

# National Park Service Organic Act

## SECTION 8, REPORTS ON THREATENED LANDMARKS AND NEW AREA STUDIES, AS AMENDED

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This Section of the Act became law on October 7, 1976 (Public Law 91-458, 16 U.S.C. 1a-5) and has been amended six times. This description of the Act, as amended, tracks the language of the United States Code except that (following common usage) we refer to the "Act" (meaning the Act, as amended) rather than to the "subchapter" or the "title" of the Code. The National Park Service Organic Act is the short title for a much longer law that established the National Park Service 16 U.S.C. 1 (August 25, 1916) and continues to address park related matters.

16 U.S.C. 1a-5,  
Additional areas for  
National Park System

16 U.S.C. 1a-5(a),  
General authority to  
investigate, study,  
and monitor areas of  
national significance

Report on threatened  
landmarks

16 U.S.C. 1a-5(b),  
Studies of areas for  
potential addition

### Section 8

(a) The Secretary of the Interior is directed to investigate, study, and continually monitor the welfare of areas whose resources exhibit qualities of national significance and which may have potential for inclusion in the National Park System. Accompanying the annual listing of areas shall be a synopsis, for each report previously submitted, of the current and changed condition of the resource integrity of the area and other relevant factors, compiled as a result of continual periodic monitoring and embracing the period since the previous such submission or initial report submission one year earlier.

The Secretary is also directed to transmit annually to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to the President of the Senate, at the beginning of each fiscal year, a complete and current list of all areas included in the Registry of Natural Landmarks and those areas of national significance listing on the National Register of Historic Places which areas exhibit known or anticipated damage or threats to the integrity of their resources, along with notations as to the nature and severity of such damage or threats.

(Rest of subsection omitted)

(b)(1) At the beginning of each calendar year, along with the annual budget submission, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate a list of areas recommended for study for potential inclusion in the National Park System.

(2) In developing the list to be submitted under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider—

# National Park Service Organic Act, Section 8

(A) those areas that have the greatest potential to meet the established criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility;

(B) themes, sites, and resources not already adequately represented in the National Park System; and

(C) public petition and Congressional resolutions.

(3) No study of the potential of an area for inclusion in the National Park System may be initiated after the date of enactment of this subsection, except as provided by specific authorization of an Act of Congress.

(4) Nothing in this Act shall limit the authority of the National Park Service to conduct preliminary resource assessments, gather data on potential study areas, provide technical and planning assistance, prepare or process nominations for administrative designations, update previous studies, or complete reconnaissance surveys of individual areas requiring a total expenditure of less than \$25,000.

(5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to or to affect or alter the study of any river segment for potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system or to apply or to affect or alter the study of any trail for potential addition to the national trails system.

16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c),  
Report on areas for  
potential addition

(c)(1) The Secretary shall complete the study for each area for potential inclusion in the National Park System within 3 complete fiscal years following the date on which funds are first made available for such purposes. Each study under this section shall be prepared with appropriate opportunity for public involvement, including at least one public meeting in the vicinity of the area under study, after reasonable efforts to notify potentially affected land-owners and State and local governments.

(2) In conducting the study, the Secretary shall consider whether the area under study—

(A) possesses nationally significant natural or cultural resources and represents one of the most important examples of a particular resource type in the country; and

(B) is a suitable and feasible addition to the system.

## National Park Service Organic Act, Section 8

(3) Each study—

(A) shall consider the following factors with regard to the area being studied—

(i) the rarity and integrity of the resources;

(ii) the threats to those resources;

(iii) similar resources are already protected in the National Park System or in other public or private ownership;

(iv) the public use potential;

(v) the interpretive and educational potential;

(vi) costs associated with acquisition, development and operation;

(vii) the socioeconomic impacts of any designation;

(viii) the level of local and general public support;

and

(ix) whether the area is of appropriate configuration to ensure long-term resource protection and visitor use;

(B) shall consider whether direct National Park Service management or alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector is appropriate for the area;

(C) shall identify what alternative or combination of alternatives would in the professional judgment of the Director of the National Park Service be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing for public enjoyment; and

(D) may include any other information which the Secretary deems to be relevant.

(4) Each study shall be completed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 [42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.].

(5) The letter transmitting each completed study to Congress shall contain a recommendation regarding the Secretary's preferred management option for the area.

# National Park Service Organic Act, Section 8

16 U.S.C. 1a-5(d),  
New area study office

(d) The Secretary shall designate a single office to be assigned to prepare all new area studies and to implement other functions of this section.

16 U.S.C. 1a-5(e),  
List of areas

(e) At the beginning of each calendar year, along with the annual budget submission, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a list of areas which have been previously studied which contain primarily historical resources, and a list of areas which have been previously studied which contain primarily natural resources, in numerical order of priority for addition to the National Park System. In developing the lists, the Secretary should consider threats to resource values, cost escalation factors, and other factors listed in subsection (c) of this section. The Secretary should only include on the lists areas for which the supporting data is current and accurate.

(16.U.S.C. 1a-5(f), Authorization of appropriations, omitted)