

# Public Goods Post

— thinking about the public economy —



This summer, as you may have heard, is the 100th anniversary of the U.S. National Park Service. Yet even as we celebrate the fact that ours was the first country on the globe to establish national parks, our widely-admired stewardship of forests, canyons, mountain ranges, and prairies is facing penury because small-government advocates in a Republican-controlled Congress have for years blocked adequate funding for the National Park Service.

Not only has our system of national parks been burdened with a \$12-billion backlog in essential maintenance costs. Congressional decision-makers have evidently mandated that this system, among the most highly prized of our public goods, should fend for itself, leaving many parks with little choice but to sell their beauty for money. Lacking funds for the upkeep of trails, campgrounds, roads, and visitor centers, some of our most prestigious parks have begun to auction off advertising and “sponsorship” rights to private business.

Read below for the latest on how our honored parks are now at immediate risk of being festooned with corporate banners, logos, and promotions.

## [Corporations Could Soon Advertise in Our National Parks](#) In The Public Interest | May 26, 2016



"The Grand Canyon, brought to you by Budweiser. Verizon signs throughout Yellowstone. The thought of advertising in our national parks is nauseating. But it could happen ... Anything from sponsoring a bench to designing, building, and even operating a park building would be allowed."

## [Yosemite, sponsored by Starbucks? National Parks to start selling some naming rights](#) Washington Post | May 9, 2016

"The policy says park superintendents must perform a number of fundraising duties," said John Garder, budget and appropriations director for the National Parks Conservation Association, the nonprofit advocacy group that lobbies for the parks.

"Does that become a major part of the job?" Garder asked. "Can the Park Service say, 'This person's doing an awesome job protecting bison, but they're not raising enough money?'"

## [Hurting for Cash, U.S. National Parks Turn to Companies](#) Bloomberg | June 17, 2016



"[O]ne of the government's most popular programs, with a record 307 million visitors last year, is showing its age: a record \$12 billion in deferred maintenance ... As the maintenance backlog has grown -- up \$440 million just last year -- the park service has considered new funding options, including changing its policy to allow closer relationships with corporate partners."

"The NPS released a proposed policy directive in March that would allow corporate donors to have their logos displayed inside parks.

The park service waived its long-standing policy against partnering with alcohol companies last year when it entered into a \$2.5 million co-branding agreement with Anheuser-Busch, the world's largest brewery. It waived a separate policy to allow park vehicles to be outfitted with corporate logos, according to a December report by the Government Accountability Office."

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