get the job done?

Mr. TIAHRT. We have seen some interest already in corporations and companies and individuals that want to be part of our park system in a big way, and matching funds is a very encouraging way to get them to become committed. In some of the parks in Florida, we have seen a big response already.

So I think this is a good way to give people more ownership in what they already know is our natural resources, but they feel like they can do something through their company resources or through their individual resources, especially if it is matched. It seems to be a big incentive. I think it would be a great fault of this nation if we did not give them that opportunity because the desire is there, the capability is there, and I think it will happen.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. I would concur with that. We see examples. One of the things, certainly in our neck of the Northwest, we do not refer to Mount Rainier as "Mount Rainier." We refer to it as "the mountain," and it is beloved. I mean, sincerely, people will call, there will be little automatic, spontaneous phone trees if there is a beautiful sunset. People say, "Run outside and look at the mountain. You have to see it." This happens all of the time.

We have a number of fairly well-to-do people, thanks to the high-tech boom, and if they could adopt projects within that National Park or down in Lewis and Clark National Park, preserving an area or expanding and improving a resource, people, I think, would be actually eager to do that, and that is why I am actually very positive about this. I think, oftentimes—Mr. Souder is absolutely right—we need to be careful to not have the "Google National Tetons."

I think, many times, folks are perfectly willing to do something just because it is the right thing to do, without asking for a logo on something, just to say, "We believe in this, and we want to support it."

By the way, the matching program that Congressman Souder and I are putting forward might be a way to help find some offset for the big contributions under the Bishop bill. The individual taxpayer could contribute to the fund, and that might be able to be used as a match for the larger direct contributions.

Mr. SOUDER. The National Park Foundation, NPCA, and others, and, in fact, every major park has had examples of major private sector giving. Clearly, there are corporations that have some stake with the outdoors, whether it is Coleman or REI or L.L. Bean, RV

manufacturers, GM, Ford, Toyota, and others, "Kodak moments"—you see that at the parks.

The question is how to broaden it beyond just the traditional. Some, by what Mr. Baird said earlier, was getting individuals to feel that they have a stake in the system, small donations, and if we can reach out to schools and get these kinds of programs into the schools, people will feel ownership in that system.

The other is, how can we get to the new money and the younger money in our society, which is why I mentioned Hollywood, why I mentioned the high-tech investors and others, that has been going to different various causes, how can we make parks the cause celebre for the hundredth birthday? And that is a slightly different donor challenge and requires some thinking beyond just kind of the traditional ways we have had private donors go in, which are basically regional support, or I visited that park, or I have a financial stake in promoting tourism. We need to figure out how to get to the next tier of donations.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you for your answers. I have a park pass right here, and I feel like this gives me a buy-in. I feel like I have an ownership. I have a role. I have a contribution that I have made, even though it is modest. These goals that you are talking about are so great, I am really glad that you are here today, and thank you for your work.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, sir. Ms. Herseth-Sandlin, any questions?

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleagues' interest. I think I know at least one of you, and, hopefully, all three of you have been to Mount Rushmore and the Badlands. I know Mr. Tiahrt has. He grew up in that neck of the woods in South Dakota, the eastern side.

I want to explore this issue of project selection because I do think, as you described, Mr. Souder, you have sort of regional groups, as we do with the Mount Rushmore Society, the Friends of Mount Rushmore, that have done a lot to preserve and enhance the visitors' experience, working with the National Park Service officials.

So we have heard some different ideas in terms of the individual levels, who may not be individuals who are not necessarily a part of those regional associations that are in the locality situated next to a National Park, and then you have those regional associations, and then you have this next tier that you described of donations.

So separate from how we get to those donations, what do we do with project selection because I know that we have the Friends of Mount Rushmore, who would be very interested in being able to access a match for a particular project at the park. But yet we also know that we could then come into the problems you described with the next tier of donations, where the donor expects something that maybe we are not comfortable giving because of the public resource that it is and naming rights of what have you.

So is there a way to set this up and maybe preserve some matching proposal, either the one that you are describing, Mr. Baird, that the caucus is working on, or the concerns that I know the Chairman has and that I share, to a degree, too, about who is best situated to make the selections: the National Park Service, Congress?

Should there be different tiers of what the donation is, and should it be bricks and mortar? Should it be separated into categories, as the Chairman's bill provides? Should a regional association that has a long track record of supporting that park have some influence in the type of project selection that would qualify for the match? I would be interested in your thoughts on that.

Mr. BAIRD. It is a great question and one that Congressman Souder and I asked when the administration first rolled out their proposal under Secretary Kempthorne.

One of the things that has been happening and has already been going on is a process to address precisely that. There have been so-called "listening sessions" held throughout the country already to hear of possible needs and priorities, and those listening sessions have been regional, but within that regional focus, there have been focuses on specific particular issues. For example, in my home district, would additional money be useful for the visitors' center in Vancouver Historic Reserve? Would it make sense to try to purchase some dunes to expand the Lewis and Clark National Park?

When you look at those, then there is a prioritization of needs, and, frankly, to some extent, also a prioritization of resources in the sense that if someone comes forward and says, "I am willing to spend X amount of dollars because I believe this need needs to be met, and no one else is spending money elsewhere."

I think that all of these proposals have one thing in common. This would supplement but not supplant the existing Postal Service budget. So we are not saying, "OK. If extra money is brought in by a private donor or a matching target in a certain area, then take it away from somebody else." This is over and above the operating budget.

So I think it would be a combination, frankly, of the legitimate resource needs, the Postal Service prioritization, and where various donors see that they might want to allocate their funds.

Mr. SOUDER. I agree with that. It is a messy process, and it always will be a messy process, and the National Park Service is not known as a big risk taker. They tend to move slowly. You have the advocacy groups as well, NPCA, as well as the Wilderness Society, which often weigh in differently. It is not that different from the jet ski-snow mobile type of end-holding types of fights of how you work it through. It is a combination of local and national. If it is a nationally funded park, add donors to that.

Should this be viewed as a private preserve of the local community, which sometimes it is? Should it be viewed as a National Park?

Often the people who seek this Committee or elsewhere are mostly on a committee because they have something in their area, and they are not necessarily looking national, but they want the national money to come into their area, but they look at it as they do not have the property taxes on that land.

These are the kinds of classic problems we are going to have. Obviously, the size of the donation is going to matter some, and there are going to be earmarks in the process, as we always go through and put our little thing in it.

But the bottom line is that, at the National Park Service, there are so many strong national advocacy groups, in addition to con-

gressional oversight, it is likely not to be egregious. But there should be some sorts of mandates, like the public process, like limitations, in my opinion, on how it can go and how extensive it can go, and, basically, complete transparency on every step.

Mr. TIAHRT. If I might add to that, thanks for the opportunity, and the Friends of Mount Rushmore have done a great job, and I think it is a good example. If we do not want to take away the resources that have already been established by some of these groups, but we do want to allow regional emphasis, one of the things that I was talking to Mr. Kiedaisch about was having an opportunity for a mountain bike path close to the D.C. area.

A lot of people like to mountain bike, and yet, in some of our close parks, they have horse trails, they have hiking trails, and they do not have very many people come here because the big popular thing quite often is to get the exercise through mountain biking.

Well, if we could, in this region, establish a matching grant to get a mountain bike path, I think we would see the number of people that use the park go up dramatically, and those kinds of regional opportunities should not be ignored.

Now, I think it should be a cooperative effort with the Park Service because, ultimately, the Park Service is responsible for our National Parks, but I think we should allow people to come up with an idea that would satisfy a region, if it is Mount Rushmore or something on the Massanutten Mountain, that they can use their resource, combine it with Federal government, and come up with a way to increase the number of people that come to our parks system. I think it is totally possible. It will be little bit messy, like Mr. Souder says, but still possible, and I think it is one way that we can use to get people outdoors.

Mr. SOUDER. By the way, you actually have one of the best examples of the difficulty, and that is the parking garage at Mount Rushmore. It was done with outside funds. It is not included in the park fee.

Therefore, one of the only places they get complaints about the park fee is that the parking part is not covered in the Mount Rushmore fee, but there was no other way to get that into the mandates to build the parking garage. So they basically went along with an unusual hybrid in order to do that, and sometimes you have to do that.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Well, thank you for mentioning that, and thank you, too, for mentioning the Homeland Security mission that especially places like Mount Rushmore have faced, and it has put the squeeze on other aspects of their budget. So thank you very much, all three of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. McCarthy, any questions?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mine is just more of a comment. I, one, like the idea. I think it is very creative. Yes, there could be a few challenges as we go, yes, but I think I go back to your statement. As long as there are transparencies, I think it is worth the challenge. Why miss the opportunity?

I think we are going to find out in the public there is going to be all new ideas that come forward. There is going to be new own-

ership from people. It is going to be a rebirth as we go forward, and I applaud you for bringing it forward and championing it, and I will work to have the challenges as we move forward, so I thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. If I could make one other comment. I know you are going to have other witnesses. I do not know that we have mentioned the international appeal of our National Parks. If you go to almost any U.S. National Park, you will see people who have traveled the world to get here. I had the privilege of kayaking the Grand Canyon about 15 years ago.

There was a couple from East Germany, actually, who had a picture of the Grand Canyon above their breakfast table and had looked at it every single day for 35 years and had set money aside. It was their dream to visit the Grand Canyon: 35 years, from a country pretty far away from us, to come visit a U.S. National Park, and that is the treasure. We have this opportunity.

There are good proposals before you. I would hope this Committee will seize this opportunity, take the very, very best of these three things and do something very creative and bold to preserve and celebrate these National Parks. As we anticipate the centennial, we are grateful for the chance to be part of that effort.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Any further comments? Let me turn to our colleague, Mrs. Capps. Do you have any comments, questions?

Mrs. CAPPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I do not have any questions of this first panel. I do with some of the subsequent ones. But I want to thank you for inviting our colleagues in and thank our colleagues for their testimony.

It is interesting to hear, as someone who has a National Park, the Channel Islands National Park, in my district, to hear comments, I particularly want to associate myself with those that our colleague from Washington State just made about the importance of our parks and what this legislation that our Chairman has introduced will do to strengthen and preserve and celebrate the centennial. I yield back.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. One last general question, and then I will offer the opportunity to Mr. Bishop, a hypothetical question, gentlemen, if you could.

We have a park unit. The grave need in that park unit is a waste water treatment plant, not a visitors' center, and as we attract private donors, how is that priority factored in, and, talking about the messy point that you brought up, just a quick response? How would we handle that?

Mr. BAIRD. My own belief is the issue I raised earlier. I think we have certain base needs, in terms of maintenance and operation of a park, that we, frankly, ought to fund as directly as we can through the normal appropriations process.

Congressman Souder and I, our bill is somewhat hybrid in that effort. I hate to overuse the term, but, remember, we have set a target and said we are going to give the public an opportunity to contribute directly, but we must meet these funding goals.

So we would say—Mark, correct me if you see it in a different way—we would say there are base funding needs for these parks that must be met by the U.S. Congress through our appropriations

process from the general fund. We believe that ought to be part of the appropriations process. We also want to give the taxpayers a way to signify their support for that by so designating money over and above it.

It should not just be the glamorous, new visitors' center or something like that. It should also be the basic day-to-day maintenance and operations, and we have to make sure we do not neglect that.

Mr. SOUDER. If I may add, I concur, and off the top of my head, an analogy might be, at a university, the park pass or your fee coming in may be like the football tickets that contribute some to the university, but you get use out of it. A university, when they do fundraising, for example, the University of Notre Dame, they do not do fundraising, saying, "We need to get our power plant updated, and we need to improve our sidewalks, and that our electrical bills went up by 10 percent last year."

They will do it for a building, for a science project, and so on, and the private sector does that. I agree with my colleagues that the basic funding has to be out of Federal, but the Park Service, in one of their goals, says that the Park Service should be an environmental model, and I have heard this at different parks.

I was able to sit in with some of the private sector research groups at Yosemite, as well as the funders, and one of their complaints was how can the National Park Service be a model to the world about how we should do it environmentally and have all of these sewage problems in these different parks? How can we be having vehicles, buses, that are not the latest in environmental strategy? I think that the goals of the new program are that the Park Service reflect that, but the bulk of the Park Service funding will always be baseline funding.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Bishop?

Mr. TIAHRT. Let me comment on that, Mr. Chairman. One of the challenges that we face in the appropriations process is watching a sustaining level of funding for our park system, making sure that we have the essentials: keeping the lights on, keeping the place clean, keeping enough rangers on staff so that we can just meet the basic level of keeping the place open and accessible to the public. That has been a challenge, and the waste treatment facilities, as you know, have been part of that. They get backlogged, and it becomes a real problem.

This corporate funding really has to be sold under the best part of the park. If you have ever had a corporate sponsor, I do not think you could get one for the waste treatment plant. Maybe Mr. Clean would like to do it. I am not sure, but it would be a challenge.

So I think that, when we look at the tax dollars we spend, we ought to look at what do we think it takes for a sustenance level, and that is where we ought to make sure that we have those kind of resources.

I look at the opportunity for corporations to be involved is gravy, or the real cream, where we can get some wonderful things done, bring more people in the park, enhance the wonderful resources we have, but let us figure out a way to sustain the National Park Service.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Bishop?

Mr. BISHOP. Todd, you came close. The three of you missed your answer. Obviously, Ms. Bomar, her first call is to Roto-Rooter. He will solve it easily then.

I appreciate all three of you for your testimony. We have kept you far too long. I apologize for that.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me turn to our colleague, Mr. Kildee, for any comments or questions he might have.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it, but I have no questions at this time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me thank you all and welcome the next panel.

[Pause.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Welcome, Director Bomar, again, and we look forward to your testimony and the opportunity to have a discussion with you about this very important anniversary, as I said. Welcome, and your testimony, please.

STATEMENT OF MARY A. BOMAR, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to all of you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2959 and H.R. 3094, bills that would establish a fund for the centennial of the National Park Service.

The Department strongly supports establishing a special fund to provide $100 million a year for the next 10 years to support the National Park Service projects and programs, as both bills would do.

We appreciate the time and interest that you, Mr. Chairman Grijalva, and Mr. Bishop and others have already devoted to this effort. We are grateful to you, Mr. Bishop, and to Mr. Young for introducing H.R. 2959, the administration's legislative proposal for establishing the National Parks Centennial Challenge Fund.

Secretary Kempthorne and I are very excited about partnering with the American people on innovative projects and programs that will capture the imagination of the public and that will welcome and inspire generations who will inherit the great national treasures under our stewardship.

We also appreciate the alternative approach that you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Rahall have introduced. The emphasis of H.R. 3094 places on diversity programs, professional development, and education is consistent with my own goals, as director of the National Park Service.

The president asked for a report on implementation of the Centennial Initiative by May 31, 2007. Secretary Kempthorne led the Department and the National Park Service in an unprecedented effort to reach out to the American public to listen to their ideas for future goals for our National Parks, with ideas from more than 40 sessions throughout the nation, and for further discussion among park managers and staff. From these sessions, five overarching goals emerged. They are articulated in the Secretary's May 31 report, "The Future of America's National Parks." Our efforts now are focused on two fronts.

First, each park superintendent and program manager has been asked to complete implementation strategies documents this summer for every unit that describes their vision desired accomplishments for their individual areas to support those five overarching goals.

