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. Currently 236 NPS sites are included in the Fee Demo Program. The sites included in the program include national parks, national monuments, national memorials, national lakeshores, national seashores, national historic sites, national battlefields, and national recreation areas. The revenue and expenditure data presented below include information for all park units or offices that collect recreation program fees.

RECREATION VISITS

Annual visitation for the National Park Service in Fiscal Year 2003 decreased 4.2 percent compared to Fiscal Year 2002. Over the last 10 years visitation increased from 266.5 million in 1994 to 287 million in 1999 then declined to 265.5 million in FY 2003.

Of the top ten highest revenue collecting parks, six showed an increase in visitation and four a decrease in visitation:

- Grand Canyon visitation increased 2.9 percent;
- Lake Mead visitation increased 4.7 percent;
- Rocky Mountain visitation increased 2.8 percent
- Sequoia-Kings Canyon visitation increased 4.9 percent;
- Yellowstone visitation increased 1.7 percent;
- Yosemite visitation increased approximately 0.06 percent;
- Grand Teton visitation decreased 9.2 percent;
- Hawaii Volcanoes visitation decreased 14.2 percent;
- Shenandoah visitation decreased 12.9 percent; and
- Zion visitation decreased 5.2 percent.

RECREATION FEE REVENUES

Total recreation fee revenues for FY 2003 were $ 147.4 million - the same as FY 2002. Total revenues include $123.5 million from fees; $16.8 million from sales of the National Parks Pass (non-fee demo revenue), $1.4 million from deed restricted parks (non-fee demo revenue) and $5.7 million in transportation fees (non-Fee Demo revenue). Golden Eagle hologram sales accounted for about $289,000 in FY 2003. Of the parks that collect fees 130 had revenue increases and 53 had revenue decreases.

Of the top ten revenue collecting parks:

- Grand Canyon revenues increased by 2.6 percent;
- Rocky Mountain revenues increased 2 percent;
- Sequoia Kings Canyon revenues increased by 12.7 percent;
- Hawaii Volcanoes increased by 7.6 percent;
- Zion revenues increased by 1.5;

- Grand Teton revenues remained constant;
- Lake Mead revenues remained constant;
- Shenandoah revenues declined by 13.5 percent;
- Yellowstone revenues declined 8.5 percent;
- Yosemite revenues declined 1.9 percent.

The explanation for the revenue declines is unclear, but lower visitation may be partially responsible. In addition, data from FY 2002 and FY 2003 indicate increased sales of the National Park Pass at some locations and declines in annual park-specific pass sales, single visit entries and Golden Age pass sales. It is also possible that use of the National Park Pass – purchased at other locations and subsequently used at Yellowstone and Yosemite -- may have contributed to reduced revenues. Hawaii Volcanoes and Zion National Parks had decreased visitation but increased revenues.

Starting in FY 2003 Glacier Bay National Park withdrew from the Fee Demo Program. The Park collects fees under the authority of the 1998 National Parks Concession Act (P.L. 104-333), which authorized the collection of fees from permitees to enter into Glacier Bay NP. This authority allows Glacier Bay to retain 100 percent of the fees collected. In FY2002, Glacier Bay collected $1.15 million under the authority of the Fee Demo Program.

Little River Canyon National Preserve (Alabama) joined the Fee Demo Program in FY 2003 and collected about $18,400 in revenues.

Effective October 1, 2003, the NPS assumed responsibility for administering the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. This site had previously been administered by the USDA FS. The site does not have an entrance fee. However, during FY 2003 about $2,000 was collected from the sale of National Park Passes.

Under P.L. 105-391, enacted in 1998, Congress authorized parks to collect a transportation fee and retain the revenues to fund such systems. Subsequently, a number of parks established transportation fees. In some cases, parks set aside a part of the entrance fee as a transportation fee. In FY 2003, 7 parks collected a total of $5.7 million in transportation fees; in FY 2002, 5 parks collected $4.98 million in transportation fees. Transportation fees are steadily increasing each fiscal year. The effect of this is that in parks where transportation fees are collected as part of the entry fee, and where the level of the entry fee has not changed, revenue collected using the Fee Demo authority is reduced.

COST OF COLLECTING RECREATION FEES

In FY 2003, the average cost of collection for NPS was 22.1 percent, compared to 21.9 percent in FY 2002. Cost of collection has generally been in the range of 20 percent for the last several years. Many small parks in the program historically have higher collection costs as a percent of the gross revenue they collect. The locations where collection costs represent a large portion of gross revenue typically collect very small amounts of revenue, primarily from the sale of passes. For the NPS as a whole, net revenues collected (i.e., the difference between total revenues and total costs) was $115 million in FY 2003. This was unchanged from net revenues in FY 2002. Although some parks showed an increase in their collection costs, other parks were able to

reduce their costs with the use of automated fee machines, and more state-of-the-art point-of-sales cash register systems.

