



Recreation

The President's Healthier U.S. Initiative is based on the premise that increasing personal fitness and becoming healthier is critical to achieving a better and longer life. Interior is committed to this goal through promoting recreational activity on all of its public lands.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, October 31, 2003

The Department of the Interior's lands boast scenic vistas, breathtaking landscapes, and unique natural wonders. The family vacation to these special places is an American tradition. On these lands, many patriotic symbols, battlefields, memorials, historic homes, and natural wonders tell the story of America. These special places provide Americans and visitors from around the world havens for recreation, education, reflection, and solace. To ensure that Interior's lands continue to play this important role in American life and culture, the Department fulfills its mission to maintain visitor facilities and services, preserve natural and historic resources, and enhance visitor opportunities. The Department's 2005 budget supplies the resources necessary to maintain and enhance recreational and other visitor opportunities at Interior sites.

Providing recreational activities began with the creation of Yellowstone National Park by the Congress in 1872. Today, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and National Park Service provide a diverse array of recreational activities on federally managed lands that make up one in every five acres of the United States.

Among the most popular places in the world, these special places will host an estimated 457 million people in 2005 as visitors experience the Department's 388-unit national park system, 542-unit national wildlife refuge system, 261 million acres of public lands, and 308 Reclamation sites.

As urban growth expands toward Interior-managed lands, we experience:

- Increased recreation on Federal lands.
- Increased resource demands.
- Increased interaction between citizens and Interior's land managers.

Citizens living near Federal lands have a very personal interest in the Interior Department's management actions and decisionmaking processes. Increasing urbanization has impacted nearly every Departmental program, but has especially augmented recreation activities. These activities affect how our services are delivered and the skills our employees require when interacting with the recreating public.

RECREATION MISSION

Provide recreation opportunities for America

The Department of the Interior's 2005 budget request provides \$900.0 million toward the recreation mission. The budget proposes to:

- Fulfill the President's commitment to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Provide a base increase for national parks of \$22.0 million for critical needs and new responsibilities.
- Support the Recreation One-Stop initiative to implement state-of-the-art

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
(dollars in thousands)

The 2005 budget fulfills President Bush's commitment to provide \$900 million annually from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

	2005 Request
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	
Cooperative Conservation Initiative	
BLM	
Challenge Cost Share.....	21,000
FWS	
Refuge Challenge Cost Share .	12,000
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	50,000
Coastal Programs.....	13,060
Migratory Bird Joint Venture..	11,449
NPS	
Challenge Cost Share.....	20,970
DM	
Take Pride in America	<u>1,000</u>
Subtotal.....	129,479
State and Other Grant Programs	
FWS	
State/Tribal Wildlife Grants ...	80,000
Landowner Incentive Grants .	50,000
Private Stewardship Grants ...	10,000
Coop. Endg. Species Grants ...	90,000
NAWCF Grants	<u>54,000</u>
Subtotal.....	284,000
Federal Land Acquisition and State Assistance	
BLM.....	24,000
FWS.....	45,041
NPS	<u>84,295</u>
Subtotal.....	153,336
NPS	
State Assistance Grants	<u>93,829</u>
Subtotal	93,829
Subtotal, Interior	<u>660,644</u>
U.S. FOREST SERVICE	
State LWCF Programs	
Forest Legacy	100,000
Forest Stewardship	40,692
Urban and Community Forestry ..	31,961
Federal LWCF Land Acquisition ..	<u>66,885</u>
Subtotal, Forest Service.....	239,538
TOTAL	<u>900,182</u>

data-sharing technology to improve the accessibility of recreation information for the public.

- Work with Congress to establish permanent authority for the recreational fee demonstration program.
- Fulfill the President's commitment to a healthier U.S. through the promotion of recreational physical activity and volunteerism on its lands. .

FULL FUNDING OF THE LWCF

These grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund can help state and local governments – many facing budget shortfalls – invest in recreational projects so that all Americans will have access to close-to-home parks and open spaces.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, February 2, 2003

The Land and Water Conversation Fund was established in 1965 to conserve, develop, and utilize outdoor recreation resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people. These goals were initially achieved through land acquisition and Federal management. Today, partnerships and cooperative conservation are increasingly important tools for fulfilling LWCF goals.

