

# America's Best Idea Meets America's Worst Idea



## Sequester Takes Toll on National Parks, Visitors & Communities



**NATURAL  
RESOURCES**  
COMMITTEE • DEMOCRATS  
RANKING MEMBER, EDWARD J. MARKEY

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National parks are known as “America’s best idea.” They have provided “for the enrichment of the lives of all of us,” as President Franklin Roosevelt put it, while preserving natural and historic treasures for generations to come and supplying the economic lifeblood for countless communities across the United States. Visitors to national parks spent an estimated \$30 billion nationally in 2011, supporting 251,600 jobs and generating \$9.34 billion in labor income.<sup>1</sup>

America’s best idea, however, is under attack by one of America’s worst ideas. Because of recent sequester cuts, parks are closing or delaying the opening of roads, campgrounds and facilities, reducing their hours of operation and visitor services, and deferring or forgoing maintenance, all of which threatens to reduce the number of visitors who spend money in nearby communities.

The Democratic staff of the House Natural Resources Committee interviewed superintendents or top deputies at 23 parks in the National Park System to learn what cuts they are making in response to the sequester and why they have chosen those cuts. The sequester plans for these parks, which represent a sampling of different park types and sizes, are summarized in Appendix A.

Park superintendents interviewed for this report said they were directed to minimize visitor impacts to every extent possible in developing their sequester plans. However, the size of the sequester cuts and the staff reductions required to meet those cuts meant that some visitor impacts could not be avoided, especially following other cuts that parks have endured over the last several years, the superintendents said.

This finding refutes Republican accusations that the Obama administration made intentionally painful cuts at the national parks in order to build public opposition against the sequester. In fact, the parks profiled in this report show that closures, delayed openings, reduced visitor services, and other adverse impacts are the inevitable consequences of the budget cuts Republicans have forced. The following describes some of the consequences being felt at profiled parks.

*Most parks have had to close facilities, delay openings or reduce hours of operation*

Yellowstone National Park received national headlines for its initial decision to delay snow plowing—and consequently the park’s opening—in response to the sequester cuts. Following that announcement, local communities and businesses that depend on visitors to Yellowstone raised almost \$200,000 to start plowing on schedule. The president of a local Chamber of Commerce told the Washington Post, however, that this is not a sustainable solution: “We have

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, “Economic Benefits to Local Communities from National Park Visitation, 2011,” February 2014, available at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/NPSSystemEstimates2011.pdf>.

said to our membership: This shouldn't be our responsibility. C'mon, Washington, let's get it together, because you're holding the economy hostage."<sup>2</sup>

There are more than 400 parks within the National Park System, which in addition to designated national parks include national monuments, historic and military parks, recreation areas, seashores, and more. Some parks have received local help like Yellowstone—Cape Cod National Seashore, for instance, was able to open a visitor center because of an outside donation—but most have been unable to avoid closures, delayed openings or reduced hours of operation, which could hurt the economies of surrounding communities. For example:

- Grand Canyon National Park will keep visitors centers open two hours less per day, impacting nearly 500,000 visitors.
- Glacier National Park is reducing the number of days and hours that its visitor centers operate, and also is opening later or closing earlier (or both) at nine campgrounds.
- Great Smoky National Park was forced to delay the opening of 10 campgrounds and five horse camps by a month and close several other campgrounds and picnic areas on the park's periphery.
- Grand Teton National Park is closing one visitor center and cutting hours at another, closing 20 campsites along the park's Grassy Lake Road, and prohibiting vehicles in some remote areas where restrooms and trash can no longer be serviced.
- Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota is shortening the season by several months for its Painted Canyon visitor center, which is located at an interstate rest area and is important to local businesses, as it attracts more than 280,000 visitors a year.
- Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia is reducing the number of days its visitor center and historical sites are open, which will deny access to more than 20,000 visitors.

*Most parks are offering fewer educational opportunities and other special programming*

Virtually all parks provide educational talks and guided walks or tours to visitors and schools. Many also offer other interpretive and recreational programming and host special events. During a park's peak season, which for most is spring through summer, parks add seasonal rangers to meet the spike in demand for such programming.

Because of the sequester cuts, however, parks are unable to add as many seasonal rangers, meaning fewer visitors and students will be served. For example:

- Cape Cod National Seashore is canceling guided walks, educational talks and other interpretive programs, which have previously attracted 49,000 visitors a year.
- Casa Grande Ruins National Monument in Arizona will be unable to host an annual two-day music festival in February (the park's peak season) if the sequester cuts remain in place; the festival draws 3,000 visitors every year and provides an economic boost to the bordering town of 8,000 residents.

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<sup>2</sup> Lisa Rein, Washington Post, "At Yellowstone, Locals Step In to Get Park Open and Help Solve Budget Woes," March 18, 2013.

- George Washington Birthplace National Monument in Virginia is providing educational programming to half as many school groups, is eliminating hourly tours of the grounds, and is providing only limited access to the Washington home.
- Isle Royale National Park in Michigan decided to cancel spring programs in local schools, affecting 5,300 students, eliminating programs at the local library, affecting another 1,300 children, and reducing its participation in shows and special events, affecting 4,500 visitors and area residents.
- Ninety Six National Historic Site in South Carolina decided to eliminate Saturday educational programming and reduce visitor hours, resulting in 28,000 fewer visitor contacts than last year, a 40 percent drop, and cut outreach to local schools, reaching 350 fewer students.
- Grand Canyon National Park is cutting its educational or interpretive programs by a third, and park rangers will no longer travel to classrooms, meaning about 10,000 students won't receive educational programming.

*Parks will not be as clean and well maintained*

Parks also add maintenance workers during peak season to service campgrounds, restrooms and park facilities, mow park grounds, and clear roads and trails, among other possible maintenance tasks. Because of the sequester cuts, however, parks will be unable to add as many seasonal maintenance workers, meaning parks won't be as clean or well kept. For example:

- Golden Gate National Recreation Area in northern California will defer maintenance of historic structures and infrastructure, will not maintain certain roads, and will clean restrooms and pick up trash less frequently.
- Olympic National Park in Washington will not open flush-toilet areas and will not service restrooms and pick up trash as frequently.
- Grand Canyon National Park will reduce its cleaning of restrooms by half, from twice a day to once a day.
- Point Reyes National Seashore in northern California may have trouble keeping its trails and roads clear as vegetation grows through the spring.
- Everglades National Park will mow less frequently along its main park road.

*Parks will have less capacity to handle emergency or law enforcement situations*

Parks conduct more search and rescue operations in peak season as visitors hike in hot weather, climb mountains, backpack in remote areas, and so on. Law enforcement incidents from petty crime to archeological poaching also increase in peak season, and some parks are at greater risk for wildfires, storms and other extreme weather events.

Because of the sequester, however, parks will be unable to hire as many seasonal emergency responders and law enforcement rangers, leaving them less prepared for these heightened risks. For example:

- Curecanti National Recreation Area in western Colorado is not hiring a permanent law enforcement ranger to lead its seasonal search and rescue team.

- Olympic National Park in Washington has reduced capacity to respond if this summer is a bad fire season.
- Bryce Canyon National Park, which responded to 1,100 emergency events last year,<sup>3</sup> will have reduced search-and-rescue and law enforcement capabilities.
- Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland decided to delay needed engine repairs for a patrol boat and is not replacing aging law enforcement vehicles on schedule.
- Everglades National Park is reducing patrols by law enforcement rangers.
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area is reducing its law enforcement presence, which may mean the park cannot respond as quickly to issues of concern to the surrounding urban community.

*Park repairs and maintenance projects will be delayed or deferred*

Parks already face a \$12 billion maintenance backlog, but the sequester cuts leave even less money for projects to repair or replace deteriorating roads, bridges, trails, facilities, historical sites, and equipment, among other maintenance needs. Parks also have less money and staff to do more routine maintenance and make repairs when something unexpected happens. “If emergency repairs are needed, that’s going to force us into difficult situations,” said the superintendent at Bryce Canyon National Park. The following are just a few of the maintenance issues that parks face:

- Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts is deferring cleaning, repair and maintenance of four museum exhibits, which attract about 100,000 visitors and 50,000 students a year.
- Bryce Canyon National Park is seeking project funding from the Park Service to do road repairs and replace the roof on its lodge, something that was identified as a need more than seven years ago, but the uncertain budget situation is delaying those projects.
- Glacier National Park will reduce road maintenance, such as grading, striping and patching.
- Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, the second hottest unit in the park system, has had to defer a contract for regular maintenance of its heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system.
- Great Smoky National Park has experienced delays in repairs of roads that were washed out in January flooding.
- Ninety Six National Historic Site in South Carolina will be impaired in its efforts to maintain and restore the Revolutionary War site and combat invasive non-native vegetation and wild hogs.
- Everglades National Park may experience delays in restoration projects because of furloughs at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which carries out restoration work.
- Grand Canyon National Park won’t be able to open roads as quickly after extreme weather events and will be forced to delay repairs to buildings, roads, trails, campsites and overlooks.

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<sup>3</sup> Staff interview with park superintendent. Emergency events include search and rescue, emergency medical services, law enforcement, and protection of park resources.

### *Parks are reducing environmental monitoring*

With conservation as a core mission, national parks track the health of plant and animal life within their boundaries, including endangered and threatened species, monitor air and water quality, and assess sources of pollution. Because of the sequester cuts and staff reductions, however, parks are being forced to reduce such environmental monitoring. For example:

- Everglades National Park is reducing monitoring programs for the park's endangered and threatened species.
- Assateague Island National Seashore will no longer monitor the water quality of streams flowing into the park.
- Denali National Park in Alaska will do less monitoring of the park's wolves, grizzly bear, mouse, caribou and Dall sheep.
- Shenandoah National Park may not meet its water quality obligations and will have difficulty responding to and coordinating air quality issues under the Clean Air Act; air pollution continues to obscure the park's mountain views.
- War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam is reducing its monitoring of the island's marine life and coral reef.