The NPS also has instituted a policy that requires that parks not exceed a 50 percent ratio of cost of collection to revenue. Parks are required to use other operating accounts to cover the amount spent that exceeds approved funding. Third-quarter accounting audits are being instituted in an effort to ensure, prior to the end of the fiscal year, that costs do not exceed approved amounts. Parks with costs exceeding 50 percent of revenues also will be required to reduce costs below 50 percent for the following year, and if unable to do so, they may be required to cease collecting fees. In FY 2003, implementation of an improved submission and review process has expedited the approval of cost of collection projects, which will assure that project costs remain within approved funding levels.

Fee collection activities serve multiple purposes. They generate revenue, but they also serve to 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 of collection is higher. The need to manage visitors, provide visitors with information, and to preserve and protect the resources at smaller remote sites has contributed to increased cost of collection but has also provided important benefits to some parks.

FEE SUPERVISOR TRAINING

Four training workshops were held in FY 2003. The first workshop, held in Albuquerque NM in February 2003, trained 18 Fee Supervisors to serve as trainers to other fee supervisors. This "Train the Trainer" class was very successful and produced a core of trainers who conducted three other workshops during the year. The curriculum and lesson plans were developed and based on the draft NPS Recreation Fee Guidelines (RM-22.) The emphasis of the training is to improve consistency across NPS for implementing fee polices.

MCKINSEY STUDY

In 2001 the NPS, in collaboration with the National Park Foundation and McKinsey and Company, Inc. evaluated the fee program. Several recommendations were made to strengthen and improve the program and the NPS has moved to implement many of these recommendations. To facilitate implementation, the NPS established an internal advisory group to prioritize the recommendations and develop implementation strategies. The initial focus has been to address issues that will increase consistency between parks (e.g., pass acceptance, fee levels, and length of stay). The RM-22 is being revised to incorporate McKinsey study and Fee Council recommendations regarding entrance and use fees, fee types and authorities, and pass acceptance.

The number of parks accepting the National Parks Pass increased by six during FY 2003, and an additional 30 sites were identified as possible candidates for pass acceptance in the future. The additional parks now accepting passes include: Canaveral NS, Carl Sandberg Home NHS, Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, Delaware Water Gap NRA, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS, Home of FDR NHS. The number of parks accepting the Parks Pass is expected to increase in FY 2004 in order to reduce fee layering. Increasing the number of sites that accept passes is a key component to the implementing the McKinsey study and achieving goals of the Interagency Fee Council.

TECHNOLOGY

In FY 2003 several parks enhanced and upgraded their fee collection technology. These improvements ranged from purchase and installation of automated self-pay machines to the development of web based curriculum and outreach programs. Two parks – Rocky Mountain National Park and Olympic National Park – made significant investments in technology that have assisted in meeting visitor needs.

Rocky Mountain National Park

An automated entrance pass lane was introduced in summer 2003 at Rocky Mountain NP The pass lane, designed to expedite the entry of more than 30,000 Rocky Mountain Annual Pass holders, is a joint venture between the park and the Federal Highways Administration. Park pass holders are able to bypass the staffed entrance lanes at the Beaver Meadows Entrance Station by swiping their encoded magnetic strip Rocky Mountain Annual Pass in the automated pass lane card reader.

Rocky Mountain National Park automated entrance pass lane.

The pass lane is a lane on the far right side of the entrance road allowing pass holders to bypass the line of vehicles waiting to enter through the three staffed lanes. Authorized government vehicles can also use the automated gate, activated by a transponder system. Expediting entry time for employees has resulted in less wait time and a cost savings to the park. Future expansion of the automated pass lane will include acceptance of National Parks Passes and Golden Age Passports. The park will also expand the transponder technology to allow entry of a future park/town shuttle system and commercial tours.

Card swiper at Rocky Mountain NP

Olympic National Park

Olympic National Park installed an automated pay station at their busiest entrance. The Park also installed four iron rangers at the other entrances to collect after-hours and off-season entrance fees. The addition of these collection stations increased revenue by 5 percent since their installation in April 2003. Revenue generated from collection at the automated self-pay machine

was sufficient enough to have paid for the machine if it had been purchased brand new. More than half of the automated self-pay were credit card payments.

Olympic National Park also added a second point of sale system, allowing the park to track statistics and consolidate deposit tasks. The Park is also upgrading point of sale systems at four other entrances to be completed by spring 2004, and will be installing a four-camera surveillance system at the busiest entrance for internal control and security. The system will improve security at self-pay stations and encourage fee compliance.

Golden Age Passports Upgraded

In 2003, paper Golden Age Passports were replaced with a plastic card. The plastic card provides the holder with a more durable card and allows for the collection of data on pass use since the passes have a magnetic strip encoded with a serial number, similar to the design of the National Parks Pass. The NPS coordinated the production and distribution of the plastic passes to the other federal land management agencies.

CASH MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING

Electronic Banking Pilot: The National Park Service continues to extend the electronic banking system to all NPS sites. As of FY 2003, 200 parks participate in this program. The 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 data reduces times the deposit information is handled manually, reduces errors, and accelerates the deposit and associated accounting information.

