



## WHAT ARE THE PARKS' PRIORITIES?

In addition to calculating resource shortfalls, the Business Plan identified the parks' top operations and investment priorities. These fall under Sequoia and Kings Canyon's broader goals of **protecting resources, reducing the maintenance backlog, and fostering new partnerships.**

### Operations Priorities

- *Deter Illegal Marijuana Cultivation:* Rangers discovered 15 tons in 2002; cultivation damages aquatic resources and land.
- *Preserve Biodiversity Through Research and Monitoring:* The parks need a better understanding of ecosystem stressors.
- *Expand Wildland Fire Program:* Additional resources are required for fire suppression and prescribed burns.
- *Protect Resources in New Land at Dillonwood Grove:* Tract was acquired in 2001; in need of rangers and some basic services.
- *Mitigate Tree and Bear Hazards:* New staff would educate visitors about food storage and detect hanging branches.
- *Manage Maintenance Backlog:* Technical review and project supervision staff are needed to ensure projects are done right.
- *Preserve Historic Structures:* Most are in fair to poor condition; funding would provide scheduled maintenance.
- *Maintain Frontcountry and Backcountry Trails:* 348 of 865 miles are in fair to poor condition due to lack of resources.
- *Educate Parks Neighbors Through Outreach Program:* Demand for education programs exceeds parks' capacity.
- *Improve Web-based Services and Increase Volunteers:* A webmaster and a volunteer coordinator are urgently needed.

### Investment Priorities

- *Rehabilitate Generals Highway:* The central artery of the parks, in use since 1926, is deteriorating in several places.
- *Overhaul Park Water Systems:* Distribution systems are 70+ years old and do not comply with fire or plumbing codes.
- *Replace Giant Forest Facilities at Wuksachi:* Final stage of project would include improvements for visitor safety.
- *Establish Giant Forest Transportation System:* Shuttles would reduce congestion and improve the character of the grove.
- *Develop Trailhead Exhibits:* Several are decades old and present obsolete trail and wilderness safety information.
- *Establish Quail Flat Fire Center:* Interagency collaboration with Forest Service would result in more cohesive operations.
- *Replace Wilderness Ranger Stations:* 30-year-old stations are safety hazards to rangers and visitors.

## WHAT ARE THE PARKS' STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE?

During the business plan process, Sequoia and Kings Canyon's staff identified cost-reducing and revenue-generating strategies that will help the parks address resource shortfalls and accomplish their operations and investment priorities.

### Cost-Reducing Strategies

- *Expand Educational Partnerships:* Proactively approach universities with requests for interns; reach out to Valley schools.
- *Manage Volunteerism:* A dedicated coordinator could potentially double the number and effectiveness of volunteers.
- *Recover Costs for Search and Rescue:* The Park Service absorbs thousands in costs that it could recover and use for projects.
- *Calibrate Expenditures to Cyclical Demands:* Parks could reduce snow-plowing; explore renting equipment, sharing costs.
- *Explore Outsourcing Campgrounds to a Concessionaire:* Yellowstone has reduced costs while maintaining services.
- *Implement Annual Workforce Improvements:* Better training and robust performance evaluations would increase efficiency.
- *Administer New Procurement Practices:* Negotiate better rates by coordinating with other parks; identify potential donations.

### Revenue-Generating Strategies

- *Identify and Implement New Commercial Services:* Study changing visitation patterns and tailor services to recreational needs.
- *Modify User Fee Structure:* The parks' fees are low relative to other large parks; fee collection funds projects and services.
- *Design and Implement Marketing Strategies:* Develop ways to increase sponsorship, visitation, diversity, and off-season use.
- *Develop an Informal Advisory Committee:* Learn best practices in operations from private sector and nonprofit leaders.
- *Build Stronger Ties with the Sequoia Fund:* Increase revenue and sponsorship from donors, foundations, and corporations.

For more information or to join the parks' community of partners, please contact us at the address below:

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# Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Business Plan Summary



## MISSION

*The mission of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is to protect forever the greater Sierran ecosystem—including the sequoia groves and High Sierra regions of the park and their natural evolution—and to provide appropriate opportunities to present and future generations to experience and understand park resources and values.*

## PARK INVENTORY

### Natural Features

- 865,258 acres (1,352 square miles)
- 723,006 acres of designated Wilderness
- 14,494 feet at highest point (Mt. Whitney)
- 1,370 feet at lowest point (Kaweah River)
- 39 giant sequoia groves (of 75 remaining)
- 217 discovered caves
- 185 miles of canyons and valleys
- 90 miles of Wild and Scenic rivers
- 7 peaks over 14,000 feet
- 1,469 plant species
- 207 bird species
- 80 mammal species
- 35 reptile and amphibian species
- 2 threatened species (bald eagle, Little Kern golden trout)
- 1 endangered species (bighorn sheep)
- 54 species of special concern

### Cultural and Historic Features

- 265 Native American archeological sites
- 69 historic sites

### Facilities

- 865 miles of hiking trails
- 1 wheelchair-accessible trail
- 14 campgrounds
- 1,406 campsites
- 3 lodges
- 8 picnic areas
- 4 visitor centers and museums
- 129 miles of paved roads
- 494 buildings
- 23 water distribution systems

## WHAT IS THE BUSINESS OF THE PARKS?

*Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks protect and preserve the ecosystems of the southern Sierra Nevada. The parks' employees educate visitors about natural resources and ensure that guests enjoy their experience in the mountains. In an effort to clearly define their operations, finances, and strategies for the future, Sequoia and Kings Canyon recently completed a Business Plan through the National Park Service's Business Plan Initiative. Summary information is presented here for all constituents of the parks, including members of Congress, visitors, and prospective partners.*

### WHAT MAKES THE PARKS SPECIAL?

Sequoia National Park was created on September 25, 1890, to protect giant sequoias from logging. One week later, additional legislation nearly tripled the size of Sequoia and established General Grant National Park to protect Grant Grove. In 1940, General Grant was merged into the newly created Kings Canyon National Park. Sequoia and Kings Canyon have been managed jointly since 1943.

