

What is Line-item Construction Funding?

By PATTY NEUBACHER

Line-item construction funding is a specific appropriation within the NPS budget that supports major development activities for units of the national park system, including new construction and repair or rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. A "line-item program" means that there is a line item in the budget justification for each construction project requested. Funds appropriated for a specific line-item project must be spent exclusively on that project.

Line-item funds are *no-year* funds, available until expended. The need for no-year funds essentially defines the type of work the construction appropriation represents—i.e., the work is of a size and complexity that requires a number of years to complete, making the use of annually expiring funds impractical. The work is characterized by long-term planning followed by construction that could extend over several fiscal years.

HOW ARE FUNDS REQUESTED?

Funds for line-item construction projects are requested using a standard NPS form 10-238 and any supporting documentation. The form is used to describe the project and provide a justification and cost estimate for the proposed work. Many parks and field areas are now using an electronic database version of the 10-238 program to develop and store information on all unfunded project needs.

The budget formulation process for a line-item construction project is a *bottom-up* process. That is, parks start the process by originating the 10-238 documents. They develop 10-238s primarily using planning documents as a guide. All requests must be in conformance with policy and planning documents, including general management plans, statements for management, development concept plans, interpretive prospectuses, and servicewide guidelines and directives.

HOW ARE PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED?

Once the 10-238 has been approved by the park superintendent, a park priority number is assigned. The document is forwarded to the field director for review, approval, and assignment of a field area priority number.

Field directors typically assign priorities with the assistance of a priority committee. Membership on a priority committee varies by field area but is characteristically organized with park, cluster, field office, and technical representatives. Once field area priorities are established, the projects are submitted, via the Associate Director, Professional Services, to the project assessment team for ranking.

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