NATIONAL PARKS PASS

The National Parks Pass (NPP) was authorized by Title VI of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391). The annual cost of the pass is $50 and it is valid for entry to all NPS units that charge an entrance fee, and for some units that charge a user fee for access to the basic resource (e.g., Carlsbad). 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, is the equivalent of a Golden Eagle Passport. Revenue from National Park pass sales increased from $15.3 million in FY 2002 to $16.8 million in FY 2003.

The pass is sold at all entrance fee parks, through cooperating associations, on the internet, and through a toll-free number. The NPS has a contract with the National Park Foundation to market the NPP. Administrative costs associated with the National Park Foundation's pass sales activities are limited to 15 percent by law. Presently, the majority of sales of National Parks Passes are occurring in parks. However, there are 25 online sales partners such as REI, LL Bean,

Target, AAA Travel, Ford, and others. For 2004, the image of North Cascades National Park in Washington was the winning photo selected from among thousands of entries in the National Parks Pass *Experience Your America* Photo Contest.

The NPS has started to collect data on pass use. During the summer of 2002, the NPS sponsored a random survey of visitors at Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Petrified Forest, and Zion. Approximately 3,311 respondents returned the survey. Of these surveys, 3,290 were complete and provided useful information for analysis. One question on the survey asked whether the individual had used a pass to enter the park where they were intercepted. Responses indicated that of the 3,290 respondents, 58 percent of the individuals used a park pass of some type. In particular, 33 percent used a National Park Pass, 19 percent a Golden Age Pass, 4 percent used a Golden Eagle Pass, 3 percent used a Golden Access Pass. Approximately 42 percent of respondents did not use a pass. The data also indicate that approximately 57 percent of respondents using a National Park Pass visited three or more of the parks where surveying was carried out during their trip. In comparison, 20 percent of the respondents not using a pass visited three or more of the parks where surveying was carried out during their trip. These data suggest that the motivation for purchasing a Park Pass may be related to the number of parks individuals expect to visit during a trip.

In addition, data on pass use was collected at 38 parks beginning in June 2003. The 38 parks all use the same point of sales system software. The parks participating were diverse in size, revenue and location. The data collection will continue through FY 2004. The ability to collect and analyze data was identified by the McKinsey and Company, Inc. Study of the NPS Fee Program as one of the four enablers for decision-making and to accomplish improvements in the Fee Demo Program. The data collection was designed to obtain information on pass use, gain a greater understanding of pass use, analyze the value of the pass, determine links between pass use and revenue, identify links between pass sales and use (i.e. passes purchased at one park but used at another), analyze visitation patterns, and provide information to decision makers. When a visitor used a National Parks Pass or plastic Golden Age Passport at one of the participating parks the card was swiped and the number of visitors in the vehicle was recorded. The analysis of this information will show the unique pass numbers used during the data collection period, the number of times those passes entered the parks where data was being collected, the average number of times the pass was used, the number of people in the vehicle, where passes are sold versus where passes are used and specific park data such as how pass sales affects revenue and the impact of pass sales from one park to another.

COLLABORATION AND EXPERIMENTATION

Interagency collaboration

A brochure to provide information about the various passes available to the public was designed by the NPS Harpers Ferry Design Center at the request of the interagency fee work group. Photos of the Golden Eagle Passport, National Parks Pass and Golden Eagle Hologram, Golden Eagle Passport, Golden Access Passport, Corps of Engineers Annual Day-Use Pass and Federal Duck Stamp were included as well as basic information on who the pass admits, how much it costs, where the pass is honored, where to obtain each pass and exceptions or clarifications for some agencies. The brochure is posted at www.recreation.gov.

Expanded Fee Program at Sitka National Historical Park

Sitka National Park entered into a cooperative agreement with cruise lines and local tour bus operators to collect fees in an effort to reduce fee layering and make fee payment easier for visitors. This has reduced fee collection costs and decreased the wait time in lines at the visitor center to acquire passes.

Approximately 60 percent of the visitors to the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center arrive as a part of prepaid bus tours of the town. Through a partnership with local tour operators, the fee is collected as a part of the tour price. The tour operators make monthly payments to the NPS for the $3 per person fees. Visitors not associated with an organized tour pay their fees at the information desk. Entrance passes are accepted.

Total fee revenues at the site (including the Russian Bishop's House and the Visitor Center) were $161,975 in FY2003 (of the total, visitor center revenue was approximately $140,000) compared to $24,551 in FY 2002.

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park - International collaboration with Canada.

The NPS entered into a joint fee collection partnership with Parks Canada to manage hiker activities on the 33-mile Chilkoot Trail, which begins in Dyea, Alaska and terminates at Lake Bennett, British Columbia. The cooperative process required establishing new methodologies and merging two fee collection systems to meet the needs of both agencies and their respective goals and policies.

