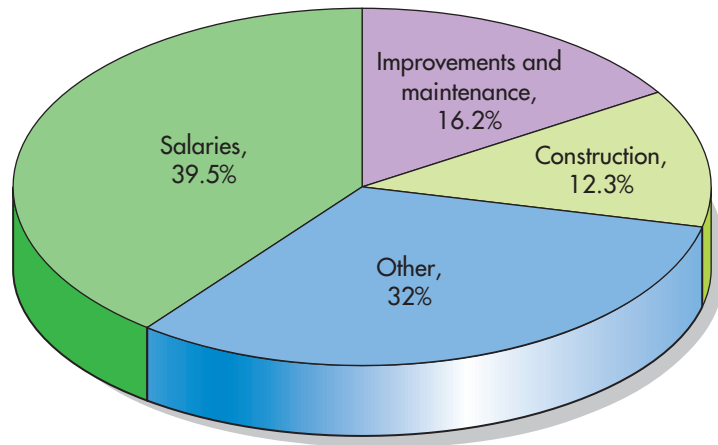


FIGURE 9.3

U.S. National Parks expenditures. *Source:* *Statistical abstract of the United States 2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.



Some attractions such as Nairobi and Tsavo National Parks in Kenya and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania have gained such international acclaim that they serve as some of these countries' primary tourist attractions. Although people from around the world are drawn to these well-known national parks, there are also millions of acres of land that have been set aside for public enjoyment on the state, provincial, and local levels. From these giant parks to the small pocket parks tucked away in the corner of a city, not a day goes by that visitors and locals alike are not relaxing or taking in a little bit of nature.

The U.S. National Park Service is a large operation in itself, with over 28,000 employees and 2.4 million volunteers, and spending over \$2.7 billion to serve approximately 11.7 billion visitors a year.⁸ As a not-for-profit government agency, the National Park Service depends on **appropriations** as well as other sources of revenues. These other sources include admission (user) fees as well as revenues generated from over 650 **concessionaires** that supply a wide range of goods and services from food and lodging to transportation and souvenirs. However, the majority of operating funds (65% in 2008) still come from appropriations. Figure 9.3 shows how these funds are spent. Even with what may seem to a significant government appropriation, the park service is having difficulty finding funds for maintenance and is exploring the possibility of corporate sponsorships in the form of advertising in the parks to generate additional funding. With the number of units in the national park service having increased from 391 to 412 from 2009 to 2016, this funding problem is sure to persist.

Botanical gardens are another important part of the tourism attraction mix for many communities. Some botanical gardens are renowned for their magnificent displays, and they draw visitors from all over the world. The oldest botanical garden was established at the University of Pisa in Italy in 1544. The Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh, the Munich Botanical Gardens, the Montreal Botanical Gardens, and the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis are just a few examples of some of the more popular and frequently visited botanical gardens.

Fairs and Festivals

Fairs and **festivals** hold unique positions in the attractions and entertainment segment of the tourism industry because they are a little bit of everything—heritage attractions, commercial attractions, and live entertainment. A fair was originally a temporary marketplace set up with the idea of stimulating commerce by creating an event that would bring together buyers and sellers. You might recognize the modern-day version of the original fair as a flea market. Festivals, on the other hand, were gatherings devoted to times of celebration.