### *Parks face 'death by a thousand cuts'*

Appropriated funds to the national parks fell slightly in the last couple of years. However, because of inflation, what appear to be small nominal cuts are actually much bigger in terms of their real impact. Appendix A includes budget graphs for each park that convert previous years' appropriations into today's dollars, adjusting for inflation. These graphs show that parks have taken a major hit over the last several years. For example:

- Lowell National Historical Park has experienced an almost \$3 million cut in real dollars since 2010.
- Boston National Historic Park has experienced a \$1.4 million cut in real dollars since 2010.
- Great Smoky National Park has experienced a \$3.6 million cut in real dollars since 2010.
- Everglades National Park has experienced a roughly \$3 million cut in real dollars since 2010.
- Grand Teton National Park has experienced a \$2.6 million cut in real dollars since 2010.

Sequestration comes at a time when parks already have been cut to the bone. One park superintendent called the recent budget reductions "death by a thousand cuts." A park can defer things like maintenance and staff training for a short period of time, but if funding is not restored, the parks face deterioration that becomes tougher and ultimately more expensive to address. "The longer these things go, the more cumulative impact to the park," said another superintendent at a large park.

### *Parks face continuing budget uncertainty*

Parks have been operating in a state of budget uncertainty because of the sequester and Congress' habit in recent years of providing funding through short-term "continuing resolutions." "How can you run a business when you wait halfway through the year to find out what your funding is going to be?", asked one superintendent. This uncertainty not only has complicated staffing and contracting decisions, it has caused park superintendents and other officials to devote an inordinate amount of time to developing budget contingencies.

Unfortunately, parks face continuing budget uncertainty, as congressional Republicans push for even deeper cuts in the federal budget. The National Park Service consequently has frozen hiring of new permanent staff across parks to prepare for potentially tighter budgets ahead. Parks may hire new permanent staff for safety-related and mission-critical positions, but they must get permission from the Park Service to do so. As employees retire or move on, parks will confront the repeated question of whether they will be able to hire replacements.

Congress should act immediately to restore funding and give national parks the budget certainty they need to plan for the future. America's best idea became reality through the commitment of past Congresses and presidents, represented by both political parties. The sequester, as shown in the profiles below, is a betrayal of that commitment.

## Appendix A: Sequester Plans for 23 Selected Parks (listed alphabetically)

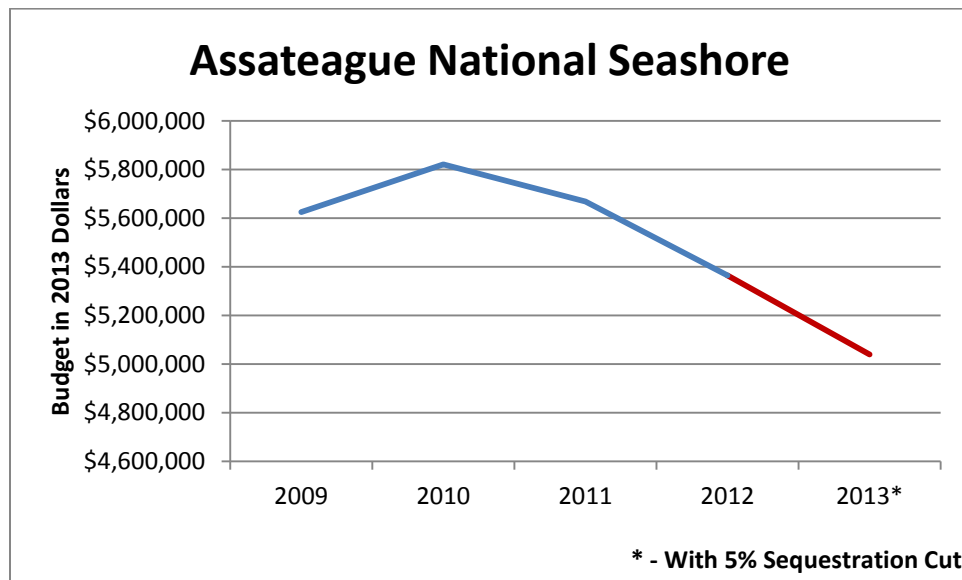
### Assateague Island National Seashore

Assateague Island National Seashore, located on the outer banks of Maryland, is known for its wild horses and pristine beaches. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$151 million in surrounding communities, supporting almost 2,000 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.15 million visitors last year, must cut more than \$263,000 from its 2012 budget of \$5.3 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park plans to delay replacement of aging or inoperable park equipment, stop monitoring the water quality of streams flowing into park waters, and not fill a vacant senior management position that is responsible for coordinating park volunteers, among other duties. The park anticipates a 25 percent reduction in volunteer labor hours because of this vacant position.

The park also is not extending its operating hours for the summer, as it normally does, because of staffing shortages. Entrance stations will be staffed from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. instead of from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., which the park expects will result in a loss of almost \$70,000 in entrance fees.

The delays in replacing equipment could jeopardize public health and safety. Funding uncertainty has caused the park to delay needed engine repairs for the shallow-water patrol boat it uses for search and rescue operations, as well as investigations of poaching. The park also is not replacing aging law enforcement vehicles on schedule, which increases the chances they will fail in an emergency.

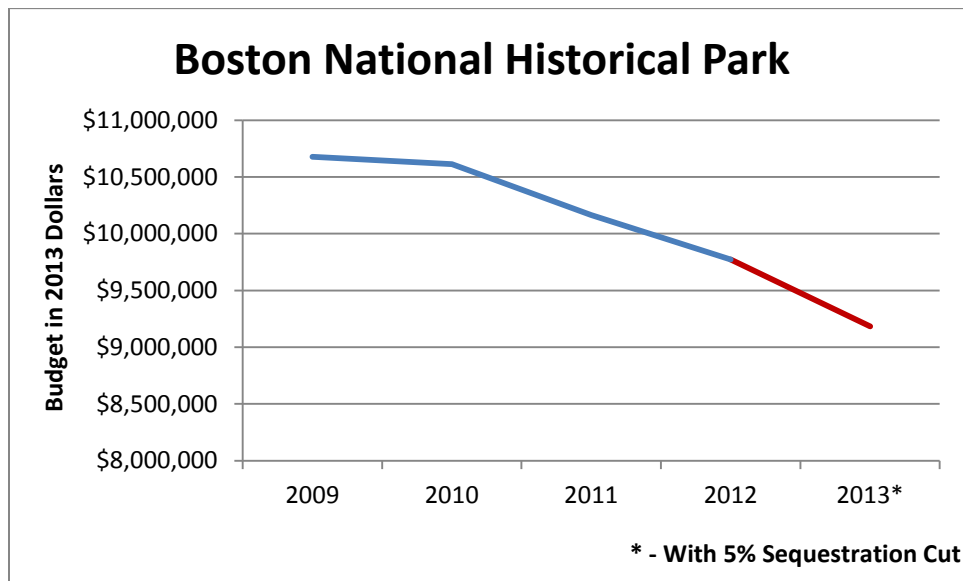




## Boston National Historical Park

The Boston National Historical Park showcases sites related to Boston's role in the American Revolution, including the Bunker Hill Monument, the home of Paul Revere, The Old South Meeting House where the Boston Tea Party may have been orchestrated, and Boston's famed Faneuil Hall. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$94 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 1,100 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.6 million visitors last year, must cut \$483,250 from its 2012 budget of \$9.7 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill a number of vacant positions, including educational or interpretive positions as well as law enforcement positions. Without these positions, there will be fewer educational programs, less security along the Freedom Trail, which connects the park's sites, and at the Charlestown Navy Yard, and possibly less park participation in community events.

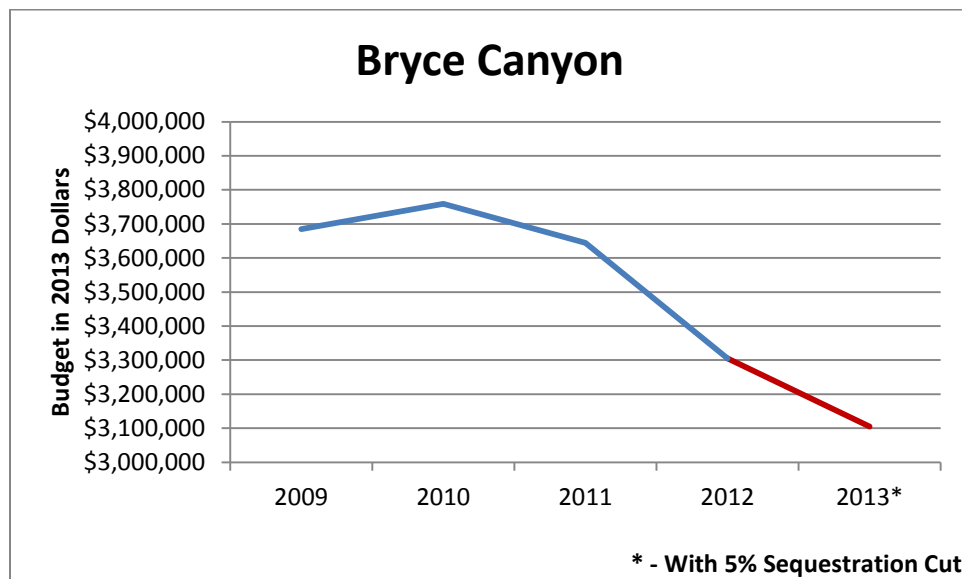


## Bryce Canyon National Park

Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah is best known for its distinctive geological structures called hoodoos, formed by frost weathering and stream erosion of river and lake bed sedimentary rocks. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$115 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 1,700 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 1.4 million visitors last year, must cut \$163,000 from its 2012 budget of \$3.3 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not hire a seasonal fee ranger, will shorten the terms of six other seasonal positions, including law enforcement rangers and maintenance workers, and will not fill six vacant permanent positions, including a heavy equipment operator and a utility systems mechanic.

Because of these cuts, the park expects delayed openings for campgrounds and some spur roads; less educational programs for students—the park now serves 3,000 to 4,000 mostly low-income and underserved students from nearby areas every year; possibly longer lines to get into the park, with one less fee ranger; and reduced capacity for emergency and law enforcement response. Last year, the park responded to 1,100 events involving search and rescue, emergency medical services, law enforcement, or protection of park resources from archaeological poaching, illegal grazing and other threats.



