

Restoring America's National Parks

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia enjoys the economic, recreational, and cultural benefits of the National Park System, which includes eight park units in the state.

National park sites in West Virginia are part of a system that encompasses 84 million acres across the country. Established by Congress in 1916, the National Park Service (NPS) manages and maintains more than 400 nationally significant sites in all 50 states and several territories. National parks are a mosaic of wild landscapes, historic and cultural sites, scenic byways, trails, military parks, and monuments that celebrate and commemorate remarkable people and America's heritage.

Unfortunately, more than 100 years after its creation, NPS is struggling to maintain many of its facilities. The agency currently faces a deferred maintenance backlog that is estimated to be \$11.9 billion based on FY2018 data.

Why is there Deferred Maintenance?

- Aging infrastructure: many park facilities and systems are 50-70 years old and need updating
- Record visitation—approximately 318 million visitors in 2018—causes wear and tear on resources
- Unreliable funding for deferred maintenance

What is Deferred Maintenance?

Deferred maintenance is work that is not completed at required intervals to ensure acceptable facility conditions. If work is delayed for more than a year, it is typically considered deferred. Examples of repairs include:

- Crumbling roads and bridges;
- Unsound buildings, including historic structures;
- Outdated wastewater and electrical systems;
- Neglected military sites; and
- Deteriorating monuments and memorials.

National Parks in West Virginia

In 2017, over 1.6 million visitors enjoyed national parks in West Virginia. From New River Gorge to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia saw \$72.8 million spent in gateway communities. That spending supported 1,081 jobs and added a cumulative benefit of \$84 million to the state economy – money that helps businesses, schools, and families.

Despite the importance of national parks to West Virginia's economy, they need more than \$61 million in infrastructure repairs. To keep national parks in West Virginia strong and vibrant, and to capture the benefits they provide to the state, restoration must be a priority.



NPS Deferred Maintenance in West Virginia - FY2018

Appalachian National Scenic Trail*	\$ 18,875,476
Bluestone National Scenic River	\$ 60,247
Gauley River National Recreation Area	\$ 2,917,701
Harpers Ferry Center	\$ 7,883,693
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park**	\$ 9,577,986
Historic Preservation Training Center**	\$ 1,294,918
New River Gorge National River	\$ 21,079,428
Stephen T. Mather Training Center	\$ 158,754
Total.....	\$ 61,848,204

*Appalachian NST crosses multiple states. The park unit's total deferred maintenance is recorded in West Virginia, where the park headquarters is located.

**Total deferred maintenance for multi-state parks: Harpers Ferry NHP - \$10,492,318, Historic Preservation Training Center - \$1,920,390.

Questions? Contact Us.

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Why Address Deferred Maintenance?

- **Preservation:** We need to ensure care of our nation's historic and cultural resources.
- **Access:** Without working roads and trails, visitors can't enjoy all our park resources.
- **Revenue:** Local communities are dependent on park-generated tourism dollars.
- **Kids:** Maintaining our national parks is a responsibility Congress owes to future generations.
- **Safety:** Aging infrastructure and building code issues need to be addressed so visitors are provided a safe experience.
- **Cost Savings:** Repairing and updating park facilities can provide significant cost savings to tax payers.

Proven Economic Boosters

- Parks are a top travel destination in the U.S.
- There were an estimated 318 million visits to the national parks in 2018.
- In 2017, park visitors spent an estimated \$18.2 billion in nearby communities and a collective \$35.8 billion boost to the national economy. That spending supported 306,000 jobs.



Photo (above): The damaged interior of the Lockwood House at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. (Photo: The Pew Charitable Trusts)

From sites that are culturally important to Native American tribes or that honor those who served in our military, to parks that commemorate painful aspects of the Civil War, Japanese internment, or the Civil Rights movement, our National Park System documents our nation's diverse and evolving history.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure the NPS has the resources needed to maintain park infrastructure, so future generations can enjoy and learn from our national treasures.

Solutions

To address deferred maintenance at NPS sites across the country, Congress should:

- Ensure that infrastructure initiatives include provisions to address park maintenance;
- Provide dedicated annual federal funding for national park repairs;
- Enact innovative policy reforms to ensure that deferred maintenance does not escalate;
- Provide more highway funding for NPS maintenance needs; and
- Create more opportunities for public-private collaboration and donations to help restore park infrastructure.

You Can Help

Ask your federal representatives to support dedicated federal funding and an infrastructure proposal that addresses the deferred maintenance needs within the National Park System.

Thank your senators, Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, at [senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov), for their proven support of dedicated funding of park maintenance needs. To contact your congressman, visit [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and enter your zip code.