The Department is meeting the President's commitment for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund by enhancing its partnership approach with States, Tribes, local communities, and private citizens, and by continuing strategic Federal land acquisition. The Department's \$660.6 million Land and Water Conversation Fund proposal is an increase of \$139.3 million above the 2004 enacted level. The Interior budget request, combined with the request for the U.S. Forest Service, brings the total government-wide LWCF request to \$900.2 million.

The Land and Water Conversation Fund State grants program request of \$93.8 million continues the 2004 funding level. The Cooperative Conservation Initiative, incorporating seven partnership programs, is a key component of the 2005 budget

for LWCF with a request of \$129.5 million, \$25.5 million or 25 percent above the 2004 level. The CCI initiative is discussed in further detail in the Resource Protection chapter. The request of \$153.3 million for Federal land transactions emphasizes the use of easements and other innovative options to make the most effective and efficient use of Federal funds, promote cooperative alliances, and leave land on State tax roles.

Appraisal Reform – To ensure the integrity of Interior’s real estate appraisals, the Department reformed its appraisal function in 2004. In all of the Department’s land managing agencies, appraisals are an integral part of undertaking land transactions that help fulfill recreation and conservation missions. Going back at least as far as 1968, Interior’s Inspector General and his predecessors have called for fundamental reform of Interior’s appraisal offices to resolve two basic conflicts of interest: appraiser subordination to realty professionals and reliance on some individuals to serve as both appraisers and negotiators, sometimes on the same transaction.

The General Accounting Office and the Appraisal Foundation expressed similar concerns with Interior’s appraisal process. In response to the critiques by these institutions, third parties, and the appraisers themselves, Secretary Norton established an Office of Appraisal Services as an administrative function within the National Business Center.

In addition to these reforms, BLM, FWS, and NPS, in conjunction with the Interior Department, continue their commitment to seven unifying land transaction principles.

LAND TRANSACTION PRINCIPLES

The following principles govern Department of the Interior land transactions:

- **Integrity** Transactions shall meet the highest ethical standards and comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and codes of professional conduct.
- **Good Faith** Transactions shall occur in good faith and, except in extraordinary circumstances, only with willing parties.
- **Transparency** Transactions shall be pursued transparently with appropriate opportunities for public participation.
- **Mission** Transactions shall promote fulfillment of Departmental and bureau missions.
- **Citizen Stewardship** Transactions shall be consistent with the promotion of private stewardship.
- **Innovation** Transactions shall employ easements, donations, and other alternatives to full fee title when appropriate.
- **Congressional Direction** The Department shall provide technical assistance and policy recommendations to Con-

Federal Land Acquisition – The single largest request in Federal land acquisition is in the NPS account in the amount of \$40.0 million to acquire the mineral rights currently owned by the Collier family in the Big Cypress National Preserve. This request demonstrates the Department’s continued commitment to preventing new exploration or oil production in the Preserve, which is part of the larger Everglades ecosystem. Although the agreement between the Department and the Collier family for the acquisition of the mineral rights recently expired, the Department is prepared to continue to work with the Collier family, subject to completion of the Inspector General’s evaluation of the proposed acquisition and the completion of an appraisal consistent with the Interior Department’s guidelines and procedures for appraisals for land acquisitions and exchanges.

LWCF Stateside Grants Program – Interior proposes a \$93.8 million request for funding for the LWCF State grants program, level with 2004.

During the 2005 formulation process, OMB, the Department, and NPS evaluated the Stateside Land and Water Conversation Fund program using the Performance Assessment Rating Tool and identified several areas for improvement. Interior and the Park Service will address the issues identified in the PART to make the LWCF program more performance-oriented. The Park Service has already initiated a collaborative process of working with each State and Territory to develop and implement new performance standards for 2006.

Our park system is the crown jewel of America's recreation system. . . We want the 80 million acres of national park land to be accessible and comfortable for the American people.

President George W. Bush, August 15, 2003

PARK VISITATION

Each year, the National Park Service endeavors to promote more active and healthier communities throughout the Nation by supporting an array of recreational opportunities. In 2005 alone, nearly 260 million visitors are expected to enjoy the benefits of the 388 park units in the national park system. In order to ensure the ready availability of a full spectrum of recreational activities, NPS must properly maintain its extensive infrastructure, which includes over 16,000 administrative and public use buildings, 17,000 miles of paved and unpaved trails, 11,900 miles of roads, and 3,029 miles of scenic rivers.