Efforts to coordinate management activities on the Chilkoot Trail began in 1977 when the International Trail Center was established to provide hiker orientation about both countries' back-country policies. In 1998 Parks Canada implemented a fee for users hiking the Canadian side of the trail. In 2002, discussions began about joint fee collection operations between the two countries. Challenges such as currency exchange, collection and handling of U.S. and Canadian funds, equitable participation by each agency and the potential for duplicating efforts were resolved. Parks Canada provided for a full-time staff member, computer reservations and accounting system, and significant publications support. The National Park Service provided two fee collectors, a workstation, building space, communications, and a fee safe.

The Chilkoot Trail received approximately 3,100 hikers during summer 2003, an increase of more than 100 hikers over last season. The joint U.S./Canadian fee was $50 (Canadian funds) for hiking the entire trail. The U.S. portion of this fee is $10 U.S.

Coinciding with the U.S. Chilkoot Trail fee in 2003, the park also began collecting a $5 per night self-registration fee for the Dyea Campground near the Chilkoot Trailhead. The campground experienced over 7,400 users in the FY 2003 season, nearly 1,000 more than in FY 2002.

Wright Brothers National Memorial

Beginning December 1, 2002, Wright Brothers National Memorial changed from a $5 per vehicle/$3 per person fee for entrance to a $3 per person fee, with the fee charged only to

individuals who were age 16 and over. Revenues at the Wright Brothers National Memorial revenue increased significantly from $379,268 in FY 2002 to $1,001,130 in FY 2003, an increase of 164 percent. Visitation increased about 150,000 in FY 2003 relative to 2002.

OBLIGATION OF FEE DEMO REVENUES

The NPS obligated $142.3 million in Fee Demo revenue to high priority projects in FY 2003. FY 2003 is the first year in which the obligation rate has exceeded the amount of revenue collected. Approximately 25% of the approved project dollars have been designated for large complex projects costing over $500,000. These projects require Congressional approval and typically involve extensive design, planning, and NEPA compliance. Most of these projects have been approved by Congress, are underway, and will enter the construction phase during the next few years. The $251 million of unobligated balances are expected to be substantially reduced over the next two years these large projects are completed.

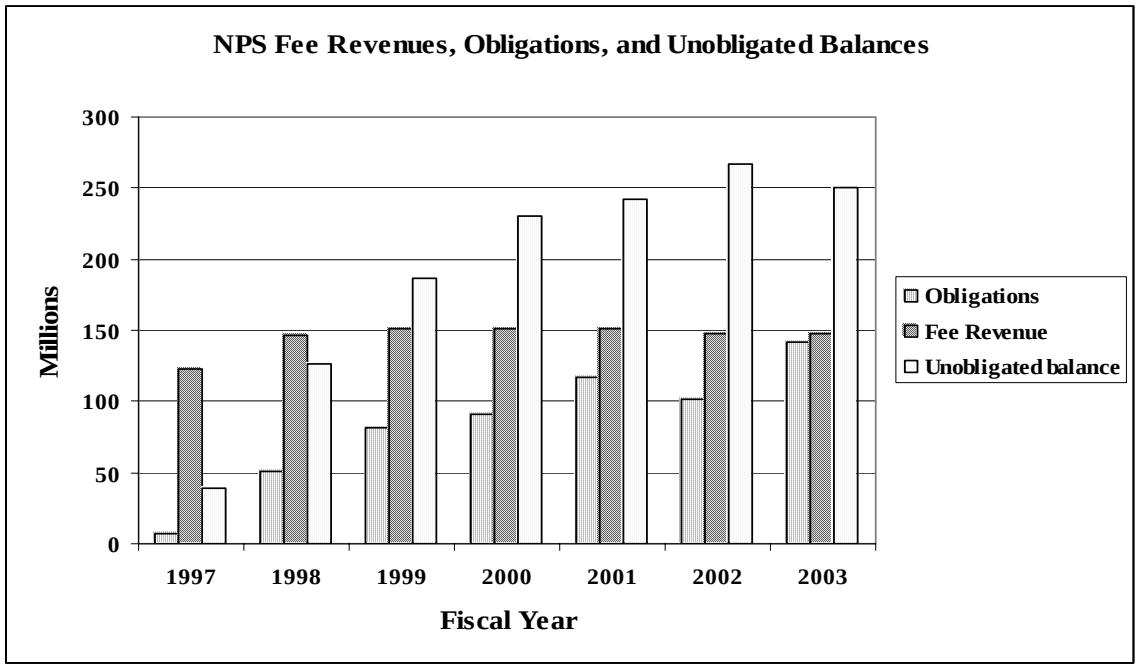

Figure 5

Management of obligations is improving:

- NPS policy now requires that funds be expended within 18 months for projects funded by 20 percent servicewide funds;
- NPS improved the quality of cost estimates by ensuring that NEPA compliance costs are adequately addressed and that planning and design are completed prior to contracting;
- The use of cost-estimating software as part of the Facility Management Software System and the distribution of a "Servicewide Class C Cost Estimating Guide" has assisted in addressing the delays caused by inaccurate cost estimates;
- In FY 2003, the NPS also received a budget increase to strengthen the capacity of regional offices to assist parks in planning and contracting of projects, which will expedite the completion of projects; and

- NPS has implemented a policy requiring parks to prepare detailed "Spending Plans." These plans identify a schedule for the expenditure of fee revenues and completion of projects funded by these revenues. This management improvement paid off in increased obligations to deferred maintenance, improved scheduling of compliance needs to eliminate delays, and the development of project implementation schedules for out-year project obligations.

