



Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 Status Report

Where's the Money?

The DOI received
\$516 million

under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to respond to disaster relief:

- **\$257.6 million** for the National Park Service (NPS)– construction and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- **\$210.6 million** for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- **\$42.2 million** for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- **\$3 million** for the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA)
- **\$2.5 million** for the Office of Inspector General (OIG)

2017 Disasters

- **Three major hurricanes** made landfall in the United States in quick succession:
 - Harvey – August 25
 - Irma – September 10
 - Maria – September 20
- **9,270 wildfires** in the State of California:
 - Burned about **1.5 million acres**
 - Damaged or destroyed **10,280 structures**

U.S. Department of the Interior Disaster Relief Funds as of September 30, 2020

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season caused widespread damage to critical infrastructure, livelihoods, and property. At the same time, devastating wildfires in California burned for months. On February 9, 2018, the President signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-123), which included funds for expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and for those areas affected by the 2017 wildfires. The act provided the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) with \$516 million to support the needs of its bureaus (see Figure 1). This report provides information on the DOI's funding status as of the end of fiscal year (FY) 2020, including spending information, trends and statistics, top funding recipients, and examples of bureau projects.

Figure 1: Funding Status as September 30, 2020

Business Area	Appropriation/ Transfer (\$)	Obligations to Date (\$)	Expenditures to Date (\$)
NPS*	257,600,000	147,138,524	39,385,395
Construction	207,600,000	97,189,025	37,263,334
SHPO	50,000,000	49,949,499	2,122,061
FWS	210,629,000	185,067,419	44,806,845
USGS	42,246,000	37,354,826	33,081,786
OIA	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
OIG†	2,500,000	1,312,816	1,312,816
Totals	\$515,975,000	\$373,873,585	\$121,586,842

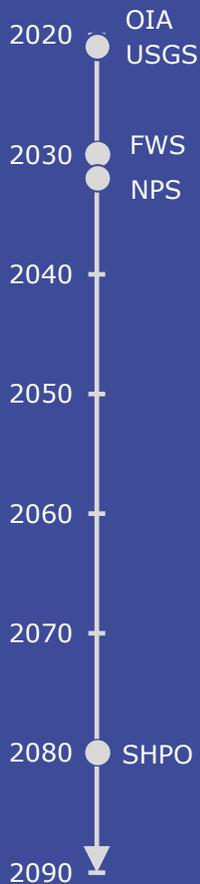
* The NPS received funding for construction related to the disasters and for the SHPO. In this report, we refer to the NPS construction amounts as the NPS.

† We do not provide an accounting of OIG funding in this report but list it here to identify all the funding the DOI received.

Note: The information in this report is intended for transparency; the funding and related details have not been audited or reviewed in accordance with applicable standards.

Projected Expenditure Timeline Based on Current Spending Rates

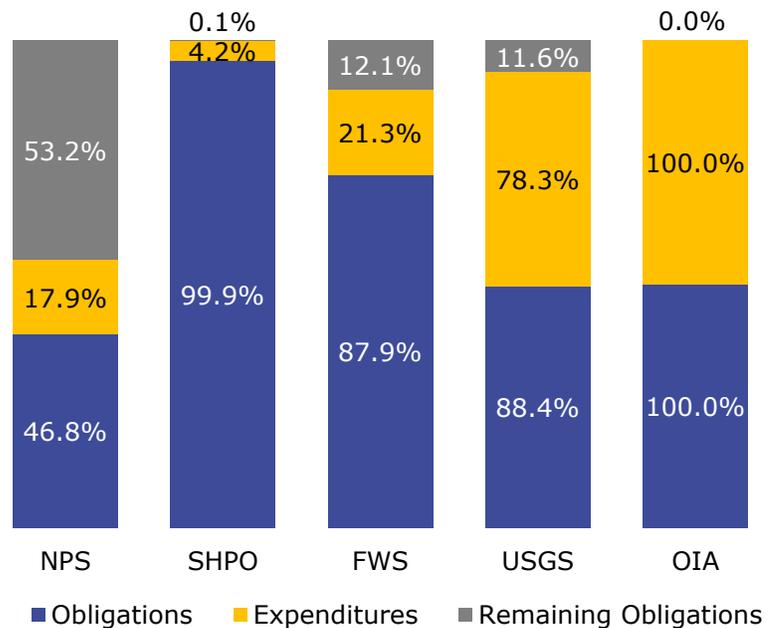
If the bureaus continue at their current spending rates, it could take years to use the funds provided through the act. The figure below illustrates the projected expenditure timelines based on the percentages noted in Figure 2.



While the DOI can quickly obligate funding to the SHPO, historical preservation recovery projects typically take longer to complete due to planning, research, and specific compliance requirements. Per the act, SHPO funds had an obligation deadline of September 30, 2019; all other bureau funding is considered no-year money and remains available until it is expended.

Figure 2 shows the status of the bureaus' obligations, expenditures, and remaining funds.

Figure 2: Status of Bureau Obligations and Expenditures as of September 30, 2020



Details on Procurement and Award Types

Nearly three-quarters of DOI programs and bureaus have made funds available via contracts and grants/financial assistance awards (see Figure 3). A contract is a legally binding document used to acquire goods or services that directly benefit the Government. Financial assistance awards, including grants, support accomplishing a public purpose. In addition to these mechanisms, the DOI obligates funds through other transaction agreements for equipment, personnel, travel, and supplies.