Primarily funded from the park operating base, NPS's recreation mission requires performing daily maintenance activities, providing interpretive ranger programs, staffing visitor centers, protecting lives and property, promoting new recreational opportunities, building and maintaining new trails, and meeting new responsibilities for recently created parks. By funding new responsibilities, NPS is able to increase access for the public to new recreational opportunities and improve the quality of recreational experiences in existing parks. The NPS 2005 budget proposes an increase of \$22.0 million to the park operating base, with a substantial portion of the increase devoted to addressing new park responsibilities.



The park operating increase will help:

- Reduce the deferred maintenance backlog by providing \$10.0 million for park-specific repair and maintenance.
- Improve law enforcement by providing \$4.7 million to improve security at icon and border parks.

RECREATION ONE-STOP

The Recreation One-Stop partnership, comprising ten Federal agencies, is implementing cutting-edge, data-sharing technology to make recreation information accessible to the public directly and through State and local government partnerships. Recreation One-Stop will create one citizen-centered web portal for recreation opportunities throughout the Nation. Individuals planning trips will be able to make recreation-related reservations using Federal sites through one "shopping cart." The project has three distinct aspects:

- Improving the existing recreation.gov web site that was launched on June 27, 2003.
- Developing recreational data standards acceptable to the recreation community.
- Creating a single Federal system for recreation reservations.

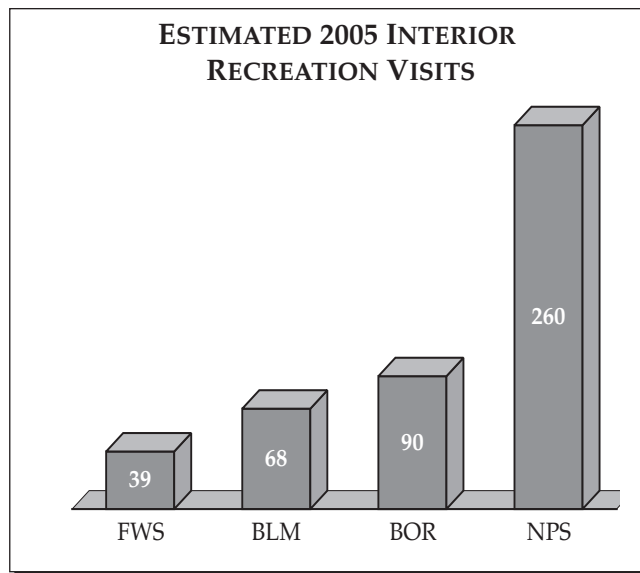
As managing partner for this trailblazing project, the Interior Department and four of its bureaus – NPS, BLM, FWS, and BOR – have significantly improved the existing Recreation One-Stop web site by:

- Adding links to State and local government websites.
- Creating a map interface to help the public plan their recreational itinerary.

As part of Recreation One-Stop, the Department is working with the U.S. Forest Service and Army Corps of Engineers to integrate two existing Federal recreation reservation systems into one user

friendly national recreation reservation system by November 2004 through the use of a performance-based contract. The new reservation system will enable individuals to access a listing of all parks, forests, lakes, museums, and other government-managed recreation sites in a given geographic location and learn about recreational activities. In addition, the new service will provide valuable information including the entrance fees for given sites, weather conditions, and links to information hosted by non-Federal recreation partners.

As part of the effort to develop a single recreation reservation system, Interior has already added 12 national park units, three BLM campgrounds, and a Reclamation campground to the existing U.S. Forest Service-Army Corps of Engineers reservation system.



RECREATIONAL FEE PROGRAM

Although recreation fees date to 1908, Congress first established broad recreation fee authority in 1965 under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. In enacting this authority, Congress acknowledged that the visitors to Federal lands receive some benefits that do not directly accrue to the public at large and that charging a modest fee to visitors is both equitable and fair to the general taxpayer. In 1996, Congress took that idea one step further and established the Recreational Fee Demonstration program for NPS, FWS, BLM, and the U.S. Forest Service.