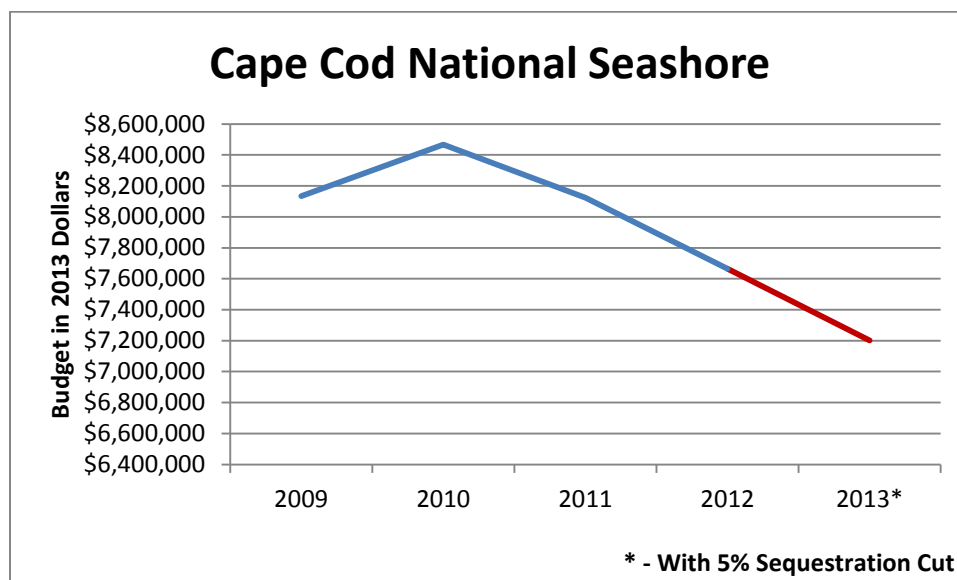
## Cape Cod National Seashore

Cape Cod National Seashore covers more than 44,000 acres on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, including 40 miles of pristine seashore on the eastern side of the cape. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$100 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 1,700 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 4.4 million visitors last year, must cut \$376,000 from its 2012 budget of \$7.5 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park decided not to hire 22 seasonal positions, most supporting educational or interpretive programs, and not fill several vacant permanent positions that support park administration and contracts.

The park initially determined that it would have to keep a seasonal visitor center closed because of the staff reductions. However, Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore then gave a donation to hire seasonal positions that will allow the park to open the visitor center from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. The donation is still insufficient to cover shoulder seasons from May 1 to October 31, when the visitor center would normally be open.

The park also will be unable to provide a variety of interpretive programs, which previously attracted more than 49,000 visitors a year. Those interpretive programs include nature and bird walks, extended hikes, shellfishing demonstrations, snorkeling, beach campfires and beach yoga. Other sequester consequences include “fewer biological technicians to monitor critical resources, and reduced custodial service,” according to a park press release. Staff reductions in law enforcement positions also may result in fewer patrols.

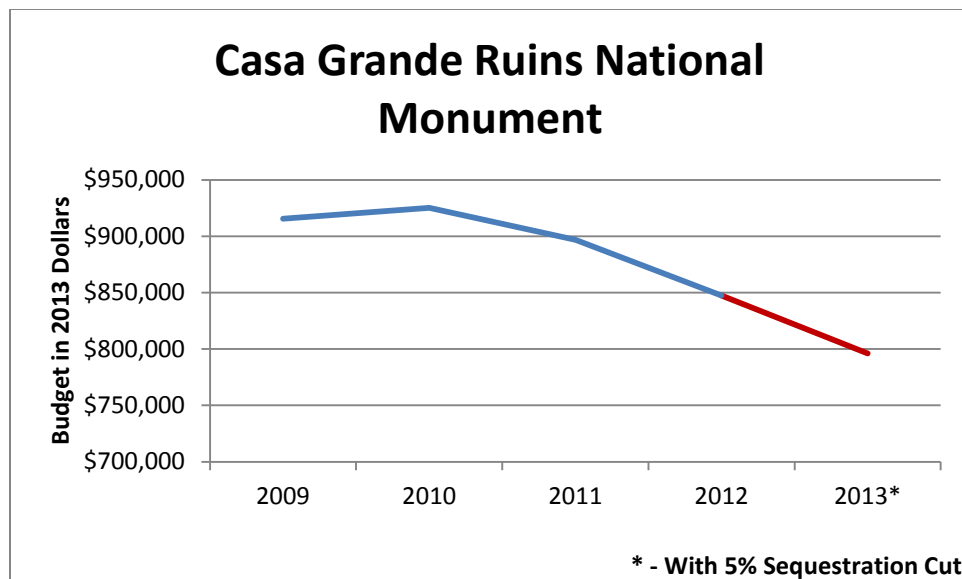


## Casa Grande Ruins National Monument

The Casa Grande Ruins National Monument in Arizona preserves Hohokam ruins, including a four-story structure that has survived for 700 years. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$2.3 million in surrounding communities, supporting 30 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracts about 80,000 visitors a year, must cut \$42,000 from a 2012 budget of more than \$830,000 because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park is eliminating a seasonal position; scaling back two maintenance positions; cutting employee training, awards, overtime, and travel; and deferring certain contracts.

The park already operates with a small staff, so any reduction in personnel time will have unavoidable consequences for visitors. In particular, the visitor center will only be open for five days a week, affecting an estimated 2,500 visitors, and education and outreach programs to schools will be cut back, meaning 500 local students won't be able to receive education at the ruins. Looking ahead, the park will be unable to host an annual two-day music festival, held in February at the height of the park's tourism season, if the sequester cuts remain in place. The festival draws 3,000 visitors every year and provides an economic boost to the bordering town, which has 8,000 residents. The park also is worried about having to defer a contract for regular, professional maintenance of its heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Casa Grande Ruins is the second hottest unit in the national park system, and the park would be unable to open its visitor center without an operational HVAC system.

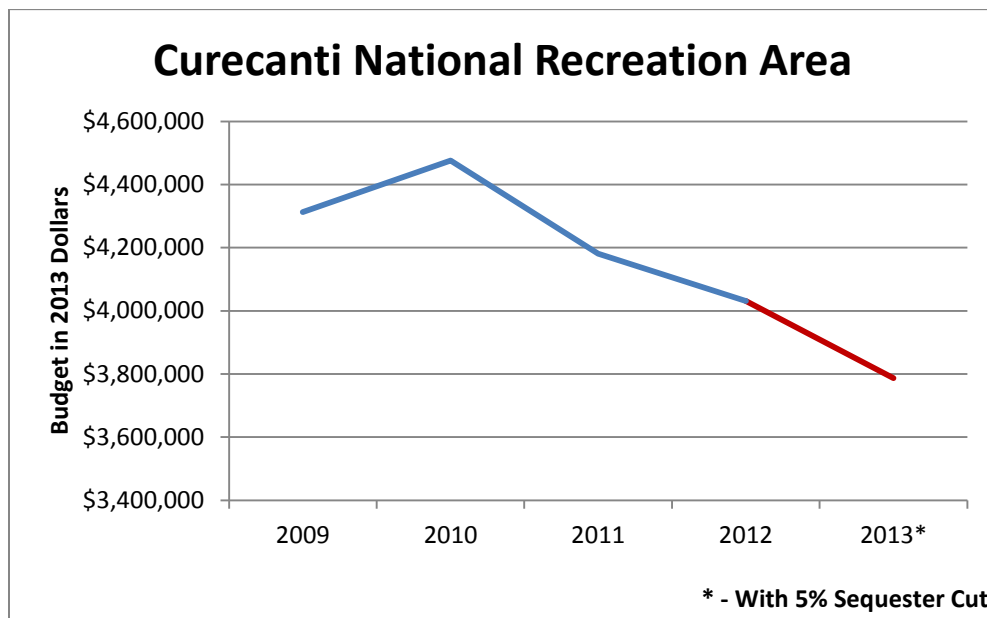


## Curecanti National Recreation Area

The Curecanti National Recreation Area, which borders Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in western Colorado, contains three reservoirs along the Gunnison River that are popular for salmon and trout fishing. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$41.3 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 450 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted more than 860,000 visitors last year, must cut about \$200,000 from its 2012 budget of almost \$4 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill a number of vacant positions, including maintenance workers, which will result in less frequent bathroom cleaning and trash pickup, and a law enforcement ranger that is supposed to lead the seasonal search-and-rescue team.

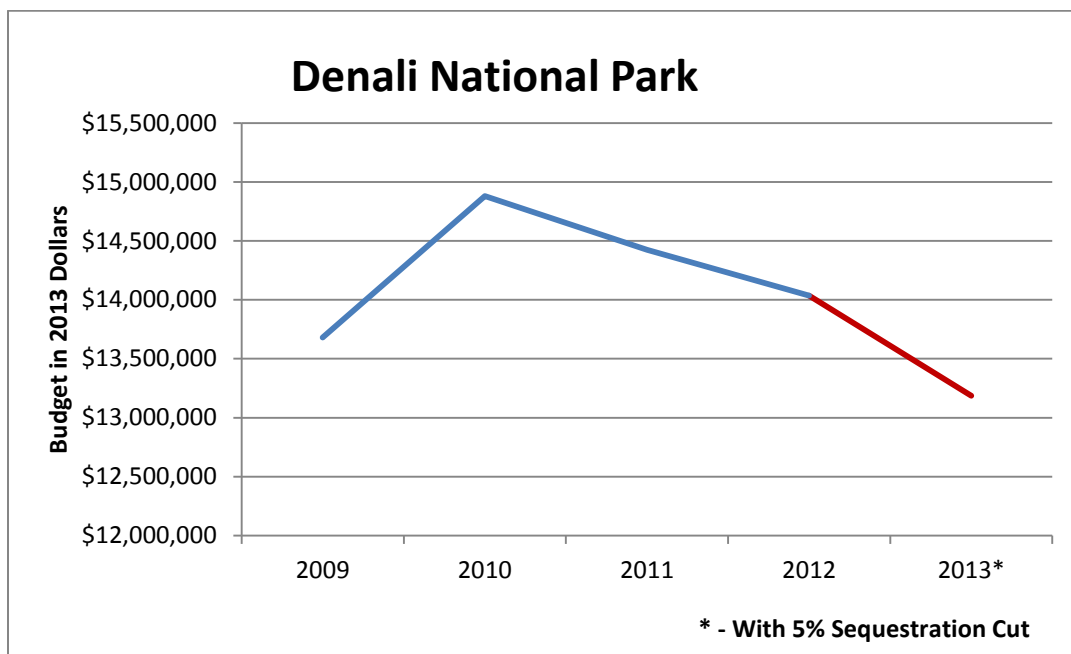
The park also is not hiring two seasonal interpreters, which means the park will be unable to open a seasonal visitor center, and another seasonal position that performs required boat inspections to protect against invasive zebra mussels. A boat ramp at the park's Blue Mesa Reservoir, which is a salmon fishery, will be closed because this seasonal position is unfilled.



