

# **Investing in America's Treasured Landscapes: Conserving Natural Resources and the Environment**

## **Meeting Our Greatest Challenges: The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget**

Under the President's leadership, we have turned our economy around and created 14 million jobs. Our unemployment rate is below five percent for the first time in almost eight years. Nearly 18 million people have gained health coverage as the Affordable Care Act has taken effect. And we have dramatically cut our deficits by almost three-quarters and set our Nation on a more sustainable fiscal path.

Yet while it is important to take stock of our progress, this Budget is not about looking back at the road we have traveled. It is about looking forward and making sure our economy works for everybody, not just those at the top. It is about choosing investments that not only make us stronger today, but also reflect the kind of country we aspire to be – the kind of country we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren.

The Budget makes critical investments in our domestic and national security priorities while adhering to the bipartisan budget agreement signed into law last fall, and it lifts sequestration in future years so that we continue to invest in our economic future and our national security. It also drives down deficits and maintains our fiscal progress through smart savings from health care, immigration, and tax reforms.

The Budget shows that the President and the Administration remain focused on meeting our greatest challenges – including accelerating the pace of innovation to tackle climate change and find new treatments for devastating diseases; giving everyone a fair shot at opportunity and economic security; and advancing our national security and global leadership – not only for the year ahead, but for decades to come.

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The Obama Administration is committed to protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the natural resources that support and sustain us. Since signing the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 into law and launching the most extensive expansion of land and water conservation in more than a generation, including creating more than 2 million acres of Federal wilderness, President Obama has made unprecedented investments in protecting our land, water and wildlife for future generations. Through the designation of national monuments covering more than 263 million acres, the President has protected more land and water than any President in history. He also prioritized the restoration of critical ecosystems, protected more endangered species due to recovery efforts than any other Administration, and announced the largest landscape level conservation effort ever assembled, partnering with 11 States, local governments, private industry and other stakeholders to protect the habitat of the Greater Sage Grouse.

Yet, many of our natural resources still lack permanent protections, and our treasured landscapes are at risk from more extreme wildfires, invasive species, development pressures, and the increasingly devastating impacts of climate change. In tandem with managing those landscapes, the Federal Government plays an important role in supporting State and local efforts to better prepare for the effects of a changing climate. To enhance Federal efforts, the President's Budget builds on the steps

the Administration has taken since its earliest days to improve the Nation's preparedness and resilience. It provides continued support for implementing the President's Climate Action Plan, which focuses on both reducing carbon pollution and other greenhouse gas emissions, and enhances the Nation's resilience to the impacts of climate change. It also proposes full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and continued investments in conservation efforts to support our important natural, historical and cultural resources.

The Budget also builds upon the FY 2016 Appropriations Omnibus, which funds many agency environmental protection and conservation efforts. Through last year's appropriations process, the Administration worked with Congress to eliminate the anti-environmental riders that have no place in funding legislation – these riders included prohibitions on carbon pollution standards, disruptions in progress to scope regulatory efforts under the Clean Water Act, efforts to block protections for endangered wildlife, authorization of road construction in Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, and interference in efforts to combat ivory trafficking. Furthermore, Congress and the Administration were able to reach agreement on funding the budgets of agencies like the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to maintain core functions. However, many environment and conservation initiatives remain underfunded. Building on our Nation's progress, the Budget will prioritize protecting our natural resources for generations to come. The Budget will

### **Provide Full Funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Programs.**

The Budget supports reliable funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs to protect and conserve the habitat of threatened and endangered species, secure public access, improve recreational opportunities, and preserve ecosystem benefits for communities. The Budget proposes full funding of \$900 million in FY 2017 for LWCF programs in DOI and USDA, an amount equal to the oil and gas receipts deposited in the LWCF each year. This total includes \$475 million in discretionary funds and \$425 million in mandatory funds. Of this amount, \$21 million is for sportsmen and recreational access.

### **Fund the National Park Centennial Initiative.**

To continue to care for our national parks and to mark the 100-year anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service (NPS), the Budget includes an increase of \$206 million in discretionary funds in FY 2017 and \$500 million a year for three years in mandatory funds to restore facilities and enhance visitor services at some of our greatest historical, cultural, and natural treasures. As part of this initiative, NPS will invest \$860 million in mandatory (\$300 million) and discretionary (\$560 million) funds to allow NPS over ten years to make targeted, measurable, and quantifiable upgrades to all of its highest priority non-transportation assets, and restore and maintain them in good condition. The Initiative will also enhance partnerships with conservation organizations, expand volunteer opportunities in parks, provide \$135 million in matching funds (of which \$100 million is mandatory funding) to leverage private donations for signature projects and programs at national parks, and support a competitive fund of \$100 million in mandatory funding to DOI and USDA land management agencies for projects to improve the condition of public facilities and lands. The Centennial Initiative also includes \$20 million in the DOI budget plus \$5 million in the Forest Service budget to help transport youth to parks and to support dedicated youth coordinators to welcome them and their families in support of the Every Kid in a Park (EKiP) program. This investment in the next generation

of visitors will provide important educational opportunities and help build the stewards of our national treasures in the future.