Project Approval

In FY 2003, 1,142 projects with a total cost of $136.9 million were approved. An additional 575 projects (total cost $103.7 million) were reviewed for approval in early FY 2004. The project approval rate is comparable to previous years. In FY 2003, parks were directed to plan the expenditure of their revenue to complete previously approved projects and to only request approval of additional projects if their unobligated balance and anticipated revenue in FY 2003 – FY 2004 would exceed the estimated cost of the already approved projects. For the majority of parks, the existing approved project costs exceeded their revenues. This resulted in over 400 previously approved projects being removed from the Fee Demo Program.

Project Management Improvements

In FY 2003, NPS improved the quality of the data contained in the Project Management Information System (PMIS) by correcting previously approved project cost estimates and accompanying data. Parks were also required to apply the DOI deferred maintenance ranking criteria, prioritize projects, and identify each project as facility or non-facility and historic or non-historic. A new version of PMIS was implemented in early FY 2004 and it includes improved features to search and report on projects by asset type, activity type, and emphasis areas. The new version of PMIS should allow improved reporting of accomplishment.

Over the last three years, the NPS has undertaken a full inventory of its industry-standard assets, determined what their condition is, and identified what repair or changes in facility management are needed. With a facility management system used by commercial property managers across the nation, the NPS now has "grades" for its facilities and other assets using a "facility condition index" (FCI). With this system, the NPS can set targets each year to improve facility grades and achieve an overall acceptable condition for facilities. These management changes will enable the NPS to ensure that recreation fees are spent on the highest priority projects.

In FY 2003, the NPS established an Internet site to distribute information about the Fee Demo Program to the general public, http://www.nps.gov/feedemo/. The site includes an overview, reports, research, the use of the 20 percent servicewide funds, success stories, innovations in collection, and how fees have worked to improve the parks.

In FY 2003, the NPS began requiring that each park develop a comprehensive plan for the use of its fee revenues. These plans estimate future annual fee revenues, identify how fee revenues will be spent, and establish a schedule for spending the fee revenues. Comprehensive plans will be completed for all the collecting parks by June 2004. Data contained in the comprehensive plans can be summarized by park, state, region and Service. Implementation of the plans will allow enhanced reporting of the history of the program and accomplishments. The plans can be used to

produce standardized graphics that are illustrative and informative. An example of the type of information contained in a comprehensive plan is shown below for Carlsbad Caverns NP.

AN EXAMPLE: INFORMATION FROM THE CARLSBAD CAVERNS NP (NM) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

At Carlsbad Caverns NP, annual allocations (i.e., revenues from all sources, including fee revenues, revenues from the sale of passes and "20% funding") have remained relatively constant over the FY 1998–FY 2003 period. Since FY 2000, the park has been "saving" revenues for a major rehabilitation of the visitor center cave entrance which will be implemented in FY 2004 as a design/build contract. This single project expenditure will eliminate the park's unobligated balance and address a major deferred maintenance problem.

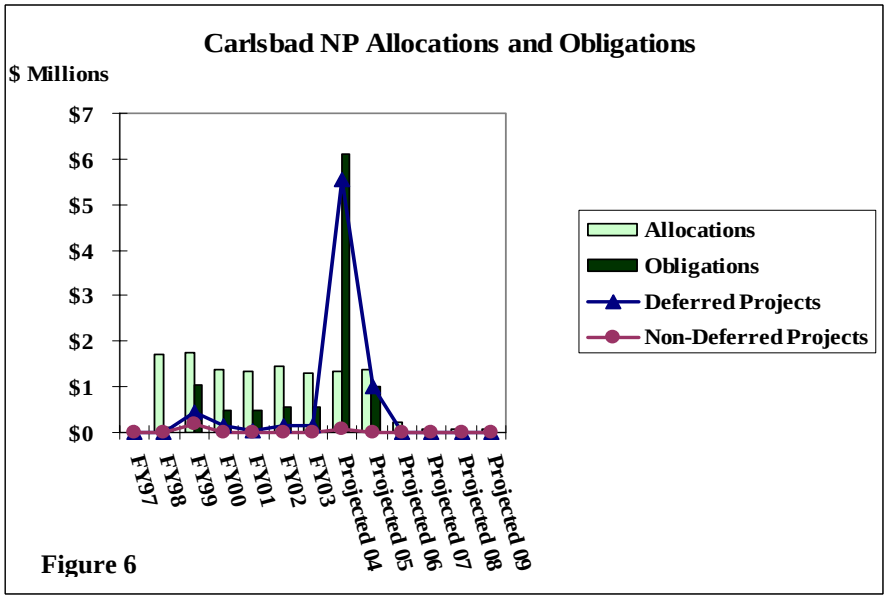

Figure 6

Cost of collection at the Park over 1998–2003 have represented an average of about 24 percent of fee revenues.. Two thirds of the revenue will be utilized for buildings, primarily the rehabilitation of the visitor center. At the same time the park has used fee revenues to improve trails, utilities, roads, and natural resources preservation.

