

Opening Statement: Chairman James Moran
Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request
National Park Service

March 16, 2010

Good morning. Mr. Jarvis, on behalf of the Subcommittee, I want to welcome you today. This is your first hearing before this Subcommittee and we very much look forward to working with you.

This Subcommittee has a long history of supporting the Park Service. We will do our best to ensure the parks are preserved for future generations, and that today's visitors have a first class experience.

In 1875 one of my personal heroes, John Muir, wrote these words that are as true today as they were in 1875.

“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.”

What John Muir knew 135 years ago, we are witnessing today: Visitation to our national parks is on the rise, especially in these difficult economic times.

In 2016, the National Park Service will celebrate 100 years as the stewards of some of the most important lands and national icons in America. The Service manages 392 park units, 23 national scenic and national historic trails and 58 wild and scenic rivers. Your responsibilities to care for these important lands and icons are enormous. In addition, you are charged with preserving cultural and historic sites for future generations.

I would like to quickly summarize the major components of the 2011 request for the National Park Service. At a total of \$2.7 billion, your request is almost \$15 million less than what we provided in Fiscal Year 2010. That is about one-half of a percent reduction. Within that amount, you are expected to absorb \$32 million in fixed costs and realize \$17.6 million in management efficiencies.

The good news is your largest account, Operation of the National Park System, includes an increase of \$35 million. As part of the President's initiative to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund by 2014, you have requested a \$30 million increase for land acquisitions.

These increases, however, come at the expense of a number of programs and projects important to this Committee and the Congress as a whole. Your request eliminates both the Save America's Treasures and Preserve America grant programs. It cuts by 50% the Heritage Area Partnership grants and reduces by one third the funds for the Park Partnership Grants. Even

though you have billions in construction backlogs, your request reduces line item construction by \$38 million.

In addition, your budget would decrease the FTEs allotted to the Service by 73 FTE from the 2010 level. And it assumes you will absorb \$32 million in fixed costs, making it difficult to fill over 400 vacancies. Although there is much in your request to be pleased about, we do have concerns about these reductions.

The Subcommittee intends to look closely at all the requests before us to identify areas of waste and abuse. We will have a few questions along those lines for you also. I trust you are committed to helping us root out wasteful spending at the Service.

Before I ask you to begin your statement, I would like to turn to our Ranking Member. Mr. Simpson, would you like to make a statement?