Second, the Service, park employees, and partners are working together to propose centennial projects and programs for 2008 and 2009. Secretary Kempthorne and I plan to report on the individual park and program centennial implementation strategies and announce centennial projects and programs approved for funding for consideration for 2008 later in August.

There are four areas in which the bills before us today approach the centennial differently and which we look forward to working with you to address.

First, we believe that the Challenge Fund matching approach will stimulate more private donations and involve more Americans in the future of their National Parks. The possibility of matching funds has excited our partners and enticed new donors, and we have every indication that we will readily raise more than $100 million a year necessary for the $100 million annual Federal match.

Second, we believe there should be flexibility in allocating funds to different categories of projects and programs rather than a formula established by law. By having this flexibility, the process for determining signature projects and programs will be more responsive to the changing needs and conditions over the next 10 years.

Third, while we understand the Subcommittee's need to meet pay-as-you-go requirements, we would prefer that any offsets included in the bill come from one or more of the proposed mandatory saving proposals listed in the president's Fiscal Year 2008 budget.

Fourth, H.R. 2959 would provide up to $100 million annually in mandatory funds that would supplement annual appropriations. H.R. 3094 would make the availability of funding contingent upon subsequent appropriations and would, therefore, compete for funding with annual appropriations.

Despite some of the differences, the two bills are similar in many fundamental respects. Given our shared goals, we hope that we have the opportunity for further discussions that will enable us to move forward on legislation with language we can all agree on.

Again, we thank you for your time and efforts you are devoting to prepare our National Parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have or any other Members of the Subcommittee.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bomar follows:]

Statement of Mary A. Bomar, Director, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2959 and H.R. 3094, bills that would establish a fund for the centennial of the National Park Service.

The Department strongly supports establishing a special fund to provide $100 million a year for the next ten years to support National Park Service projects and pro-

grams, as both H.R. 2959 and H.R. 3094 would do. Establishing a fund to prepare for the National Park Service's centennial in 2016 is one of Secretary Kempthorne's top priorities, and we appreciate the time and interest that you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Bishop, and others have already devoted to this effort. We are grateful to Mr. Bishop and Mr. Young for introducing H.R. 2959, the Administration's legislative proposal for establishing the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund.

Secretary Kempthorne and I are very excited about partnering with the American people on innovative projects and programs that will capture the imagination of the public and that will welcome and inspire the generations who will inherit the great national treasures under our stewardship.

We also appreciate the alternative approach, H.R. 3094, that you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Rahall have introduced. The emphasis that H.R. 3094 places on diversity programs, professional development, and education is consistent with my own goals as Director of the National Park Service. Those goals are to:

- Re-engage the support of the American people for the National Parks and rejuvenate their pride in "the best idea America ever had," in the famous words of a British diplomat;
- Increase the capacity of the National Park System, through increased funding, to meet the needs of a changing population; and
- Recruit, retain, train, and prepare a new generation of leadership for the National Park Service.

While we have serious concerns about the funding mechanisms and certain other provisions contained in H.R. 3094, we look forward to working with this subcommittee to reach agreement on the best means of securing the funding necessary to achieve our shared goal of preparing our national parks for the next century of stewardship by the National Park Service.

The legislative proposal that the Department transmitted to you this past spring began with a directive which was announced on August 25, 2006, the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service. The day before, the President issued a memorandum directing Secretary Kempthorne to "enhance our national parks during the decade leading up to the 2016 centennial celebration" [and] prepare them for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment." From that bold directive, the Department developed the multi-year Centennial Initiative, which was presented in February as part of the President's FY 2008 Budget.

The Centennial Initiative proposes $3 billion in new funds for the National Park Service over the next ten years. Of that amount, $1 billion is the "Centennial Commitment"—$100 million in additional annual appropriations for each of the next ten years. The other $2 billion would come from the "Centennial Challenge"—the challenge to individuals, foundations, and businesses to contribute at least $100 million annually to support signature programs and projects. Each year, $100 million in donations would be matched by $100 million of Federal funding from the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund, the mandatory spending fund that would be established under H.R. 2959.

We greatly appreciate the support Congress has already shown for the Centennial Commitment portion of the Initiative. Both the House-passed and the Senate committee-approved versions of the FY 2008 Interior appropriations bill contain the $100 million in additional operations funding identified in the President's Budget as Centennial Initiative funding. Including the centennial funding, total operations funding for FY 2008 would increase by $199 million under the House-passed version over the FY 2007 level, and by $196 million under the Senate committee-reported version. Enactment of operations funding in that range would mean that all parks would receive enough funding to cover fixed costs in FY 2008, and many would also receive more seasonal rangers, more maintenance funding, and more resource protection funding, all of which would better enable parks to provide visitors with safe, enjoyable, and educational experiences.

The President asked for a report on implementation of his August 24, 2006 directive by May 31, 2007. To begin the process of determining signature programs and projects, Secretary Kempthorne led the Department and the National Park Service in an unprecedented effort to reach out to the American public to listen to their ideas for future goals for the national parks as we move toward the 100th anniversary. During March and April, after planning 12 listening sessions, we expanded to more than 40 sessions throughout the nation after the initial sessions generated such excitement among the American people as well as National Park Service staff. Some of them were led by the Secretary and me personally. We also took comments through our website and by mail; in total, we heard from more than 4,500 people, including many National Park Service employees. From these sessions, and from further discussion among park managers and staff, five overarching goals emerged.

They are articulated in the Secretary's May 31 report, The Future of America's National Parks, as follows:

- Stewardship: The National Park Service will lead America and the world in preserving and restoring treasured resources;
- Environmental Leadership: The National Park Service will demonstrate environmental leadership to the nation;
- Recreational Experience: National parks will be superior recreational destinations where visitors have fun, explore nature and history, find inspiration, and improve health and wellness;
- Education: The National Park Service will foster exceptional learning opportunities that connect people to parks; and
- Professional Excellence: The National Park Service will demonstrate management excellence worthy of the treasures entrusted to our care.

The report established these goals not only as the foundation for decisions about specific projects and programs, but also to guide the work of the National Park Service as we work toward our centennial in 2016. The report also identified specific performance goals within each overarching goal, and gave examples of actions that would fulfill those goals.

Our efforts at the present time are focused on two fronts: First, each park superintendent and program manager has been asked to complete an implementation strategy this summer that describes their vision and desired accomplishments for their individual areas to support the five overarching goals. Second, across the Service, park employees and their enthusiastic partners are working together to propose centennial projects and programs for 2008 and 2009. The projects and programs proposed for 2008 are being evaluated in terms of the criteria that were finalized in June. At the Secretary's request, the Inspector General is engaged in conducting critical point evaluations of how we intend to implement the Centennial Challenge. In particular, he has highlighted the issues of transparency in the project and program selection process and financial accountability.

Secretary Kempthorne and I plan to report on the individual park and program centennial implementation strategies, and announce centennial projects and programs approved for funding consideration for 2008 at the end of August.

The criteria adopted in June require that all proposed projects and programs:

- provide for authorized activities in existing units;
- contribute toward at least one of the five centennial goals;
- be consistent with our management policies and planning and compliance documents;
- require little or no additional National Park Service operating funds to be sustainable; and
- have partners willing to contribute at least 50 percent of the project cost in cash from non-Federal sources.

Beyond those basic requirements, projects and programs are being evaluated by National Park Service interdisciplinary review teams. Projects approved for 2008 will be analyzed to ensure that the programs and projects represent a mix of different emphasis areas—the five centennial goals, different-sized parks, different-sized projects, multiple park projects, national initiatives, and a mix of projects and programs. We have been very clear in our quest for a diversity of centennial undertakings; this is by no means strictly about "bricks and mortar" construction projects. There will be opportunities to consider additional bold and innovative projects and programs in future years, as parks and their partners rise to the challenge. Over time, the list will be updated to add new projects and programs and remove completed ones. We look forward to working with you to identify such projects and programs.

Turning to the legislation, H.R. 3094 diverges from H.R. 2959, the Administration's proposal, in four fundamental ways, and it is these differences that we have concerns with:

First, H.R. 2959 establishes a partnership program: it makes funding from the Centennial Challenge Fund available only upon the receipt of funds from non-Federal partners for specific signature projects and programs. H.R. 3094 makes funding available from the Centennial Fund regardless of how much, or whether any, non-Federal funding has been received.

We believe in the Challenge Fund approach—the idea that if obtaining Federal funding for projects depends on first obtaining private contributions, we will stimulate more private donations and involve more Americans in the future of their national parks. The challenge component was first developed in collaboration with philanthropic, non-profit, and private groups, and we found broad support for the idea of a public-private match in the public listening sessions we conducted this past spring. We found the "challenge" approach to fundraising to be a familiar and ac-

cepted concept. The possibility of matching funds has excited our partners and enticed new donors, and we have every indication that we will readily raise more than $100 million a year necessary for a $100 million annual Federal match.

Many of the private contributions are likely to come from small cooperating associations and small friends' groups, who are more likely to fund innovative educational programs than large, expensive capital projects. The Challenge Fund approach makes it possible for these small groups to make a vital contribution to the centennial goals.

Second, H.R. 2959 gives the National Park Service, working with its partners, the responsibility for determining which programs and projects are eligible for funding, while H.R. 3094 would allocate certain percentages of funding for certain types of projects, and have decisions on individual projects made by Congress as part of the annual appropriations process. We agree that it is desirable to devote centennial funding to projects in all of the categories listed in H.R. 3094: education, diversity, supporting park professionals, environmental leadership, natural resource protection, and line-item construction. We would add to that list "enhancing the recreational experience" and "cultural resource protection" and then these categories would cover most, if not all, of the same types of activities and projects that our five overarching goals cover. However, we believe that there should be more flexibility in determining how much funding is allocated to various types of projects than is possible if the spending formula is established by law.

By having this flexibility, the process for determining signature programs and projects will be more responsive to changing needs and conditions over the next ten years. Also, we cannot anticipate the categories of projects and programs that will be available year to year through our selection process. We would not want to miss an opportunity to fund a critical program or resource management project because of the limitations of the categories.

Third, while we understand the subcommittee's need to provide offsetting funding to meet "pay-as-you-go" requirements, we would prefer that any offsets included in the bill come from one or more of the proposed mandatory savings proposals listed in the President's FY 2008 Budget. H.R. 2959 does not include any offsets for the mandatory spending for the Centennial Challenge Fund, because the Administration's proposal was offset by mandatory savings within the President's Budget. In contrast, H.R. 3094 proposes to offset funding for the Centennial Fund through new or higher fees on commercial activities on Federal lands.

This offset provision would be unacceptable to the Administration and difficult for the Department to implement. An across-the-board increase in fees would have no correlation to the purposes of those fees, while selective increases could result in litigation. Fees are not royalties, bonus bids, or rents. The Department charges many different cost-recovery fees, and the fee levels are based on the costs related to the activity at issue. The Department also charges other fees for specific purposes. For example, the National Park Service sets franchise fees for concession contracts at levels based upon a detailed statutory standard. Such fees are contractual, and changes to existing fees require renegotiation of the contracts or referral to binding arbitration when agreement cannot be reached, as provided under statute. Diverting such fees would be detrimental to these important programs; raising the fees could result in contractual disputes and litigation and make those activities cost-prohibitive for the users.

Fourth, H.R. 2959 would provide up to $100 million annually in mandatory funds that would supplement annual appropriations. Yet, while H.R. 3094 provides that "unobligated amounts in the Fund shall be available without further appropriation," the bill would make funds available "only for Projects approved in Acts of appropriation for the Department of the Interior." Since availability would be contingent upon a subsequent act of appropriations, these amounts would be scored against that appropriation action and thus counted against the discretionary cap. In effect, the Centennial Challenge funds would have to compete for funding within annual appropriations, rather than be in addition to annual appropriations.

Despite these differences, the two bills are similar in fundamental respects:

- Both bills provide for an infusion of $100 million a year in Federal funding for Fiscal Years 2008 through 2017 to pay for National Park Service projects and programs that would fulfill certain purposes or goals;
- Both bills use the mechanism of a separate Treasury account in an effort to supplement annual discretionary appropriations;
- Both bills allow for donations from private entities to help pay for projects while retaining current rules pertaining to the solicitation and receipt of donations by National Park Service employees; and

- Both bills require annual reports to Congress on signature programs and projects, ensuring a flow of information between Congress and the Department on the use of funds provided in the Centennial account.

Given our shared goals, we hope that we will have the opportunity for further discussions that will enable us to move forward together on legislation with language we all agree on.

As Secretary Kempthorne said in his report to the President, "the golden years for the national parks have not passed, but are ahead." Again, we thank you for the time and effort you are devoting to the effort to prepare our national parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, Madam Director, and, as always, we appreciate your presence and your comments and testimony before the Committee.

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you, Mr. Grijalva.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Just a couple of questions. I think you mentioned, right now and also in your testimony, that your preference and the preference of the Department is to use the mandatory proposals listed by the president in his 2008 budget as the method to go.

Let me reference one, which, I think—there are six or more there, but the one that is the biggest revenue generator, I would think, is the drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I bring that point out because the historic reality is that the plan to drill in the arctic refuge has failed to become law even under previous majorities, so is it realistic to propose that that is the principal revenue source for the challenge and the match?

Ms. BOMAR. Sir, I know that we did not address the pay-as-you-go in our legislation. However, we have a list of offsets that are in the budget, the Fiscal Year 2008 budget, and I would be glad to offer you a copy of that so I can pass that in today. Thank you.

Also, I have with me today Pam Hayes, who is the director for the Department of the Interior for budget and finance, and she would be glad to discuss the dialogue with you on the——

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Director, I think, specifically, my question is, if ANWR is the source with the most sufficient revenue to deal with the question we are talking about, and it realistically has not received a majority and has not been acted upon, then what guarantees on that offset do we have in the future, if that is a sufficient revenue source that we are talking about as one of the mandatory proposals?

Ms. BOMAR. Right. Sir, again, my testimony did not reflect that, as I said, but I have a list of proposals as offsets for the Department of the Interior, and I would be more than glad to share that with you or discuss that. I hope that we can continue dialogue, Mr. Chairman, and that we can talk further about this, but the Department is certainly willing to work with you, sir, and, again, I would be glad to address those proposals or have our director do that for you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes. I bring that point up because, as we go forward with both pieces of legislation, the offset becomes the critical question for whether it is the match or whether it is the proposal that I have introduced, the point being that, in your testimony, you talk about how commercial activities that we propose as an offset, that they are set to just recover the costs associated with them, yet

multiple GAO studies have found that the Department's fees do not come close to covering agency costs.

Assuming that is the case, and I will let you respond to it, shouldn't these cost recovery fees be raised so that the agency's budgets are not subsidizing any of these commercial activities?

Ms. BOMAR. Many of the Federal fees, Mr. Chairman, already in place are in place through legislation, as with the Federal recreation fee program, and already designated to cost of operations for those fees. We feel that the administration's bill, certainly showing the mandatory funding, is the way that we would like to proceed. We do feel that the fees right now are designated toward certain, whether it is commercial or leasing, leasing fees in National Parks stay the National Park where those fees are generated, just as the cost of operations for entrance fees, for example.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. How can you make sure that projects which are attractive to donors, big-ticket projects and big-ticket donors, will not take priority over the basic necessities, maintenance backlog, that you have spoken to this Committee in the past?