At Carlsbad Caverns NP, 97 percent of the approved project costs are deferred maintenance projects, with 52 percent deferred maintenance health and safety, 18 percent deferred maintenance for critical resource protection, 15 percent critical mission deferred maintenance, and 4 percent NEPA compliance deferred maintenance.

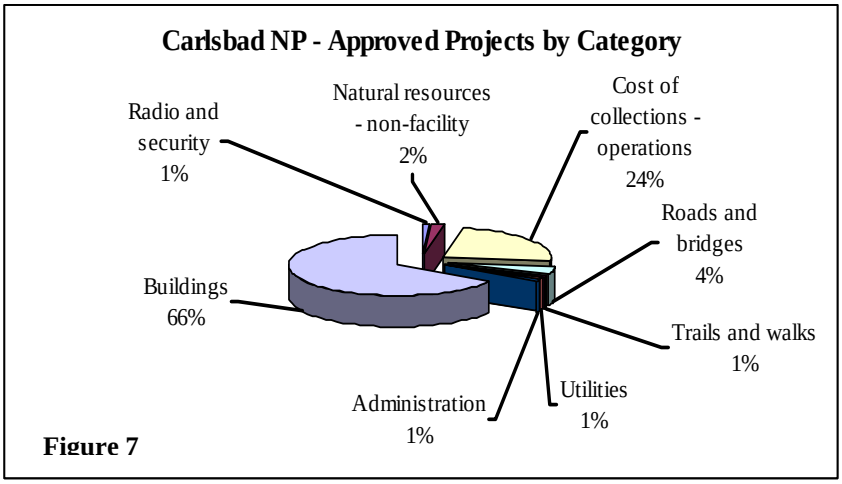

Figure 7

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The NPS Fee Demo Program uses the definitions and criteria established by the Department of the Interior in attachment "G" of the budget formulation guidance to identify projects as deferred maintenance. See Appendix A for additional details on these definitions. Figure 8 shows FY 2003 NPS obligations of fee revenues by category.

Deferred Maintenance Projects

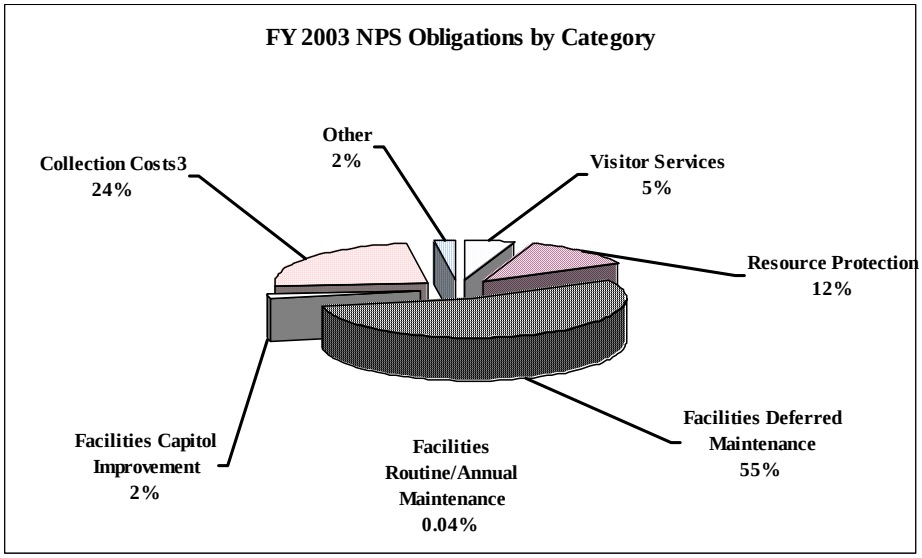

Figure 8

Over the life of the Fee Demo Program, $500 million (70 percent) of the approved projects have been identified as deferred maintenance projects. In FY 2003, $77 million (55 percent) was obligated to deferred maintenance projects. NPS completed 139 deferred maintenance projects ($29.8 million) in FY 2003. Approximately $47 million was obligated for deferred maintenance projects in FY 2003 that are underway.

The following are highlights of the deferred maintenance projects the NPS completed in FY 2003.

- At Canyonlands National Park, the striping on the roads was virtually non existent creating visitor safety issues on the park's narrow curving roads. Thirty six miles of roads were re-striped to provide visitor safety for a road corridor that is used by buses, motorhomes, trucks pulling recreational vehicles and cars.

- The main sewer line at Bandelier NM was rehabilitated to prevent water pollution. To accomplish this, the park needed to rod and investigate the 660 lineal feet of deteriorated sewer line in Frijoles Canyon, the main visitor location. The line runs parallel to Frijoles Creek and has over flowed into the creek three times. It was also necessary to investigate 2,160 lineal feet of line on the Mesa, which serves a campground with 71 sites, two bathrooms, 8 permanent residences, and 8 seasonal mobile homes. Failure to correct the sewer line problems could have resulted in the closing of all visitor use facilities by the New Mexico State Water Quality Division.

