

— LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND —

50 Years

of Conserving America the Beautiful





Gila National Forest, New Mexico

In 1964...

Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to protect and enhance our nation's incomparable array of natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. It was the culmination of a bipartisan effort to achieve some lasting good for all Americans and the land we share, and it built upon more than a half-century of heroic and visionary work to conserve our natural surroundings. Shortly before his death, President Kennedy had proposed the creation of LWCF as "a sound financial investment" to realize the true potential of "parks, forests and wildlife refuges which were acquired decades ago by the great conservationists." He was thinking of the likes of Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, Stephen Mather and Franklin Roosevelt – Republicans and Democrats who shared a common commitment to the places we all care about and rely upon.



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act into law on September 3, 1964.

"The land and water conservation bill assures our growing population that we will begin, as of this day, to acquire on a pay-as-you-go basis the outdoor recreation lands that tomorrow's Americans will require."

- President Johnson

Fifty years later, this report, compiled by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Coalition, examines the first five decades of America's most essential federal conservation program and outlines LWCF's exciting potential for the next 50 years. It highlights the program's widespread successes in protecting our national and state parks, refuges and forests; our working landscapes from forests to ranches; our cultural resources and historic sites; recreational opportunities from urban parks to backcountry hunting and fishing access; and essential water resources, iconic scenery, and a broad array of irreplaceable natural resources. These remarkable assets constitute our uniquely American heritage, and together they represent a birthright we cannot afford to lose.

The nation's economic vitality is increasingly tied to outdoor recreation as well, as more of us take advantage of close-to-home recreation with family and friends or experience our national parks and forests. In 1964 when LWCF was enacted, the rising demand for outdoor recreation was recognized; today this demand is spiraling upward faster than we could have imagined. We need to respond before key resource areas are no longer there for our children and grandchildren.

Now we must work together to set a conservation direction to meet our country's needs for the next 50 years, just as we did a half-century ago and a half-century before that. Dynamic population growth will continue, especially in metropolitan areas where outdoor space is at a premium. And challenges to our rural lands and wildlife habitat will require more creative and flexible approaches to achieve our conservation and recreation goals.

This report includes important recommendations to honor the original promise of LWCF, including policy changes to ensure that at least \$900 million in federal offshore energy receipts deposited each year into LWCF is used to fulfill that conservation promise. In the pages that follow, you will see myriad ways in which the program has responded to the evolving needs of communities and landscapes all across America. Working together, we can meet the commitments of our nation's past conservation leaders, and we can secure the future of our nation's unparalleled outdoor resources for the generations to come.


Henry Diamond
Senior Counsel,
Beveridge & Diamond, PC


Ken Salazar
Former Secretary of the U.S. Department
of the Interior and U.S. Senator for Colorado



White River National Forest, Colorado
Jodi Stemler

Policy Recommendations

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition comprises over a thousand organizations—representing the recreation, outdoor industry, landowner, conservation, sportsmen, historic preservation, small business, and veterans communities—working together to support funding and reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in order to meet America’s conservation and recreation needs in the 21st Century. We are pleased to present this report, highlighting a sampling of the unparalleled accomplishments of LWCF during its first 50 years.

While we reflect on LWCF’s tremendous successes, we must also recognize that continued challenges remain in the effort to provide access to recreation and meet other conservation needs for all Americans, and that now is the time to act to reauthorize this successful and popular program. The American population in 2050 is expected to be twice that of 1964. There is continued demand for outdoor recreation opportunities to combat the growing obesity crisis. Critical landscapes can never be replaced when lost.

Recognizing that much more must be done to meet current and future needs, we offer the following recommendations.



Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Blossom Music Center, Cuyahoga National
Park, Ohio. *Roger Mastroianni*

- LWCF should be honestly budgeted at no less than the full, congressionally authorized level of \$900 million annually to ensure that critical natural, historical, cultural and recreational resources are protected around the nation. This funding level—established in 1978 and never indexed for inflation—is the minimum necessary to keep pace with the needs of our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, Bureau of Land Management lands and other federal areas; support the vast network of state, county and neighborhood parks that provide close-to-home open space and public recreation needs; conserve working forests and ranches that maintain water quality and wildlife habitat, public access, and jobs in the woods and on the range; and facilitate appropriate development while protecting critical wildlife habitat.
- No less than the \$900 million deposited each year into the LWCF account from federal offshore oil and gas leasing revenues should be permanently dedicated to this purpose. In fiscal year 2013, the Department of the Interior collected more than \$9 billion from offshore energy production, yet LWCF was funded at only \$306 million in 2014—barely one third of the amount deposited at the Treasury Department for this purpose. Over the life of the program, more than \$18 billion of LWCF’s funding has been diverted into general revenues for other, unintended purposes. Congress should ensure that at least \$900 million, consistent with the underlying asset for asset principle of LWCF, is dedicated annually to long-term protection of our nation’s land and water resources.
- Congress must act to secure a permanent reauthorization for LWCF before it expires in September 2015. Reauthorization should ensure full funding each year for the LWCF at large, while preserving the historic role Congress has played in allocating funds between LWCF’s component programs each year based on demonstrated needs.
- No less than 1.5 percent of annual LWCF funding should be used for opportunities that specifically increase public recreational access. LWCF is essential to making public lands public by securing recreational access, particularly where opportunities for sportsmen and others to access existing public lands are limited or precluded.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund – 50 Years of Conserving America the Beautiful

America the Beautiful. Our great nation is blessed by its natural beauty, and from this abundance we have created a network of conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities that span the breadth of the nation. Our working forests, farms and ranches maintain the traditions of rural communities. Our urban parks, open spaces, trails and bike paths connect people with the outdoors in cities and suburbs. Families can explore iconic national parks, state parks and wildlife refuges within reach of communities all across the country. Our lakeshores, seashores and winding riverways offer essential water-oriented recreation, while historic battlefields, homesteads and Native American cultural sites provide a connection to our past. Together, these shared outdoor resources are the places where we hunt and fish, backpack and camp, rock climb and paddle, experience our heritage, and find solace in the wild beauty of America. What’s more, they drive an outdoor recreation and tourism-based economy that provides homegrown local jobs for millions of Americans.