## Denali National Park

Denali National Park and Preserve covers six million acres of Alaskan wilderness, including Mount McKinley, the tallest peak in North America. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$160 million in surrounding communities, supporting almost 2,700 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted nearly 390,000 visitors last year, must cut about \$690,000 from a 2012 budget of \$13.8 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill a dozen vacant permanent positions, which may include the chief of interpretation and park historian (the park is still deciding which 12 positions won't be filled), and cut money for employee development, training and travel. Consequently, the park expects to do less recurring park maintenance and less environmental monitoring, including monitoring of wolves, grizzly bear, mouse, caribou and Dall sheep.

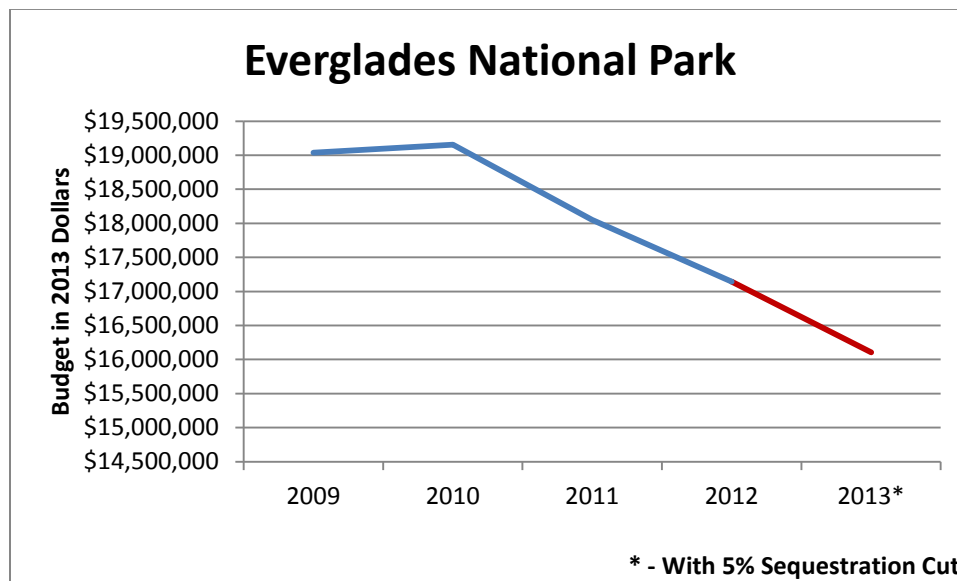


## Everglades National Park

Everglades National Park spans 1.5 million acres of wetlands, forests and bays in Florida, comprising the most significant breeding ground for tropical wading birds in North America and the largest mangrove ecosystem in the western hemisphere. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$147 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 2,300 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 1.14 million visitors last year, must cut \$850,000 from a 2012 budget of \$16.9 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill 17 vacant permanent positions, including deputy superintendent, chief law enforcement ranger, wildlife biologist and water scientist. The Everglades peak season is in the winter months, so the park naturally has fewer seasonal workers in the summer, making the sequester cuts less visible to the public this summer.

Nonetheless, the staff reductions will result in fewer patrols by law enforcement rangers; reduced threatened and endangered species monitoring programs; fewer educational programs; reduced invasive animal control programs; reduced management of visitor interactions with wildlife; and less frequent mowing on the main park road. It's also possible park restoration projects may be delayed because of furloughs at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which carries out restoration work.

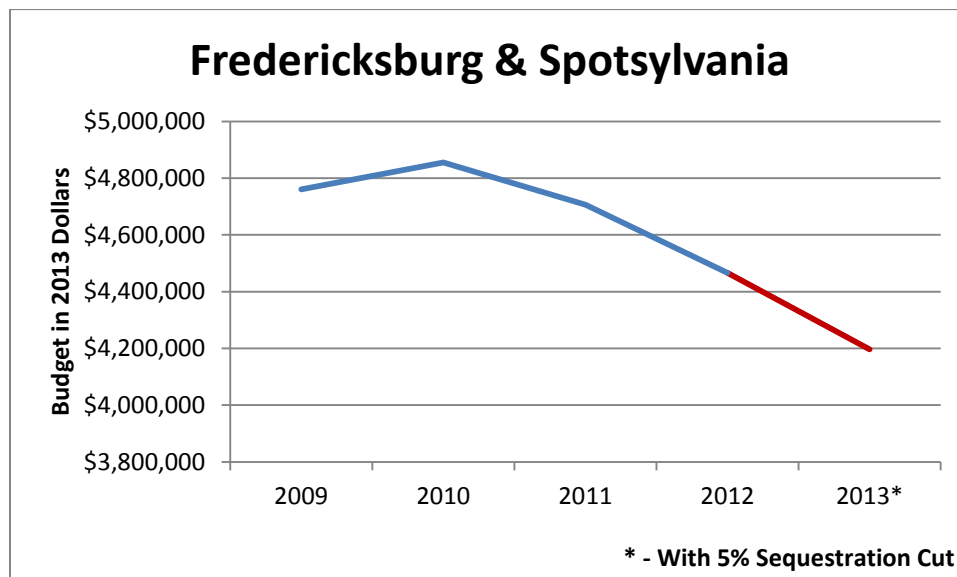


## Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia is a multi-unit park commemorating four major battles of the American Civil War, including the Battle of Fredericksburg, the Battle of Chancellorsville, the Battle of the Wilderness, and the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. The park also includes several historic buildings and sites from the era, including Chatham Manor, Ellwood Manor, the home where Confederate General Stonewall Jackson died (Jackson shrine), and the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, where more than 15,000 Civil War soldiers are buried. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$48 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 600 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted more than 980,000 visitors last year, must cut \$200,000 from a 2012 budget of \$4.4 million (after absorbing a nearly \$150,000 cut from 2011) because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not hire any seasonal workers and will not fill 11 vacant permanent positions, representing a 23 percent reduction in staff. The park expects additional volunteer help, but it already depends on the equivalent of 15 full-time employees (FTEs) in volunteers.

The staff reductions are having “a major impact on our programming,” according to the park’s superintendent. Educational programming is being reduced by 70 percent, meaning 1,800 fewer kids will be served, more than half from local areas. Walking tours also are being reduced by 30 percent at Fredericksburg and 50 percent at Chancellorsville (combined, 7,400 fewer visitors will be able to take these tours); “History at Sunset” tours are being eliminated; several historical sites will be closed on weekends; and Chatham Manor and the Chancellorsville visitor center are both closed one day a week while Jackson Shrine is closed five days a week, denying access to more than 20,000 visitors on those days. In addition, the park will reduce its mowing of the grounds and will eliminate roadside litter pickup.



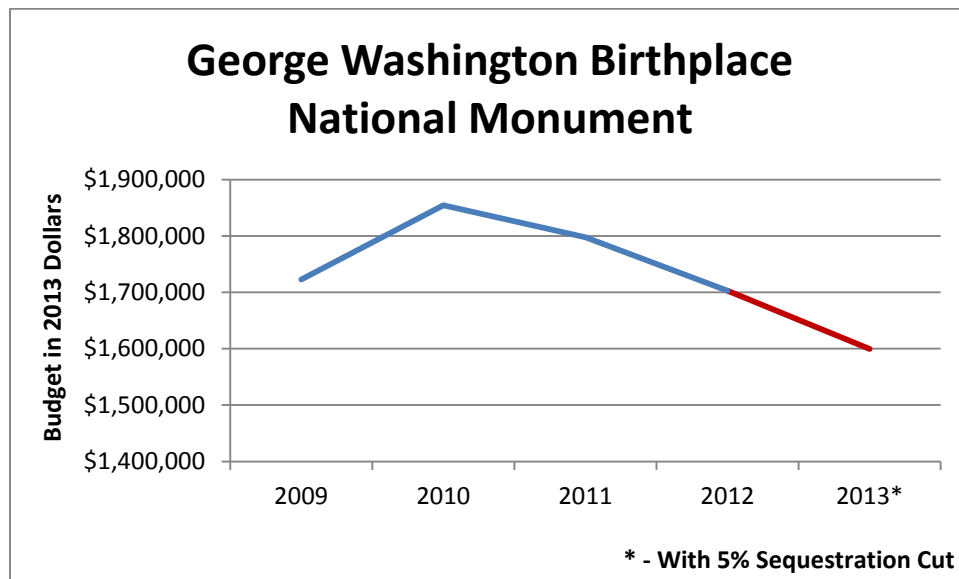


## George Washington Birthplace National Monument

George Washington Birthplace National Monument preserves the Washington family estate in Westmoreland County, Virginia, where America's first president was born. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$3.6 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 40 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted nearly 135,000 visitors last year, must cut \$84,200 from a 2012 budget of \$1.68 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not hire three seasonal education positions and two seasonal maintenance workers and will not fill three vacant permanent positions, including two ranger guides and an IT specialist, as well as a part-time position for museum tech support.

Because the park already operates with a small staff and is in a rural area, where there are not as many volunteers available, these reductions will have significant consequences for visitors. Specifically, the number of school groups that will be able to visit the park will be cut in half; hourly tours of the grounds will be eliminated; and access to the Washington home will be limited. In addition, fields will not be mowed, and the park may no longer be able to keep the same number of heritage farm breeds, which help give an authentic feel to the historical area.



