

B. National Park Service

The National Park System consists of 388 units encompassing more than 84 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. The 233 sites that comprise the Fee Demo Program projects show the diversity of the National Park System. This represents a significant increase in the number of projects and sites which until FY 2002 was limited to 100. They include national parks, national monuments, national memorials, national lakeshores, national seashores, national historic sites, national battlefields, and national recreation areas.

Several parks have implemented transportation systems since FY 2000. The passage of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act (P.L. 105-391) allows parks to collect a transportation fee and retain the money to fund such systems. Parks with transportation fees typically added these fees to existing entrance fees to ease collection and administrative burdens on both visitors and park staff.

Because of high operational costs and requirements, Hampton National Historic Site was withdrawn from the Fee Demo Program in FY 2002.

Recreation Visits

Total annual visitation for the NPS in FY 2002 decreased 4.2 percent relative to FY 2001. Of the top ten highest revenue-collecting parks, six showed a decrease in visitation. Grand Canyon decreased 7.2 percent, Yosemite 4.5 percent, Rocky Mountain 6.9 percent, Shenandoah less than 1 percent, Lake Mead 15.2 percent, and Hawaii Volcanoes 17.3 percent. Yellowstone visitation increased by 6.7 percent, Grand Teton by 2.9 percent, Zion by 16.9 percent, and Sequoia-Kings Canyon by less than 1 percent.

The September 11th tragedy, wildfires, weather, decreased regional travel, the economic downturn, road construction, and park closures all contributed to the modest decline in overall visitation.

Recreation Fee Revenues

The total NPS recreation fee revenue for FY 2002 was \$ 147.4 million. This includes \$125.7 million from fees; \$214,758 from the sale of the Golden Eagle Hologram; \$15.3 million from sales of the National Parks Pass; and \$5 million in transportation fees.^a In FY 2001 the total of Fee Demo revenues, Golden Eagle sales, National Park Pass and non-Fee Demo receipts was \$146.6 million. Transportation fees collections totaled \$4.9 million in 2001 but were not included in the total revenues in FY 2001. However, since most transportation fees are collected in conjunction with entrance fees, a decision was made to include these revenues in the FY 2002 total. Total revenues declined 2.7 percent in FY 2002 relative to FY 2001 (when the transportation fee revenues are included in the FY 2001 totals). Revenues from the Golden Eagle Hologram in FY 2002 decreased by \$101,455 (or 32 percent) relative to FY 2001.

^a The National Parks Pass, transportation fees, and revenues from deed restricted parks are not part of the Fee Demo Program.

Commercial tour visitation dropped significantly in FY 2002, with a \$5.4 million reduction (31.5 percent) in commercial tour fee revenue in FY 2002 relative to FY 2001.

In FY 2002, Cape Cod National Seashore showed an increase of revenue of 39.8 percent due to the increase of their entrance fees from \$7 to \$10 per vehicle, per day (or from \$20 to \$30 annually per vehicle). Acadia National Park increased revenue by 12 percent because of an increase in visitation. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial showed an increase in fee revenue of 18.8 percent despite a decrease in visitation of 7.5 percent. Park managers surmise that the increase in revenues could be from increased compliance for payment of fees at the site due to the showing of a new Lewis and Clark film. The entrance fee is paid at the same time as obtaining film tickets. Mammoth Cave revenues were up 56.5 percent compared to FY 2001. Although the FY 2001 revenues at this park were down significantly because of an accounting adjustment from previous years, the revenues for FY 2002 were significantly higher than FY 1999 or FY 2000. One possible explanation is that because of the Fee Demo Program, Mammoth Cave was able to add an extra tour to Grand Avenue, one of the more popular tours. Since this tour is priced higher than other tours and accommodates more visitors, total revenues increased.

Grand Canyon National Park reported that about 33 percent of visitors are entering the park using a Golden Age or National Park Pass. Pass usage is suspected as the reason revenues were down 6.6 percent at Zion National Park despite a substantial increase in visitation of 16.9 percent. The pass is more cost effective especially when traveling to areas of parks that charge a \$20 entrance fee. At Mesa Verde National Park revenues were down 35.8 percent after an August fire caused an extended park closure.

Cost of Collecting Recreation Fees

In FY 2002, all parks that collect recreation fees were converted to Fee Demo Parks. This brought many smaller parks into the program that have a higher cost of collection ratio. The effect of the addition of these new sites in FY 2002 has resulted in a slight increase in the cost of collection to 21.9 percent (based on the sum of Fee Demo, transportation, and Parks Pass revenue) when compared to 20.4 percent in FY 2001. Decreased visitation, rising salary costs and more visitors using National Park Passes, Golden Eagle, Age and Access Passport and park specific passes all potentially contributed to a greater margin between revenue collected and the cost to collect revenue.