Wildlife viewing in Texas’ Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge. *Eric Swanson*

For 50 years, one program above all others has been instrumental in conserving America the Beautiful and providing opportunities for Americans to get outside and recreate—the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Congress created LWCF to provide our nation a funding tool to conserve natural areas, culturally and historically significant landmarks, and outdoor recreation opportunities. The vision was simple—to reinvest a portion of energy revenues from offshore oil and gas that belong to us all into conservation of our land, water and recreation resources we all need. Since the first year of funding in 1965, LWCF has invested over \$16 billion in land and water conservation and outdoor recreation across every state and several of the territories.

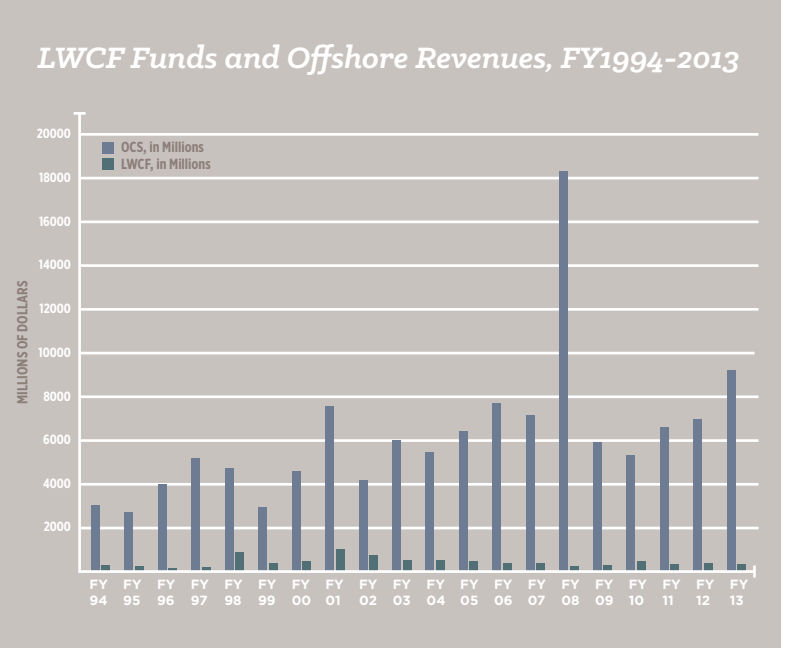
Over its 50 years, LWCF has met a spectrum of diverse local and regional needs. It has conserved millions of acres in our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, historic and scenic trails, wild and scenic river corridors, national battlefields and monuments, and other federal lands. LWCF’s State and Local Assistance Program supports close-to-home parks and recreation in almost every county in the nation. The Forest Legacy and Cooperative Endangered Species (Section 6) Programs fund federal partnerships with landowners, states, local governments, and non-profit partners to conserve working forests and private lands. The Highlands Conservation Act targets LWCF funding to help secure the drinking water for major northeast cities. Finally, the American Battlefield Protection Program provides states and localities with matching funds to preserve the sacred ground of our history before it is lost forever.

This powerful array of tools has produced many successes over 50 years, but low and unpredictable funding has inhibited the true strength of the program. Meanwhile, demand for investment in our nation’s most treasured natural, cultural and recreation resources has skyrocketed. With increasing land values, population growth, and the development of the rural-urban fringe, open spaces are rapidly being converted to other uses—and the cost to protect them is on the rise. America’s special places and community treasures are often lost because there is simply not enough LWCF money to go around.

Asset for Asset Conservation

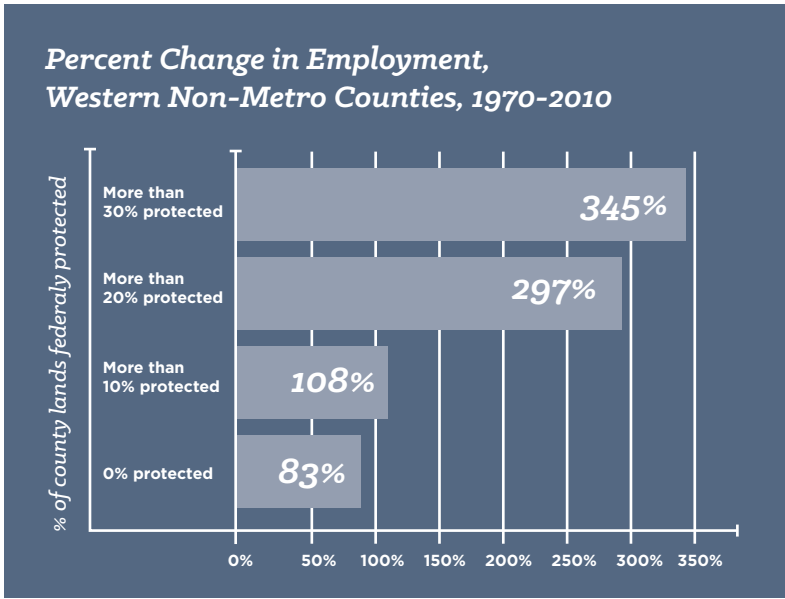
The Land and Water Conservation Fund is based on the commonsense idea that a small portion of revenues from the development of non-renewable offshore energy resources, belonging to all Americans, should be paid back by conserving precious landscapes and close-to-home parks and recreation for the public to use and enjoy. These are not general tax dollars, instead, they represent a generations-old, asset for asset commitment to reinvesting in conservation. And the land conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities supported by LWCF have been paying dividends for communities ever since—the very definition of a smart investment.