Ms. BOMAR. Yes. Coming back to the projects, the projects have all been generated as a need by every National Park unit. We have a system, a management information system, a database that is in place that all projects have to come through that, and they are generated at the park.

The parks, working with their partners, and I brought with me today, you will see here partnership letters from all over America. There are over 300 partnership letters of support of commitment for funding that are going through a screen-out evaluation process this week. As we speak, we have a review team that has come in to review all of the projects.

These are absolutely not dominated by the partners. It is started from a grassroots effort from the parks that have come up through the system. It is in accordance with all Federal regulations. These projects are consistent with management policies and are generated at the park level certainly in tandem with the partners.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me turn to my colleague, Mr. Bishop, for any questions. We are going to be called to a vote. We will try to get as many questions as we can.

Mr. BISHOP. Ms. Bomar, I hope you can also stay through this panel because I know there are going to be several rounds of questions that we are going to have for you.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. First of all, just for the record, the director has actually submitted at least seven different potential saving areas, each of which by themselves would fund the yearly requirement that is there. However, if you were actually to go to ANWR—to be technically correct, no one has ever suggested drilling in ANWR Section 1002 that was set aside by President Carter for economic development. If you did that, you could fund the 10-year program in one fell swoop. Actually, you could do it four times with the 10-year program and have energy independence at the same time.

So you have a wonderful idea, Mr. Chairman. We should go in that direction.

Ms. Bomar, you have described your plan in a way that involves both new partners and the public. The alternative proposal seems

like a no-brainer; it is easy. There are no strings attached to the billion dollars; it will always be there. Why, then, is the plan that actually involves a matching grant preferable to you?

Ms. BOMAR. It is not just about the money. Mr. Bishop, good question. It really is about reengaging the American public with their National Parks. We have found that reengaging foundations, communities, individuals, and individual Americans with their National Parks; they want to be part of their National Parks.

We believe that, over many years, we have had many of our friends and foundations that have been friends working with us now as partners for the last 30 and 40 years. I, myself, have come from many partnership parks, as you know, from the Northeast Region and parks throughout America. This book confirms that, that partners want to be involved. They want to be part.

Often, they will say, "We will put in a dollar-for-dollar match, but when is the Federal government going to step up also and show really good-faith effort to be a partner on both sides of the house?" And you can see here, from all of the partnership levels, that many of them—it is, again, about building constituents. It is about building the future stewards of America. They want to be involved with their National Parks.

This team that has just come in before me, sir, this panel, have answered those same questions by saying they want to be involved. Americans love their National Parks. The challenge funding approach, matching private funds with Federal funds, will leverage, and it gives more of an incentive also to Americans to get involved with their National Parks.

Why should donors and the private sector be interested, you say, in the funding? Many of our partners, as I said, in every state; they do not want to pay for basic services. It is augmenting. It is giving the margin of excellence from partners. I have been involved in many large partnerships. Looking at one of the projects that we have talked about before, at the Ben Franklin Museum, that is an $18 million project. Twelve million would be put up by partners that care about their community, that care about the National Parks. They are looking for a Federal match to be a true partner with the National Park Service.

Right now, there is a large credit company that has just put out a recent survey that has said, Tell us what your top priorities would be as card holders, and many of them come back and said, About caring for the National Parks. They have actually voted on this. It came out as one of the number one projects that Americans would like to be involved with.

Mr. BISHOP. Ms. Bomar, I have actually got eight questions, so I am, obviously, going to run over time with this one.

Let me just get one comment here, as my time runs down. Sometimes I think we underestimate the expectations of what the private sector is willing to do, as to what they will pay to do it. Just as a personal example, and this is not a one-to-one match, but it is as close as I am going to come. I am an old school teacher sitting in the school, realizing that every athlete got some kind of a scholarship because it was the popular thing to do in going to the community, and also the business department could go to every business and get scholarship monies.

I was the department chair of history, and I decided I was tired of that. There is no natural constituency out there in the business world for history scholarships, but what we were able to do was become creative, and, as a department, we came up with a whole new approach to something, which actually ended up, after a whole lot of effort on our part, coming up with more money that we were giving out for history scholarships than the athletic department was giving out for their scholarships.

People are willing to pay for the so-called "non-glamorous grunt things" if they think they are contributing to the whole.

I think we are really being a little bit skeptical about what people will support and what they will not support, even though I made the crack about Roto-Rooter. It is possible. It is not only possible; I think it is probable.

In my experience in the state legislature, I saw the same thing in our capital facility outlook, in our capital facility budgeting.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. I think sometimes we are underestimating the ability of people to step up to help.

Ms. BOMAR. Absolutely right. Many companies, and it is not to commercialize the National Parks, have come in——

Mr. BISHOP. Wait. That is my third question, so go ahead.

Ms. BOMAR. All right. They have come in to say, that have owned air-conditioning companies. I was at the missions for seven years. There was an air-conditioning company. We needed some air conditioners for the missions. Many companies stepped up to say they would be glad to put air conditioning. That might not be a sexy project to some. Again, I try not to lose sight of—we have construction money, we have fee money. We have done a terrific job of improving our facilities. The President and Congress, I salute you for keeping us focused on improving our facilities, our maintenance.

Again, you are right, sir. The American public, when it comes to their home back yard, in any of our cities where our parks are located, people are glad to step up.

Mount Rushmore is another perfect example. My deputy director here. We have found that the American people do love their National Parks, and they are willing to step up and fund many projects that we often hear they are not sexy projects, but after working with many friends groups, and, again, these letters verify that.

At universities, you talk about sports or education. Universities have stepped up. We have many university partners in here: city, state, local government. There is a group in this week that are evaluating the projects under very stringent criteria.

Mr. GRIJALVA. If I may, we are going to recess so we can go take these votes and return and continue this discussion with you.

Ms. BOMAR. All right.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I think the point Mr. Bishop made is well taken. I think private donations are important. I think that the fundamental difference in the two bills is we do not tie the two together. There is no prohibition that people, private folk, can give to our parks. We just do not tie them together. We will get back and discuss that.

Ms. BOMAR. That is right. Thank you very much, Chairman. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:17 a.m., a recess was taken.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Resuming the meeting, Madam Director, thank you for your patience, and let me turn to our colleague, Mrs. Capps, for any questions or comments she may have.

Mrs. CAPPS. Thank you and welcome, Director Bomar, and thank you for you testimony and, again, for this hearing, which I think is very timely and important. My questions will follow along and, I hope, not be repetitive to what our Chairman was asking, but I think it is very important for us to get to the heart of what this partnership is. The administration bill which proposes to leverage additional private funding by creating a matching program where Federal funds would be made available equal to amounts contributed by nonFederal sources, up to $100 million a year.

Here is my question, and these are hypotheticals, but this is what we need to work on. What happens if only $25 million is raised?

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mrs. CAPPS. You talk about the interests of the private sector, but we do not know for sure if they are going to step up to the plate.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes. We have had many friends groups that have been donating to the National Parks, Mrs. Capps, for many, many years, and we have 170 friends groups that, in 2005, donated $68 million to the National Parks. You know, it is sad that there was not a matching fund in place for the partnership then.

We look at the National Park Foundation: $22 million came in.

So I do feel it is very important, on the partnership side, and it is also the incentive that we create with the partnerships.

Mrs. CAPPS. This is an aside on this. We are assuming that there is an administration in place that wants to invest $100 million. An administration could theoretically say, "Well, we do not want to put in more than $25 million." So you might then just not work very hard.

What safeguards are in this? Let me ask you.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mrs. CAPPS. You are going to speak to your administration, which has made that pledge, and I applaud you for that, but this legislation is written for any administration. We hope no one would be as stingy as I mentioned, but here is the follow-up question: The challenge for you, as the administration, then, is to raise $100 million a year, and you have talked about the friends and so forth. But for the parks, if you get the full $200 million a year, you have to make sure that private sources contribute and invest. I want friends groups to be involved, but I want you to encourage more investment from private sources.

The devil is in the details. How are you going to specifically raise the money? What steps will you take to incentivize the donations? Are these steps outlined in the administration's proposal?

Ms. BOMAR. Yes. Let me come back again to the partnerships. Again, our telephone and fax machine have been off the wall with these proposals coming in from partners. Over 300 letters that are

committed. When we sent these requests out, to make sure that we have a firm commitment that you have the funding in place, that you want to be a partner, and there is a project—you have worked with the part—so there is over $300 million in projects, and over my 17 years with the National Park Service, that has been really going on, working with partners, like the Pew, the Penn Foundation, many other foundations.

In fact, 62 percent of these projects that have come in are solely related to foundations, nonprofit groups, city, state, government, some non-NGO's.

Mrs. CAPPS. I hear you say that. I guess I am a little concerned with the lack of safeguards in the proposal by the administration as a whole.

Here is a more challenging one perhaps, which also lurks. We have seen these proposals, these ideas. Some of my constituents with our Los Padres National Forest talk about the Disney-fication, when recreational groups seek private funds, and the sort of substantial change in the way the public land appears to the visitor. It looks like a billboard. They are concerned. I have seen what has happened in public schools with the stadiums now that endorse, you know, well, this is just a given.

When we start this process, I think we are going to be really careful. Here is another hypothetical: What happens if a private company—we have talked about Roto-Rooter today—wants to donate $10 million for a visitors' center at Channel Islands National Park? That is, as you know, the park in my district.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Eventually, the new visitors' center, brought to you by Roto-Rooter, is constructed. What safeguards would have to be in place, and are these in your proposal, to ensure that someone, like Roto-Rooter, is not making policy decisions at the park.

Money sometimes is totally lack of strings, but it is not always, and it is our job, I think, as the government, to make sure that policy is driven by the public's interest in elected officials setting policy who, hopefully, do not have any ulterior motive and do not want to, you know, skew the policy in a certain direction.

Friends can be friends. They can be altruistic friends, but they can also be self-serving friends. Those safeguards, I think, go, for me, to the heart of anything we want to put in place.

Ms. BOMAR. It is an excellent question, and I am glad that you have brought it up. DO-21, "Fundraising and Negotiations"; we are absolutely going to be in conformance. It is not to commercialize the parks. You will not see a golden arch at any National Park. We will make sure that none of our employees solicit donations.

For many years, I come back to philanthropy has been a big part of the National Parks. Thirty National Parks were created through philanthropy.

Mrs. CAPPS. Absolutely.

Ms. BOMAR. But we will make sure that we stay absolutely within conformance with DO-21. Donations are not to be used to offset appropriated funds or to meet recurring operation requirements, and employees will not solicit donations.

In DO-21, it clearly states how you can recognize donors. That is done in a very tasteful matter. This is not about commercializing our National Parks.

Mrs. CAPPS. I guess it goes to the difference between rulemaking and standards, and I have to tip my interest on behalf, and there is just a difference there. I appreciate your saying all that you say, and I appreciate what you have done to cultivate all of these wonderful friends that we have, and yet, I think, in the final analysis, I do appreciate what our Chairman and our Committee, overall Committee Chairman, have struck as a——

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you, Mrs. Capps, and also, to reemphasize, all of fundraising and working with donations and partners, it is all done through a Federal agreement. Agreements will absolutely be in place. They are in place today, and I really truly feel we have been very transparent and can all pass the red-faced test about how ethical we have been in making sure that these agreements are in place.

Mrs. CAPPS. Well, that speaks well to your directorship. Thank you very much.

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Bishop?

Mr. BISHOP. I am sorry. I am somewhat confused here. You already can take donations now. Right?

Ms. BOMAR. Yes, sir, we can.

Mr. BISHOP. And you have these regulation whatever, 21, whatever it is called.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes. "Fundraising and Donations."

Mr. BISHOP. So that prohibits you from commercializing the stuff now.

Ms. BOMAR. Absolutely.

Mr. BISHOP. If a bill were passed that you actually got matching funds, these regulations are still in place.

Ms. BOMAR. Absolutely, they are in place, sir, yes.

Mr. BISHOP. What you are trying to tell us, I guess, is if you are willing to sell out the parks, you could sell out the parks now. It is not going to be a difference.

Ms. BOMAR. Absolutely. There is nothing different. These funds will augment our appropriations. They are a supplement to our appropriations. It is another way of getting projects completed. Again, those agreements have always been in place. They are absolutely very stringent about what we can do and what we cannot do.

Mr. BISHOP. All right. I told you I had eight questions, total. That was number nine. I just added that one. I am sorry.

Ms. BOMAR. All right.

Mr. BISHOP. Let me go to a couple of the others. One of the things we did not do in our bill that, I think, may have been a mistake is in-kind donations. Do you have an opinion on whether in-kind donations should be added to cash donations as well?

Ms. BOMAR. Yes. There has been a lot of discussion about in-kind donations. Our bill presently does not address that, about having in-kind donations, and we certainly would like to keep the dialogue going about in-kind donations. However, it is the reporting to make sure that they are in conformance with the IRS requirements. But we certainly would like to continue dialogue about——

Mr. BISHOP. It is something that could be done if we worked through the details of how you——

Ms. BOMAR. Yes, Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. In the difference between the two bills, there are a couple of things that I would just like a quick reaction to.

One is in the bill that you actually asked for, you specifically have a recreation component.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. It was not in the other version. Is that of significance to you that that become one of the areas of emphasis?

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you. It is a very good question. I appreciate that.

After we received the president's mandate, part of that criteria was go out and seek comments from the American public. It was clearly defined. We had 40 listening sessions throughout America. The five goals that were established came from the American public. The citizens were heard when we went through that process.

Recreation, professional excellence, stewardship, environmental leadership, and recreation were part of the goals that clearly emerged through all of the dialogue that we had at these listening sessions.

Mr. BISHOP. You also mentioned, in your testimony, the idea of flexibility. The one bill gives you flexibility of how you spend the money; the other divides it up into percentages.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. I see. Let me skip that one because you mentioned that in your testimony. You have covered it.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. Unless you really have a desire to say one more word.

Ms. BOMAR. No. Again, it really is a grassroots effort. Those goals really were established. We would like flexibility, so yes. Rather than putting percentages on the goals, I know that stewardship on our administration's bill clearly includes cultural resources, which is very important to us as well, as well as natural resources.

Mr. BISHOP. This is maybe an unfair question because we have not talked directly about this at any given time, but one of the concerns we have always had is that visitorship in the so-called "crown jewels" of the park system is on a decline, especially those amongst the certain demographic groups you are after.

The two areas that seem to have had an increase are the Mall in Philadelphia, both of which you were directly involved in.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. How does your success in those particular areas, how can that be transferred over to the rest of the park system that is not having that same kind of success in increasing its visitorship?

Ms. BOMAR. Again, it is through solid, great partnerships, but also, you know, we have had the success there by being relevant, by making sure that our stories are relevant today. When we went through the reports to the president, the goals that we outlined, clearly we have to change: changing demographics, migration, high-tech today.

I was successful, Mr. Bishop, because we were relevant. We made sure that our staffing was relevant, that we were telling relevant stories, and people felt welcomed, but much of that was focused on really true, great partnerships with the community, with tourism, with recreation. It takes a village to raise a child, and it is the same in National Parks. It takes a community working with those parks, working together in tourism. We should be looking thematically across different parks. How can larger Civil War sites help the smaller ones?

Mr. BISHOP. I agree with you. That is probably not the phrase I want to hear in the future, but I agree with you. Do not give them any more ammunition than they already have here.

