

Director's Office
Memo Issued On Implementation Of Sequestration Cuts

On Friday, March 8th, Director Jarvis issued a Servicewide all-employee memorandum entitled "Implementation Of Sequestration Budget Cuts." The full text follows:

As of March 1, sequestration has imposed an across-the-board five percent cut to our Fiscal Year 13 budget that we must now take in the remaining seven months of this fiscal year. I want you to know that the impacts of these cuts are real and will be felt by our visitors, our partners, our parks and programs, and each and every employee. We must now get ready to implement the sequestration plans that each park and program manager developed to respond to the cut. Implementation of the operational decisions laid out in your plan should begin immediately.

Congress has stipulated that each agency apply this cut equally to all of its budget activities and sub-activities. As a result of each agency's unique budget structure and unique mission, the application of cuts will result in differing impacts to different agencies across Interior and across the federal government. That will mean, for example, that some agencies will face lengthy furloughs while others will feel impacts in other ways.

I want to commend you all for making very difficult decisions. To help meet the reductions, 900 permanent positions will not be filled. In an organization with 15,000 permanent employees, 900 vacant jobs have a profound effect. Every activity will be affected. Some impacts will be immediate, others will accumulate over time. Fewer law enforcement rangers and USPP officers mean lower levels of protection and longer response times. Fewer maintenance personnel mean that parks may have to close facilities completely when breakdowns occur – and that the \$12 billion maintenance backlog will continue to grow. Fewer management and administrative personnel can translate into lower levels of accountability and oversight. Our investments to control invasions by exotic plants and animals will be wasted as they regain toeholds in parks. Our community support programs will reduce grants and technical assistance to states. Uncertainty about access to everything from interpretive programs to facilities could send visitors elsewhere, with impacts to entrance fees, concession revenue, and the tourism economies in gateway communities.

Implementation of the sequester has required difficult decisions on seasonal hiring. Servicewide, we will hire over 1,000 less seasonal employees this year. Seasonal employees are our utility infielders, the "bench" we turn to when fires break out, search and rescue operations are underway, and every other collateral duty. Many of these folks return year after year - they are the repositories of amazing institutional knowledge.

The sequester was designed to be inflexible. As a result, there can be differences in the needs for furloughs from activity to activity. Consequently, we do expect limited furloughs in the Service – specifically in the U.S. Park Police. Let me assure you that all affected employees will be provided at least 30 days notice prior to executing a furlough or in accordance with the designated representative collective bargaining agreement as appropriate. We will also continue to engage in discussions with employee unions as appropriate, to ensure that any furloughs are applied in an appropriate manner meeting agency mission requirements.

As you move forward with implementation of the plan for your specific park or program, I want to be clear on our implementation guidelines:

A hiring freeze is in place for all hiring with the exception of summer seasonal hiring within your 95 percent plans. The Department has reviewed our sequestration implementation plans and has given us permission to move forward with the plans for seasonal hiring within park/program 95 percent plans. This

hiring will come with additional reporting requirements. All other exceptions must be approved by NPS leadership and the Department. The process to apply for an exception will be posted on a new [InsideNPS sequestration page](#).

Travel ban for all but essential travel. “Essential” travel includes **ONLY** the following: travel that is critical for health and safety, and travel to attend training required to retain current, mission critical certifications – such as contracting warrants. International travel is cancelled. I have cancelled all of my own non-essential travel, and I expect the entire NPS Directorate to follow suit. No one is exempt from the travel restriction. The Deputy, Associate, Assistant, and Regional Directors have agreed on a process that parks and program offices will use to submit every travel request for approval. These instructions will also be on *InsideNPS*.

NPS participation and attendance in conferences are cancelled. All NPS participation and attendance in conferences scheduled for March have been cancelled. Those scheduled for the balance of the year are under review and have not yet been approved by DOI.

In the days and weeks ahead, we must be prepared to clearly explain to our employees, our partners, our gateway communities, our visitors, and the media not only the decisions we have been forced to make by the sequestration cuts, but the genuine impacts those cuts will have.

Later this month, on March 27, we face the expiration of the latest continuing resolution that has provided the appropriations necessary to keep the government running since October 1. We do not know how, or if, the debate on a new continuing resolution will impact the remainder of FY13 or the FY14 budget negotiations. For now, please assume that we will operate for the remainder of the year at the 95 percent spending level envisioned in your sequestration plans.

Finally, I want to again commend you for your hard work and conservative fiscal approach in this most unusual – and difficult – time. National Park Service employees make me proud every day. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission and to serving the people of the United States.