However, funding allocated to LWCF programs has dropped even as the revenues from offshore development, and the cost of conservation, has gone up. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average farm real estate value grew almost five times from the mid-1980s to 2013. At the same time, offshore oil and gas revenues have increased dramatically, so now even the currently authorized annual level of \$900 million is less than 10 percent of total revenues. If it was adjusted for inflation, the original \$900 million deposited into LWCF each year would be over \$3.5 billion!

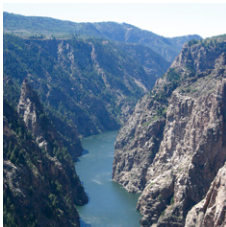


Public Lands and Recreation Benefit Communities

According to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, outdoor recreation, natural resource protection and historic preservation are a \$1.7 trillion a year economic engine that supports 12.8 million American jobs. As a result, public lands, open space and community parks have a positive impact on local communities. The National Park Service found that the more than 282 million visits to park units in 2012 generated \$14.7 billion for gateway communities. And research by Headwaters Economics in 2012 found that Western counties with federally protected public lands showed a significant employment increase and higher salaries, primarily in service-based industries that see outdoor opportunities as a lure for the best and brightest employees.



LWCF’s Toolbox



Federal Land Management Agency Projects

Within the current boundaries of our national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and many other public land units, there is still a great deal of privately owned land (over 2.6 million acres within the National Park System, for example). While not all of this land can or should be acquired, many such inholdings are critically important from either a visitor or a natural resource perspective. LWCF allows purchase of property or scenic/conservation easement interests from willing sellers, protecting against incompatible uses while also allowing private owners to continue traditional land-based activities like forestry and agriculture, or to invest in land better suited to development. Agency personnel and local partners work to identify pressing needs and conservation opportunities, elevating projects to the national level for prioritization according to set criteria, resulting in national rankings included in the president’s budget proposal each fiscal year. Congress then decides upon a set level of LWCF appropriations for each agency, enabling certain projects to proceed. Annual need far outstrips that available annual funding, placing undue burdens on landowners and leaving many key resource areas at risk.

Within the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are four land management agencies:

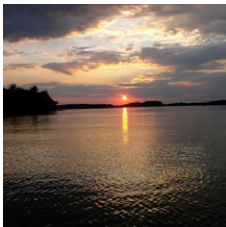
- The National Park Service (NPS)** utilizes LWCF funding to protect against development at our national parks, seashores and lakeshores, and recreation areas; national historical parks and historic sites; national battlefields and military parks; and the national trails system.
- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** utilizes LWCF funding to conserve land within its system of national conservation lands including national monuments, national recreation areas, areas of critical environmental concern, and special recreation management areas.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)** utilizes LWCF funding for conservation within national wildlife refuges, hatcheries, and other FWS areas, and increasingly to acquire easements for the purpose of protecting wildlife habitat on privately owned lands in designated conservation areas.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) utilizes LWCF funding to protect land within our national forests and national grasslands.



State and Local Assistance Grants

Administered by the National Park Service, the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program provides matching grants to state, local and tribal governments to create and expand parks, develop recreation facilities, and further local recreation plans. Each year, funds are distributed to every U.S. state and territory using a population-based formula. Ranging from active recreation facilities to natural areas, these funds are a vitally important tool to renovate existing sites, develop new facilities, acquire land for state and local parks, and promote statewide recreation planning. Over 42,000 grants totaling over \$4 billion have supported protection of three million acres of recreation lands and over 29,000 recreation facility projects, driven by local priorities and matched with local dollars, to provide close-to-home recreation opportunities that are readily accessible to all Americans.



Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

Administered by the USDA Forest Service in cooperation with state partners, the Forest Legacy Program is a voluntary program designed to provide conservation value to working forests in the face of development pressure. Using funds from LWCF, the program provides grants to states to permanently protect forested properties through conservation easements or by outright purchases. FLP projects typically restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other public values like clean water, wildlife habitat, and public access for sportsmen and other recreation enthusiasts. Now working in 48 states and territories, the program is highly competitive and focuses on projects with strong conservation partnerships. To date, the program has helped protect almost 2.4 million forested acres in 45 states and two U.S. territories. A total of \$643 million in federal funds have leveraged \$807.7 million in non-federal funds and donations.



Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Idaho
Alex Diekmann



Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (“Section 6”)

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) provides funding to states and territories (as authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) for species and habitat conservation on non-federal lands; local partners match at least 25 percent of project costs. The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Recovery Land Acquisition grants under CESCF are funded through LWCF. The HCP Land Acquisition program promotes voluntary conservation in areas where landowners, states and other stakeholders have agreed on conservation and development goals. Combined with state, local and private contributions toward habitat protection, this competitive grant funding has been an important and effective mechanism to avoid land-use conflicts and to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, providing additional protected habitat while allowing development to proceed in other areas with a minimum of red tape. Recovery Land Acquisition grants similarly provide states and landowners an opportunity to protect habitat essential to listed species as a problem-solving alternative to the regulatory process; grant funds are matched by states and non-federal entities to acquire these habitats from willing sellers in support of approved species recovery plans.