Let me just ask one last question, and I will get you off of the hook here.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. Since one version talks about fees as a way of raising the revenue, what effect would imposing additional fees on concessionaires, for example, which is a commercial entity, have on the National Park System?

Ms. BOMAR. I am glad you brought up the fees. I was talking to the congressman for just a moment from the Virgin Islands, Donna Christensen, and we go through civic engagement, and many have said, "Mary, we cannot raise fees. The American public have complained." There are only fees in 168 parks out of 391, and the fee issue of raising fees; we have had outcry from the public about raising some of those fees. So, yes, that is probably not the wise way to go, as far as raising fees, whether they are with concessions; it comes back to the American public.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. I appreciate your patience. I will yield back. I am over time again, anyway.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, Director. I think the distinction that is being made is important to make: The issue of increases of fees for visitors, and what the legislation, 3094, talks about is fees for commercial activities. Those are two separate items. 3094 does not touch the issue of visitor fees increase.

But, anyway, at some point, to submit, and not for now, that out of the $68 million, the figure you gave of the private donations that are coming into our park system now, because the administration's legislation and my colleague's legislation talks about a cash-only kind of match as we go forward.

Ms. BOMAR. Yes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Anticipating that, could you kind of, not for now, break down for the Committee, and if you could submit to it, that $69 million in terms of in-kind or cash only——

Ms. BOMAR. Yes, I can. I can bring that to you, absolutely. We can get those figures for you, sir.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. With that, let me thank you, unless—Mr. Bishop, do you have any additional questions?

Ms. BOMAR. I just want to say, I appreciate your time that you have spent on this effort. I do feel that there is a great excitement, and you probably want to ask if there are any other questions, but there is a great excitement out in the National Parks, with our staff. They are excited about coming to work, to give good visitor service, and I truly feel that this really was a grassroots. The Na-

tional Park Service should institutionalize going out to the American public and seeking their ideas and input.

I just appreciate it, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Bishop. Thank you for your time, for giving us the forum. It is nice that we all dance together with the National Park Foundation and the Centennial.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you for the fine work that you do, and let me invite the next panel.

Ms. BOMAR. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

[Pause.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me welcome this panel. Thank you very much for your patience, and I am looking forward to your testimony.

Let me begin with Mr. Vin Cipolla, president and CEO, National Park Foundation. Sir?

STATEMENT OF VIN CIPOLLA, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

Mr. CIPOLLA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. We commend the sponsors and this Committee for their commitment to preparing our National Parks for the challenges and opportunities of the next century.

My name is Vin Cipolla, and I am the president and CEO of the National Park Foundation. The National Park Foundation is the national charitable arm of the National Park Service, chartered by Congress in 1967 to encourage private philanthropic support for America's National Parks. Involvement by a diverse charitable community deepens connections to and understanding of both the history of the parks and how much they mean for our future.

Since February, when the president focused the attention of the Nation on the National Park Service Centennial in 2016, there has been a lot of thoughtful dialogue, including the proposal by Chairmen Rahall and Grijalva on how to ensure the future of our National Parks.

As the national charitable partner for the parks, we think it is key to continue the rich tradition in which the parks were founded and have been sustained: public and private interests working in tandem.

Both of the proposed bills recognize the importance of this complementary approach. The National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act [H.R. 2959] seeks to raise up to $100 million each year over a ten-year period from private donations and to match those donations with Federal funding up to $100 million annually.

The proposal introduced by Chairmen Rahall and Grijalva [H.R. 3094] clearly anticipates private philanthropy as well. These proposals continue the long history of private philanthropy that has created our unequaled system of National Parks.

More than 100 years ago, people from across this country gathered to protect the places they loved and the places they knew would matter long into the future. It is their spirit and ideals on which the National Park System was founded. Together, they had the vision to transform the natural treasures of our country into the first National Parks so future generations could enjoy these magnificent places and learn about our nation's proud history.

Thirty parks were directly created through donations, as Director Bomar pointed out.

The future of philanthropic support is in both diversifying the opportunity to experience National Parks and in diversifying the opportunity to support our parks. The National Park Foundation and friends groups, cooperating associations, and others continue this legacy of public-private partnership. Together, we are reinvigorating a movement for park philanthropy to benefit all parks.

In the United States, charitable giving in 2005 exceeded $260 billion, of which approximately $90 million went to causes related to the National Park Service mission: education, health, the arts, culture and humanities, and the environment. The National Parks received only a very small portion of these gifts. We can do better.

Our preliminary conversations with major donors and philanthropic organizations surrounding the centennial have been, indeed, very promising. We see great opportunities to make the National Parks an important and prominent place for individual charitable giving. In the last Fiscal Year, we, at the National Park Foundation, have been able to increase our number of individual donors by 40 percent.

Also, throughout its history, the National Park Foundation has worked with many significant corporate partners. Their support has enabled the National Park Service to enhance and expand important programs in such areas as education, preservation, community engagement, health, and wellness and volunteerism.

Unilever, the longest-standing corporate partner of the National Park Foundation, has been working with us for nearly 15 years and, through one of the many programs they fund, has provided nearly 200 of our parks with 1,100 miles of recycled lumber. This product has been used on the decking around Old Faithful, the dry dock for the USS CONSTITUTION, and miles of park trails and boardwalks.

For the last eight years, Ford Motor Company has helped place Ph.D. students in parks across the system to help park managers understand and find solutions to challenging transportation issues.

American Airlines has helped us fund critical programs and global conservation initiatives dealing with migratory birds.

Coca-Cola North America recently pledged several million dollars to help parks across the system restore hiking trails for visitors.

Having worked with the parks for such a long time and in such significant ways, I can assure you that both the Foundation and its partners understand and share the concern that corporate support for parks not become confused with, and not lead to, commercialization. We work carefully within Director's Order 21 to ensure that corporate involvement adheres to this guideline.

Today's media environment creates multiple opportunities for donors and parks to work together in new and creative ways that do not lead to the commercialization of parks, such as the way we can use the Web to express a partnership and encourage engagement.

This renewed interest in encouraging park philanthropy and partnerships creates many opportunities.

The first is the opportunity to connect and strengthen the fabric of support for parks on a national and local level.

The second is the opportunity to expand the dialogue around park partnerships as richer conversations about parks lead to incorporating best practices and innovation, allowing us to bring new ideas and models to National Parks.

Third is the opportunity to better support the National Park Service in its efforts to enhance important youth and diversity programs system-wide.

We are glad to see the focus on children and diversity in the proposed legislation. While charitable involvement of the American people has helped preserve and protect our parks, it has also connected children to our parks, something the Federal government cannot do alone.

The National Park Foundation continues to expand and support our own programs surrounding this initiative. We have seen support for the Junior Ranger and WebRangers programs increase over the last two years, and we continue to expand and increase Electronic Field Trips where we connected 37 million children in a simultaneous visit to our parks during the last National Park Week.

We will continue to work to improve the relationship of children to their National Parks, and we have a lot underway. Additionally, the African-American Experience Fund is working to connect people with National Parks that present African-American history and culture.

We, at the National Park Foundation, believe there is much more potential in philanthropy. We will be convening a National Leadership Summit on Philanthropy at the University of Texas in Austin on October 14-16 to help bring together charitable leaders from across our nation who care about our parks.

The state of our parks at the Centennial Celebration——

Mr. GRIJALVA. If I may.

Mr. CIPOLLA. I am over——

Mr. GRIJALVA. Over.

Mr. CIPOLLA.—and I am at the end, as well, so thank you very much. We applaud the effort to increase base funding of the Park Service so it can carry out its mission more fully and complement the activities of the charitable side. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cipolla follows:]

Statement of Vin Cipolla, President and CEO, National Park Foundation

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. We commend the sponsors and this committee for their commitment to preparing our national parks for the challenges and opportunities of the next century. My name is Vin Cipolla and I am the President and CEO of the National Park Foundation. The National Park Foundation is the national charitable arm of the National Park Service, chartered by Congress in 1967 to encourage private philanthropic support for America's national parks. Involvement by a diverse charitable community deepens connections to an understanding of both the history of the parks and how much they mean for our future.

Since February, when the President focused the attention of the nation on the National Park Service Centennial in 2016, there has been a lot of thoughtful dialogue—including the proposal by Chairmen Rahall and Grijalva—on how to ensure the future of our national parks. As the national charitable partner for the parks, we think it is key to continue the rich tradition in which the parks were founded and have been sustained—public and private interests working in tandem.

Both of the proposed bills recognize the importance of this complementary approach. The National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act (H.R. 2959) seeks to

raise up to $100 million each year over a ten year period from private donations and to match those donations with federal funding up to $100 million annually. The proposal introduced by Chairmen Rahall and Grijalva (H.R. 3094) clearly anticipates private philanthropy as well. These proposals continue the long history of private philanthropy that has created our unequalled system of national parks.

More than one hundred years ago, people from across this country gathered to protect the places they loved and the places they knew would matter long into the future. It is their spirit and ideals on which the National Park System was founded. Together, they had the vision to transform the natural treasures of our country into the first national parks so future generations could enjoy these magnificent places and learn about our nation's proud history. Thirty parks were directly created through donations.

Private philanthropy has traditionally been held in the hands of a few individuals whose commitment is strong, consistent, and valuable. We view the future success of private support not only in the capable hands of Congress and the National Park Service, but also in the hands of the 80 million plus national park visitors and enthusiasts. The future of philanthropic support is in both diversifying the opportunity to experience national parks, and in diversifying the opportunity to support our parks.

The National Park Foundation and friends groups, cooperating associations and others, continue this legacy of public private partnership. Together, we are reinvigorating a movement for park philanthropy to benefit all parks.

This new century presents wonderful opportunities for our national parks, but also serious challenges. The parks exist in increasingly complex environments with varied and often competing demands placed upon them: the U.S. population is growing older and more diverse, children are spending less time outdoors, and technology is bringing rapid changes. The National Park Service and we as a nation are challenged to respond.

We believe the American people, like the generations before, are ready to embrace this challenge and provide the innovation, creativity, and charitable support necessary to protect these places for the next 100 years and beyond. In the United States, charitable giving in 2005 exceeded $260 billion. Of which, approximately $90 billion went to causes related to the National Park Service mission—education; health; arts; culture and humanities; and the environment. The National Parks received only a small portion of these gifts. We can do better. Our preliminary conversations with major donors and philanthropic organizations surrounding the Centennial have been very promising. We see great opportunities to make the national parks an important and prominent place for individual charitable giving. In the last fiscal year, we've been able to increase our number of individual donors by 40%. We believe these gifts pay dividends in deepening not just the financial, but also the emotional commitment that Americans have to their parks.

Throughout its history, The National Park Foundation has worked with many significant corporate partners. Their support has enabled the National Park Service to enhance and expand important programs in such areas as education, preservation, community engagement, health and wellness, and volunteerism. Unilever, the longest-standing corporate partner of the National Park Foundation, has been working with us for nearly 15 years and through one of the many programs they fund has provided nearly 200 of our parks with 11,000 miles of recycled lumber. For the last eight years, Ford Motor Company has helped place PhD students in parks across the system to help park managers understand and find solutions to challenging transportation issues. American Airlines has helped us fund critical programs and global conservation initiatives dealing with migratory birds. Coca Cola North America recently pledged several millions of dollars to help parks across the system restore hiking trails for visitors.

Having worked with the parks for such a long time and in such significant ways, I can assure you that both the Foundation and its partners understand and share the concern that corporate support for parks not become confused with and not lead to commercialization. We will work carefully within Director's Order #21 to ensure that corporate involvement adheres to this guideline. Over the last number of years, we have looked at this issue far too conventionally. Today's media environment creates multiple opportunities for donors and parks to work together in new and creative ways that do not lead to the commercialism of parks.

This renewed interest in encouraging park philanthropy and partnerships creates many opportunities. First is the opportunity to connect and strengthen the fabric of support for parks on a national and local level. Our parks offer the best investments in the areas of youth-enrichment, education, health, and volunteerism, yet philanthropic potential on a grand scale and in line with contemporary thresholds has not been realized. Federal funding offers incentives for charitable partners to

work collaboratively and creatively to develop fundraising campaigns that affect the entire park system. The National Park Foundation is prepared to take the necessary national leadership role to make this a reality and is currently working with an outside firm to examine the feasibility for creating a national philanthropic campaign to support national parks for the next century.

Second is the opportunity to expand the dialogue around park partnerships. A richer conversation about parks will lead to incorporating best practices and innovation, especially at the state and local levels, which allow us to bring new ideas and models to national parks.

Third is the opportunity to support the National Park Service as it works to enhance important youth and diversity programs system-wide. The approaching Centennial encourages us to build relationships that crosscut the full spectrum of American society. By working together to address under-reached audiences in ways that create meaningful park experiences, we ensure that all Americans feel connected to our shared heritage and accept their responsibility as future stewards of the national parks.

We are glad to see the focus on children and diversity in the proposed legislation. While the charitable involvement of the American people has helped preserve and protect our parks, a lot of charitable activity today helps connect children to our parks—something the federal government can't do alone. The National Park Foundation continues to expand and support our own programs surrounding this initiative. We have seen support for the Junior Ranger and WebRangers programs at about $2.5 million over the last two years and continue to expand and increase our Electronic Field Trips, connecting 37 million children in a simultaneous visit to our parks during the last national park week. We will continue to work to improve the relationship of children to their national parks, and plan to work with private charitable organizations promoting these programs. Additionally, the African American Experience Fund is working to connect people with national parks that present African American history and culture.

We at the National Park Foundation look forward to this century of giving. We will be convening the first National Leadership Summit on Philanthropy and Parks at the University of Texas in Austin on October 14-16 to bring together leaders from across our nation to shape strategies, which will ensure that our national parks remain the world's premier centers of learning, science, recreation, preservation, and partnership.

The state of our parks at the Centennial Celebration in 2016 will say a lot about our priorities as a nation. I applaud efforts to increase base funding for the National Park Service so it can carry out its mission more fully. Opportunities for philanthropy must be central to any Centennial legislation and we are confident this can be accomplished in a manner that allows our partners at the local level to be successful and for programs at the national level to extend the benefits of philanthropy to all parks. Philanthropy is critical to not only leveraging the federal investment, but to creating new opportunities for more of the public to relate to their parks and to generate the creativity and innovation the National Park Service will need in the coming century.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your ongoing support of national parks and for allowing me the opportunity to speak about the important role philanthropy plays in supporting the noble mission of the National Park Service and in connecting all Americans to these very special places.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. CIPOLLA. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me turn now to Mr. Gary Kiedaisch, president and CEO of the Coleman Company. Sir, your comments, testimony. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF GARY KIEDAISCH, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE COLEMAN COMPANY, INC.

Mr. KIEDAISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and add my voice in support of the goals and key elements of both bills before you today, bills that would establish historic, bold, and visionary funding for the National Park Service in the Centennial Celebration.

I am here today as an advocate for using the centennial as a catalyst to build new partnerships between corporate America and our National Parks, partnerships that will help restore and preserve our national treasures; a partnership that will help make our parks attractive and relevant to today's American recreating public, including providing additional recreational venues, such as better trails, better hiking trails, and perhaps mountain biking trails, as was discussed earlier today by our representative from Kansas; better destination camp sites and better camp sites and better boat launches; a partnership that will carry the message to the American public that our National Parks are both treasures, learning places, and a place to recreate for a day, a weekend, or a week.

