

The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks’ crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation’s history.

Statue of Liberty

NATIONAL MONUMENT

Facing southeast out of New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty symbolizes—perhaps more than any other monument in the United States—freedom and democracy. The statue welcomes more than three million visitors annually, arriving by ferries that depart from Battery Park in New York City and Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

Long before the copper statue was dedicated in 1886 and before it was transferred by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the National Park Service in 1933, Bedloe’s (now Liberty) Island was a strategic part of New York’s harbor defense system. A massive stone fort in an 11-pointed star design was constructed on the island between 1808 and 1811 and acted as a lookout position with harbor guns entrenched near the shore. Fort Wood, as it was later named, helped prevent New York from falling to the British during the War of 1812 and served as a recruiting station and ordinance depot when the U.S. Civil War began.

In 1877, military use of the fort was suspended in preparation for the arrival of the Statue of Liberty,

a gift from France. Between 1884 and 1886, the statue’s pedestal was built within the fort’s courtyard, atop the remains of the star-shaped fort. “The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World” was managed by the U.S. Lighthouse Board and War Department until it was transferred to the National Park Service.

THE CHALLENGE:
maintaining a 200-year-old fort—the base of the Statue of Liberty—in a harsh environment

The weather in New York Harbor is typically colder and windier than it is in other areas of New York City; in fact, winds as strong as 50 miles an hour can cause



BY THE NUMBERS:

-  **\$22 million**
estimated investment from the GAOA for repair projects
-  **3 million**
annual visitors to the statue
-  **50 miles/hour**
winds in New York Harbor
-  **137 year-old**
statue pedestal
-  **50,000 sq. ft.**
of highly visible walking surface in disrepair

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the torch of the Statue of Liberty to sway up to six inches. This harsh environment, combined with storms and seawater, are tough on structures, said Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Superintendent John Piltzecker. “Fort Wood has weathered two centuries of exposure to the elements in the middle of New York Harbor,” he said.

Currently, about 50,000 highly visible square feet of walking surface at the fort are in disrepair, unable to properly shed water and to provide adequate accessibility for visitors. Deterioration has accelerated, increasing the scope and cost of future repairs and risking the integrity, durability and stability of the structure.

THE PROJECT

Through a \$22 million investment, the Great American Outdoors Act will address ongoing deterioration and provide long-term protection to historic Fort Wood. The project will provide for protection of the terreplein (the horizontal structure that connects the exterior walls of the fort to the base of the statue's pedestal) and vertical surfaces of the fort. The work will focus on deterioration and drainage issues caused by age, the marine environment and heavy use. The exterior levels of the fort will be waterproofed to halt or prevent leaks and water infiltration. In addition, 50,000 square feet of walking surface will be upgraded to improve drainage and aesthetics, as well as visitor access and safety. Work includes removal and

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– Superintendent Piltzecker

replacement of pavers and waterproofing on the exterior levels of Fort Wood. Liberty Island will remain open during the rehabilitation effort, but as work progresses, temporary closures of walkways and gathering areas may be put in place to ensure safety.

THE IMPACT

Installing durable materials that endure in a marine environment will address current safety and drainage issues and prevent future deterioration at Fort Wood. After the project is finished, the facilities and systems addressed by this work should not require major rehabilitation or replacement for 20 years. The work not only will protect prior investments in the Statue of Liberty, such as the recent work restoring the fort's stone walls, but will preserve Fort Wood so that future generations may enjoy one of our country's most important structures. “This project will help ensure that Fort Wood will continue to endure,” Superintendent Piltzecker said, “as the iconic star-shaped fort at the base of the Statue of Liberty.”



The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



Protecting Our Future.

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