American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP)

In addition to funding the acquisition of sacred ground within the boundaries of existing national battlefields, national military parks, national historical parks, national historic sites and national monuments by the National Park Service, LWCF helps to protect land outside those boundaries through the American Battlefield Protection Program. In cooperation with state, local and private partners, ABPP has protected more than 14,000 acres since 1999 with over \$40 million from LWCF.



Highlands Conservation Act (HCA)

Enacted in 2004 to address the growing need for protection of drinking water supplies in America’s most densely populated metropolitan corridor, the Highlands Conservation Act (HCA) seeks to protect the forested hills running through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania that provide a plentiful supply of clean water to the cities of the Northeast. The HCA authorized funding from LWCF to protect lands with the highest conservation value in the four-state region. Since then, more than \$14 million in LWCF funding has leveraged more than \$35 million in state, local and private matching funds to protect 5,500 acres, providing trails and recreation opportunities as well as safe clean water for the 25 million Americans who live within an hour’s drive.



The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) - Though not previously or currently funded under LWCF, there are proposals to allocate LWCF funds for UPARR in order to meet the growing need for recreation facilities in cities and underserved communities. Between 1978 and 2002, UPARR grants helped bring improvements to parks and playgrounds in 380 communities in 43 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico—from Riverside County California and Lawton Oklahoma to St. Paul Minnesota and Portland Maine.

LWCF and Iconic Places

Visitors from all over the world come to see the grandeur of the Redwoods, Mt. Rainier, the Great Smoky Mountains, the Everglades, the Grand Canyon and so many other national parks and public lands. Many of these most recognizable American places have been protected forever, in part or entirely, through LWCF.

When we picture these places, they are pristine and untouched. But many private landholdings within or near these lands threaten the iconic landscapes with development. Often landowners want to protect their property in perpetuity through public ownership, so that the landscape remains unaltered and accessible for future generations—but without LWCF funding, they are left with no alternative to private sale and development. LWCF has been used to protect viewsheds along the Pacific Crest and Appalachian National Scenic Trails, to acquire inholdings in national parks and forests, and to protect watersheds around our country’s most famous rivers.



Sleeping Bear Dunes, Michigan. Keenan May



Grand Tetons
John Morrow II

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation (Section 6) programs—are being used to conserve thousands of acres and maintain the region’s ranching history. Ongoing priorities include inholdings in Grand Teton National Park where LWCF funding has forestalled potential sale and development of critical lands in the very heart of the park. Throughout the landscape these community-based efforts are securing the public recreation, wildlife, and ranching heritage that makes the Crown of the Continent so unique.



Horman's Path, Acadia
Aimee Beal Church

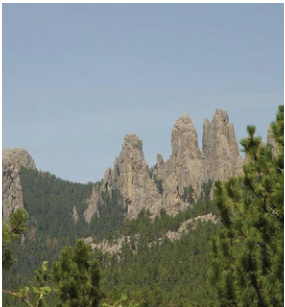
Crown of the Continent – Multi-agency

The landscape known as the Crown of the Continent extends from northern Idaho and Wyoming through Montana to the Canadian border, linking the Greater Yellowstone and Salmon-Selway ecosystems and including Grand Teton, Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Widely regarded as the best opportunity for landscape-scale conservation in America and a model for public-private conservation efforts, like the Montana Legacy Project, this region has recently been a focal point for LWCF investment.

Through LWCF funding, willing-seller inholding purchases are safeguarding spectacular scenery and public access along the Flathead River south of Glacier National Park, and the vital grizzly migration routes and dense forest habitats of the Seeley and Swan Valleys. Key forest inholdings within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem have been secured through LWCF, including the New World Mine acquisition, which resolved a mining threat that could have been devastating to the Yellowstone River and the park itself. Within Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front and Blackfoot River Watershed, conservation easements—largely funded by LWCF as well as the Forest Legacy and

Acadia National Park, Maine – NPS

Acadia National Park is one of America’s most beloved and visited National Parks. People are drawn to Maine’s rugged coastline for its beauty and natural diversity. Playing an integral role in its creation and growth, LWCF acquisitions have helped expand and connect Acadia so visitors can hike its granite peaks, bike historic carriage roads, and enjoy amazing scenery. The recent addition of 37 acres at Lower Hadlock Pond opened up 1,600 feet of lake frontage and a network of trails. LWCF funding has ensured public access to the pond and trails and protected the water supply for the community of Northeast Harbor. There are still a number of private land parcels in Acadia, including highly visible places like Burnt Porcupine and Rum Key Islands that if developed would fundamentally change the character of Acadia National Park forever.



Custer State Park, South Dakota – NPS State and Local Assistance

The first and largest state park in South Dakota, Custer State Park encompasses 71,000 acres of spectacular terrain in the Black Hills. The famous Needles Highway, named for the granite spires that pierce the horizon along the highway, winds through the park past Sylvan Lake. The Iron Mountain Road, which connects Custer State Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial,

passes through the beautiful Black Hills and features three tunnels that frame Mount Rushmore in the distance. The park hosts a yearly buffalo roundup, in which cowboys and cowgirls gather the free roaming herd of over 1,300 bison, helping to maintain a strong and healthy herd. Recreation opportunities include outstanding hunting for elk, deer, antelope and turkey; high quality trout fishing; and hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding trails. Custer State Park has received 23 separate grants from the LWCF state and local assistance program, protecting the rugged and unique scenery of the Black Hills.



