

2.3 PROGRAM FUNDING

2.3.1 Overview

The National Park Service receives a specific appropriation by Congress as part of the Construction account to fund the preparation of GMPs for parks and to prepare GMPs or similar comprehensive plans for other areas, such as national trails, when directed by Congress. In FY 2006 the appropriation for general management planning was \$7.2 million. As part of the construction program, GMP funds are “no year” funds, which means they carry over if not obligated. However, if all the funds allotted to a specific project for a specific year are not obligated in that year, the unobligated balances are returned to the program for reallocation to individual projects in future years.

GMP funds are “project” funds and, consistent with NPS policies regarding the use of all project funds, are not available to support salaries of permanent employees outside the Denver Service Center or Harpers Ferry Center. Generally, GMP funds are used to assist a park staff in its general management planning process by enlisting experienced planners (from DSC, the regional office, or a private contractor) to be responsible for most of the plan production elements, including NEPA document development. Park managers and staff are expected to contribute time and effort to the GMP process as part of their normal responsibilities, especially related to leading or participating in civic engagement and public involvement activities.

The GMP program operates primarily on the basis of a NPS priority list (described in greater detail, below). Projects compete for a place on the NPS list by submitting project statements through the Project Management Information System (PMIS) in accordance with the schedule for the Servicewide Combined Call.



~~A small percentage of the annual appropriation for the GMP program is allocated by the Washington office among the regional offices for the purpose of GMP program mission support. These regionally directed funds are often used for plan amendments and work on foundation statements.~~

2.3.2 GMP Servicewide Priority List

The GMP Servicewide Priority List is developed for a five-year time frame. Projects are evaluated and prioritized by a panel representing each region and program area in the PLG, using the “Choosing by Advantages” (CBA) methodology. Five factors are used to evaluate the advantages of the projects:

- need for fundamental direction, or change in direction, for management of the park
- specific resource management issues
- specific visitor use issues
- specific park operational issues
- other advantages to the National Park Service (e.g., projects that will be a prototype for other NPS plans illustrating creativity and innovation, potential

for the project to address issues in several NPS units that are geographically or thematically linked)

The CBA process produces a list in order of the advantage/cost ratio for each project. Regional priorities are not part of the system for determining the Servicewide Priority List.

The priority list is usually divided into three bands of small, medium, and large projects so that a mix of different types of parks can be served. Although the list provides the basis for setting priorities, decisions about the sequencing of projects allow for consideration of other factors, such as readiness of park staff, availability of data, coordination with other agencies, and local interests. This means that in any year the top 5 or 10 projects in each band might be eligible for funding, and that project 6 might proceed before project 4. However, project 20 would not be allowed to proceed before the higher priority jobs had an opportunity to begin.



Add a new section

2.4 Consultation with the Washington Office in the Development of GMPs

Appendix A-1 describes the Division of Park Planning and Special Studies procedures for consultations on GMPs. As the appendix and table 2-1 note, the primary purpose of consultation with the Washington Office is to ensure NPS senior program managers and leaders agree with major policy decisions being proposed in plans, to assure leadership support for the plans, and to assure the plans are consistent with Servicewide policies. To this end, planning teams are encouraged to regularly consult with the Division of Park Planning and Special Studies at key points in the planning process, including the development of project agreements, preliminary alternatives, and the draft and final public documents. These consultations can help avoid potential stumbling blocks and delays, identify the need for briefings of officials, and facilitate required reviews and approvals.

It is recommended that planning teams include the program manager and analysts in the Division of Park Planning and Special Studies on project mailing lists. This will help ensure that the Washington Office stays abreast of ongoing work on GMPs.