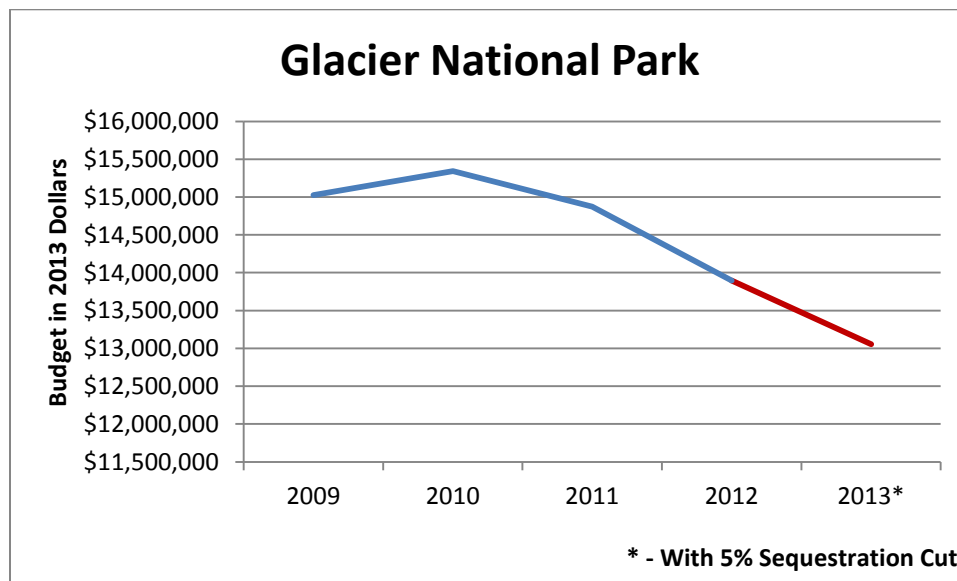
## Glacier National Park

Glacier National Park spans more than one million acres of wilderness and two mountain ranges in Montana. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$97.7 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 1,300 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.16 million visitors last year, must cut more than \$680,000 from a 2012 budget of about \$13.7 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park is reducing “travel, training, overtime, vehicle leases, and supply and equipment leases for the remainder of the fiscal year,” delaying hiring for vacant permanent positions, and cutting or reducing the duration of some seasonal positions, according to a park press release.

Because of seasonal staff reductions, the park is delaying the opening of one visitor center and reducing its hours; closing two other visitor centers early, with one of those also operating at reduced hours; and opening later or closing earlier (or both) at nine campgrounds. The park also is delaying trail access, decreasing maintenance of trails, park facilities, roads and utility systems, and reducing educational programming and native plant restoration.

The park considered delaying the spring opening of the road that runs through the heart of the park (the Going-to-the-Sun Road), which requires snow plowing. However, a donation from the Glacier National Park Conservancy along with savings from unexpected personnel changes provided the funds needed for snow plowing. Road maintenance, such as grading, striping and patching, will still be reduced in the fall.



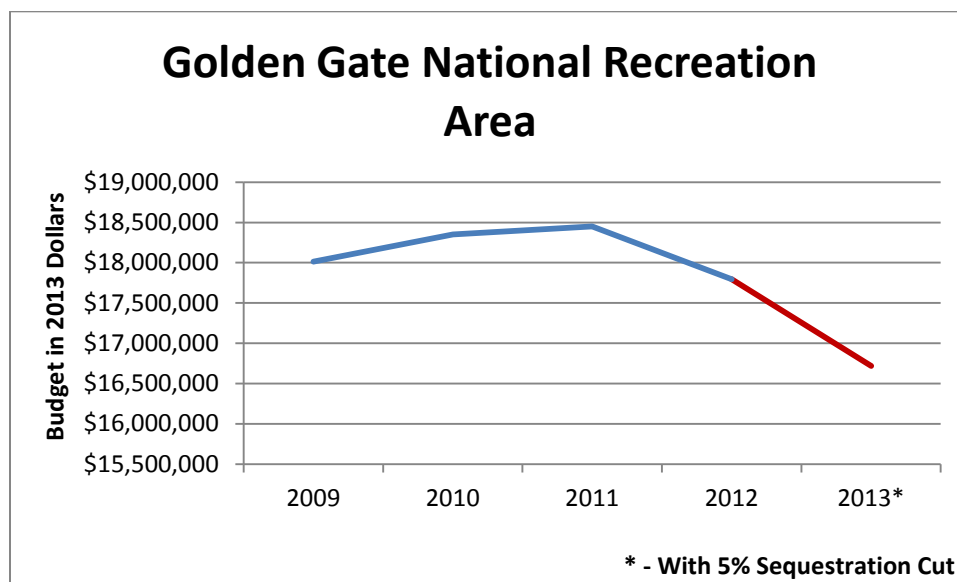
## Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Golden Gate National Recreation Area is a collection of diverse attractions in the San Francisco Bay area, including the Muir Woods National Monument and Alcatraz Island. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$290 million in surrounding communities, supporting almost 1,600 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 14.5 million visitors last year, must cut at least \$1.3 million from a 2012 budget of just over \$26 million (after enduring a nearly \$300,000 cut the previous year) because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill at least 11 vacant permanent positions and will reduce its seasonal workforce by at least five positions. Much of these vacancies are in important maintenance, law enforcement and interpretation functions. The park will also need to reduce hours, training, travel, supplies and overtime for some park staff, resulting in less service for park visitors.

Visitors will more regularly experience unclean restrooms and un-maintained park areas due to fewer maintenance staff, and the park's law enforcement presence will be reduced, which may create longer response times to issues of concern for the surrounding urban community that regularly interfaces with park areas. Deferred maintenance on historic structures and infrastructure park-wide will increase, and certain roads will not be maintained.

The cuts also mean that the Fort Point National Historic Site, a fort completed just before the Civil War to defend the San Francisco Bay, will be open one less day a week—open only two days a week in the off-season and only a maximum of six days a week in the peak season. Other visitor centers such as in the Marin Headlands will have their hours of operations reduced, or experience intermittent or weekday closures.



## Grand Canyon National Park

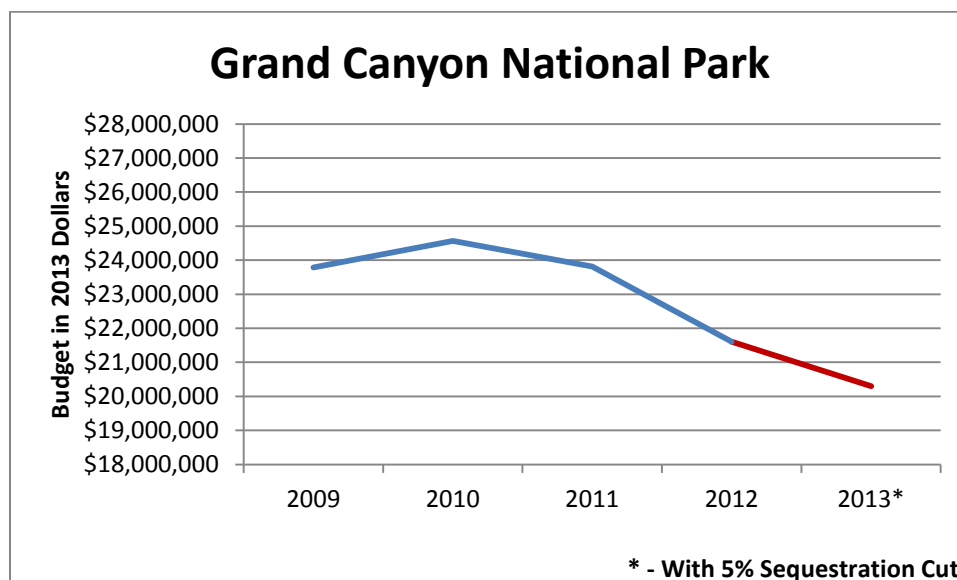
The world-famous Grand Canyon in Arizona was carved out of ancient layers of rock over millions of years by the Colorado River. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$467 million in surrounding communities, supporting almost 7,400 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 4.4 million visitors last year, must cut \$1.6 million from a 2012 budget of \$21.4 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park is not filling vacant positions (accounting for \$500,000), is reducing its seasonal workforce, and is freezing staff travel, training and overtime.

These cuts mean less service for visitors. Visitor centers will be open two hours less per day, impacting nearly 500,000 visitors who won't have access to a park ranger during those hours. Visitors can expect longer waits at entrance stations and for backcountry permits. And the park will reduce its cleaning of restrooms by half, from twice a day to once a day.

Educational or interpretive programs also will be cut by a third in the park and by half at the park's north rim, and park rangers will no longer travel to classrooms, meaning about 10,000 students won't receive educational programming.

Finally, the park won't be able to open roads as quickly after extreme weather events and will be forced to delay "emergency and scheduled repairs to buildings, roadways, rim and inner canyon trails, camp sites, and overlooks... causing further damage and deterioration," according to a letter to park stakeholders.

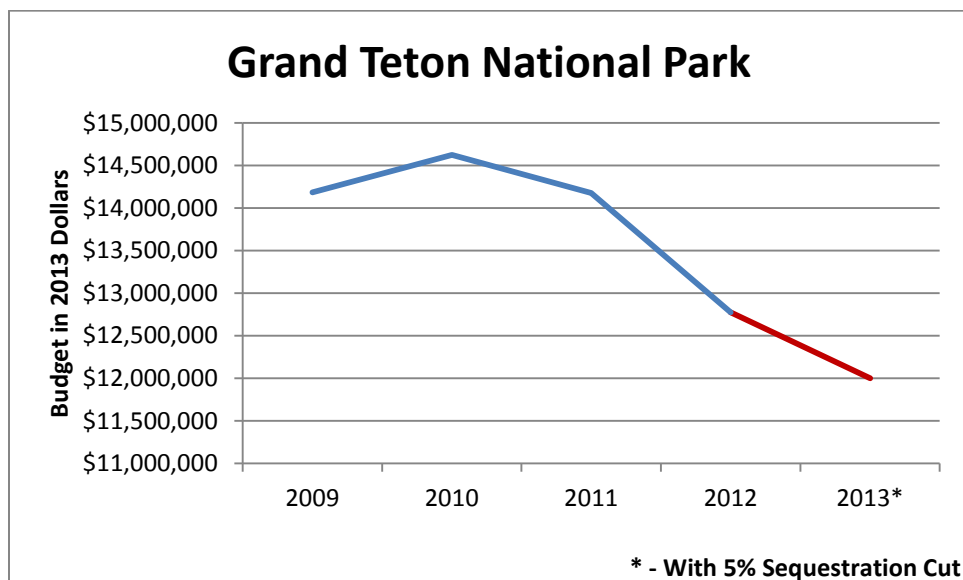


## Grand Teton National Park

Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming is famous for its high mountain peaks and pristine lakes. The John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, which is managed by park, connects to Yellowstone National Park, which is just 10 miles to the south of Grand Teton. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$436.4 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 6,300 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.7 million visitors last year, must cut \$700,000 from a 2012 budget of \$12.6 million because of the sequester (this includes funding for the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway). To meet this cut, the park is hiring 26 fewer seasonal employees (90 seasonal employees are hired normally from the park's base funded appropriation), including educational or interpretive positions, law enforcement rangers, fire personnel, and maintenance workers, and may not fill three vacant permanent positions, including a radio systems operator for law enforcement.