Ken Denis

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Oregon and Washington – USFS

The famed Columbia River Gorge stretches for 85 dramatic miles along the Oregon/Washington border just east of Portland. This incomparable river corridor, the only sea-level route carved through the Cascade Mountains, is replete with dramatic cliffs and escarpments, the highest

concentration of waterfalls in North America, dazzling wildflower displays, diverse habitats, and world-renowned windsurfing, fishing, hiking and other recreation opportunities. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation to protect this spectacular resource as America’s first congressionally designated National Scenic Area. Since then, LWCF funding has repeatedly been used to conserve many of the Gorge’s most iconic natural and recreational treasures including critical inholdings near the Crown Point Vista House in Oregon and the remarkable basalt cliffs of Cape Horn in Washington.

50 Years of Wilderness and LWCF

In 2014, 30,000 acres of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore received wilderness designation—becoming the first addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System in more than five years. Voted in 2011 by ABC’s Good Morning America as the most beautiful place in America, the National Lakeshore would essentially not exist without LWCF. Over 85 percent of this pristine area’s powder-soft sandy beaches, crystalline waters, winding rivers, historic farmsteads, and majestic bluffs along the shores of Lake Michigan have been conserved through LWCF—the largest single LWCF investment in any one place. Visitors can enjoy new beachfront access points at Good Harbor Bay and Big Glen Lake, an incredible recreation spot with very few other public access options.

Sleeping Bear Dunes is a stellar example of the connection between the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and the Wilderness Act, which is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. From the vast mountainous landscapes of Alaska to the shores of Maine and nearly all other states in between, LWCF and the Wilderness Act have worked hand in hand to protect the nation’s most wild places for future generations of Americans to enjoy.



Jodi Stemler



Mestizo-Curtis Park, Denver
Darcy Kiefel

LWCF and Close-to-Home Recreation

For the 80 percent of Americans who live in or near a city, neighborhood parks offer the closest connection to nature and an opportunity to get outside to play, exercise and relax. As America’s largest cities are experiencing a growth rate several times higher than the national rate, these urban parks and close-to-home open spaces become more and more important. Urban parks and suburban open spaces play a huge role in attracting and retaining residents and supporting sustained economic growth while also supporting cleaner air and water, more tourism, improved public health, crime reduction, increased property values, and an enhanced sense of community.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund plays a key role in filling the need for close-to-home outdoor recreation. Each year, LWCF provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Funding from LWCF has enabled states and localities to leverage resources and rise to the challenge of providing enough open space to sustain vibrant, healthy communities for residents and visitors. Since LWCF was enacted, the state and local assistance grants program has leveraged \$4 billion in federal grants with over \$8 billion in matching funds to support more than 42,000 park, trail and recreation projects in virtually every county in America.

An active lifestyle, along with other factors, can help to reduce the trend of obesity in our nation’s children—as long as active kids have clean, safe, close-to-home places to go outdoors. From local parks, tennis courts, swimming pools, sport fields or playgrounds to hiking and biking trails on federal lands, these public parks are an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Federal, state and local LWCF projects are making critical contributions toward addressing our nation’s growing public health concerns.



Municipal golf course in Fort Worth, Texas
City Parks Alliance

LWCF in the Lone Star State

Texas is home to eight of the 15 fastest growing cities in the country. To meet their need for outdoor space, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department combines LWCF dollars with state revenues to support numerous grant programs for recreation, parks, trails, ecological restoration and wildlife protection. Examples of this metropolitan collaboration include the multi-phase development of Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin, trail and greenway development promoting connected linear park systems in Dallas and Fort Worth, the development of parks that comprehensively address access and storm/floodwater management in Houston, and the permanent protection of nearly 9,000 acres of natural area at Government Canyon State Park just outside of San Antonio. These and other projects have been instrumental in enhancing the quality of life in Texas amidst its significant and continued population growth.

ALLPLAY, Seymour Smith Park, Omaha, Nebraska

The city of Omaha utilized three separate LWCF state and local assistance grants to acquire and develop Seymour Smith Park, which features several trails, youth athletic fields, and other outdoor recreation activities. Thanks to a recent \$1.5 million investment by the ALLPLAY Foundation, Seymour Smith Park is now also home to the ALLPLAY complex, one of the finest barrier-free sports complexes in the country. The entire complex utilizes barrier-free design concepts that allow people who have mobility impairments and other disabilities to fully enjoy sports and recreation. The complex is open and free to the public during park hours and hosts numerous programs, activities, and events for organizations that provide services for people with disabilities. Without the initial investment and subsequent development provided by LWCF funds, this inclusive community asset might not exist.



Family fishing event, C&O Canal National Historical Park. Curtis Dalpra

Federal Lands, Close-to-Home Nature

The LWCF program also funds land conservation at federal units located in heavily populated areas. For local residents these units are essential, heavily used, easily accessible destinations for afternoon and weekend visits. For out-of-town visitors, these places are centerpieces of a trip to a new city or to visit relatives. A number of these parks were authorized in the 1960s and 1970s and LWCF has played a substantial role in protecting the necessary land for these public jewels. Examples include:

- Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Cleveland, Akron, and Canton, Ohio
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area
San Francisco, California
- Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge
Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
New Orleans, Louisiana
- Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
Detroit, Michigan
- Angeles National Forest
Los Angeles, California
- Bonneville Shoreline Trail (Wasatch-Cache National Forest)
Salt Lake City, Utah
- Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
Atlanta, Georgia
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Minneapolis – St. Paul, Minnesota
- Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
Washington, DC, Maryland and West Virginia



Central Park, New York: A green oasis in the middle of the skyscrapers of midtown Manhattan.