- Haleakala NP replaced the House of the Sun Visitor Center comfort station and water/sewer systems because they did not meet State of Hawaii health and safety

regulations and were offensive to the visitor. The new wastewater system, water system and comfort station have reduced maintenance by eliminating water hauling. The system has also eliminated odor problems.

- At the Panoramic Point day-use area in Sequoia Kings Canyon NP the parking lot and restrooms were rehabilitated. The parking lot was repaved and striped; the trail from the parking lot was paved and a pit toilet was replaced with a new vault toilet. Additional amenities were also installed, including a split rail fence around the perimeter to establish foot traffic patterns, replacement of deteriorated bear proof trashcans and food storage containers, and the addition of recycling bins.

- At Arches NP, 1,200 linear feet of the Double Arch Connector Trail was reconstructed to eliminate erosion problems and provide a safe visitor experience. Work included constructing erosion control structures such as waterbars, retaining walls, and steps.

- Seven miles of the main water supply line at White Sands NP were replaced and the associated equipment was reconditioned. The booster pump shed and chlorinator building became obsolete with the replacement of the failing water line. The new system included replacement of fire hydrants for structural fire safety and air reliefs to improve the operation and maintenance of the system.

Projects to Rehabilitate Historic Structures

NPS completed 62 projects ($11.6 million) to rehabilitate historic structures. Some examples include the following:

- 150-year old seacoast fortifications were rehabilitated and preserved at Golden Gate NRA by removing vegetation and trees that were destroying the earthworks, reconstructing and stabilizing earthworks where erosion or other actions were threatening their loss, installing post and cable fencing to protect the resource from future damage and keep visitors safe, and removing graffiti to emphasize responsible stewardship of these historic structures.

- At Gulf Island National Seashore, mildew and vegetation on 40,000 square feet of the fortifications were removed by spray washing as part of the rehabilitation of structures at Fort Barrancas/Redoubt. Nearly 100 percent or 41,000 historic bricks were reset on a new subsurface to restore the counter scarp gallery brick flooring. The Advanced Redoubt drawbridge was reconstructed using aluminum lattice framework encased with 2" x 10" treated wood to recreate the historic scene and provide safe visitor use.

- Deteriorating siding and a failing stone wall on Massanutten Lodge at Shenandoah NP were threatening this historic structure. To preserve the historic structure and cultural landscape while preparing the building for visitor use, rock walls were re-pointed and repaired, the sidewalks were repaired, the fence was replaced, the building painted, and a non-historic asphalt parking area was removed and restored to a walking path.

- The Mabry Mill House at Blue Ridge Parkway is one of the most recognized and photographed sites in the park system, yet it had deteriorated to the point of structural loss. A leaking roof attributed to floorboards so rotten that securing the Mill building from entry to persons and animals was no longer possible. With rehabilitation complete, this active living history mill is ready to receive more than 100,000 visits per year. Once again, visitors can walk through the structure and experience the operations of an 1800's mill.

Rehabilitated Mabry Mill House at Blue Ridge Parkway

Enhanced Visitor Service Projects

In FY 2003, Fee Demo revenues helped fund 26 projects to enhance visitor service ($3.7 million). Some examples include:

- During the current lava eruption at Hawaii Volcanoes NP over 750,000 park visitors were permitted the remarkable opportunity of a close-up visit to an active eruptive area. A cost recovery project allowed the area to be "open" to visitors by providing personnel and facilities for a safe visitor experience. The unexpected costs of operating the lava viewing area included the need for personal contact, provision and maintenance of basic services such as lavatories and the continual re-routing and marking of visitor access as the landscape changes. This premier visitor experience continues to attract and hold visitors with the average visitor spending over two hours observing the wonder of this active lava eruption.

Visitors observing lava eruption at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

- Eight fully certified ocean lifeguards were hired by contract to provide rescue services at Canaveral National Seashore designated beaches. The park was able to support the competitive sourcing initiative and simultaneously provide a safe visitor experience. No

lives were lost on Canaveral beaches during the lifeguard year and several important first aid responses were made.

- Tours were given for visitors at Mamouth Cave NP arriving as part of organized motorcoach tour groups. Because of the positive response to this effort, the special tours will be expanded to all organized groups in 2004 and the group tour orientation area will be relocated to better meet large group needs.

Projects in Partnership with the Public Land Corps

The Public Land Corps program matched $4 million from fee revenue with their youth work partners to complete 223 projects focused primarily on deferred maintenance. Examples include the following:

- A Minnesota Conservation Corps crew worked at Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway installing new bulletin boards, rehabilitating picnic tables at river landings, rehabilitating the visitor center gardens, removing hazardous trees and cleaning campsites, brushing 3 miles of trail, rehabilitating a former cabin site, rehabilitating a canoe landing and removing exotic purple loosestrife from 65 miles of river.