I am fortunate that I was introduced to the great outdoors by my father, a sportsman and a sporting goods retail store owner. Unfortunately, we have unintentionally created an indoor society. We have worked hard to provide our children with what we did not have: autos, home entertainment, and the like. Too many of us failed, however, to share with them what we did have as kids. In doing so, we failed to introduce them to the great outdoors.

Today, the average 18-year-old spends upwards of eight hours a day plugged into a screen of some type. Childhood diabetes and obesity is on the rise in America in epidemic proportions, inactivity being a direct contributor to that situation.

Visits to our National Parks are declining, and we are at risk of accepting or creating public apathy for these treasured resources. We need, together, to get Americans outdoors, active, and recreating. I have spoken to large and diverse audiences across America and have had the opportunity to change lives by telling them, "If you have never awoken on a crisp, fall morning inside the warmth of a sleeping bag under the protection of a tent next to a babbling brook, you have missed one of life's greatest experiences, and if you have never shared this experience with a child, you have missed one of life's greatest opportunities and responsibilities."

The Secretary of the Interior has presented to the president and Congress a bold, visionary, and aggressive call to action that will, indeed, get Americans outdoors and revitalize our National Parks, but we must be aware that the old adage, "If you build it, they will come," no longer applies in today's hyper marketplace. The word "relevant" really plays here importantly.

Our National Parks need to have venue offerings that attract visitors and captures them for periods of time. This last February, I visited Shenandoah National Park and learned that their visits were down from two million to 1.1 million visits, and I asked if they had mountain bike trails, and the answer was no. You heard earlier testimony today to the relevance of that and the importance of perhaps having mountain bike trails, which are relevant to today's market.

We can, indeed, compete for the hearts and minds of young Americans who are now effectively captured by the home-entertainment electronics industries.

Enter a partnership with corporate America. The National Park Service and the U.S. taxpayer do not need to go it alone. Corporate America stands to benefit from a better-run, more relevant park venue. Corporate America stands to benefit from a healthier, more

active recreating public. Our customers are the same. The very same people who buy Coleman tents and lanterns and sleeping bags are the people who visit our parks. I know these people, and my company wants to work seamlessly with the National Park Service to give them what they seek when they visit a park: a great memory.

In fact, many people ask me, why is the Coleman brand such a beloved brand, much like the National Park brand is a beloved brand? It is because we give life experiences, and we make memories.

This is a good opportunity for corporate America to heighten their corporate citizenship by wearing a white hat and partnering with the National Park Service to get Americans active and outdoors.

I can give you many, many examples, and I hope we have time in the questions and answers, of how we have done this without commercializing the parks and how I experienced this real live time while I served on the United States Olympic Committee. There are examples of how the concessions in National Parks and ski areas in our national forests are both examples of programs which attract private capital to provide appropriate public recreation services and opportunities.

Together, we need to market the benefits and communicate the availability. We need to get people active, thus reducing health care costs, which will attract insurance companies whose actuaries will clearly recognize the benefit of partnering with the National Parks and its initiatives to get people in the outdoors.

In closing, I applaud the increase in investment in our National Parks under both bills. They are both bold and visionary and needed. House Bill 3094 proposes an assured addition of $100 million, regardless of achieved matches. Thank you. It is a good bill.

However, House Bill 2959 would provide up to that amount in Federal funds, if matching funds were attracted, with the possibility to increase annual funding to $200 million through 2016. I strongly support this and advocate that you go for the higher target.

There are many examples of public-private partnerships that respect each party's goals, objectives, and values. Under the leadership of the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and the many interested parties before you, I, today, remain confident that we can leverage the Federal dollars, create a lasting and sustainable partnership to increase park visitation, and future generations of advocates to maintain these treasured public assets. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kiedaisch follows:]

Statement of Gary A. Kiedaisch, President and CEO, Tthe Coleman Company, Inc.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to add my voice in support of the goals and key elements of both H.R. 2959 and H.R. 3094, bills that would establish funding for the National Parks Service Centennial Celebration. I am here as an advocate for using the Centennial as a catalyst for new partnerships between corporate America and America's parks, partnerships which can be key forces in park revitalization and re-engaging the public with the outdoors.

I'm a fortunate American because, as President and CEO of The Coleman Company, my passion for the outdoors coincides with my vocation. I frequently suggest to audiences, "If you're never awakened on a crisp fall morning inside the warmth of a sleeping bag under the protection of a tent next to a babbling brook, you have missed one of life's greatest experiences. And if you have never shared this experience with a child, you have missed one of life's greatest opportunities." But this experience I describe in reality depends upon foot soldiers with the right skill sets, working cooperatively. We at The Coleman Company, in concert with an army of partners in the outdoor industry, in the retail trade and with organizations like the Boy Scouts and public park agencies, have been cultivating that skill set for more than a century.

Beginning in 1900, the role of The Coleman Company has been to lead the charge in getting people outdoors. When you expose people to the great outdoors, our founder said, you're introducing them to the wonder, the healing powers and the joy of being close to nature. So many others have echoed that sentiment, most notably President Theodore Roosevelt. I am proud that The Coleman Company has championed this message throughout its 100+ years. One of my predecessors, Sheldon Coleman, came before this panel in the 1960's—as well as other bodies, including the platform committees of both political parties—to urge creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. He also championed the expansion of the Dingell-Johnson Fund and creation of the National Trails System and the National Scenic Byways Program, and served in a leading capacity on the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors side by side with the late and Honorable Mo Udall. Yet today the messages of Teddy Roosevelt, and Sheldon Coleman, and Mo Udall, and of many of you, are falling on deaf ears—or at least distracted ears.

Today, the average youth spends six and one-half hours every day tied to television and computer screens. Today, nearly 20,000 additional American children are being diagnosed with diabetes annually. Today, we face an obesity epidemic for all age groups, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and especially among urban and suburban youth. Today we have millions of youth diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and medicated to control disruptions in classrooms. Today, we see unrelieved stress leading to drug abuse, roadway rage and abuse of loved ones. Today, we are grappling with the long-term healthcare costs of growing numbers of inactive senior Americans.

And today, we know that regular doses of healthy active fun in the outdoors are a remedy—a cost effective and medically effective remedy—to these challenges that now jeopardize the quality of life for millions, render many U.S. businesses uncompetitive and pose daunting economic hardships for government agencies at the local, state and national levels.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIPS

The National Park Service and other government entities should not be the only foot soldiers in this campaign to re-engage the public with the outdoors and harvest the physical, the mental and the spiritual benefits. That has been increasingly the pattern over fifty years, under Democratic and Republican leadership alike. And it has left us with an underfunded system of parks and other public places and declining visitations. It is time to be as bold as we were as a nation one hundred years ago, as bold as we were fifty years ago. It is time to invite the business community in as a partner to help provide the places and the programs that serve societal needs.

The corporate world is a huge, untapped resource for both funding the outdoor places and the message about the benefits of these places. And it is at its best in getting messages out. In addition, business has the power to make getting outdoors into a national priority. That is a marketing challenge, the very skill set that business has in great supply.

Engaging corporate America in this campaign will, without question, broaden public support. It will also help tap into a national structure for communicating the message from the local, to the regional, to the national parks level using the same tried and true business practices that have made this country's economy the strongest in the world.

At The Coleman Company, our business is making the outdoors more accessible and more appealing to an ever more sedentary population. We provide the tools and the information for people to get to the fun of the outdoors faster and make the experience one that they'll want to repeat over and over again. The mandate of our company—get people outdoors, have fun and reap the ancillary physical and emotional benefits of the outdoor lifestyle. And we're not alone. Corporate America has gotten the outdoor message, has been preaching it in its marketing messages and is ready to answer your call.

In partnership with the National Park Service, key corporations can help make our National Parks relevant to today's Americans. Businesses know the consumer pretty well. Knowing the customer is the difference between success and failure. And it is important to remember that consumer spending on recreation in America today is some $400 billion annually and growing.

At Coleman, our insights into America's leisure wants are delivered through the marketplace, and the success of our efforts is reflected in the fact that most families visiting national parks arrive with one or more of our products: a cooler or a lantern, a stove or a sleeping bag, a tent or one of our fishing rods, a Coleman canoe or an inflatable water tube or kayak.

But our parks are largely disconnected from feedback from the marketplace.

Case in point—visits to Shenandoah National Park have been declining significantly in recent years. One of several reasons—the park hasn't added the infrastructure that people seek. Mountain biking, one of the fastest growing categories in family outdoor activity, for example, has been ignored despite available administrative roads and underused trails. Corporate American knows how to fix a disconnect like that by linking park offerings with consumer demand.

Forging this coalition is an opportunity for government to bring together a broad cross-section of American business resources, including representatives from a wide array of different sectors, each with a vested interest and each with unique contributions.

Imagine recruiting executives from the country's most successful entertainment companies, healthcare companies, travel companies, outdoor companies and auto companies, as well as countless others, and setting them to the task of repositioning the National Parks as destinations, not just places to visit. I ran a four season Ski and Golf resort and know, all too well, the painful difference. Marketing is what drives business and marketing, along with park revitalization, will be the driving force behind this campaign's success.

I recently learned that the average length of stay at many of our national parks is equal to the time it takes to drive across them. Think of if, visiting the natural wonders of Death Valley National Park, an area roughly the size of the State of Connecticut, for only three hours. What a waste. Want the solution? Ask business.

One of the critical missions of this initiative is to remind the American public of their responsibility to be stewards of the land by using and not abusing it. Business applauds this and, through effective marketing, will make it possible for the parks to include stewardship education. Coupled with the right park offerings, visits and length of stay will increase. By identifying and funding new activities that will attract today's consumer to the parks, participation rises and everyone wins.

I am not simply touting real effective partnerships as an academic exercise. The Coleman Company relies heavily on partners—partners like the Continental Divide Trail Alliance and the Appalachian Mountain Club, Wal*Mart and specialty sporting goods retailers. We combine dollars and manpower and other assets to serve seamlessly those people who seek positive memories of time in the Great Outdoors. And this is the template that the National Park Service should pursue as it approaches its Centennial and enters its second century.

Partnerships will help us focus on and overcome the barriers that exist to connecting Americans with their lands—barriers like onerous insurance requirements placed on non-profits and profits seeking to help youth discover the fun of the outdoors at parks. In my discussions on Capitol Hill and with Administration executives over the last year, I have often referenced the model of the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) as a way to meld public and private forces into a force for the public good—in that case, equipping American youth to achieve greatness and stand on podiums to receive medals in international competition. And the USOC succeeds without commercializing sports, just as we need to succeed without commercializing parks.

This Congress and this Administration are engaged in a dialogue that demands a win/win. We need to transcend divisions, including political divisions. And we need to open the doors to innovation. It is time to look closely at innovative efforts underway within many state park systems, including partnerships that replace investments of public funds with private capital. It is for us to adopt lessons learned from partnerships at Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts—a National Park Service unit—and the Smithsonian. We need to learn and adopt the best practices from partnerships like the Claude Moore Colonial Farm—a unit of the National Park Service that serves the public without a NPS staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON LEGISLATION

I opened my testimony by applauding both pieces of legislation subject to today's hearing. It is easy to find elements of both bills to support. Yet I urge the committee

to look for a synthesis of these bills complete with some new elements as its work product.

First, we applaud the increase in investments in our national parks under both bills. H.R. 3094 proposes an assured addition of $100 million, regardless of achieved matches. H.R. 2959 would provide up to that amount in federal funds—if matching funds were attracted. That could boost annual funding to $200 million or more annually through 2016.

We strongly support the higher target and the requirement that the agency solicit support which will leverage available federal funding at least 1:1. This seems especially appropriate because we are talking about a Centennial Fund not to cover normal operations and facilities, but to fund excellence in the parks. This is truly an exciting opportunity for individuals, non-profits and businesses to be invited to the table to help define the programs that deliver this revitalized outdoor experience and share the tab.

Practically, this also creates broad ownership in the Centennial effort. For many of us who admire and support the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the idea of a more engaged base of support is very, very attractive. This provision could be essential in assuring that the Centennial Fund will be fully funded and make it to 2016—perhaps continuing long thereafter.

Let me also express strong support for a change to the legislative proposals before you to capitalize on recent lessons. Both bills envision a Centennial Fund. H.R. 2954 expressly calls for contributions to this fund to create the matches needed for approved projects. Far more preferable would be a fund from which matching grants could also be made. A model for this would be the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, which, since 2000, has received nearly $3 billion from the auction of surplus federal lands in Southern Nevada. It is used to award grants for annual projects in land acquisition, capital projects and environmental restoration. Typically, the projects it funds are leveraged, but these matching funds do not need to be deposited into a federal account and the projects can be achieved faster and often more efficiently than through traditional federal procurement efforts. We urge adoption of a similar model for the Centennial Fund, with project selection vested in the Secretary of the Interior and with oversight from a board created in the Centennial legislation.

I am also told that the goals we share must be resolved in compliance with federal budgeting and appropriations guidelines. I live well outside the Beltway and don't profess to understand PAYGO and offsets. I appreciate that H.R. 3094 addresses this issue and commend the commitment reflected to not work for a symbolic success—one that will not deliver the results to the ground in national park units across the nation. The support of America's business leaders for the Centennial Initiative will be strong if the Fund is truly a mandatory program through 2016, with a definite commitment of federal funds.

Finally, I need to comment on the language in H.R. 3094 regarding project categories and categorical percentages. While some guidance is needed, I strongly urge the Congress to avoid highly prescriptive formulas that may force the National Park Service to ignore the public and partner input into the Centennial initiative. Far better would be regular Congressional oversight and consultation with the agency—something H.R. 3094 already contemplates. My concern with the formulas in H.R. 3094 is exacerbated because the legislation fails to include a category of vital interest to The Coleman Company and all recreation interests: needed investments in recreation infrastructure.

A visit to a national park should not be defined by time spent looking through the windows of your personal vehicle or a park tram, and it should not be focused on time spent in a visitor center. America's parks need more and better trails, better campsites—developed and backcountry—and better fishing piers and boat launches. The Coleman Company's interest and support of the Centennial initiative, and that of our partners, is focused on the recreation infrastructure of the parks.

Additionally, I strongly support use of the Centennial Fund to go beyond the physical aspects of parks. Attention to and investment in is needed to such non-physical needs of the parks as marketing, interpretation, events and outdoors activity training programs.

SUMMARY

As a lifelong outdoor advocate working in a company whose name is synonymous with the outdoor lifestyle, I can think of nothing that would affect positive change faster in the use of these national treasures than to increase the number and diversity of interests engaged in their revitalization.

The goals for this effort are clear. The benefits to the public are also clear. All that remains, as we say in business, is to get the right people on the bus, put them in the right seats, and decide where the bus should go.

Today I ask you to include corporate America on the National Park Service Centennial Celebration bus as a partner in this important initiative. Its contributions will be many, its financial support will be significant and the result will be a healthier, happier and more outdoors oriented public. Together, we will make the National Park Service Centennial Celebration into a lifestyle changing reality for everyone.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, sir, and let me now turn to Tom Kiernan, president, National Parks Conservation Association. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF TOM KIERNAN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Mr. KIERNAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman and Congressman Bishop, I am Tom Kiernan, president of the National Parks Conservation Association, and pleased to be here to represent our 330,000 members nationwide who care deeply, as you very much do as well, about our beloved National Parks. I do have a written statement, which I would submit for the record and would attempt to summarize right now.

First, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and Chairman Rahall for your leadership in introducing H.R. 3094 and for holding this very important hearing as you approach the recess. Obviously, these are extraordinarily busy times for you.

I also would like to commend Mr. Bishop and Congressman Young for introducing the equally important legislation suggested by the Secretary, H.R. 2959.

Overall, NPCA strongly supports the effort contemplated by these two bills, so long as this effort, first, is viewed as part of a larger, comprehensive solution to restore the National Parks by the 2016 centennial; second, if this effort effectively encourages appropriate increases in philanthropy; and, third, for this effort to be integrated into, and support a vision for, the National Park System as a whole.

For reasons that I want to explain in just a moment, NPCA prefers the approach taken in H.R. 3094, though with certain modifications consistent with the intent, we think, of both bills.

First, I would like to explain why these bills need to be viewed as part of a broader solution for our National Parks. Chronic funding shortfalls continue to be the most pervasive threat to our National Parks. Based on our analysis over the last many years, the annual funding shortfall for our National Parks more than $800 million each year. As a result, many park managers have had to reduce their workforces, have had to reduce the hours that a visitors' center is open, have had to close some visitors' centers, and have had to reduce the number of programs and the number of ranger-led tours in the parks.

Given the significant $800 million annual funding shortfall, I want to emphasize that the $100 million annual Centennial Fund idea must be thought of as a part, a very important part, but only a part of a concerted, comprehensive, and multi-year effort to restore and adequately fund the nation's parks by their centennial.

Toward this end, we are certainly pleased with the Fiscal Year 2008 Interior appropriations bill that has passed the House that makes unprecedented progress in reducing that annual funding shortfall from $800 million down to roughly $600 million. The House bill also includes a $50 million funding initiative for the Centennial Challenge as a way of bridging over to this authorizing legislation hopefully being enacted.

In addition to thanking this Committee for your work on park funding, I want to recognize again the co-chairs of the National Parks Caucus, Congressmen Baird and Souder, for their leadership. These proposed increases have also been catalyzed by the thinking and leadership of the Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne, and Director Mary Bomar, and I want to recognize their work on that issue.

I would like to now switch from talking about Federal funding to philanthropy. From its inception, the National Park System has benefitted greatly from the generosity of the American people, and we see increasing philanthropy as an integral and positive part of this initiative. But to effectively encourage appropriate increases in philanthropy, we would like to make three specific recommendations in regard to the bills that you are considering.

First, the administration's bill, 2959, proposes to create a required match program whereby Federal funds would match, dollar-for-dollar, cash contributions from nonFederal sources. We believe counting only cash contributed to the Federal Treasury is too limiting.

By Park Service estimates, the largest share of private contributions to the park system is in the form of in-kind materials and services. We believe that while such cash contributions are important, these in-kind contributions of materials and services, including the related project-management capabilities of the larger friends groups, should be included in the match process as well.

Second, some accommodation needs to be made in the match concept to ensure that parks with small or nonexistent friends groups are also able to participate in the Centennial Challenge program. Since H.R. 3094 does not include a formal, dollar-for-dollar, match requirement but makes the philanthropic component optional, it obviates these two problems that I just summarized, and thus we prefer the approach taken in H.R. 3094.

However, we do recommend that 3094 be adjusted to give additional priority to those projects and programs that have a strong partnership component. Such an approach would encourage the many friends groups, cooperating associations, individual partners for being a part of this whole program.

Last, we would encourage that Section 4 of H.R. 3094 be expanded to include a component explicitly on cultural resources.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify, and we look forward to working with you and here, obviously, to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kiernan follows:]

Statement of Thomas C. Kiernan, President, National Parks Conservation Association

Mr. Chairman, and members of the subcommittee, I am Tom Kiernan, president of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Since 1919, NPCA has

been the leading independent voice of the American people for protecting and enhancing our National Park System for present and future generations. I am pleased to be here today on behalf of our more than 330,000 members nationwide who visit and care deeply about America's national parks.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot overemphasize how important introduction of H.R. 3094 by you and Chairman Rahall is in terms of creating the critical legislative momentum needed to enact legislation in time to authorize a truly viable centennial program. We applaud and thank you for your leadership in developing a thoughtful legislative proposal that includes mandatory new spending on behalf of our national parks, sets priorities for how those funds should be allocated and encourages contributions from philanthropic sources as we ready the parks for their second century.

I particularly appreciate that the subcommittee has chosen to hold this important hearing on the proposed national parks centennial legislation in this time frame with the press of so much other important business before the Congress. Taking this step in the legislative process now clearly demonstrates that you share our goal of making national parks a national priority as the centennial of the founding of the National Park Service and the unique and magnificent park system the Park Service was created to manage and conserve approaches in 2016. Time is certainly of the essence in launching an ambitious, viable program to help repair and enhance the park system in order for it to begin its second century in the best condition possible, prepared for the challenges of the future. It is a task that requires the Congress, the Administration, philanthropic groups, conservationists, communities, and individual park advocates working together for a common purpose—to harness American pride, patriotism and vision to protect this precious national legacy. Holding this hearing before the impending recess sends an important message to that effect.

NPCA strongly supports the effort to create a special, dedicated fund over and above amounts provided in the regular appropriations process to address priority programmatic and project initiatives to enhance the park system during the years leading up to the centennial. We see this concept not only as an important source of money to pay for important and worthy programs and projects for the parks, but as a way to engage the American people in keeping their own heritage alive.

Let me emphasize at the outset, though, that this proposal alone will not solve the problems and address all the long and short term needs of the parks which have resulted from decades of funding shortfalls during many administrations and Congresses. It must be thought of as one part of a concerted, comprehensive, multi-faceted, multi-year effort to restore and adequately fund the nation's parks. Substantial increases in park funding, particularly for operations in addition to this bill, sustained over many years will be needed to make the parks whole.

Chronic funding shortfalls continue to be the most pervasive threat to the national parks. Our analysis shows that the shortage of funding for national parks has grown to more than $800 million every year. The backlog of maintenance and preservation needs exceeds $7.8 billion dollars, and the Park Service has a backlog of $1.9 billion in acquiring inholdings located within park boundaries. Many park managers have been forced to reduce their work forces, lower the number of public education programs they are able to offer, shorten visitor center hours or shutter visitor centers altogether, and deny requests from school groups for ranger-led tours. In parks across the country, interpretive displays and signage are outdated, brochures are in short supply or non-existent and interpretive rangers are missing. In many parks, nationally significant lands are subject to development threats. Under these constraints, park managers struggle to engage and inspire visitors, and protect natural and cultural resources.

A commitment for sustained funding increases is absolutely necessary to make progress toward eliminating the annual $800 million operating budget shortfall. We believe without a doubt that, armed with the facts, the American people will agree that the protection and enhancement of the superlative natural, cultural and historic symbols of our shared American experience should indeed be a national priority, particularly in these difficult and unsettling times when the meaning of our heritage is so profound. These places remind us of who we are and how we got here, as a people and as individuals with personal and family connections to special park places.

We are very gratified, and frankly relieved that the administration requested and the full House of Representatives and the Senate Appropriations Committee have approved FY 2008 Interior appropriations bills containing a significant first installment in the increases for park operations that are so essential. It would mean, roughly, that the $800 million operating shortfall would drop to $600 million for the 2008 fiscal year. It is a good start and one that needs to be enacted. This increase

needs to be sustained as the appropriations process moves forward, and we respectfully solicit your help in achieving that goal. I know that you, Mr. Chairman, and many members of this subcommittee, have consistently supported increased funding for park operations in the appropriations process, and I want to thank you for that.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank Representatives Souder and Baird for the strong leadership they have consistently shown over the past several years. This includes their introduction of the National Park Centennial Act, and the extensive series of hearings Mr. Souder conducted across the country on the future of the National Park System. As co-chairs of the ever-growing House National Parks Caucus, they have both demonstrated a significant and sustained commitment to our national parks and have helped create the opportunity that is now before us.

Nearly one year ago at Yellowstone National Park, Interior Secretary Kempthorne announced an initiative to re-focus attention on the national parks and their needs in anticipation of the 2016 centennial. One of the key elements of that initiative is the so-called "centennial challenge," and how that concept is to be manifest in legislation is, of course, the subject of today's hearing. But before I discuss the legislation, let me say a word about Secretary Kempthorne.

Since his arrival, we have experienced a sea change in receptiveness at the Interior Department to our entreaties about the needs of the parks and the federal responsibility to address them. Clearly, he shares our vision about the value of the National Park System to the American experience, both now and in the future, and I attribute the lion's share of this administration's newfound interest in the national parks to his presence and his commitment to help the parks on his watch. I thank him for his leadership in support of the national parks.

Having an experienced director who has worked her way up through the ranks of the Park Service has also been good for the parks. Let me say for the record that it is a pleasure to work with Director Mary Bomar.

While the central element of the effort to address the needs of the National Park System during the years leading up to the 2016 centennial must be focused on encouraging the federal government to meet its fundamental stewardship responsibility in protecting and adequately funding the national parks, much of the attention surrounding the centennial initiative has been devoted to the idea of creating a program to carry out selected signature or centennial projects and programs. We heartily support this concept so long as the specific projects and programs are integrated into a vision for the National Park System as a whole and will take the parks to a higher standard of excellence in preparation for their next century. As H.R. 3094 specifies, the program should consist of new money, and should not result in reduced funding for other important park needs.

Forty years ago, when the Eisenhower administration launched "Mission 66", its commitment of $1 billion in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the National Park System, it did so in the context of the development of the interstate highway system, with a vision very much influenced by that endeavor. The $1 billion initiative that President Eisenhower launched and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson continued is worth some $7 billion in today's dollars. Although that investment was devoted to a smaller national park system serving fewer visitors, it was tremendously important. In hindsight, however, it also resulted in what is now acknowledged to have been too heavy an investment in infrastructure projects, some of which needed to be reworked in later years. Accordingly, the centennial challenge must incorporate a strong set of criteria for project selection that will build on the most beneficial aspects of the Mission 66 experience, meet genuine park system needs, and avoid a repeat of past mistakes. It should articulate a vision and define priorities based upon the mandates of the National Park Service Organic Act and its mission. It must contribute to a compelling case that the Park Service will be better equipped to restore natural and cultural treasures, to protect park resources, to serve park visitors, to enhance park science, to engage the full diversity of our nation in the parks, and better connect them to schools and universities. It is essential that the Park Service focus as well on how it needs to evolve in order to fulfill its mission in the next century and to integrate the parks into the lives of more Americans and keep them relevant to the communities in which we live. If that occurs, Congress can be fully justified in making a ten-year commitment to enhanced park funding.

From its inception, the National Park System has benefited greatly from the generosity of the American people, who have contributed many millions of dollars in support of their parks in order to assure a measure of excellence in the condition of park resources and the quality of park programs for visitors. According to the Park Service, in 2005, the combined value of contributed services, aid and funding to national parks through cooperating associations, volunteers and friends groups, as well as the National Parks Foundation was approximately $241 million. One of

the truly exciting things about the centennial program and project concept is its potential to increase the level of philanthropic support for the park system. We see that as an integral and positive part of the initiative, not just incidental to it.

For its part, the Administration proposes to leverage additional philanthropic activity by creating a required match program whereby federal funds would be made available equal to amounts contributed by non-federal sources, up to $100 million per year. That is to say, if only $20 million dollars is raised privately under the program in a year, the federal government would contribute only $20 million. The "challenge", therefore, would be to raise at least $100 million in philanthropy every year to ensure that the full $100 million in federal dollars could be released for centennial projects and programs.

As is so often the case, the devil is in the details.

The administration's bill, introduced in the House by Representative Bishop and Representative Young as H.R. 2959, requires that non-federal contributions be made in cash and paid directly into the Treasury in order to qualify for the federal match.

What we have learned from the various parks friends groups and other charitable organizations with whom we have developed close relationships over many years is that counting only cash contributions which are paid into the treasury is too limiting. In fact, by far the largest share of contributions to the park system is in the form of in kind materials and services. For example, in 2005, friends groups donated $61 million - $8.5 million in cash and $52.5 in non-cash contributions, according to Park Service estimates. It is important to note that non-cash contributions often take the form of turnkey facilities such as museums and visitor centers, materials such as the steel used for the restoration at Yosemite Falls, and other projects providing direct monetary value to benefit a specific park. Because such friends groups can often achieve market efficiencies through project management the Park Service cannot, such in kind contributions often result in substantial cost savings. This should be maintained.

Under the match proposal, parks with particularly active or successful friends groups likely would be disproportionately advantaged since projects or programs they support would have a greater chance of being funded. Today, there are 391 units in the National Park System. There are some 175 friends groups. Some serve more than one park, but many if not most units have no such groups. Some accommodation needs to be made in the match concept to assure that parks without active, successful friends groups are not disadvantaged or forgotten.

Finally, requiring the matching funds to be channeled through the treasury could actually be detrimental to the goal of increasing charitable contributions. Not only does it foreclose giving credit for in-kind or other non-cash contributions, but high-end donors in particular understand that financial gifts made directly to the government do not earn interest but that gifts though intermediary non-profit groups do. Many of those donors also fear that their contributions will not be used as they intend if they write a check to the federal treasury.

The Grijalva/Rahall centennial bill (H.R.3094) would also create a centennial fund to be used for selected projects and programs, but it makes the philanthropic component optional rather than mandatory. By doing so, it obviates several challenges with which we have been struggling since the Secretary took the initiative to propose the centennial challenge concept. For example, by using existing partnership authority, H.R. 3094 avoids the need to create new bureaucratic mechanisms that would be needed to make a philanthropic match requirement work. It ensures, for instance, that parks without active philanthropic partners will receive needed assistance in preparation for the centennial, while enabling friends groups and their national park partners to be as creative as possible in developing additional project or program proposals using the potential federal monetary commitment to leverage additional philanthropic activity. Without the requirement of a match, the bill avoids the need to develop a more encompassing and realistic match definition or to debate the inclusion of appropriate in kind contributions. By using existing partnership authority, it eliminates the need to address whether philanthropists would have to write checks directly to the treasury.

This being said, it will be absolutely critical for the Park Service and its partners to work together to maximize the potential for using this program to attract additional philanthropic support.

Section 5 of H.R. 3094 on partnerships clearly acknowledges that the Secretary may accept donations for any centennial project. Indeed, it provides sufficient flexibility to enable the Park Service to submit proposals to Congress, the vast majority of which would include a match component. It merely prohibits the administration from withholding funds from parks based on the existence or lack of a non-federal match. Experience shows that park philanthropies generally follow a philosophy of

adding value. If the private sector sees itself as supplanting rather than supplementing the federal responsibility to fund the national parks, philanthropy retreats since no added benefit is evident. Potential donors are in general unwilling to pay for things they perceive their tax dollars should already be covering. By the same token, if potential donors recognize an increase in federal government priority for the national parks and an improved federal commitment to adequately funding core park operations, their motivation to add value, including specific park improvements and programs will be invigorated. When coupled with sustained increases in funding for park operations, creation of the national park centennial fund clearly demonstrates the kind of increased federal attention that can lead to expanded charitable giving for the park system.