Because of these cuts, a visitor center at the Lawrence S. Rockefeller Preserve, which just opened in 2008, will be closed for the summer; another visitor center at one of the park's main attractions, Jenny Lake, will be opened for limited hours and will close in late August instead of September; an information center between Yellowstone and Grand Teton will be closed; and 20 campsites along the Grassy Lake Road will be closed. Some remote areas also will be closed to vehicles due to lack of staff available to clean restrooms or do trash pickup (including Spalding Bay, Schwabackers Landing and Two Ocean Lake), and the park may be slower in responding to emergencies—the park conducts 75 search and rescue missions a year.

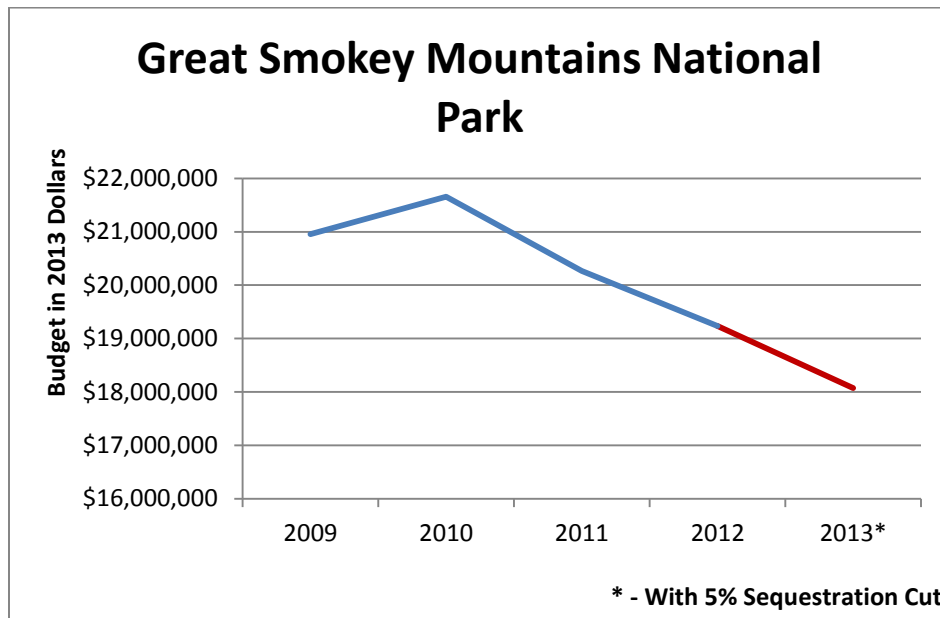


## Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Great Smoky Mountains National Park spans more than 520,000 acres in the Appalachian mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$819 million in surrounding communities, supporting 11,418 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 9.7 million visitors last year, must cut more than \$950,000 from its 2012 budget of \$19 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park will not fill 10 vacant permanent positions, including the deputy superintendent, and six seasonal positions, including park rangers and maintenance workers.

Consequently, the park is closing several campgrounds and picnic areas on the park's periphery, delaying opening of 10 other campgrounds and five horse camps by a month, and cutting ranger patrols of backcountry areas. Reductions in staff and resources also have slowed repairs of roads that were washed out in January flooding.



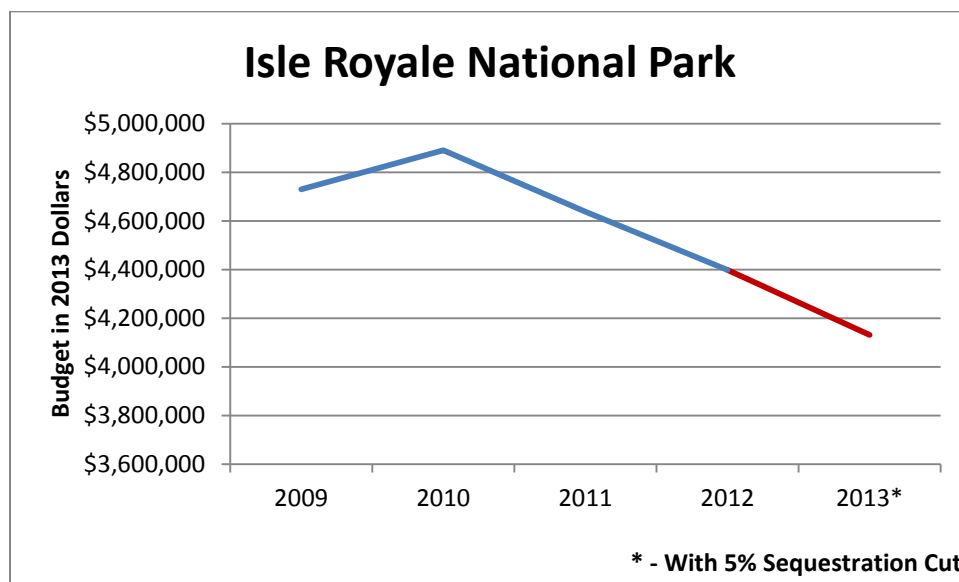
## Isle Royale National Park

Isle Royale National Park in Michigan is on the largest island in Lake Superior and is known for its wolves and moose, which are the subjects of the world's longest running predator-prey study. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$2 million in nearby communities, supporting 30 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted nearly 17,000 visitors last year, must cut \$217,450 from its 2012 budget of \$4.35 million because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park is not filling seven permanent positions, including law enforcement positions and a drinking water treatment operator (although the park is appealing to Park Service headquarters for permission to fill this position for health and safety reasons), and is cutting seasonal positions in half, including positions in law enforcement, education (or interpretation) and resource management.

Because of these staff reductions, the park is shutting down several facilities and reducing its law enforcement presence and visitor services. The park will close two ranger stations and leave the busiest park campground unattended, weakening the park's emergency response capabilities and reducing campground patrols and maintenance. The park also will close the popular Edison Fishery, a commercial fishery that includes seven buildings, which could not be protected with the staff reductions.

Educational programming is also being cut significantly. The park will cancel spring programs in local schools, affecting 5,300 students who would normally be able to receive educational programming. The park also is eliminating programs at the local library, affecting another 1,300 children, and reducing its participation in shows and special events, affecting 4,500 visitors and area residents.



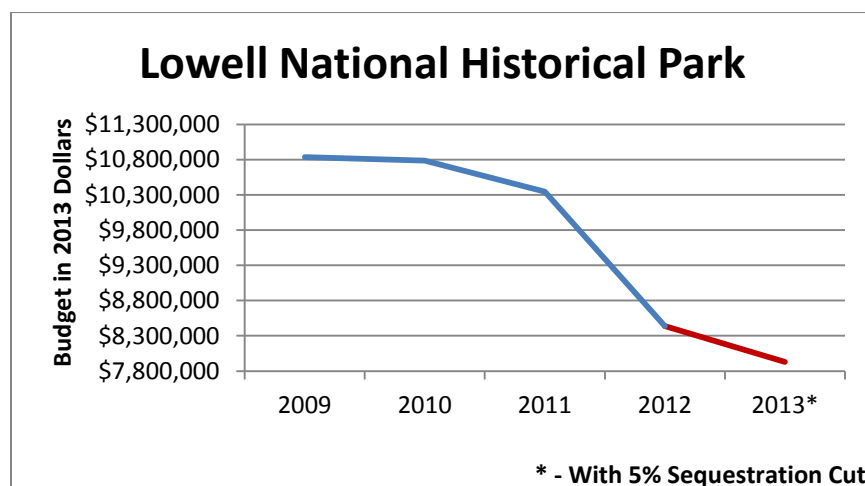
## Lowell National Historical Park

Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts preserves textile mills and other historic structures of the Industrial Revolution. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$35.8 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 400 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted almost 540,000 visitors last year, must cut \$414,220 from its 2012 budget of \$8.35 million. To meet this cut, the park is cutting seasonal positions and is not filling several vacant permanent positions. These staff reductions affect the visitor experience in a number of ways. The park will defer cleaning, repair and maintenance of four museum exhibits, which attract about 100,000 visitors and 50,000 students a year, and customer service and park facilities may suffer because of staff reductions in tech support and contract management. Guided trolley tours also will be cut back, meaning about 1,600 visitors will not be served, and a seasonal weaver will not be hired for the “living history exhibit” that features 100 working looms and draws about 59,000 visitors annually.