Sites use fees to maintain and protect the resources and provide public contact at entry points. It is in the best interest of some sites to manage visitation by using fees to limit or restrict inappropriate use of some NPS sites even when the cost is higher. The need to manage visitor services, provide regulatory and orientation information, and to preserve and protect the resources at smaller remote sites has attributed to increased cost of collection but has provided important benefits to the park.

In FY 2002 parks that exceeded a 50 percent cost of collection ratio were identified and a policy was put in place beginning in FY 2003 that no park will be allowed to exceed a 50 percent cost of collection ratio.

Castillo De San Marcos National Monument experienced an increase in the cost of collection of 51.4 percent. The cost of collection was much lower in 2001 because the Fort was closed on weekdays for 10 months out of the year. The doubling of revenue in FY 2002 is attributed to increased

visitation. However, the disparity between collection costs and revenue generation is a result of an increase in the acceptance of passports.

Great Falls Park, a site on the George Washington Memorial Parkway added staff to their fee operation in FY 2002 to maintain year-round collection and consistent hours. This is also a prime example of a situation where fee collection assisted in improving aspects of the site that otherwise might not have occurred. By staffing the fee booth regularly the site has reduced vandalism and improved the control of parking areas.

Oregon Caves National Monument decreased the cost of collection by 89 percent. The park entered into an agreement with the Crater Lake Natural History Association to collect the cave tour fees. The NPS still provides the tours while the Association collects the fee. Since cashiers make sales for the Association and collect tour fees simultaneously, the cost of collection for the NPS is reduced.

Obligation of Fee Demo Revenues

The NPS obligated \$6.5 million in Fee Demo revenue to priority projects in FY 1997, \$51.3 million in FY 1998, \$80.9 million in FY 1999, \$91.5 million in FY 2000, \$116.4 million in FY 2001 and \$101.9 million in FY 2002. The NPS obligated 81 percent of the Fee Demo revenues collected in FY 2002. Since FY 1997, the NPS has obligated a total of about \$48.5 million, or 63 percent of the total Fee Demo revenue collected over the FY 1997 - FY 2002 period. For FY 2003, the NPS will: require an obligations plan for each collecting park; initiating additional reporting requirements; and implementing policy changes to increase the obligations rate of the unobligated balance generated in previous years.

Project Approval

In FY 2002 857 projects were approved for \$117.1 million and an additional 702 projects for \$103 million were reviewed for approval in early FY 2003. The project approval rate in FY 2002 was lower than in previous years because of shifts in program management. Parks were directed to review their revenue stream in terms of completing previously approved projects and then only add additional projects if their unobligated balance and anticipated revenue in FY 2002 – FY 2004 would exceed the dollars of approved projects. For the majority of parks, the previously approved project dollar amounts exceeded the anticipated revenues. The approval rate was also impacted by delays in project submittal and review caused by the DOI Internet shutdown that was concurrent with implementation of a complex new version of the Internet based Project Management Information System software.

Project Management Improvements

Version 4 of the NPS computer software Project Management Information System was implemented. This enabled the NPS to determine, on a project-by-project basis, the relative priority of projects Servicewide through a banding into high, medium and low. It also incorporated a numerical priority assigned by the park to identify the project's strategic and management importance to the park. The new version allowed for the identification, approval and tracking of multiple-years, multiple-phase and multiple-fund source projects which had been an issue for Fee Demo projects in the past. It also allowed for the easy determination of categories such as facility, non-facility, primary-asset type, historic, non-historic and emergency projects.

Automated Technologies

The NPS continues to look for ways to modernize fee collection activities. Some of the improvements to date have included: automated fee machines, sophisticated cash register equipment, more modern payment methods, and more sophisticated security equipment. Several parks experimented with innovative methods this year:

- Badlands National Park tested a solar-powered self-pay machine at the Sage Creek Wilderness area, a remote entrance point on the northwest side of the park. The machine operated well, but was removed after a few months because of its unusually large size, which was considered aesthetically obtrusive for the wilderness area. The machine was of standard size, but the solar panels, twelve in all, that were mounted on 12-foot poles to keep the bison from bumping into them, created a visual intrusion. The park removed the equipment and is exploring alternative solar panels that will be less obtrusive. Badlands is one of the first parks to use solar powered automated self-pay machines.
- Yellowstone National Park went online in the fall of FY 2002 with a vehicle identification system at the North and Northeast Entrances. This system uses a plastic card, attached to the car (usually mirror), which is read by an antenna connected to a CPU in the entrance station. This is a pilot program for employees, concession vehicles, park suppliers, and some permitted commercial travelers. Yellowstone is also planning to incorporate swipe card technology for entry. The park recently renovated the West Entrance to include an express or fast pass lane(s).
- Grand Teton National Park has reduced shift and remittance paperwork through their computerized point of sale system. By using this technology, staff time is reduced and operations are more efficient.
- Mount Rainier National Park installed an automated self-pay machine at Cougar Rock campground. The machine is popular with the public because it accepts credit cards or cash. It is used in the shoulder seasons when Mount Rainier is not on the national reservation system. The park recently obtained two automated self-pay Lexis machines, the first of their kind to be used by the NPS. One will be installed at the White River Entrance Station and the other will be installed at the White River campground, a first-come, first-served campground that currently an iron ranger. The new automated self-pay machine will save the park from counting 8,000 envelopes that may significant amounts of cash. The need to transport and handle cash will be reduced because of the credit card feature, saving staff time and improving security.

Cash Management and Accounting

Electronic Banking Pilot: The NPS continues to work with the U.S. Treasury and a prominent commercial bank to use modern banking systems in parks to speed fee deposits to the U.S. Treasury and improve accountability for these deposits. This modern banking project is an Internet-based deposit and reporting system, the first of its kind among Federal agencies. Park staff enters deposit information directly into the web-based deposit form. The deposit information is then sent electronically to the U.S. Treasury. The NPS receives automated deposit information and updates of

its accounting records. This electronic dissemination of information reduces manual handling of data, reduces errors, and accelerates the deposit and associated accounting information.

The pilot began in August 2000 and concluded with implementation and successful testing in June 2001 throughout the pilot region. The U.S. Treasury has certified the system as meeting its financial accountability standards, and the parks in the pilot region have found the system to be efficient for entering, tracking, and auditing revenue. The NPS is working toward extending the electronic banking system to all Service sites in 2003.

Advanced Cash Register Systems: Computerized cash registers have been implemented in 48 parks. One vendor conducts annual training for all the parks that use the vendor's specialized software. This software is designed to gather and manage point-of-sale fee collection data. By coupling these advanced cash registers with specialized software, parks can quickly reconcile and report sales statistics while avoiding the tedious task of manually compiling detailed sales data. Benefits of this approach include lower labor costs and reduced accounting errors.

National Parks Pass: The National Parks Pass was authorized by Title VI of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391; Stat 3518; 16 U.S.C. 5991 et seq.). The pass costs \$50 and is valid for entry to all NPS units that charge an entrance fee. The pass is valid for 12 consecutive months from the month that it is validated up to the date of expiration. A \$15 hologram sticker is available that, when affixed to a National Parks Pass, makes it equivalent to the interagency Golden Eagle Passport. The National Parks Pass was offered for sale beginning on April 18, 2000.

Since introducing the National Parks Pass, sales have increased from \$10.1 million in 2000 to \$15.3 million in FY 2002. The pass is sold at all entrance fee parks, through cooperating associations, by the National Park Foundation (including through the Foundation's web site), and through a toll-free number. Sales through select corporate partners began in FY 2002 and generated \$2.45 million. Corporate partners include: REI, LL Bean, Target, AAA Travel, Ford, and others. The new 2003 National Parks Pass features an "Owners Manual" that replaces the previous package. Costs to produce the package were substantially reduced. The image of Fort Union National Historic Site in New Mexico was the winning photo selected from among thousands of entries in the National Parks Pass Experience Your America Photo Contest.

Collaboration and Experimentation

Reciprocal pass arrangements are in place for several geographical locations. In Arizona, one annual pass allows entry for Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Walnut Canyon National Monument, and Wupatki National Monument. In Utah, Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Hovenweep National Monument and Natural Bridges National Monument honor each other's weekly and annual entrance passes. Colonial National Historic Park and Jamestown National Historic Site sell a combination pass for \$9, a savings of \$2 if a visitor were to purchase each pass separately.

The multi-agency regional Rocky Mountain National Park - Arapaho National Recreation Area Annual Pass sells for \$50 and allows entry to Rocky Mountain National Park (NPS) and Arapaho National Recreation Area (USDA Forest Service). The Park and the Recreation Area share a common boundary. Individual annual passes to each area cost \$30, so the visitor saves \$10 by buying the joint pass. Revenue generated from pass sales is split equally between the sites.

In Ohio, the Carillon Historical Park, a privately owned site that is legislatively authorized as part of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, accepts the National Park Pass for entry.