One useful clarification relates to the use of unobligated funds. We suggest making it explicit that the availability of unobligated funds for projects in the Fiscal Years 2009 through 2018 as set out in Section 4(b) is not intended to be limited by fiscal year. That is to say, amounts in the fund that remain unspent should be carried over from year to year, not returned to the treasury.

H.R. 3094 also explicitly addresses the concern we have expressed that amounts spent from the centennial fund on selected projects must be new money, not money taken out of other park programs or budgets or offset against existing appropriations levels. Section 7 on maintenance of effort makes it explicit that money from the fund shall supplement and not replace other annual park service expenditures. The section goes on to direct the Park Service to maintain adequate, permanent-staffing levels, not replacing permanent staff with non-permanent employees hired to carry out projects. That is also very important.

We are also pleased that Section 6 of the bill specifically directs that actions of Park Service employees with regard to any project shall be governed by Director's Order #21. Having that directive in statutory language is an additional safeguard against any potential for over commercialization of the park system that might be created by participation in centennial projects by private entities.

Ever since the idea of creating a dedicated fund for signature or centennial projects and programs was first raised, we have argued that the development of an objective selection process that is guided by clear standards for judging and prioritizing projects is essential if the program is to be politically credible and viable. We believe great care must be taken to ensure that proposals are evaluated objectively and for the value they bring not only to individual parks, but also to the future of the entire park system. By specifically setting out the categories of issues and goals the centennial projects must address and outlining a process for their selection, H.R. 3094 not only provides the program with clarity and stability for its duration, but also increases its political credibility with the Congress. It will also require Congressional discipline in reviewing Park Service proposals to ensure that system needs are being met.

The six categories for centennial projects and programs set out in the bill—Education, Diversity, Supporting Park Professionals, Environmental Leadership, Natural Resource Protection, and Construction are generally in keeping with our own thinking and recommendations, and are basically consistent with categories outlined by the Interior Department in its Report to the President in May. Clearly, they lay a foundation for implementing centennial projects and programs that are truly meaningful and which will contribute to the goal of preparing the National Park System for its next century.

There are a couple of points about specific categories I would like to mention.

First, while the "Natural Resource Protection Initiative" [Section 4(b)(5)] is extremely important, cultural resource needs are not sufficiently addressed in the bill. Each of the 391 units in the National Park System contains significant cultural resources that the Park Service is charged with preserving for present and future generations. More than just bricks and mortar historic structures, cultural resources also include archeology, culturally significant landscapes, ethnographic resources, and museum collections. These valuable resources are not renewable; they cannot be researched or interpreted for future generations if they are lost forever through neglect. The job of putting the National Park System in its best possible condition in time for the centennial would be incomplete if the historic and other cultural sites under the Park Service's care are overlooked. Therefore, we strongly suggest that section 4 of the bill be expanded to include the protection of cultural resources as well.

I also want to call attention to the category titled, "Supporting Park Professionals" [Section 4(b)(3)], which we consider to be very important. One of the most acute complications the Park Service has faced as funding for the parks has failed to keep up with need has been the ability of the agency to fully train its staff on critical emerging skills and issues. This is particularly problematic with the number of re-

tirements the Park Service has been experiencing. It is our understanding the Park Service now has the smallest budget for training per employee of and of the federal resource management agencies. While many Park Service staff are well trained and experienced in many important areas, park managers also need to be trained to handle the complicated financial, political and managerial responsibilities needed to run an increasingly complex park system, and uphold Park Service management policies. I commend you for recognizing that need in your bill.

Finally, let me say that while the bill's formulation of requiring spending in each category to be allocated in specific percentages seems reasonable in terms of preventing problems such as those encountered in Mission 66 with too much emphasis being placed on brick-and-mortar projects, somewhat more flexibility may be warranted. For example, there might be categories wherein a spending percentage ceiling is required and others that should have a spending floor in order to achieve the desired diverse mix of centennial projects and programs. Requiring adherence to a strict percentage formula for the allocation of funds each year for each category may mean worthy and timely initiatives are forced out of the running without adequate consideration because their relative cost does not fit into the percentage formula.

Again, Mr. Chairman, let me commend you and all the members of the Subcommittee, for your interest in taking substantive action to ensure that our national parks are ready to meet the challenges of their second century. The lead up to the centennial presents an extraordinary opportunity to evaluate and prepare to meet these challenges and to reach the park system's full potential as one of our country's premier resources. Our sleeves are rolled up and we are ready and willing to work with you to perfect this important legislation and see it enacted into law as soon as possible. The national parks should be a national priority. By 2016, the entire National Park System should be a model for the world of American excellence and innovation, grounded in protecting the natural and cultural heritage we hold so dear.

I am happy to respond to any questions you might have.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much.

The final witness, Mr. Bill Wade, Chair of the Executive Council, Coalition of National Park Service Retirees. Welcome and thank you.

STATEMENT OF BILL WADE, CHAIR, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, COALITION OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RETIREES

Mr. WADE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Bishop. I will add my thanks to you for holding this hearing and for inviting us to make our views known.

I am the Chair of the Executive Council of the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, which now consists of 600 individuals, all former employees of the National Park Service. Together, we bring to this hearing over 17,000 years of accumulated experience.

We strongly support H.R. 3094, the National Park Centennial Fund Act. We believe this bill is much better than the Bush administration's proposed Centennial Initiative to increase NPS funding over the next 10 years that is incorporated in H.R. 2529, and we applaud the efforts of Chairman Rahall and Congressman Grijalva for their vision and efforts.

Because we think this is a much better bill, I will confine my comments largely to that, and in my written testimony, I have provided some specific suggestions and recommendations that we think would enhance the bill. But for purposes of my comments here today, I would like to focus on a couple of specific issues.

First of all, we support and applaud the bill's intent to create a dedicated funding source for the Centennial Fund for each fiscal year, from 2008 through 2017, a notable difference from the Bush administration's proposal in H.R. 2529.

Additionally, we appreciate the identification of the National Park Centennial Initiatives specified in the program allocation section of the bill and especially the emphasis prescribed in subsection [d] for the "Education in Parks Centennial Initiative." We think that education in the parks is one of those programs that has taken a very large hit over the last few years.

However, we believe that this section glaringly omits a Cultural Resource Program Centennial Initiative. It is important to reflect that over 60 percent of the 391 units of the National Park System were set aside by Congress and the president to preserve our nation's cultural heritage resources. Moreover, 100 percent of all National Park Service areas have cultural resource elements found in them that require management and sometimes protection consistent with the law and the mission of the National Park Service.

The National Park Service cultural heritage responsibilities are fully equal in status and stature to the National Park Service's natural science and conservation mandates and need to be properly recognized as such.

The National Park Service leads the Nation and works with citizens, sister Federal agencies, and local state and tribal governments to preserve the nation's heritage through such well-known programs as the National Heritage Areas, the National Register of Historic Places, Natural and National Historic Landmarks, Historic American Buildings Survey, and through a number of Federal historic tax credits programs that provide a wide variety of granting and assistance programs.

All of these cultural heritage programs must not be precluded from consideration for receiving support through the Centennial Fund, nor should the protection of the nation's cultural heritage be so narrowly construed that it represents only old historic buildings.

Assuming that the Line Item Construction program will cover many of the majority of the work required in cultural resource management neglects the reality that maintenance of historic structures is only one small aspect, although a costly one, of what is required under the law to care for the cultural resources that the NPS is responsible for.

I would also like to comment, just briefly, on the partnership element. While we strongly believe in the concept of philanthropic support to the National Parks, and we note the huge values and benefits accrued to the National Park System since its inception, we have been very skeptical of the administration's proposed efforts to provide additional funding through a matching provision in the proposed legislation.

Given what we have all witnessed in the past decade or so relative to the increase in greed in the corporate sector and declining ethical behaviors in both corporate and government officials, it is hard not to be suspicious about the motives of some giving organizations, and I am not trying to cast broad aspersions here, but, nonetheless, there is an incentive, both on the commercial side and on the part of park managers sometimes, to make up for appropriations that are not really there that cause us some concern. We would urge some very serious caution in how that is administered and how it has moved forward.

That pretty much concludes my comments here, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank you for inviting us. I have submitted my written statement for the record, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wade follows:]

Statement of John W. "Bill" Wade, Chair, Executive Council, Coalition of National Park Service Retirees

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing and thank you for inviting me to express my views, and the views of our Coalition of National Park Service Retirees on the important topic of managing our nation's national parks. I retired just over ten years ago from the National Park Service after a 32-year career, including serving the last nine years of that career as the Superintendent of Shenandoah National Park. I am now the Chair of the Executive Council of the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees.

The Coalition now consists of 600 individuals, all former employees of the National Park Service, with more joining us almost daily. Together we bring to this hearing over 17,000 years of accumulated experience. Many of us were senior leaders and many received awards for stewardship of our country's natural and cultural resources. As rangers, executives, park managers, biologists, historians, interpreters, planners and specialists in other disciplines, we devoted our professional lives to maintaining and protecting the National Parks for the benefit of all Americans—those now living and those yet to be born. In our personal lives we come from a broad spectrum of political affiliations and we count among our members seven former Directors or Deputy Directors of the National Park Service, over twenty-five former Regional Directors or Deputy Regional Directors, over thirty former Associate or Assistant Directors and over one hundred and thirty former Park Superintendents or Assistant Superintendents.

We strongly support H.R. 3094, the "National Park Centennial Fund Act." We believe this Bill is much better than the Bush Administration's proposed Centennial Initiative to increase NPS funding over the next 10 years that is incorporated in H.R. 2529. We applaud the efforts of Chairman Rahall and Chairman Grijalva for their vision and efforts.

Because we think it is a much better Bill, I will confine my comments to H.R. 3094. We offer the following thoughts on Sections of that Bill that might need attention or refinement.

Section 3: National Park Centennial Fund

We support and applaud this Bill's intent to create a dedicated funding source for the Centennial Fund for each fiscal year from 2008 through 2017, a notable difference from the Bush Administration's proposal included in H.R. 2959. While we strongly believe in the concept of philanthropic support to National Parks, and note the huge values and benefits accrued to the National Park System since its inception, we have been very skeptical of the Administration's proposed efforts to generate additional funding by including a matching provision in the proposed legislation. Given what we've all witnessed over the past decade or so relative to the increase in greed in the corporate sector and declining ethical behaviors by both corporate and government officials, it is hard not to be suspicious about the motives of the "giving" organizations—especially commercial and some special-interest organizations—and the quid pro quo expected from, and sometimes provided by the recipient organizations. When coupled with the increased pressures placed on park managers to take advantage of the incentives offered by private money to offset declining budgets, we are very concerned about keeping national parks public and national.

Section 4: Program Allocation

Developing the list of proposals as prescribed in this section is guaranteed to further stress an already cumbersome and lengthy project development and review process prescribed for the NPS, unless short but feasible deadlines are specified. As an example, review and approval of projects, authorized by the Fee Demonstration Program are frequently locked in years of review and approval through the mandated Development Advisory Board process. This leaves important fee money sitting in accounts, often for several years, awaiting programmatic approval and contributing to the perception that the fee money is not being effectively applied to projects in accordance with promises that have been made. Adding another $100,000,000 to the annual process of project review and approval will challenge the system even

more severely and could result in increasing years between nomination of the project and completion of it. We believe that careful project development and review is a critical component of a successful project. Congress has made its intentions clear that the NPS must exercise its expertise and due diligence to also assure funds are carefully spent. We know that Congress wants to see results, and the parks need results—during the birthday decade of the National Park Service, not the decade after it! But, Congress must also accommodate its expectations of project accomplishment with the Service's capacity to efficiently conduct the required project oversight. It is our opinion, and that of many national park professionals, that the current system and capacity of the NPS to carry out increased project review and approvals of an additional $100 million dollar program is compromised.

A "Cultural Resource Program Centennial Initiative" is Needed

We appreciate the identification of the "National Park Centennial Initiatives specified in subsection (b) of this Section, and especially the emphasis prescribed in subsection (d) for the "Education in Parks Centennial Initiative." However, we believe this Section glaringly omits a "Cultural Resource Program Centennial Initiative." It is important to reflect that over 60% of the three hundred and ninety-one units of the national park system were set aside by Congress and presidents to preserve our nation's cultural heritage resources. Moreover, 100% of all our national park areas have cultural resource elements found in them that require management, and sometimes protection, consistent with law and the mission of the National Park Service.

National Park Service cultural heritage responsibilities are fully equal in status and stature to the National Park Service's natural science and conservation mandates and need to be properly recognized as such. Our National Park System tells the full American story from the First Americans, to the landing of Christopher Columbus to recent sites of the civil rights struggles. The NPS preserves for the American public the site of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World, most of the major battle sites of the American Revolution and the Civil War, the homes of many presidents, sites associated with the Alaska Gold Rush, Japanese internment camps during World War II, and the story of the struggle for equality for women. The NPS holds all these in trust for the American people. These places, and the unsurpassed museum collections associated with them, tell the authentic, real American story spanning thousands of years. They are the best American History classrooms in existence. They are authentic places in an increasingly inauthentic world.

The National Park Service leads our nation and works with citizens, sister federal agencies, and local, State, and tribal governments to preserve the nation's heritage through such well known programs as National Heritage Areas, the National Register of Historic Places, National Natural and Historic Landmarks, Historic American Buildings Survey and through a federal historic tax credits program and a wide variety of granting and assistance programs that touch every state and thousands of local and tribal governments each year.

All of these cultural heritage programs, in parks and external to parks, must not be precluded from consideration of receiving support through the Centennial Fund. Nor should the protection of our nation's cultural heritage be so narrowly construed that it represents only "old historic buildings." Assuming that the Line Item Construction program will cover the majority of work required in cultural resource management neglects the reality that maintenance of historic structures is only one small aspect (although a costly one) of what is required under law to care for the cultural resources the NPS is responsible for. Even these historic structures will not fare well in direct competition within the same category with high-dollar priorities such as new visitor centers and needed infrastructure projects.

There is evidence that cultural resources program management in the NPS has suffered serious problems and has declined in effectiveness over the past several years. To ignore the 115,000,000 objects, 67,000 archeological sites and 26,000 historic structures managed by the NPS by not according them the same level of importance in the Centennial Fund as the natural resources managed by the NPS is likely to compound the already serious problems.

It is essential that a Cultural Resource Management component be added to the initiatives proposed in this legislation. Similarly, the distribution of funds for these initiatives proposed in this section would need to be adjusted accordingly to reflect the addition of a Cultural Resource Management Initiative certainly as equitable as the other 10% Initiative Allocations. In subsection (d), we suggest reducing the allocation to the "Line Item Construction Program" to 20% to allow a "Cultural Resources Protection Centennial Initiative" to be added with an allocation of 10%.

"Diversity in Parks Centennial Initiative"

We believe the language in the "Diversity in Parks Centennial Initiative" might benefit from some refinement. For instance, the present language in 2(B)(ii) requires that each diversity proposal shall be designed "to make" NPS employees "and" visitors to System units "reflect the diversity of the population" of the U.S. This is a very stringent test if every proposal has to meet both, and to "make" that result possible ignores local and regional demographics in favor of national demographics that, in fact, may not be representative at all. The report itself might benefit from having a FACA-exempt advisory committee.