A number of programs that engage the surrounding community and underserved youth are also being cut. In particular, the park is:

- Eliminating a theater program that employs 10 youth from Lowell’s recent immigrant populations
- Eliminating a volunteer coordinator position, resulting in fewer opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the Lowell Folk Festival
- Eliminating two positions for underserved youth interns to assist with the folk life festival
- Eliminating at least five cultural “Folk Life Series” programs serving about 150 to 300 local residents
- Reducing funding and staff support for The Tsongas Industrial History Center, a partnership with the University of Massachusetts Lowell that offers workshops and tours for students
- Reducing funding for a program called “Public Matters: Lowell’s Emerging Leaders,” which trains 20 local residents in public stewardship





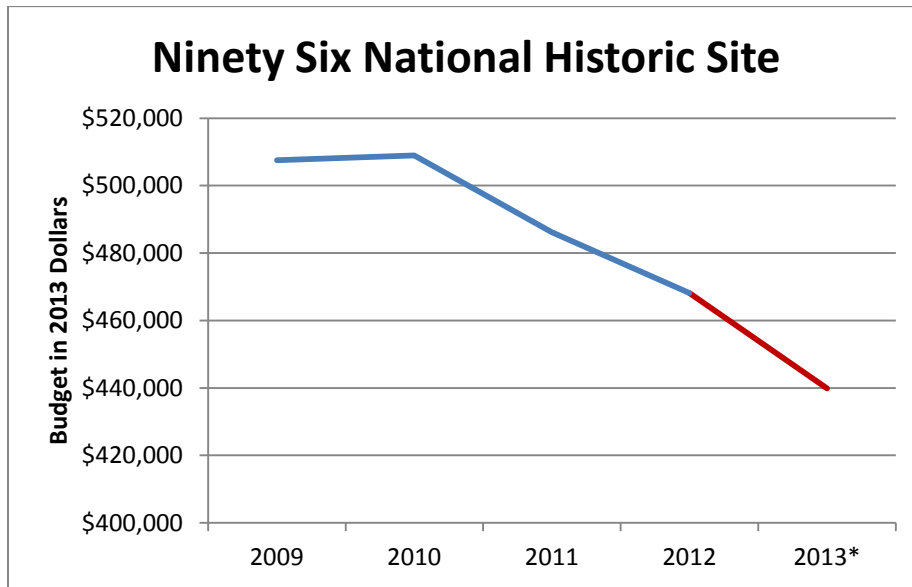
## Ninety Six National Historic Site

Ninety Six National Historic Site in South Carolina is the site of an 18<sup>th</sup> Century settlement and two Revolutionary War battles. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$3.7 million in surrounding communities, supporting 50 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted more than 73,000 visitors last year, must cut about \$23,000 from a 2012 budget of about \$460,000 because of the sequester. To meet this cut, the park is eliminating two educational (or interpretive) positions out of a typical seasonal staff of three and a half.

The small park only has five permanent staff, so such a reduction is forcing the park to cut hours and reduce educational programming for local students. The park is only open five days a week (instead of the usual seven for the peak season from March through August); park visitation is being cut from eight hours a day to six hours a day; and Saturday educational programming is being eliminated.

Consequently, the park expects 28,000 fewer visitor contacts than last year, a 40 percent reduction. The park also expects to reach 350 fewer students because of reduced outreach to local schools. Moreover, the park's efforts to maintain and restore the site and combat invasive non-native vegetation and wild hogs will be impaired.

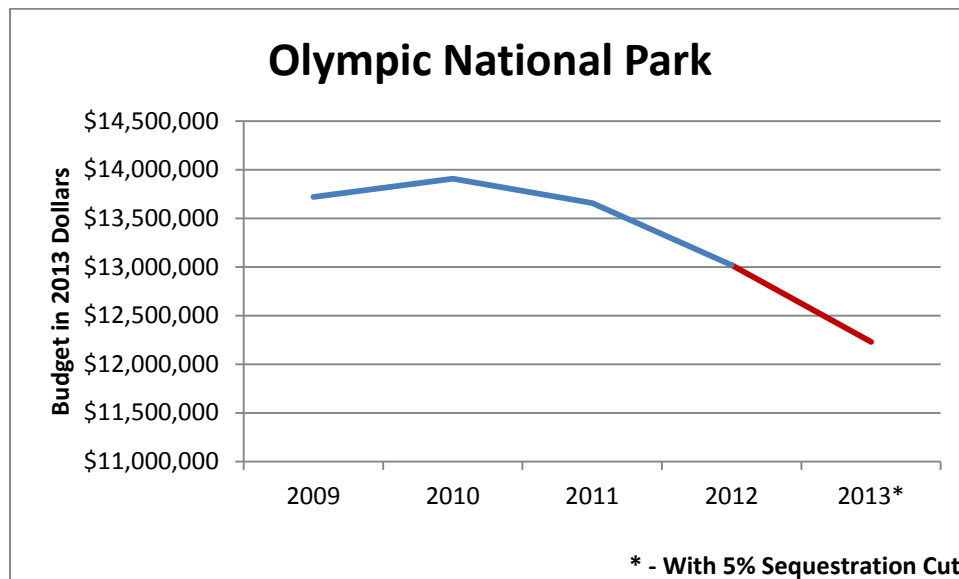


## Olympic National Park

Olympic National Park in Washington state spans nearly one million acres across temperate rainforest, glacier-capped mountains and the Pacific coast. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$115.3 million in surrounding communities, supporting almost 1,500 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.8 million visitors last year, must cut \$643,700 from its 2012 budget of \$12.9 million. Consequently, the park decided to close two campgrounds and, in some areas, wait for snow to melt instead of plowing. This wait was expected to cause a roughly six-week delay in opening facilities on snowed-in roads, affecting about 4,000 to 5,000 people.

The park also is not filling 11 vacant permanent positions, including law enforcement rangers and maintenance positions, and is reducing its seasonal workforce. With fewer guides and interpreters, the park won't give tours of a major river restoration and dam removal project, which had been popular with visitors in previous years. And with fewer maintenance workers, the park will not open flush-toilet areas and will not service restrooms and pick up trash as frequently. The park also is concerned about its ability to respond if it turns out to be a bad fire season.



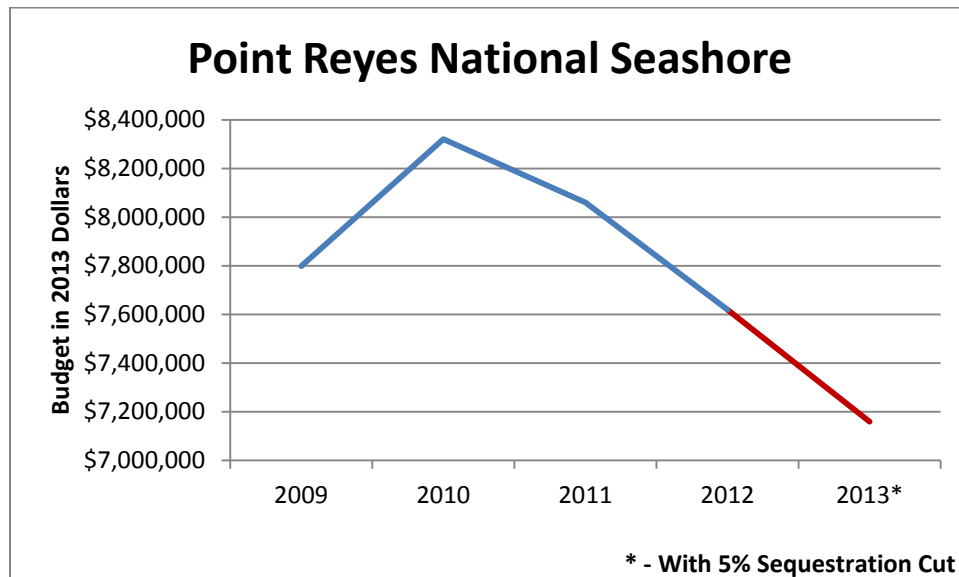
## Point Reyes National Seashore

Point Reyes National Seashore on the northern California coast features more than 1,500 plant and animal species and 150 miles of hiking trails. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$93.3 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 1,100 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which attracted 2.4 million visitors last year, must cut \$374,000 from its 2012 budget of \$7.5 million. To meet this cut, the park will not fill seven vacant permanent positions, including the chief of natural resources, a budget official, and law enforcement and interpretive rangers, and will reduce its seasonal workforce.

Because of staff shortages, the park will shut down one of its three visitor centers, close another visitor center an extra day a week (going from five days to four days), and operate the third visitor center at reduced hours.

The park also will provide less educational programming to school children, many of whom visit from the greater Bay Area, and will be unable to provide its usual level of maintenance for visitors. The park may have trouble keeping its trails and roads clear as vegetation grows through the spring. A reduced law enforcement ranger staff also may result in longer response times to search and rescue and enforcement incidents.



## **Shenandoah National Park**

Shenandoah National Park in Virginia is known for its scenic Skyline Drive, which winds through the Blue Ridge Mountains for more than 100 miles. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$73.9 million in the region, supporting 938 jobs (see Appendix B).

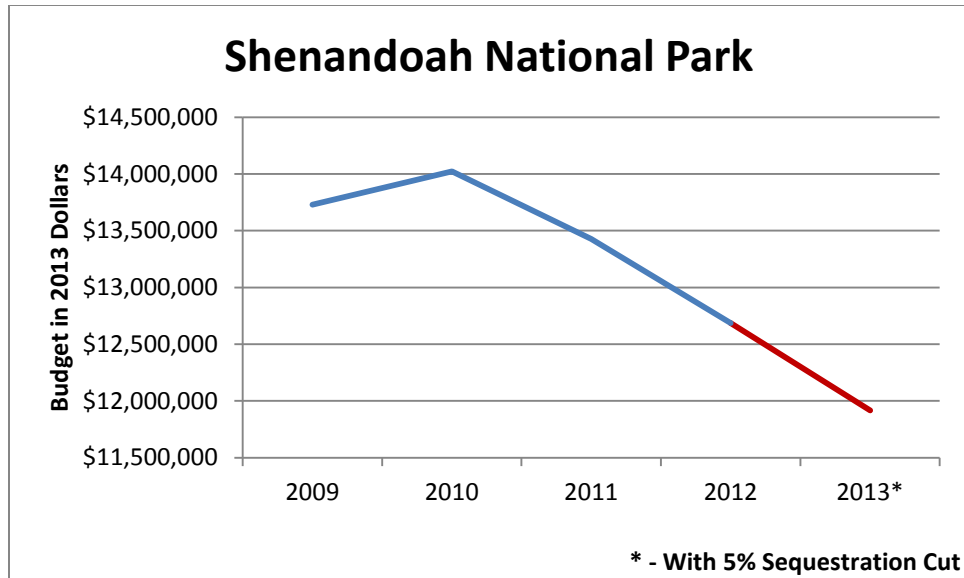
The park, which attracted 1.2 million visitors last year, must cut \$625,000 from its 2012 budget of \$12.5 million. Consequently, the park decided to delay the opening of four campgrounds by two to four weeks (to late April or late May instead of March or April); reduce the hours of operation for its two visitor centers; and open most facilities about a month behind schedule (April 6 instead of March 12). Moreover, some facilities will be open only five days a week until summer, and there will be no ranger-led walks or educational talks in the spring.