### **Support Climate Resilience.**

The Budget provides significant support for resilience planning tools and assistance to communities vulnerable to climate change impacts, including support for coastal natural infrastructure restoration and coastal community planning and adaptation, wildfire risk reduction and management, and drought planning and mitigation. Some specific examples include:

- \$366 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in support of climate resilience activities including flood hazard mapping and pre-disaster mitigation grants, and \$20 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to administer competitive grants to State, local, tribal, private, and NGO partners to support activities such as vulnerability assessments, regional ocean partnerships, and development and implementation of adaptation strategies.
- \$2 billion in mandatory funding for a new Coastal Climate Resilience program at DOI, which will provide resources over 10 years for at-risk coastal States, local governments, and their communities to prepare for and adapt to climate change. This program would be funded by redirecting roughly half of the savings that result from the repeal of offshore oil and gas revenue sharing payments that are set to be paid to only four states under current law. A portion of these program funds would be set aside to cover the unique impacts of climate change in Alaska where some Native villages are so threatened by rising seas, coastal erosion, and storm surges that they must prepare for potential relocations.
- \$6 million for the Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Responses to Climate Change at Corps Projects program to continue development of planning and engineering guidance and supporting tools that will aid in the design of future climate-resilient water resources infrastructure.
- \$4 million to support a Resilience AmeriCorps pilot program at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). This will support roughly 175 AmeriCorps VISTA members that will assist communities in planning for and addressing climate impacts. In addition to CNCS' investment, the Budget provides \$2 million for NOAA to train the Resilience AmeriCorps members.

### **Conserve Landscapes and Ecosystems.**

To follow the President's 21st century approach to conservation, the Budget leverages and integrates efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, along with States, Tribes, and others, to conserve the most critical landscapes. The Budget funds grant programs that assist States, Tribes, local governments, landowners, and non-profit groups in preserving wildlife habitat, wetlands, historic battlefields, and regional parks at \$248 million. Operations at national parks, forests, refuges, and public lands are funded at \$6.9 billion. The Budget also maintains support for Farm Bill conservation programs that provide technical and financial assistance to help private landowners and agricultural producers address a broad range of resource concerns.

### **Continue the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.**

Following these conservation efforts, the FY 2017 Budget provides \$250 million for the EPA-led interagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which will continue to address the most critical issues in the region, such as combating Asian carp and other invasive species, reducing nutrient pollution that leads to harmful algal blooms, and dealing with contaminated sediment, habitat loss, and nonpoint source pollution as this initiative embarks on implementing its new Action Plan. GLRI funds, coupled with agencies' base Great Lakes funds, are helping accelerate environmental progress in the world's largest freshwater system.

### **Support Chesapeake Bay Restoration.**

In support of Executive Order 13508 on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration, EPA, USDA, NOAA, DOI, DOD, and other agencies continue to work closely together to improve water quality and restore habitat in our Nation's largest estuary. The EPA is a key Federal partner in this effort and the Budget requests \$70 million for EPA's Chesapeake Bay Geographic Program. Building largely from goals and processes established under the Executive Order, on June 16, 2014, Chesapeake Bay Program partners signed the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, which establishes 10 goals and 31 outcomes for sustainable fisheries, water quality, vital habitats, climate change, toxic contaminants, and other areas consistent with the Executive Order strategy. The Budget also supports State partners in implementing their nutrient pollution reduction goals to stay within the Bay's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

### **Advance Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation in the Everglades and South Florida.**

The Budget builds on existing efforts to protect and restore the Everglades with a Government-wide investment of over \$190 million, including approximately \$106 million for the Army Corps of Engineers, \$63 million for DOI, and \$21 million for USDA. This includes sustained funding for the operations and maintenance of national parks and national wildlife refuges, and planning, research, and interagency efforts to restore the Everglades ecosystem, including protecting threatened and endangered species. The funding will also provide for continued work with private landowners and agricultural producers to improve water quality and quantity and habitat conservation in the region through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Farm and Ranchland Protection Program.

### **Improve Conservation and Water Quality Outcomes from Private Lands Conservation.**

The Budget maintains support for Farm Bill conservation programs that provide technical and financial assistance to help private landowners and agricultural producers address a broad range of resource concerns. The Budget fully supports the continued USDA and EPA partnership to address non-point-source pollution through the National Water Quality Initiative by targeting conservation assistance in key watersheds, including establishing monitoring protocols, short and long-term performance measures, and baseline performance data collection. The Budget fully funds the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), providing \$1.65 billion, to help willing private landowners and agricultural producers implement conservation practices to address natural resource challenges such as soil erosion, air quality, water quality and quantity, and the sustainability of fish and wildlife habitat. Programs like EQIP are instrumental in the agency's ongoing efforts to partner with private landowners and restore habitat for species such as the Greater Sage Grouse and the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

## **Combat Wildlife Trafficking.**

The National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking positions the United States to address a serious conservation and global security threat by setting up three strategic priorities: strengthening domestic and global enforcement; reducing demand for illegally traded wildlife at home and abroad; and strengthening partnerships with international partners, local communities, NGOs, private industry, and others to combat illegal wildlife poaching and trade. In support of this strategy, the FY 2017 Budget continues to support domestic efforts to reduce trade in illegal wildlife products within the United States and will fund outreach and enforcement efforts around the proposed prohibition on most interstate trade in elephant and rhino ivory. The budget includes \$75 million for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement and \$41 million for USAID and Department of State, which will support programs to reduce wildlife trafficking globally, including strengthening policies and legislative frameworks, enhancing investigative and law enforcement functions, supporting cross-border law enforcement cooperation, and developing capacities to prosecute and adjudicate wildlife crimes and related corruption.

## **Advance Ocean Science and Conservation.**

Today about one quarter of human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide dissolves into the ocean and is the main driver of ocean acidification, which in turn affects marine ecosystems. The Budget includes \$22 million, a \$12 million increase over FY 2016 levels, to address this complex issue and understand the consequences of ocean acidification on marine resources. The Budget provides \$9 million to help fishing communities, which face significant climate challenges, become more resilient to the impacts of fisheries disasters. These competitive funds will assist communities in becoming more environmentally and economically resilient through activities such as ecosystem restoration, research, and adaptation. The Budget also proposes \$22 million for NOAA's Species Recovery Grants, a \$16 million increase over FY 2016, to support state efforts to recover and delist endangered marine species.