

Friends of Acadia Advocacy Alert

No. 32, November 27, 2012

PROTECT ACADIA, A MAINE ECONOMIC ENGINE:

Please urge Congress to prevent cuts to Acadia National Park's budget

As Congress decides how to address the impending fiscal cliff, please ask your Senators and Representatives to prevent further cuts to the National Park Service budget.

In a nutshell...

National parks, including Acadia, preserve national treasures and outstanding scenery. The American people love their national parks. Almost 279 million visits were made to national parks last year. In 2010, national park visitors contributed \$31 billion to the American economy, supporting almost 258,000 jobs.

If Congress fails to enact a budget that avoids the "sequester" element of the impending fiscal cliff, the National Park Service will face an 8.2% budget cut, which will mean closures of campgrounds and visitor centers, deferred maintenance of park buildings, and reduced numbers of rangers to interpret and protect park resources.

As Congress wrestles with the budget over the next few weeks, it is critical that members hear now about your personal connection to national parks, why you think these American treasures must and can be funded, and that you are watching.

Action You Can Take:

Please send an email or make a phone call to your members and newly-elected members of Congress. Ask them to prevent any further cuts to the National Park Service budget and let Congressional leadership know how important national parks are to the American public.

Talking Points:

- National parks are America's "best idea." They preserve and protect America's important scenic wonders, historical sites, and rare natural habitats. This American heritage should be maintained as a public resource, open and affordable to all. For 96 years, Congress has been mandated to adequately fund the national parks to preserve them unimpaired for future generations.
- National parks are an economic engine that contributes \$31 billion to the American economy, supports 258,000 jobs, and generates billions in revenue.
- National parks are affordable, requiring only 1/14th of 1% of total federal spending.
- National parks are valued by their owners. According to a recent bi-partisan national poll sponsored by the National Parks Conservation Association and the National Park Hospitality Association, 92% of American voters feel that national parks should receive about the same or additional funding from Congress.
- Significant cuts to the National Park Service budget will severely threaten the visitor experience at national parks. Reduced hours at visitor centers, closed park

campgrounds and museums, fewer park interpretive programs, and fewer lifeguards at park beaches are just a few of the effects of budget cuts that will harm the visitor experience.

- National parks draw significant international tourism. The United States will lose this market if international visitors are disappointed by closed facilities, lack of contact with park rangers, and deteriorating natural and cultural resources.

Some statistics and impacts at Acadia:

- Acadia's visitors spent over \$186 million in 2010 in the local economy, generating over 3,100 jobs, and creating more than \$79 million in labor income.
- Acadia's visitation is growing, averaging a 3.6% increase each year for the past two years.
- The entire seasonal workforce for Acadia is equal to about 10% of Acadia's annual operating budget, so an 8.2% cut will have significant consequences for the park.
- From FY 2007 – FY 2011, the overall average hourly cost to operate the park has risen 6.5%.
- Acadia National Park has addressed previous operational shortfalls by not filling 15 permanent park jobs, reducing training opportunities, and deferring maintenance. Future budget cuts will degrade the visitor experience and will be felt by families, communities, and businesses across Maine.

At a time when national park partner organizations, individual donors, and volunteers are investing in national parks, it is discouraging to think that Congress may decide to disinvest in our greatest public resources. Please contact your members and newly-elected members of Congress to encourage them to prevent further cuts.

To find your members of Congress: <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/directory/congdir.tt>

To reach Senator Collins

Washington office: 202-224-2523 (phone); 202-224-2693 (fax)

Form to email Senator Collins: <http://www.collins.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email>

To reach Senator Snowe (who continues to serve during the remainder of this Congress)

Washington office: 202-224-5344 (phone); 202-224-1946 (fax)

Form to email Senator Snowe: <http://www.snowe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email>

To reach Senator-Elect Angus King (who will assume Senator Snowe's seat in the next Congress)

207-607-4300 or info@angusformaine.com

To reach Representative Michael Michaud

Washington office: 202-225-6306 (phone); 202-225-2943 (fax)

Form to email Representative Michaud: <http://michaud.house.gov/email>

To reach Representative Pingree

Washington office: 202-225-6116 (phone); 202-225-5590 (fax). Form to email Representative

Pingree: <https://forms.house.gov/pingree/webforms/contact-form.shtml>

For More Information: Contact Friends of Acadia Conservation Director Stephanie Clement at 207-288-3340 or 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, please email 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 Acadia National Park.