In 2006, Congress passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) dedicating 12.5 percent of royalty revenues from newly authorized offshore energy development in the Gulf of Mexico to the LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants program. While the legislation initially held these additional LWCF funds to a minimum, starting in 2017 reinvested royalties will total \$125 million a year for state and local parks and recreation.

LWCF and Working Landscapes

America’s private landowners need conservation tools that enable them to be good stewards of the land. Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners make their living off the land while supporting conservation values by maintaining productive and sustainable landscapes. Working lands supply timber and agricultural products, support local jobs, conserve wildlife habitat, protect soils and watersheds, and provide recreational opportunities. However, generational change, evolution of these industries, and urban sprawl are challenging the future of working landscapes.

For many years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program have been funding conservation easements to help keep working lands in working hands. Conservation easements help to retain natural resource values while protecting America’s rural heritage. Sale of a conservation easement can provide the funding a landowner needs to keep working lands in production, fostering traditional land uses in the face of growing development pressures. Additionally, as landowners look to pass their property on to their children, easements can reduce estate tax liability, making it easier to keep traditional family ownership for generations.

Successful conservation efforts will depend on empowering landowners and helping them to keep their property productive. LWCF and Forest Legacy are two essential tools for landowners who want to permanently conserve a portion of their land while keeping it in private hands and maintaining traditional land uses.



Cattle grazing in the Dakota Grasslands
Richard Hamilton Smith

Protecting Working Forests



Randy Beacham



The Trust for Public Land

St. Joe Basin/Mica Creek, Idaho – FLP

A conservation easement protected 54,613 acres of this working forest in northern Idaho. These lands produce more than eight million board feet per year, supporting sawmills and a plywood mill in the area. The timber industry is the top industry in this part of the state; the easement keeps these lands in production in the face of second-home development pressures and the project provides year-round public access for activities such as hunting, fishing, camping and snowmobiling.

Orbeton Stream, Maine – FLP

5,808 acres in Maine’s western mountains region were protected through the Forest Legacy Program. The conservation easement on a family-owned forest supports a local pellet mill, while protecting endangered Atlantic salmon streams and the viewshed of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking and snowmobiling, with public access to a 6.4-mile section of the Maine snowmobile trail system.

Koochiching, Minnesota – FLP

Conservation easements protected 136,606 acres supporting mills in International Falls, Bemidji, Duluth and Grand Rapids. Public outdoor recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, biking, snowmobiling, ATViing and cross country skiing.



Koochiching, Minnesota
Peter Crouser

Fiery Gizzard, Tennessee – FLP

3,282 acres were protected through a conservation easement, supporting the region’s largest sawmill located about seven miles from the project. Timber-based jobs are important to the South Cumberland region of Tennessee. The nearby Fiery Gizzard trail system is one of the premier backpacking destinations in the country and is visited by hundreds of thousands of hikers annually. An LWCF state grant also supported acquisition of 2,900 acres in the South Cumberland State Recreation Area, allowing continued access along the Fiery Gizzard trail and demonstrating the community-supporting synergy among LWCF’s programs.