Oregon Caves National Monument entered an agreement with the Crater Lake Natural History Association to collect the cave tour fees. The NPS still provides the tours while the Association collects the fee. This partnership significantly reduced the cost of collection.

Project Accomplishments by the National Park Service

From the initiation of the Fee Demo Program, the NPS has directed that priority for use of the revenues would be for work on the deferred maintenance backlog. Revenues have also been used to address critical resource management and visitor services needs. It should be noted, that deferred maintenance projects also address critical resource management and visitor experience needs.

Over the life of the program \$457 million in projects, or 69 percent of the approved project dollars, have been identified as deferred maintenance. Projects are identified by the parks as deferred maintenance per the definition of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) and DOI Budget Formulation Guidance – “Attachment G”. Annually, the NPS generates a portion of the FASAB list of deferred maintenance projects from PMIS. The previously approved projects have been compared to that list to validate their deferred maintenance status. With the implementation of PMIS Version 4, which allowed for regional concurrence with deferred, and the interface with the Facility Management/Condition Assessment Software, NPS anticipates validation and refinement of the projects identified as deferred maintenance. In FY 2002, 47 percent of the obligations or over \$46 million of the fee revenues were spent on deferred maintenance projects. Each fiscal year, the decision is made at the park as to which approved projects to obligate revenues. The region concurs with the obligation by allocating the revenue to approved projects. In FY 2003, the parks are developing spending plans to strategically plan the use of their revenue on approved projects over the next five years. From the spending plans the regions are developing deferred maintenance obligations plans to meet an assigned target for obligations to deferred maintenance.

The projects completed in FY 2002 include:

- Rehabilitating of historic structures such as: cannon carriage replacement at Antietam National Battlefield; restoration of sandstone parapet walls at Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site; and Rehabilitation and adaptive use of the McGraw Ranch Historic District in Rocky Mountain National Park.



Wonderland Trail, Mount Rainier National Park, before and during a Public Lands Corps restoration project.

- Providing visitor services such as a shuttle to the summit of Scotts Bluff National Monument, custodial and visitor safety services at the West Beach area of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, a web cam for visitor interpretation at Castillo San Marcos National Historic Site where areas were closed to the public during the historic structures restoration; opening the remote Keys Ranch in Joshua Tree National Park to visitors; and extending the hours of visitation to Alcatraz Island at Golden Gate National Recreation Area for 300-600 visitors daily to attend evening interpretive programs.
- Completing 191 deferred maintenance projects in partnership with the Public Land Corps program. The Public Land Corp matched \$3 million from fee revenue with its youth work partners to complete a variety of projects. For example, at Denali National Park trails were rerouted, and vegetation was replanted with the assistance of volunteers. At Isle Royale National Park, two group tent sites were rehabilitated, and new privy holes were dug.



Now accessible trolleys are available at Lowell National Historic Site in Lowell, MA.

- Providing accessibility to visitors with disabilities at a number of sites. For example: at the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, an accessibility lift for the schoolhouse was constructed; at the Lowell National Historic Site, six wheel-chair lifts were designed and installed on the trolleys; an entrance was made accessible at the White House Visitor Center; and accessible restrooms at Nez Perce National Historical Park were provided.

- Fee revenues were an important fund source to implement the planning and analysis for 8 potential alternative transportation systems in parks and supported the operation of 11 Alternative Transportation Systems including Acadia, Zion, Grand Canyon, and Bryce Canyon National Parks.
- 136 deferred maintenance projects were completed including rehabilitation of the Great Falls Tavern at Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, the rehabilitation of the south entrance ramp's granite pavers at Jefferson National Memorial Expansion, rehabilitation and relocation of the West Thumb comfort station to the backloop of the Mammoth Campground at Yellowstone National Park, and rehabilitation of the bison capture corrals at Badlands National Park.
- Eighty projects involved natural resource protection. These projects included a study to assess the effectiveness of the modified vessel and backcountry use regulations on marine mammals at Glacier Bay National Park; a study at Wind Cave National Park to determine the causes of the decline in the pronghorn antelope population; the restoration of Redwood Creek at Golden Gate National Recreation Area; and the monitoring of West Nile virus at Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park.
- Sixty two projects involved improvements to interpretive exhibits. These projects included the installation of a traveler's information station at Wind Cave National Park, design of an exhibit on slavery and emancipation at Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park, construction of an exhibit case for George Washington's tents at Colonial National Historical Park, provision of Lakota cultural demonstrations at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument; and implementation of a program to gather electronic data for interactive interpretation at Mesa Verde National Park's Spruce Tree House.



Dupont Circle Fountain, during and after restoration at National Capital Parks-East, Washington, DC.