The park currently has 16 vacant permanent positions and has seen a reduction in its seasonal workforce. One of the vacant positions is for an ecologist who monitors air and water quality. The park may not meet its water quality obligations and will have difficulty responding to and coordinating air quality issues under the Clean Air Act.

The park, which is a designated Class 1 air quality area, and regulatory agencies are responsible for protecting all air-quality-related values from proposed emissions in new air permit applications in addition to existing sources of pollutants. The park continues to experience obscured visibility from historic overlooks and mountain views, acid rain polluting park streams, ecosystems impacted from contaminants, and visitor and staff health risks during poor air quality days.

In addition, search and rescues may increase and have longer response times. The park has previously sponsored a Preventative Search and Rescue Program in which college students were hired as summer seasonal employees to patrol high-use trails to assist hikers with any problems and prevent emergency situations. Since the program has been in place, the park has seen a 25 percent reduction in search-and-rescue incidents. However, the program will not exist this summer because of the sequester cuts.

A dispatcher position for the park's emergency communications center also remains unfilled. The center provides dispatch service to three parks in addition to Shenandoah, and provides after-hours coverage for an additional park and the NPS Emergency Incident Coordination Center (EICC). The communications center is the point of contact for visitors for emergency and urgent calls for service; provides support to law enforcement officers and other first responders aiding in visitor and resource protection; and assists the EICC with nationwide mobilization of resources to affected NPS units.



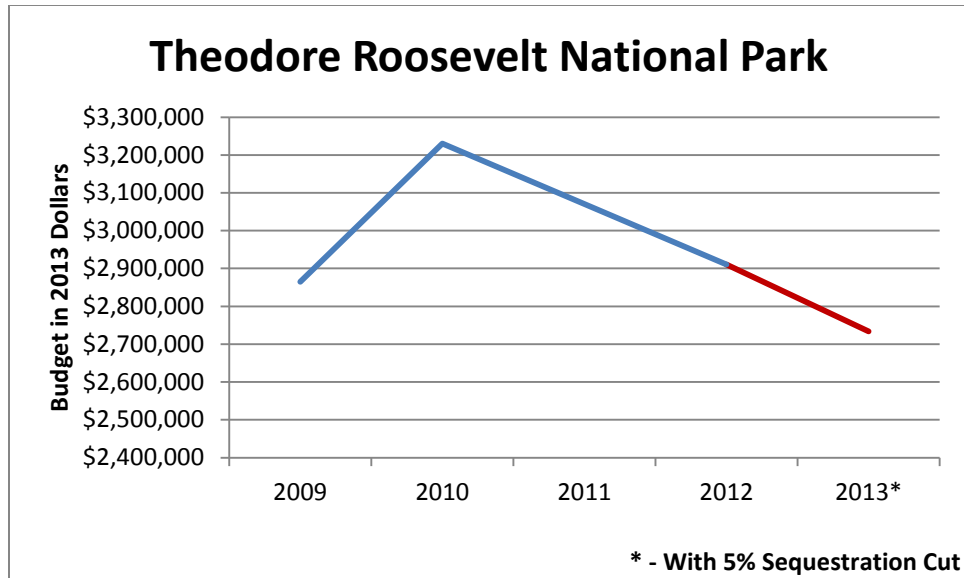
### Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Theodore Roosevelt National Park is comprised of three separate areas of North Dakota badlands and showcases two ranch homes that were owned by the former president for which the park is named. Visitors to the park in 2011 spent an estimated \$28.3 million in surrounding communities, supporting 431 jobs (see Appendix B).

The park, which had more than 640,000 visitors last year, must cut \$143,000 from its 2012 budget of \$2.9 million. The park currently has five vacant positions, more than 15 percent of the permanent staff. It has delayed hiring for several of these positions, and will be unable to hire two maintenance workers and a botanist this year due to the service-wide hiring freeze. The park also is eliminating seasonal positions in maintenance, law enforcement and visitor education or interpretation, and reducing hours at its visitor centers.

Because of reductions in staff and operations, the park expects that about 10,000 fewer visitors will receive educational programming at its south visitor center (a 75 percent reduction from the previous year) and almost 3,000 fewer students will receive educational programming either at the park or in classrooms visited by park rangers.

The park originally expected to close its Painted Canyon visitor center, which is located at an interstate rest area and visited by more than 280,000 visitors a year, but ultimately found savings to open it for a short season from late May to September (the visitor center is normally open from April 1 to November 11).



### War in the Pacific National Historical Park

War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam preserves World War II battlefields, trenches and structures along sandy beaches that are open to visitors. Visitors to the park in 2010 spent an estimated \$7.6 million in surrounding communities, supporting more than 80 jobs.<sup>4</sup>

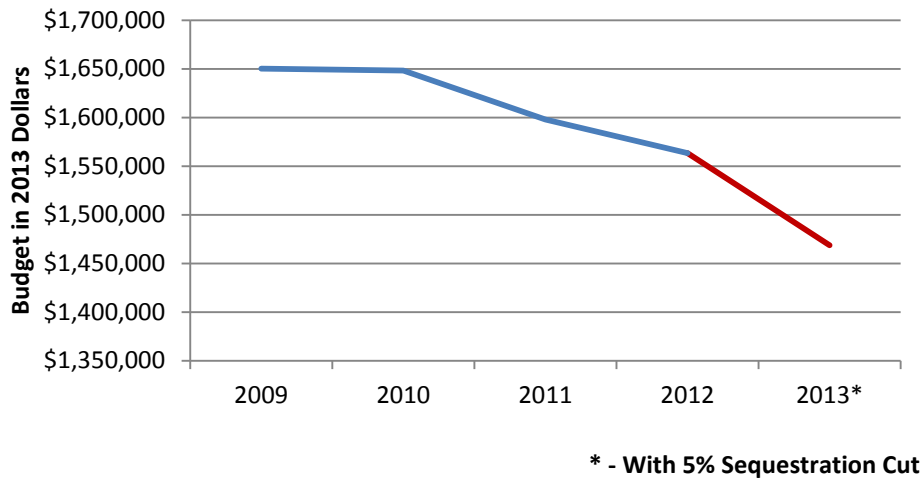
The park, which attracted almost 256,000 visitors last year, must cut \$76,000 from its 2012 budget of \$1.5 million. To meet this cut, the park delayed filling vacant permanent positions, including a chief ranger position (which was recently filled after the delay), and is cutting staff training and travel.

Because of the staff reductions, the park is cutting back on educational programming for school groups; reducing environmental monitoring, including of the island's marine life and coral reef; postponing fire training; and reducing mowing and landscaping of the grounds. The park also conducts summer camps for students in elementary school, middle school and high school, which may have to be reduced because of the sequester cuts.

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<sup>4</sup> 2010 estimates are used here instead of the latest 2011 estimates used for other parks because of a data error in the park's 2011 estimates.

## War in the Pacific National Park



## Appendix B: Economic Benefits of Highlighted Parks<sup>5</sup>

Park Unit	Visitor Spending 2011		Impacts of Non-Local Visitor Spending		
	All Visitors	Non-Local Visitors	Jobs	Labor Income	Value Added
Assateague Island NS	\$151,195,000	\$143,513,000	1,957	\$48,550,000	\$93,783,000
Boston NHP	\$93,996,000	\$90,797,000	1,144	\$47,138,000	\$78,167,000
Bryce Canyon NP	\$115,066,000	\$113,928,000	1,726	\$32,695,000	\$64,683,000
Cape Cod NS	\$174,980,000	\$138,812,000	1,739	\$56,607,000	\$102,574,000
Casa Grande Ruins NM	\$2,282,000	\$2,142,000	30	\$930,000	\$1,602,000
Curecanti NRA	\$41,288,000	\$36,075,000	450	\$8,808,000	\$18,313,000
Denali NP and Preserve	\$160,010,000	\$160,010,000	2,669	\$69,258,000	\$111,362,000
Everglades NP	\$146,784,000	\$141,069,000	2,336	\$83,242,000	\$140,066,000
Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania	\$48,113,000	\$44,735,000	618	\$15,068,000	\$28,167,000
George Washington Birthplace NM	\$3,569,000	\$3,275,000	44	\$871,000	\$1,696,000
Glacier NP	\$97,715,000	\$93,928,000	1,337	\$30,590,000	\$55,206,000
Golden Gate NRA	\$289,700,000	\$119,573,000	1,566	\$62,428,000	\$107,537,000
Grand Canyon	\$467,257,000	\$467,257,000	7,361	\$194,112,000	\$346,447,000
Grand Teton NP	\$436,416,000	\$432,295,000	6,352	\$158,759,000	\$292,497,000
Great Smokey Mountains NP	\$818,886,000	\$792,559,000	11,418	\$293,668,000	\$528,578,000
Isle Royale NP	\$2,098,000	\$2,098,000	30	\$524,000	\$1,049,000
Lowell NHP	\$35,818,000	\$33,303,000	408	\$16,351,000	\$27,109,000
Ninety Six NHS	\$3,711,000	\$3,450,000	50	\$946,000	\$1,793,000
Olympic NP	\$115,317,000	\$105,561,000	1,497	\$28,293,000	\$59,819,000
Point Reyes NS	\$93,317,000	\$84,981,000	1,105	\$43,524,000	\$75,171,000
Shenandoah NP	\$73,908,000	\$65,113,000	938	\$22,465,000	\$41,855,000
Theodore Roosevelt NP	\$28,318,000	\$26,881,000	431	\$8,784,000	\$15,313,000
War in the Pacific NHP (2010 data <sup>6</sup> )	\$7,637,000	\$7,109,000	85	\$3,514,000	\$5,670,000

<sup>5</sup> National Park Service, “Economic Benefits to Local Communities from National Park Visitation, 2011,” February 2014, available at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/NPSSystemEstimates2011.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> 2010 estimates are used for this park instead of the latest 2011 estimates used for other parks because of a data error in the park’s 2011 estimates.