



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
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Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

JAN 25 2013

## Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Associate and Assistant Directors, USPP

From: Director *Jonathan B. Jarvis*

Subject: Sequestration Planning

All federal programs were to be subject to the sequestration of funds set to take effect January 2, 2013 in the event Congress failed to agree on a budget plan prior to that date. When they were unable to meet the deadline, Congress passed a law that postponed sequestration until March 1, 2013, extending the time to reach agreement. So far, the NPS has used data available from the finance system, the scorecard and a limited number of park-submitted BCPs to describe the general impacts of a possible across-the-board cut. Now, OMB has directed that all agencies intensify planning efforts to determine what specific effects the sequestration will have on each program, project and activity. This memorandum and the attached materials outline the actions you are directed to take to develop a sequestration plan in response to the Administration and Congress.

As a first step, you should delay hiring permanent employees until this issue is resolved. You may honor offers of employment already made. Regional Directors and WASO Deputy Directors may grant hiring exceptions when justified for critical positions. For now, you should continue your seasonal hiring plans, but delay making offers. Hopefully, the budget issue will be resolved in time to allow you to complete your seasonal hiring. We will provide more guidance on this issue as we approach individual hiring deadlines.

The process for developing plans will be completed in two phases. First, specific plans must be developed for each park and program as displayed in the annual NPS budget justifications. Attachment 1 indicates each fund source that is subject to sequestration and each organization that must prepare a plan. Some accounts are exempt from sequestration, such as reimbursable and donation accounts, and these exemptions are reflected in Attachment 1. While the majority of the recreation fee account is exempt, sequestration does apply to recreation fee collection operations. Once all of these plans are completed, we will initiate a second phase in which we will review your submissions and determine if any actions are needed to ensure that the effects on programs and employees are proportionate servicewide. Each region must supply responses from at least five park areas by January 31. The balance will be due February 11 to the WASO budget office. Regions should endorse all park plans before forwarding to WASO.

You are to use the documents attached to this memo to complete your plan. Attachment 1 provides reduction amounts by park and program, attachment 2 provides detailed instructions, and attachment 3 is a template that you will fill out. Both documents were developed in accordance with direction from OMB and DOI.

General Provisions are as follows:

- You will assume a sequestration level of 5% from the FY 2013 funding level previously allocated by WASO budget. The cut is to apply to each park and organization at the level shown in the attachment. The FY 2013 funding level is also included.
- You may not move personnel from one fund source to another. You may not shift costs to a project or fee account.
- Program managers at the Regional and WASO level will reduce project fund sources in the discretionary appropriations by cutting the lowest priority projects and notifying parks and the Comptroller's office of the affected projects. These rules apply to all project accounts except for line item construction and land acquisition, which will absorb a 5% cut to every FY 2013 project.

To reach the required planning level you are to quantify impacts of reducing costs in the following order:

1. Apply the immediate hiring freeze and calculate savings that will be accrued as a result.
2. Eliminate all less-essential costs that can be cut with minimal short-term impacts to operations, including: travel, non-mandatory training, overtime, purchases of supplies, materials and equipment and contracts.
3. Eliminate all seasonal and temporary personnel costs unless they provide the only option for ensuring the health and safety of visitors and employees or the protection of resources and assets.
4. Extend furloughs of subject-to-furlough employees to the maximum length allowed in accordance with each individual's specific employment agreement unless they provide the only option for ensuring the health and safety of visitors and employees or the protection of resources and assets.
5. If additional cuts are needed to reach the 5% level, you will be required to furlough permanent employees and base funded terms (rules governing furloughs will be issued separately). You should base your calculation of savings on furloughing **all** employees in the organization for the same duration. Furloughs must be scheduled in such a manner as to minimize disruption of essential services and to avoid compromising the health and safety of visitors or the protection of resources and assets. For example, a park may choose to furlough each of its rangers on various days of the week, ensuring that adequate personnel are on staff at all times to protect resources and ensure visitor safety during reduced operating hours.

Finally, you are to describe the programmatic impact of these cuts. It is critical that the NPS is able to provide specific and tangible results of an across-the-board, 5% cut. We expect that a cut of this magnitude, intensified by the lateness of the implementation, will result in reductions to visitor services, hours of operation, shortening of seasons and possibly the closing of areas during periods when there is insufficient staff to ensure the protection of visitors, employees, resources and government assets. Parks must be specific in their descriptions and include the number of visitors affected and an indication of the effect on nearby communities and businesses. All other organizations should describe impacts in terms of diminished performance and reduced administrative services and oversight.