"Environmental Leadership Centennial Initiative"

We note somewhat of the same problem with the "Environmental Leadership Centennial Initiative." It also requires that each proposal must "reduce harmful emissions, conserve energy and water and reduce solid waste production..." What about proposals that meet only one or two of these criteria, but not all?

"Line Item Construction"

We agree that "Line Item Construction" proposals should be consistent with approved park planning documents. However, we again alert you to the backlog of just getting "administrative approvals in place before or during the fiscal year for which funds are sought" (see previous comments). Excluding environmental compliance and project review and approval from funding consideration neglects the reality that most of any project's effort is "up-front" in planning, design, environmental and cultural compliance, and project review—all of which is constrained by time and funding.

Frankly, we would not be disturbed if even smaller amounts of this "extra" Centennial money were to go to bricks and mortar, and even more of it to creating and imbedding new operating habits geared toward resource protection, communication of park values, relating to emerging population dynamics, and providing quality lifelong learning for employees thereby continuously raising professional standards.

Section 5: Partnerships

There is a long and rich tradition of philanthropic and non-profit partnership in managing and protecting national parks—as long as the history of the National Park Service itself. Clarification is needed to better articulate the values that a constructive philanthropic effort can bring to the table in support of this legislation. While this legislation rightly focuses on assuring a dedicated funding source for the Fund, it does little to seriously encourage philanthropic and Foundation efforts that can offer wonderful and powerful additive "margins of excellence" to the NPS. We believe the "No Contingency" clause is positive by not precluding projects simply because the originating park does not have a "cost-share partner." However, should the proposal have such a partner and be able to meet all the criteria and provide the "margin of excellence" a philanthropic partner can provide, we believe it should strengthen consideration of the proposal and offer dramatic proof of what federal and private investment can bring to our parks. We urge the Committee to include in this legislation an expectation that all bona fide philanthropic and other non-profit partners, including the National Park Foundation, friends groups of all sizes and capabilities and the complete range of cooperating associations and educational and programmatic non-profit partners, be equally able to contribute to the long term benefit of the parks in our society. Doing so will reinforce the goal of using the Centennial decade as a way to prepare the national parks and the National Park Service for its second century to be as valuable to the nation and the world as its first century has been. Again, we make the point that philanthropic partnership must not replace inherent federal responsibility of managing and funding our National Park System, but can offer a meaningful and deep valuable addition to the federal effort, and can serve to further connect Americans to their national parks and the heritage they preserve for all of us, our children and grandchildren.

Section 6: Maintenance of Effort

We appreciate the language in this Section that the Fund "shall supplement rather than replace annual expenditures by the NPS...." However, we recommend that the same language be applied to the Congressional Appropriations process and to the Administration Budget process where language is frequently inserted to take back what has been given, or to assess costs against an appropriation, or to offset one appropriation with another. As you know, in practical effect this may be determined as much by the degree to which Appropriations Committee members support the intent as by the wording of the legislation. We recommend extraordinary steps be taken to obtain the understanding and support of Appropriations Committee

members for the intent behind the legislation, and we offer our assistance in doing so.

Summary

In closing, we believe that this legislation represents an important step forward toward trying to solve the funding problems of our National Park System. The chronic under-funding of the National Park Service has been well-documented by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), the Coalition of National Park Retirees, and the NPS itself. A decade ago, the National Park Service prepared studies of its present abilities to manage the natural and cultural resources entrusted to it. The reports determined that it employed only 25% of the staff needed to provide professional attention to natural resources and only 22% of the staff needed to care for its cultural resources! Practically speaking, this means that the national parks have been operating on only two-thirds the funding required to preserve, research, and interpret to the visiting public their collection of incomparable resources. Importantly, a decade later the Business Plans undertaken in our park units have identified the same types of shortfalls. Finally, the NPS has been struggling for years to address the so-called "maintenance backlog," the funding required to attend to the deferred maintenance of visitor centers and other administrative buildings, roads and trails, housing, water and wastewater systems, as well as archeological sites and monuments. The National Park Service estimates its backlog at $8 billion. By any measure, the $2.4 billion in President Bush's 2008 budget proposal, while generous when compared with recent NPS budgets, will not make much of a dent in this monumental shortfall.

The National Park Service should not only be the leading natural and cultural heritage preservation agency in the country, it should set the "gold standard" for the preservation of natural and cultural resources throughout the country and the world. The Centennial of the National Park Service presents the nation with an opportunity to attend properly to the needs of an agency that preserves reminders of who we are as a people and where we want to go as a community.

ALMOST A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, just before the creation of the National Park Service, the British ambassador to the United States, James Bryce, spoke to the American Civic Association on the subject of national parks and their importance to society. With great simplicity, he acknowledged the obligation to "carefully guard what we have got." "We are the trustees for the future," he charged. "We are not here for ourselves alone. All these gifts were not given to us to be used by one generation, or with the thought of one generation only before our minds. We are the heirs of those who have gone before, and charged with the duty we owe to those who come after...."

As this country begins to think about the Centennial of the National Park Service, it is appropriate that we have a serious conversation about parks and their value to our society, and the role we want parks and the National Park Service to play in the future. What is our obligation, as the trustees of these magnificent places, to our children and their children? The upcoming Centennial provides an opportunity to think creatively about the kind of National Park Service we want for the next century and envision systemic changes for its betterment and ours.

We believe this legislation will be one of the many decisions and actions that must be taken during this Centennial to assure an appropriate future for our National Park System. We look forward to working with all partners to assure a bright future.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me thank all of the panel in its entirety. Let me begin with Mr. Cipolla.

Given the experience you have raising money for our park system in the private sector, we are coming upon the hundredth anniversary, this important anniversary, plus a renewed commitment, on the part of Congress and the administration, to our park system, which we are talking about additional funding as part of that renewed commitment.

Do you think these two factors, the funding equation that we are talking about plus the anniversary, are going to provide you with enough leverage to be able to actively and successfully raise money in the private sector as we approach these dates?

Mr. CIPOLLA. We do appear to be in an environment of more momentum for National Park philanthropy. Certainly, the conversation around 2016, a lot of the work that is being done in the Landscaper Friends groups, friends groups, of which there are 160 across the country, are coming into their own. They are maturing as charitable organizations. They are doing better work each and every year. The National Park Foundation, as well, has been investing and is maturing as an organization to do better work.

So I do think that we are entering a very promising era for park philanthropy. The leverage of matching money, and matching money, of course, is very common in charitable work, the leverage of matching money, as a tool, would further encourage and accelerate charitable giving as well.

Mr. GRIJALVA. The matching requirement, you feel, is absolutely necessary.

Mr. CIPOLLA. Well, charitable giving is increasing now to the National Parks and, I think, will continue to do so. Matching money, again, which is very, very common, will accelerate giving. It just will. To have that kind of leverage and the awareness around the potential of Federal funds to complement charitable dollars will have an impact. Giving will increase without it, but it will go faster with it.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Kiedaisch, thank you very much. Going back to the mountain bike example that you gave relative to the relevance of what our parks need to be doing in the future, usually those management plans, as to hiking trail, equestrian, mountain bike, those are management resource decisions that are made at that unit.

So my question is, there is no implication in your comments that the private sector should have some role in those resource decisions or in the process of environmental compliance.

Mr. KIEDAISCH. No, absolutely not. In fact, it is very important that those decisions are made in the neighborhood by the park because there will be different opportunities with different venues that should be appropriate.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Is the Coleman Company presently a donor to the National Park Service?

Mr. KIEDAISCH. Not presently, sir. We are donors to many others. One example would be the Appalachian Mountain Club. We made a commitment to fully fund their Trails 2010 project, which is to rebuild the trails the Appalachian Mountain Club is responsible for, for the trail from Connecticut to Maine, and, indeed, we have done that.

Relative to the concern about rulemaking and standards and commercializing the parks, you will not find a Coleman placard anywhere, you will not find a press release anywhere to that, and, in fact——

Mr. GRIJALVA. That is because we are all carrying them into the park.

Mr. KIEDAISCH. They are on their backpacks, yes. Mr. Chairman, there you are correct, and there is where the partnership works. The rising tide will help pay this back to the corporation.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. I am sure Mr. Cipolla will give you his card, as he actively recruits donors as we approach the centennial. Thank you.

Mr. Kiernan, we have heard a couple of times that visitation is flat or declining over the last decade. Speak to us about what is impacting this trend and the factors involved in it and some of the things that are being talked about: education, outreach, professional development. Would they, or would they not, help begin the reversal of that trend?

Mr. KIERNAN. Let me back up for one moment. It is our understanding that visitation is variable among the different parks. By that, I mean, some parks have seen significant increases over the years. Some have been flat and some declining.

So one observation is there are very different reasons among different parks as to why the visitation may be declining, which, from our viewpoint, then means the strategy for enhancing visitation in those different parks is likely very different based on the park. So that is one observation.

We would submit that a significant part of it has been the long-term funding, operating, funding shortfalls in the parks, where the parks have had to either cut back on the programming, cut back on the ranger-led tours. All of that matters to kids, families coming into the park. If they do not have the activities where a ranger is able to teach them, inspire them, take them for a walk, likely their visit will be shorter to the park, or they will not return.

So we think funding is a problem. Clearly, in some of those parks where the facilities have not been kept up, where the bathrooms have not been as clean as they should be, that has been a detriment to some folks coming. We do think, as you, I believe, said, that increasing the operating budget so that the park personnel are better trained, have the resources they need to provide the educational experience; that is all part of a multidimensional solution in enhancing visitation. We do see this 10-year window leading up to the centennial and this whole philanthropic dimension as all part of the solution.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Let me acknowledge something you said and also Mr. Wade said, and that is about cultural resource protection being part and parcel. I think that that is an excellent observation and something that we will look at very, very carefully. I appreciate it.

Mr. Wade, you mentioned that the National Park Service has difficulty meeting its responsibilities, especially around the environmental-compliance process, I think, before a project can go forward or be put into effect.

The centennial bill, which would pump significant amounts of new resources into the process; is that going to help or hurt the current situation?

Mr. WADE. Well, it is one of those things that we are concerned about, Mr. Chairman, because we know of examples right now where, with the ongoing construction funding that has been provided, sometimes as meager as it is over the last few years, there are still examples where, you know, approvals get bogged down in both the compliance and the priority setting within the National Park Service and all of those sorts of things.

Now, to come along and add another dimension of funding, either through the increase that you propose or through the matching or both, is just going to simply add a tremendous amount of workload there that I think certainly the National Park Service is aware of, but I think the Congress and the Committee needs to be aware of also.

There may need to be some provisions thought about—I do not have the answer specifically—in the legislation that would at least recognize that, if not try to figure out some mechanisms by which that can be enhanced without compromising the environmental compliance and some of those things.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me turn to Mr. Bishop for any questions he may have. Sir?

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. Mr. Cipolla—did I pronounce that properly, or at least close enough for government work?—when you reach out to the philanthropic community for donations, what challenges do you face that other nonprofits would not?

Mr. CIPOLLA. Certainly that we are raising money for projects for assets, for places, that receive Federal support. So the charitable community wants to understand that its dollars are really being used in an appropriate way—we sometimes refer to it as "margin of excellence"—where their dollars and commitments are bringing value to the parks in addition to the Federal government's responsibility to those parks.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. Thank you. Mr. Kiedaisch—is that right?

Mr. KIEDAISCH. That is correct.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. What is being done in state park systems that could be replicated in the National Park System?

Mr. KIEDAISCH. That is a great question. In the State of Connecticut, the director of parks and recreation there actually initiated a program where people go into a library, their local library, and check out a card that will give them access to the state parks, and they increased visitation tremendously. While that was state government doing that, that is a good example of how the private sector can be the communication and distribution vehicle.

For example, Wal-Mart reaches 92 percent of all American households. A kiosk inside their store communicating the benefits and reasons why people should be visiting these parks and building the stepping stones, from the couch to the back yard to the state park to the National Parks, is doable there.

You can reach different consumer segments by the different channels of retail. An REI could be a good example of reaching more avid mountain climbers that would get access to the parks and communicate that way as well.

Mr. BISHOP. Why is it important for the public to have ownership in the centennial effort?

Mr. KIEDAISCH. I think it is important always to engage the public in these public properties in order for them to have stewardship and pride in it. If we do not engage them, they do not become part of it, and they will not protect it.

It also is important to engage corporate America because they are going to benefit from it, and, as I said in my testimony and in my written testimony, I do not believe that the American taxpayers, the Federal government, should have to go this alone.

If you go to the insurance industries and say, "What does it mean to you if we can reduce childhood diabetes by one percent?" Their actuaries will give you a number very fast, and they will be very willing to support whatever initiative would increase activity of young adults and children to reduce that onset of diabetes.

Mr. BISHOP. I have talked about individual contributions. That would be probably the same effect and not have the same desire to put "Coleman" all over everything to do it.

Mr. KIEDAISCH. No. Actually, in my experience, I served on the United States Ski Team Foundation for eight years. We actually put estate planning in, and it allowed people to donate, in memory of themselves and their family, to support various programs, and it was overfunded every single year. In fact, we raised, for the U.S. Ski Team, upwards of $25 million a year, and the parties interested in the ski team are for smaller than the audience that we have at hand here for the National Parks.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. One last question for you. You discussed the situation of your visitation to Shenandoah National Park. From a business perspective, how do the problems like that reverberate and damage visitation throughout the entire park system?

Mr. KIEDAISCH. Well, this would come from my experience in running a resort. I ran Stowe Ski Resort for eight years, and the skier visit was flat for many, many years, and until the ski resorts changed their venues and brought services that the consumers were looking for—better dining or snowboard parks and music festivals in the summertime—the venues were going dry on the vine.

So the importance here is that you need to make sure that the venue is relevant to today's consumer. I am not suggesting turning them upside down. They need to preserve what the original heritage was of these parks.

Mountain biking is a great example. It is compatible in these parks. We have vast acreage, and we can build trails that would be compatible for that and have alternative trails for equestrian as well. If we do not have those venues, we will not attract the young people, and visitation will continue to go down, in my belief.

Mr. BISHOP. I know that is consistent with what Director Bomar was talking about in her testimony as well, and her success rate she had in those areas for which she had direct control before becoming director of the entire Park Service.

Mr. Kiernan, I just have a question about the disclosure statement that you sent to us. I realize that you noted that, in the last three years, you have received grants from the Interior Department. Have you any pending lawsuit or lawsuits in the last three years with the Interior Department?

Mr. KIERNAN. I would need to check with staff. Off the top of my head, I am not sure. So we will check with staff and get back to you.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. Mr. Wade, I will give you one last question, and then I am done. What commercial fees do you think should be raised to offset?

Mr. WADE. Congressman Bishop, I do not really know. I will admit that I have not personally looked into the variety of fees that are out there. I do certainly believe that to include concessions in that mix is going to turn out to be a problem, in the sense that any

raises in concession fees are going to be turned right back around in terms of costs to the visitors, and that, then, in turn, is likely to work against the visitation issue that you and others have brought up.

When it gets into the other commercial fees that are involved in the other bureaus within the Department, I would have to do some homework to answer your question specifically because I just do not know about all of those.

Mr. BISHOP. All right. Thank you. I will yield back.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, gentlemen. I appreciate your testimony. It was very informative, and as we go through this process, your ideas and your comments will be welcomed. Thank you very much, and the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:56 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

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