

Conservation group asks White House to commit to National Parks

By Ashlie Rodriguez, Los Angeles Times

Conservation groups have warned that parks “cannot survive” unless the White House redoubles the resources needed to maintain them.

Using data from a new study released Tuesday on the state of national parks, the National Park Conservation Association and the Center for Park Research said the health of natural and cultural resources within national parks is fading, while a “host of new and long-standing threats” is rising, such as declining air quality, polluted waterways and decreased diversity of species.

“These parks are in jeopardy,” said Ron Tipton, NPCA senior vice president. “We are concerned about the condition of park resources, but we also believe there are solutions to all these challenges. We believe there is hope and opportunity.”

NPCA called on President Obama to sign an executive order that would recommit the federal government to the conservation of national parks using the study’s recommended policies. They are also calling on Congress to provide \$600 million for restoring ecosystems and habitats.

Tom Kiernan, president of the NPCA, pointed out parks are receiving two-thirds of what they need. Funding parks amounts to “one-thirteenth of 1% of the national budget. Cutting funds or not providing funds is not going to impact the deficit.” Kiernan said parks are an economic investment, with a \$4 million return annually. The parks system generates \$13.3 billion in economic activity, according to NPCA.

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