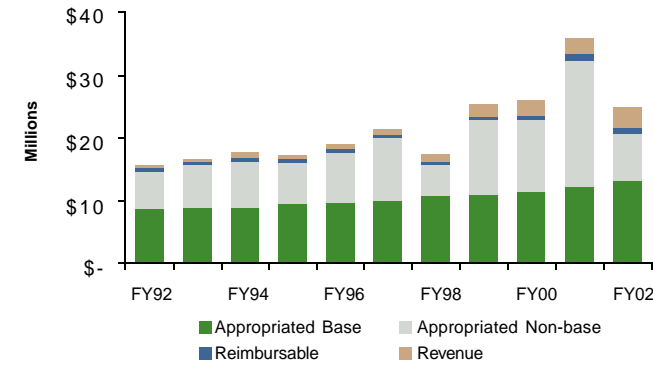
Sequoia trees exist only in 75 groves on the western slope of California's Sierra Nevada, and today Sequoia and Kings Canyon protect 39 of these groves. The General Sherman tree, the largest in the world, is located in Giant Forest. General Grant, the third largest tree in the world and the "Nation's Christmas Tree" since 1926, can be found in Grant Grove.

The United Nations declared the parks an international biosphere reserve for their unusual diversity of climates and ecosystems. The parks' arid foothills, their extensive cave network, and the granite basins and peaks of the High Sierra are all home to distinctive vegetation and wildlife.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon are rich in cultural as well as natural resources. The parks protect artifacts that bear witness to the long presence of several Native American groups, including the Western Mono, Tubatulabal, and Yokuts. Relics of the pioneer era, including logging camps, sawmills, and mines, can also be found here.

Visitors can explore this impressive natural and cultural landscape on daytrips or extended excursions into the vast wilderness. Sightseeing, hiking, birding, swimming, camping, and backcountry skiing are some of the many activities at the parks.

Historical Funding at Sequoia and Kings Canyon



### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN THE PARKS?

The business plan identified gaps between the parks' fiscal year (FY) 2002 funding levels and the resources that would be required to run the park sustainably into the future. At Sequoia and Kings Canyon, sustainability means that biodiversity is preserved, the \$60 million maintenance backlog is eliminated, and services are maintained at a level that satisfies park visitors and educates them about natural resources.

### Current funding is not sufficient to cover the parks' operational goals. In FY2002, Sequoia and Kings Canyon needed \$36.2 million to cover operational costs, yet the parks received only \$22.0 million.

Appropriated Base funding, set by Congress, is the best indicator of the parks' financial stability because it varies less than other sources and is dedicated to essential operations. The parks' \$13 million Appropriated Base has barely kept pace with inflation over the past two decades, and it actually was reduced in 2003. Thus, the parks are increasingly dependent on highly variable sources to meet their operational needs.

These other sources include Appropriated Non-base funding, which is awarded to parks on a competitive basis for one-time projects. This source fluctuates greatly. The parks' FY1998 Appropriated Non-base total was low because the park did not receive construction or Federal Highway Administration funding. The FY2001 figure was high because of \$75 million awarded for the Giant Forest restoration project.

Revenue funding has increased due to the Fee Demonstration Program. Since 1997, the parks have been able to keep 80% of entrance and campground fees collected for use in special projects. This source has grown to \$3 million annually.

### WHAT DO THE PARKS' EMPLOYEES DO?

The Business Plan classified the work of Sequoia and Kings Canyon's employees into five functional areas: Resource Protection, Visitor Experience & Enjoyment, Facilities Operations, Maintenance, and Management & Administration.

**Resource Protection** faced a shortfall in FY2002 totaling \$3.9 million and 65.2 full-time equivalent employees (FTE). Major tasks in this area include researching the effects of poor air quality on flora and fauna, controlling invasive species, restoring habitats, inventorying caves and prehistoric sites, and managing hazards that include problem bears and falling tree branches. Sequoia and Kings Canyon's wildland fire program, a Park Service leader in fire and fuels management, conducts prescribed burns to maintain healthy ecosystems and works to suppress dangerous fires.

**Visitor Experience & Enjoyment** staff members ensure that all guests have a safe, educational, and satisfying visit. The identified shortfall in this area was \$2.4 million and 27.7 FTE. Rangers handle an average of 50 search & rescue and emergency medical services incidents and 800 law enforcement incidents per year, and they must also contend with illegal marijuana cultivation. Interpretation staff cannot meet high demand for programs in several campgrounds.

**Maintenance and Facility Operations** had a combined shortfall of \$6.5 million and 39.6 FTE in FY2002. Workers maintain the parks' buildings, campgrounds, water systems, roads, trails, and vehicle fleet. Due to the \$60 million maintenance backlog, crews are frequently forced to make emergency repairs rather than complete necessary cyclic maintenance.

**Management & Administration** programs include external affairs, partnerships, planning, communications, and financial management. The shortfall was only 7.7 FTE and \$769,000 in FY2002. Managers hope to increase resources dedicated to developing partnerships throughout the state.

FY 2002 Required and Available by Functional Area