Protecting Working Ranches



Jim Ringelman, Ducks Unlimited



The Nature Conservancy, Kansas



The Nature Conservancy

Dakota Grassland Conservation Area, North and South Dakota – FWS

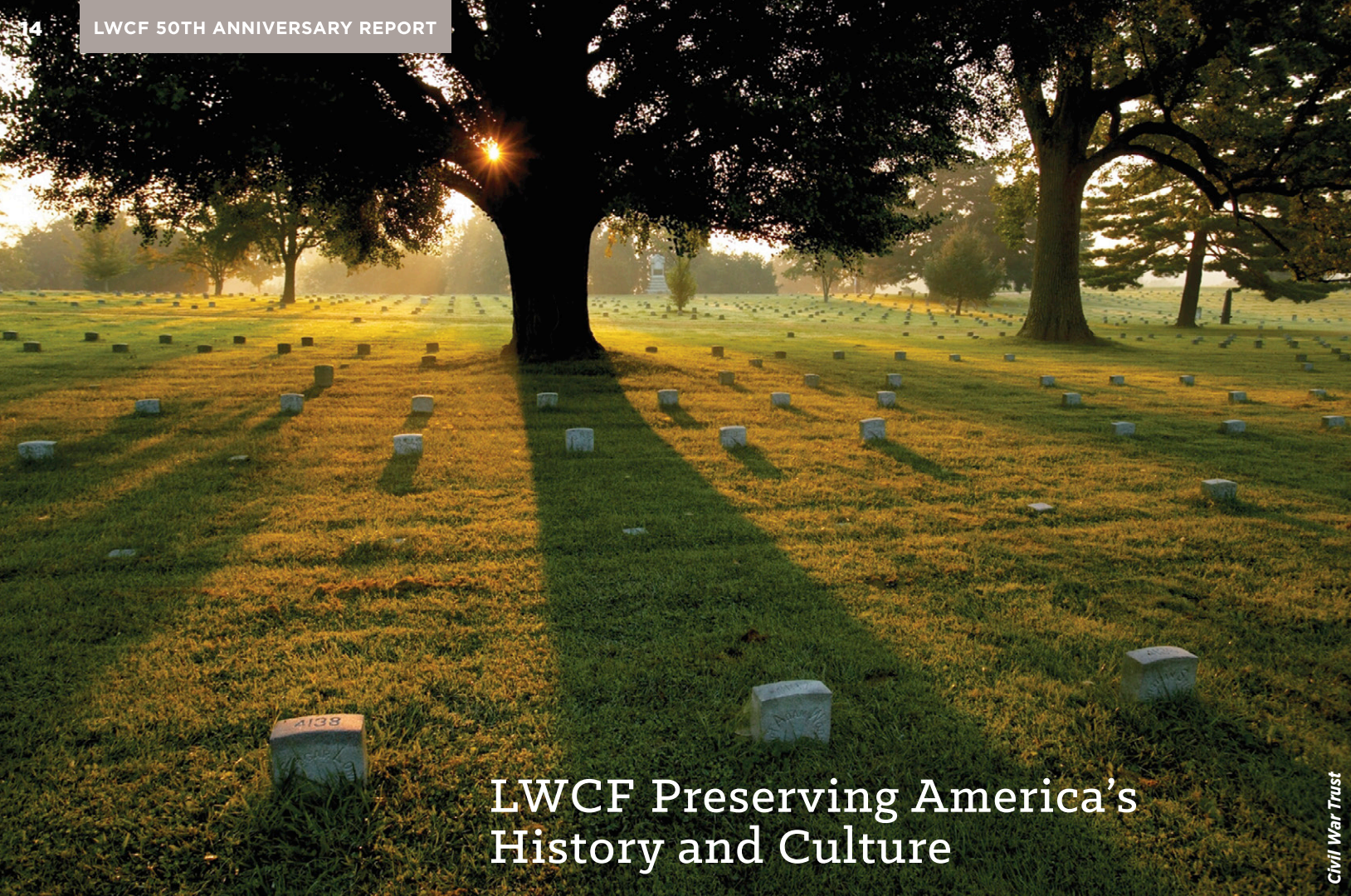
Known as “America’s Duck Factory,” the Prairie Pothole Region is one of the most important migratory bird habitats in the Western Hemisphere. Unfortunately it is also one of the most altered as wetlands are drained and native grasslands are tilled. To stem the loss of habitat, LWCF funding for voluntary wetland and grassland conservation easements on private working farms and ranches is essential. Since 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has partnered with landowners to secure easements on 13,700 acres. To ensure a sustainable future for this vital habitat and the migratory birds that depend on it, the Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area will ultimately need to include easements on over 240,000 acres of wetland and 1.7 million acres of critical grassland habitat. Currently, 800 landowners are on the waitlist for the program.

Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area, Kansas – FWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with landowners in Kansas to protect the last remaining functional, intact, landscape-scale tallgrass prairie in America through conservation easements. The agency has secured two easements totaling roughly 2,500 acres and is actively pursuing easements on an additional 12,000 acres. Over 99 percent of the historic tallgrass prairie has been lost, but over 2 million acres of Flint Hills tallgrass prairie still remain, and LWCF will be essential in the effort to protect this irreplaceable natural treasure.

Everglades Headwaters Conservation Area, Florida – FWS

Eight million people and countless species of animals call the Everglades ecosystem home—challenging the resources of this iconic natural system that supplies water for the residents of south Florida. Over five decades, conservation partners have protected more than 360,000 acres, mostly within a 170-mile swath of working cattle ranches, longleaf pine savannas and seasonal wetlands in the northern end of the system. Coupled with long-term LWCF-supported conservation efforts in the southern part of the watershed at Everglades National Park, the conservation of working ranches at the watershed headwaters is key to maintaining the entire ecosystem. Conservation partners are looking to conserve an additional 300,000 acres of public and private lands that will help ensure the return of the “river of grass.”



LWCF Preserving America's History and Culture

Civil War Trust



Martin Luther King National Historic Site, Georgia. *Peter Beney*

To truly understand who we are as a country and to learn from the triumphs and challenges of our history, we must preserve the places that showcase the many cultures and the history that define the American experience. From the homes and birthplaces of presidents, writers and civil rights leaders, to Civil War battlefields, pioneer forts, sites of American ingenuity and invention, paleontological sites, and Native American cultural sites, the Land and Water Conservation Fund helps to ensure that current and future generations understand what has shaped our nation.

Approximately half of the units of the National Park System were specifically designated to protect our nation's most important historical, archeological and cultural sites. Battlefield protection projects have preserved Civil War sites such as Fort Sumter, Vicksburg, Shiloh, Antietam, Gettysburg and Harper's Ferry, and Revolutionary War locales such as Minute Man and Saratoga National Historical Parks. Culturally important areas from Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Nez Perce National Historical Park to the Martin Luther King and John Muir National Historic Sites have also been protected through LWCF. The homesites of some of our nation's great presidents like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman have benefited along with the Lewis & Clark, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and Oregon National Historic Trails, and historically significant locations such as Scotts Bluff National Monument in western Nebraska.

Our history helps us shape our future, and while many of the most indelible images of American history are already forever protected, others are at the precipice of being lost forever. Continued LWCF funding is necessary to protect those places and cultures that tell our unique American story.



Civil War Trust/Kelly Schneider

Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Virginia – NPS and ABPP

Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia encompasses four major Civil War battlefields—Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House—and other important related sites. As the scene of some of the most intense battles of the conflict—15,000 soldiers were killed, and some 85,000 more injured between 1862 and 1864—its historical importance is unparalleled. The battlefields remind us of the war's tragic cost, and the changing human experience during the four years of combat.

