

ISSUE: **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE FUND**

BACKGROUND:

The President's FY08 included a major new initiative to improve national park operations, resources and programs in preparation for the 100th anniversary of the creation of the National Park Service in August 2016. Congressional action is well underway to implement key pieces of the initiative, including an increase in baseline funding for the agency which will permit the hiring of some 3,000 additional seasonal employees. A major benefit of this increase will be increases in park interpretation and visitor services.

A key piece of the initiative is an effort to substantially increase the leveraging of federal appropriations to benefit national parks and national park visitors. As proposed by the President, a new Centennial Challenge Fund would receive mandatory funding of \$100 million annually for park projects and programs which attracted at least \$100 million in non-federal funding, and especially from foundations, corporations and other private entities. Hearings were held on August 2 in both the House (H.R. 2959 AND H.R. 3094) and the Senate (S. 1253). In testimony to the two chambers, ARC and others identified needed revisions to make the Fund successful but offered enthusiastic support for the provisions.

ACTION NEEDED:

(1) The House FY08 appropriations legislation for Interior provides a \$50 million line item for the Challenge Fund, since passage of the proposed legislation is unlikely this fall. The Senate provision, still in committee, includes no such initial funding. ***We urge the Senate to accede to the House action.***

(2) We seek active ***support of the Centennial Challenge Fund legislation through co-sponsorship and letters of support.***

MORE INFORMATION:

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