- At Point Reyes NP, the Marin Conservation Corps spent 1,000 hours on preventative and deferred maintenance. The Corps prevented 15 miles of trail tread from eroding by cleaning out and repairing 309 drainage devices on 9 trails.

- The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps led by two adults dedicated a 10-person crew for four weeks to rehabilitate the Appalachian National Scenic Trail from Kent Pond to Thundering Brook Road, Vermont. The youth worked to harden the tread surface on 1.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail east of Gifford Woods State Park. Built in the late '80s, this section required step stones in wet areas, waterbars on moderate slopes and intricate rock stairs on steep slopes to prevent erosion.

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps Crew.

- The Greater Miami Service Corps partnered with Biscayne NP to replace the deteriorated decking on the 400'x 12' boardwalk from the visitor center parking area to the bay. The sustainable boardwalk made with recycled plastic decking also meets universal accessibility standards.

Projects to Protect and Restore Natural Resources

NPS completed 43 projects in FY 2003 to protect and restore natural resources ($3.3 million). Some examples include the following:

- Great Sand Dunes National Monument replaced an obsolete, mouse infested trailer which served as the resource management lab. The new building serves as the center of the resource management operations with a GIS lab, a geology lab, and facilities for biological research.

- Restoration of former home sites to a natural condition at Sleeping Bear Dunes NP included removal of non-native soils, the restoration of the original contours through rough and finish grading and revegetation with native plants.

- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area hired an "anti-graffiti" seasonal ranger who coordinated educational efforts, recruited and led volunteer groups that removed graffiti. Volunteer groups also renovated trail tread, and manufactured heritage registers.

- In partnership with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the non-profit group Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeepers, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area entered into a cooperative project that involved the daily monitoring of bacteria (E. coli) at river water monitoring sites within the park.

The last African Oryx removed from the White Sands National Monument.

- Wind Cave NP removed debris along the 1.5 miles of developed trails in Wind Cave. This restoration work of the natural cave system started from the model and cathedral room areas on the natural entrance route. After the first cave room was completed, the goals of the project were revisited when the depth and extent of the debris was found to be far greater than expected.

- FY 2003 saw the successful completion of a four-year wildlife management project to remove the exotic African Oryx from White Sands National Monument. This project repaired and constructed fencing around 225 square-miles of the monument and then removed 253 animals to protect the native plants and animals from detrimental effects of this exotic species.

Projects to Improve Interpretive Exhibits

In FY 2003, NPS completed 69 projects to improve interpretive exhibits, media and facilities ($8.6 million). Some examples include:

New exhibits at Blue Ridge Parkway's Museum of North Carolina's Minerals.

- Forty-year old exhibits were replaced with new exhibits at Blue Ridge Parkway's Museum of North Carolina Minerals. Close to many interesting geologic features along the 469-mile length of the Parkway, these exhibits will enhance the visitor experience for over 215,000 visitors annually.

- Kenai Fjords NP completed the 1500-square foot Exit Glacier Nature Center. This facility replaces a seasonally operated substandard Exit Glacier Ranger Station with a year round facility that provides exhibits, a trip planning area, a natural history bookstore, and staff offices at one of the few attractions accessible by road in this water based park.

Interpretive Booklet at Bent's Old Fort.

- Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site re-designed the existing self-guided tour booklet incorporating universal accessibility features for the visually impaired and describing areas inaccessible to wheelchairs. Over 65 percent of all visitors tour the fort on a self-guided basis. With no interpretive signs or labels, the furnishings and park brochure were the primary interpretive method. The exceptional design and production won this project the 2003 National Association of Interpretation media award.

Projects to Improve Accessibility

In FY 2003, 40 projects ($6.8 million) were completed to improve accessibility. Some examples include the following:

Modifications to meet ADA standards at the Cowpens National Battlefield Visitor center.

- Cowpens National Battlefield modified the visitor center to meet ADA standards for employees and visitors. This included replacing the 21 year old information desk, reconfiguring parking spaces, installing an elevator and producing Braille and audio tapes to enable visually-impaired visitors to experience the exhibits.

- Extensive rehabilitation to a portion of the Price Lake Trail near Blowing Rock, NC, resulted in the Blue Ridge Parkway's first accessible trail of extended length through a natural woodland area. This work included grade adjustments, stabilizing of trail walking surface, construction of boardwalks, puncheons, bridges, drainage devices and ramps necessary to meet ADA Standards for Outdoor Recreational Areas.

Rehabilitated Price Lake Trail near Blowing Rock, NC, at the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- The Hidden Valley day-use area at Joshua Tree NP, was improved in a number of ways. This included paving 900 linear feet of access road, installing new tables and grills at eight picnic sites, constructing four new ADA compliant picnic sites, and 1,420 linear feet of hard surfaced accessible walkway. Two fiberglass toilets were replaced with pre-cast concrete accessible toilets. In addition, 300-square yards of disturbed landscape were rehabilitated to a natural condition.