During the 105th Congress, a House Appropriations committee report noted that the Recreational Fee Demonstration program was developed in direct response to Federal agency concerns over their growing backlog maintenance needs. Thus, the Recreational Fee Demonstration program allowed participating agencies to retain a majority of recreation fees at the site where collected and reinvest those fees into enhancing visitor facilities and services. This authority was deliberately broad and flexible to encourage agencies to experiment with their fee programs.

In 2003, Interior generated \$137.6 million in revenues through the Recreational Fee Demonstration program. Extended through December 2005, the Demonstration Program has allowed the Department to invest funds to reduce the national park maintenance backlog and fund deferred health and safety projects, provide improved visitor services, enhance resource protection activities, and defray the cost of future fee collections.

In 2005, the Department anticipates that \$138.2 million in revenues will be collected in fees for reinvestment in parks, refuges, and public lands where recreational activities are popular. The Administration continues to work with Congress to make the Recreational Fee Demonstration program authority permanent.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Perhaps no Federal agency has closer ties to the American people than the Department of the Interior. The many historic, cultural, and natural resources accessible throughout lands managed by the Department provide public opportunities for respite, reflection, and outdoor recreation. This connection of people to these special places provides a rich context within which to engage the public, establish partnerships, and promote volunteerism in America.

Each year Interior receives tremendous contributions as a result of long-term relationships with partners and volunteers. Through a variety of volunteer programs, individuals of all ages with differing levels of experience and educational backgrounds contribute valuable time to help the Department fulfill its recreation mission and realize new relationships to healthy lifestyles and dynamic recreational opportunities. In 2005, it is anticipated that volunteers will contribute nearly

INTERIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

	FWS	NPS	BLM	Total
Hours donated (thousands of hours)				
2003	1,229	4,590	1,500	7,319
2004	1,	4,681	1,900	7,834
2005	1,278	4,869	2,100	8,247
Value of volunteer time (dollars in millions)				
2003	20.3	77.7	24.8	122.8
2004	21.3	79.6	31.4	132.3

8.2 million hours of their time to the Department at a value of \$142.3 million.

In 2003 Interior re-launched Take Pride in America, the public lands component of the President’s USA Freedom Corps. The 2005 budget requests \$1.0 million to support Take Pride in America, a national, multi-agency partnership that empowers volunteers from every corner of America to participate in enhancing our refuges, parks, recreation areas, and cultural and historic sites. The initiative calls Americans to action and encourages them to join in voluntary stewardship efforts on our public lands. Recently, Take Pride in America initiated a 2004 volunteer pledge drive in southern California for forest fire restoration efforts, with 400,000 hours pledged in the first two weeks of the effort.

Over 100 charter partners, including major corporations, conservation groups, youth and service organizations, recreation groups, and State governments, currently participate. Take Pride in America also recognizes outstanding volunteer efforts with national annual awards and additional awards for hours dedicated to stewardship programs. Through Take Pride in America, bureaus recognize exceptional volunteer contributions. In NPS alone, over 600 volunteers donated over 4,000 hours of

service each; two-dozen volunteers donated over 15,000 hours of service.

The NPS is adept at leveraging the energy and intelligence of partners and volunteers to advance the delivery of its recreation goals. The NPS continues to build upon the success of the Volunteers-in-Parks program in requesting an overall budget increase of \$850,000 in 2005. Of the amount requested, \$600,000 will provide for the costs of training, supervising, and utilizing an anticipated four percent increase of volunteers expected from new programs such as the Master Volunteer Ranger Corps and programs targeting “senior” volunteers. This funding will also support additional volunteer projects as part of the Take Pride in America program. The remaining portion of the budget increase, \$250,000, will provide for the creation of VIP/Partnership coordinators to assist in directing and managing the steadily increasing number of volunteer and partnership projects.



One of the things that really makes our park systems go and really function well is the volunteer effort all around the country.

President George W. Bush, August 15, 2003

Take Pride in America is a national partnership that aims to inspire a new generation of volunteers to put their love of country to work to improve our national parks, wildlife refuges, public lands, cultural sites, playgrounds, and other recreation areas.

Secretary Gale A. Norton, September 3, 2003