

# National Park Service (NPS) Land Resources Division (Lands)

Lands is responsible for land acquisition within the legislated boundaries of National Park Units. Funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), land interests may be acquired in fee simple or a less-than-fee interest, to protect park resources. Lands is the official steward of all NPS acreage reports, boundary records, GIS boundary/tract datasets, and legislative maps. Lands is the office to consult with regarding right-of-way applications and permits and is responsible for reviewing, tracking, and reporting on right-of-way permits.

Types of land interest:

- Full and complete ownership (Fee interest) of all the interests in real property
- Limited interest (Less-than-fee) in property, for example – scenic, preservation or conservation easements, timber rights, water rights, rights-of-way, or mineral rights

Lands operates a willing seller program by working directly with voluntary sellers and donors.

## Land Acquisition Process

### Initial Contact

- If your property is within the legislative boundaries of the Park and you are considering the sale of your property or an interest in your property, please contact your Regional Lands Office through your local Park staff. We will meet with you to discuss the real property interests you may like to convey along with our acquisition process. A consultation with an assigned Regional Realty Specialist can determine if your property or interest in property is eligible for acquisition.
- To begin the acquisition process, NPS will provide you with a Property Inspection Certificate, which will allow you to provide property information and give NPS permission to visit your property.

### Title Evidence

- Once we receive your permission, NPS will order preliminary title evidence to determine if there are any title issues on the property that will need to be resolved prior to closing.
- NPS will also review the parcel boundary and legal description and determine if there are any issues with identifying the boundary.

### Appraisal

- NPS will order a federal appraisal to determine the fair market value (FMV) of the property interest (unless you intend to donate your interest and waive the right to an appraisal).
- **NPS cannot offer you less than the appraised FMV. Additionally, NPS cannot offer you more than the appraised FMV without the approval of Congress.**

### Offer and Just Compensation Letter

- NPS will send you a letter stating the FMV and will include an Offer to Sell Form (a contract). The offer will state how long NPS has to accept your offer.

### Environmental Site Assessment

- Federal acquisitions require a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment to determine whether any hazardous substances exist on the property.
- If hazardous substances are found, further examination and approvals may be required.

### Conveyance Documents

- NPS will draft a deed and other required conveyance documents for your review.
- We strongly recommend that you have your own attorney review these documents on your behalf.

### Relocation Benefits

- NPS will help you determine which relocation benefits, if any, apply to your situation. (These expenses include but are not limited to: moving expenses, incidental expenses, replacement housing payments, down payment assistance, etc.)

### In Preparation for Closing

- After the required due diligence is complete and funding and approvals are obtained, NPS will send you an Acceptance Letter notifying you that your offer has been accepted.
- NPS will coordinate with you to sign all required closing documents and will be responsible for paying closing costs.

### Purchase and Closing

- NPS will arrange for the deed to be recorded at the local county office.
- Payment will be made to you upon closing.
- After closing, NPS will send you a notice letter and claim form with respect to potential reimbursable expenses.

