

# Friends of Acadia **Advocacy Alert**

No. 19, June 9, 2008

## **Friends of Acadia Needs Your Help**

Please contact your member of the House of Representatives to encourage him/her to support H.R. 3094, the National Park Centennial Fund Act, as amended by the Natural Resources Committee. It is critically important to America's national parks that this bill be brought to the House floor and approved. It will help direct at least another \$100 million a year, matched by private donations, to our national parks through 2017.

### **In a nutshell...**

The House of Representatives' Natural Resources Committee recently marked up H.R. 3094, the National Park Centennial Fund Act, and ordered that it be reported as amended to the floor of the House of Representatives. The bill establishes a Centennial Fund into which the Secretary of the Treasury will deposit up to \$100 million a year through FY 2017 for projects that will help prepare the national parks for their next century. A similar bill has been sponsored by Senator Susan Collins and others in the Senate. Friends of Acadia supports H.R. 3094 because it will bring critically needed additional funds to the national parks for programs that will engage youth in the outdoors, encourage diversity among park staff and visitors, protect natural and cultural resources, and make our national parks leaders in environmental stewardship. Projects that are matched by private donations, such as those from Friends of Acadia, will receive priority consideration.

Please contact your House members to let them know that it is important for them to pass this bill now.

## **Summary of H.R. 3094, the National Park Centennial Fund Bill**

The text of H.R. 3094 can be accessed via the Library of Congress website, [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov). Please note, however, that the Committee on Natural Resources made changes to the bill which are not reflected in the version at the Thomas website. The purpose and intent of the bill remain the same. The National Park Centennial Fund bill as amended includes the following provisions:

1. It establishes a National Park Centennial Fund into which \$100 million would be deposited annually from FY 2009 - 2017.



PO Box 45 ~ Bar Harbor, ME 04609  
Phone: 207-288-23340 ~ Fax: 207-288-8938  
[www.friendsofacadia.org](http://www.friendsofacadia.org)

2. Projects or programs in seven areas would be prioritized by the Department of the Interior each year for consideration to receive funding under this program. The seven areas include education, diversity among park staff and visitors, professional development for National Park Service employees, environmental leadership, natural resources protection, cultural resources protection, and health and fitness in national parks.
3. These projects and programs must be consistent with National Park Service plans and policies and may be for an individual park or for multiple parks.
4. The Secretary of Interior may “encourage and facilitate” private participation and support in project proposals. Priority may be given to those proposals that have committed non-federal matching funds, such as donations from Friends of Acadia.
5. All private contributions to Centennial Fund projects and programs would be according to existing National Park Service regulations and procedures.
6. No more than 30% of the funding for this program in any year can be dedicated to major construction projects of \$5 million or more.
7. Funds from this program shall supplement not replace annual Congressional appropriations for national parks.
8. The Secretary of the Interior will report to Congress annually regarding the expenditure of the funds. A cumulative summary of the results of the Centennial Challenge will also be submitted, as well as a statement regarding staffing levels – whether permanent staffing levels are adequate and how many staff members have been hired to carry out Centennial programs and projects.

**List of Present Sponsors/Co-Sponsors for H.R. 3094 as of June 9, 2008 (followed by their state and congressional district in brackets):**

Rep. Earl Blumenauer [OR-3]  
Rep. Raúl Grijalva [AZ-7]  
Rep. Norm Dicks [WA-6]  
Rep. Lloyd Doggett [TX-25]  
Rep. Bob Filner [CA-51]  
Rep. Alcee Hastings [FL-23]  
Rep. Mazie Hirono [HI-2]  
Rep. Barbara Lee [CA-9]  
Rep. Joe Sestak [PA-7]

Rep. Jim McDermott [WA-7]  
Rep. Michael Michaud [ME-2]  
Rep. Ed Pastor [AZ-4]  
Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II [WV-3]  
Rep. Ciro Rodriguez [TX-23]  
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen [FL-18]  
Rep. John Salazar [CO-3]  
Rep. Hilda L. Solis [CA-32]  
Rep. David Wu [OR-1]

**Action to Take:**

If your member of the House of Representatives is not on the list of co-sponsors of H.R. 3094, please take a minute to urge them to support this important bill for our national parks. If your House member has already co-sponsored the bill, please thank them for their support.

**Talking Points:**

- H.R. 3094, the *National Park Centennial Fund Act*, is a critical bill needed to authorize and appropriate additional funding to help prepare our national parks for their next century.
- The bill will encourage investment in areas such as youth involvement in national parks, encouraging diversity, making our national parks environmental leaders, and protecting natural and cultural resources.

- Friends of Acadia and other park support organizations are excited to contribute matching funds to Centennial projects. In 2007, 201 proposals were deemed eligible for Centennial funding if the program were authorized by Congress. Private partners pledged \$216 million to match \$154 million in federal funds for these projects.
- In the FY 2008 budget, Congress set aside almost \$25 million for a pilot year of the Centennial Fund. One hundred ten projects were funded. Partners pledged \$27 million in private donations. Think of the potential if Congress were to make this program permanent and fully fund it at \$100 million a year for the next ten years!
- In the FY 2008 pilot year, Acadia was granted \$181,000 in funding for programs to engage youth, including investments in teacher training, the Junior Ranger program, and enhancements of the Schoodic Education Adventure, an overnight residential education program for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades at the Schoodic Education and Research Center. Friends of Acadia, Acadia Partners for Science and Learning, L.L. Bean, and Eastern National are providing \$181,000 in matching funds for this program.
- In FY 2008, Acadia is also slated to receive \$3,500 to be matched by \$3,500 from Acadia Partners for Science and Learning to conduct a bio-blitz as part of an all-taxa-biodiversity inventory effort to better understand the range of species in the park.
- The Centennial Fund is supported by a large coalition of environmental and recreation groups who worked closely with Congressional staff to refine H.R. 3094 to language that is widely supported.
- The House bill has achieved critical momentum by passing through the Natural Resources Committee. In order to enable the Centennial Fund through 2017, Congress must pass the bill now.

**To Contact Your House of Representatives Member:**

Go to the House of Representatives website, and click on “Write your Representative”. This will bring you to a form (<https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml>) that you can use to send an e-mail to your House member. Phone calls are also welcome, but it is not recommended that you send letters through the U.S. Mail because of security delays.

**For More Information:** Contact Friends of Acadia Conservation Director Stephanie Clement at 207-288-3340 or [stephanie@friendsofacadia.org](mailto:stephanie@friendsofacadia.org).

*This Advocacy Alert was sent to citizens who have expressed interest in joining the Acadia Advocacy Network. If you would like to be removed from the network, e-mail [stephanie@friendsofacadia.org](mailto:stephanie@friendsofacadia.org) with the word, “unsubscribe” in the subject line. Thank you very much for your support of Friends of Acadia and for weighing in on issues of importance to the Acadia National Park and Mount Desert Island region.*