

National Park Service's befuddled funding

By Phil Taylor, High Country News

As the Park Service celebrates its 100th anniversary, lack of funding threatens its ability to fulfill its basic mandate to preserve America's iconic scenic, historic and recreational sites for the public's enjoyment.

Congress has been tightening the agency's purse strings. Annual appropriations, which make up about 88 percent of its roughly \$3 billion budget, declined 8 percent between 2005 and 2014 after adjusting for inflation, according to a December report from the Government Accountability Office.

As a result, park superintendents are being forced to do more with less – particularly when it comes to staff. “What options do superintendents have?” says Denis Galvin, a Park Service retiree who served as deputy director under presidents Reagan, Clinton and George W. Bush. “You've got to pay the electric bill. You've got to pay your suppliers of materials. The only thing a park superintendent can really do is not hire people.”

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