

PARK FUNDING



Yosemite National Park, Tunnel View
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TUNNEL VIEW OVERLOOK PROJECT

As part of the last Centennial Initiative, the Tunnel View scenic overlook—from which some of the most iconic photographs are taken of Yosemite National Park—was completely rehabilitated. The renovation expanded handicap accessibility, improved traffic flow, corrected drainage deficiencies, restored the historic rockwork, and enhanced the educational exhibits. The \$3.3 million project was jointly paid for by The Yosemite Fund and the National Park Service. It is one of most popular overlooks in the park with an estimated 5,000-7,000 people visiting it per day during the busy tourist season.

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Centennial Challenge

Centennial of the National Park System Provides Opportunity for New Investment through Public-Private Partnerships

In August 2016, the National Park System will celebrate its 100th anniversary, an ideal opportunity for public and private organizations to invest in restoring and renewing America's treasures. National parks are loved by American and international visitors and are economic generators for the local communities that surround them. National parks not only maintain and protect our natural resources, but they also preserve America's rich history and cultural icons for current and future generations.

The Centennial is an opportunity for Congress to leave a lasting legacy by ensuring the National Park System is adequately prepared to serve billions of visitors in the next century and beyond. The fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending bill provided a necessary increase in discretionary funding to employ needed rangers and make essential repairs. In addition, Congress provided \$15 million for the Centennial Challenge, a public-private matching program originally launched in 2006. This funding will leverage at least \$15 million in private dollars for projects throughout the country for the Centennial. **If Congress authorizes a long-term Centennial Challenge Program building on previous investments, the private sector could more robustly invest in important centennial initiatives and address maintenance needs in our national parks.**

History

In 2006, President George W. Bush and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne launched the National Park System Centennial Initiative as a 10-year, \$3 billion effort to prepare national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, recreation, and enjoyment.

The Centennial Initiative included the Centennial Challenge, a matching grants program that invited individuals, foundations, businesses, and other private-sector organizations to contribute at least \$100 million annually, matched by \$100 million in federal funds, to support signature programs and projects in the national parks. While Centennial Challenge funding was requested by the President for many years, funding was only appropriated in fiscal years 2008 and 2010. Unfortunately, the Centennial Initiative was never fully realized.

In fiscal year 2015, Congress reinvested \$10 million in the Centennial Challenge Program. That federal investment was matched by \$16 million in private contributions.

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Sample of Projects Funded in 2015

- ◇ *Zion National Park (Utah)*: Funding improved the park’s temporary educational exhibits at the Nature Center and provided additional youth programming through curriculum and Junior Ranger programs. Total cost: \$186,500; partner match: 53%.
- ◇ *Yellowstone National Park (Wyoming, Idaho, Montana)*: Funding restored and enhanced the only year round entrance to the world’s first national park by improving walkways, reducing traffic congestion and updating signs. Total cost: \$2 million; partner match: 75%.
- ◇ *Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park (Texas)*: Funding rehabilitated 3,725 square feet of the deteriorated viewing area by replacing the walking surfaces and constructing new ADA accessible concrete sidewalk from the parking area to the viewing area at the Johnson Cemetery. Total cost: \$20,800; partner match 50%.

Fiscal Year 2016 Centennial Challenge

The fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending bill provided \$15 million for the Challenge which will be matched by at least \$15 million in private donations for signature centennial projects. This continued investment has provided hope that Congress will set aside dependable, mandatory funding for the program in time for the Centennial.

Dedicated federal dollars matched with private funding could leverage millions of additional dollars for the park system for the Centennial and for several years after. The President has requested since 2014, \$100 million per year for three years to fund the Centennial Challenge Program. The request is subject to authorizing legislation by Congress.

Additional and dedicated Centennial Challenge Program funding would help prepare the parks for their next century of service and invest in construction, maintenance, and education projects.

Funding	FY15 (enacted)	FY16 (enacted)	FY17 (requested)	FY18 (requested)
Discretionary	\$10 million	\$15 million	TBD	TBD
Private Match	\$16 million	TBD, but at least \$15 million	TBD	TBD
Mandatory	\$0 million	TBD	\$100 million	\$100 million

We call on Congress to authorize and robustly fund a long-term Centennial Challenge Program to enhance our national parks for the next 100 years.

For more information: visit npca.org/secondcenturyaction
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“I believe that the number of projects, the amount of match, and the impact of the projects could all be enhanced with the benefit of a reliable, established program with lead time and dependable funding.”

David MacDonald, President of Friends of Acadia

December 2, 2015



Old Faithful Geyser, Yellowstone National Park
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