Figure 3: Award Types Used as of September 30, 2020

Award Type	Total Obligations	% of Total Obligations
Contracts	150,473,077	40.2
Grants/Financial Assistance	137,101,419	36.7
Other	86,299,089	23.1
Totals	\$373,873,585	100%

Charge Card Expenditures

The DOI temporarily raised the micropurchase threshold from \$3,500 to \$20,000 after Hurricane Harvey, thus allowing Government charge cardholders more flexibility to procure goods and services without using relatively more time-consuming contracts or financial assistance

Funding of Total Obligations to Date

Recovery often begins while emergency response activities are still in progress. The disaster recovery process focuses on restoring, redeveloping, and revitalizing communities and infrastructure affected by a disaster. The Federal Emergency Management Agency developed the National Disaster Recovery Framework to give flexibility to address the unique recovery challenges of each disaster and provide consistent, timely, and efficient Federal recovery support. Based on *Departmental Manual* parts 900 through 910, the DOI integrates efforts across five preparedness phases: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

The DOI is funding the majority of its recovery work through procurements (e.g., contracts); however, the DOI has also expended labor costs to address the consequences of the disasters. Labor expenses include research, debris clearing, and staff increases. Personnel and benefits costs have amounted to \$20.8 million, or 24 percent of the \$86 million of other acquisitions listed in Figure 3 (this does not include any amounts for the OIG).

The figure below displays the percentage of the \$20.8 million in labor each bureau used.



awards. As of September 30, 2020, Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 charge card expenditures totaled \$7.7 million (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Charge Card Purchase Amounts as of September 30, 2020

Bureau/Office	Total Amount (\$)	% of Figure 1 Total Expenditures
NPS	3,973,599	10.7
FWS	2,193,571	4.9
USGS	1,513,440	4.6
SHPO	45,042	2.1
Departmental Offices	18,699	0.6

Example Bureau Projects

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The FWS received \$210.6 million in funding for construction expenses related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is a landmass of more than 115,000 acres along the Texas Gulf Coast, which includes Matagorda Island, a 38-mile long barrier island. The refuge was significantly affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

The refuge has obligated 95.5 percent of its disaster reconstruction funding; however, it has expended only 16.7 percent of that funding as of September 30, 2020. The refuge has obligated \$19.8 million for its visitor center and campus reconstruction project, which it expects to complete in December 2021. The refuge recently completed the survey phase for a \$20.5 million shoreline protection and hardened infrastructure project, which it expects to complete by January 2022.

Matagorda Island Unit

The Matagorda Island Unit has obligated more than 87 percent of its disaster funding toward recovery projects and has expended 47 percent of that funding as of September 30, 2020. The hurricanes damaged or destroyed 12 structures on the island, including the housing and education center, the boathouse, and the bulkhead along the coastline. The FWS has used a phased approach for projects on the island due to access issues. While debris removal efforts have been largely completed, dredging materials from access points and channels has proved to be challenging. Dredging activities must be completed before construction activities, as any contractor will require safe access to the island with large equipment barges.

Top 5 Recipients

- Ducks Unlimited (\$49,691,827)
- Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries (\$22,418,000)
- Butler-Cohen LLC (\$19,800,000)
- Texas General Land Office (\$15,000,000)
- Puerto Rico SHPO (\$12,847,381)

About Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the stated mission to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North American waterfowl. Ducks Unlimited received six awards under the act, including:

- Shoreline and infrastructure projects at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida
- Hurricane levee projects at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina
- Shoreline and water management facility restoration at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Texas

National Park Service

The NPS received \$207.6 million in funding for construction expenses related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. NPS facilities in the U.S. Virgin Islands sustained significant damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria just 2 weeks apart. Hurricane Irma was the strongest Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever measured, while Hurricane Maria damaged or destroyed 70 percent of the buildings on St. Croix. Together, Irma and Maria devastated much of the Virgin Islands National Park, including the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument.

Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument

The NPS has obligated more than 64 percent of its disaster funding of \$736,100 for the reef; however, it has expended only 0.3 percent of its funding as of September 30, 2020. The monument supports a diverse and complex ecosystem of coral reefs, shoreline mangrove forests, and seagrass beds. The NPS expects to begin working on a plan for the monument focused on restoring marine conditions and visitor services in FY 2021 and expects to complete the project in FY 2023.

Virgin Islands National Park Employee Housing

The storms caused damage to six housing units (approximately 7,000 square feet). The loss of housing resulted in staff relocations off the island and hampered the park staff's ability to manage both the hurricane recovery efforts and the day-to-day business of the park. In September 2020, the NPS obligated \$12.2 million for a construction contract to rebuild housing throughout the park and estimates it will take 2 years to complete the project. Due to the late timing of the obligation on September 21, 2020, this project did not expend any costs by the end of FY 2020.

U.S. Geological Survey

The USGS received \$42.2 million in funding for surveys, investigations, and research. A USGS priority was mapping California's burned areas using remote sensing technology (i.e., Light Detection and Ranging—or LiDAR), which provides precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics. Bureaus use LiDAR data to assess wildfire risk and analyze post-wildfire hazards (e.g., floods and mudflows). The USGS has completed 6 of its 10 LiDAR projects to date, including:

- A \$3.7 million contract for LiDAR mapping and surveying services for approximately 19,990 square miles in northern California, which has been fully expended
- A \$1.3 million contract for LiDAR services covering 9,489 square miles in southern California, which has been fully expended