The Battle of Chancellorsville, fought on the grounds that now make up the park, was arguably General Robert E. Lee's greatest victory. It was also the battle where his top commander, General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, was critically wounded by friendly fire. LWCF helped to protect significant and critically threatened lands along Jackson's Flank Attack zone, which follows today's busy Route 3, as well as critical landscapes like the Slaughter Pen Farm at Fredericksburg and the First Day at Chancellorsville Battlefield.



National Park Service

Flight 93 National Memorial, Pennsylvania – NPS

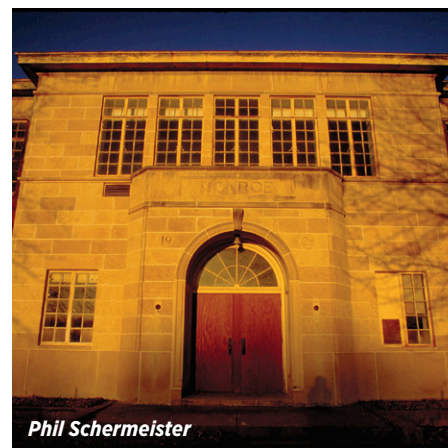
After learning that hijacked airplanes were used in attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the passengers of United Flight 93 made a heroic decision to fight back against the terrorists that had taken over their own plane. Working together, they fought for control of the plane, which ultimately crashed into a vast meadow in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Little more than a year after the attacks, the Flight 93 National Memorial Act was passed by Congress, designating the site as a national memorial managed by the National Park Service. It is the only national park unit commemorating the events of that infamous day. LWCF contributed \$10 million to protect the "Field of Honor" as a permanent tribute to the brave passengers of Flight 93 and a place where we can reflect on the valor of individuals who heroically stopped the terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol.



Bailiwick Studios

Legend Rock State Petroglyph Site, Wyoming – NPS State and Local Assistance

Legend Rock features nearly 300 individual petroglyphs, including some of the oldest and best examples of Dinwoody rock art in the world. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places, but access was a challenge and the lack of a formal trail network was degrading the property. With funding from LWCF's State and Local Assistance Program, the state rallied private citizens, tribes and other government agencies to help improve the state historical site, protecting these resources while keeping them open for all to enjoy.



Phil Schermeister

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Kansas – NPS

The Monroe Elementary School was one of four African-American segregated schools in Topeka, Kansas. In 1951, a student from Monroe and her father, Oliver Brown, became plaintiffs in a legal battle over racial segregation in schools. In 1954, the historic Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision determined that the segregation of schools was unconstitutional. The Monroe School closed its doors in 1975 due to declining enrollment, and was slated for destruction in the 1980s until local and national advocates banded together to save it. The school was designated a national historic landmark in 1991, and in 1992 President George H.W. Bush signed legislation establishing the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. The National Park Service used LWCF funds to purchase the school and now administers it as an interpretive center illustrating the integral role that the Brown v. Board of Education decision played in the civil rights movement.



Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area, Minnesota
Mark Godfrey, The Nature Conservancy

LWCF and the Outdoor Recreation Economy

For 50 years, Land and Water Conservation Fund investments have protected parks and natural areas and funded the development of playgrounds, sports fields, bike paths and hiking trails. This network of public lands provides the foundation of America’s strong outdoor recreation-based economy.

According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation’s 2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, 142.6 million Americans hunted, fished, camped, hiked, biked, climbed, skied, paddled and engaged in numerous other outdoor recreation activities in 2013. Similarly, a 2012 report by the U.S. Forest Service shows that outdoor recreation participation increased by 7.1 percent between 2000 and 2009 and total visitor days increased by about 40 percent.

The outdoor industry is one of the healthiest sectors of our economy, even in difficult times, but it depends on access to quality parks and public lands to thrive. Public lands are key to local recreation and tourism industries, and visitors to these areas spend money on food, lodging and equipment.

Economic Benefits:

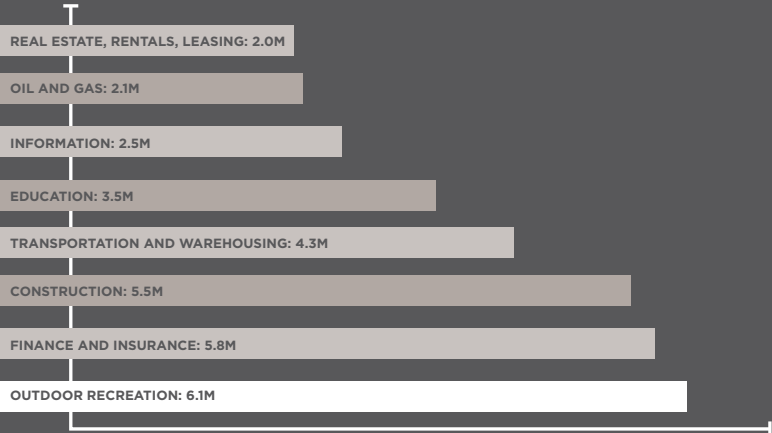
6.1 million American jobs

\$646 billion in outdoor recreation spending each year

\$39.9 billion in federal tax revenue

\$39.7 billion in state/local tax revenue

Outdoor Recreation Employs America Job Comparisons, by Industry



Whether manufacturing, retail or service related, jobs supported by outdoor recreation are sustainable-resource or tourism-based jobs that cannot be exported.



Bear Mountain, New York
Mark Zakutansky

creation of 11 long-distance national scenic trails and 19 national historic trails extending for almost 54,000 miles, and more than 1,200 national recreation trails in all 50 states. These trails include the Pony Express Trail, Ala Kahakai in Hawaii, the Iditarod in Alaska, the Pacific Crest Trail running the length of the west coast, and the North Country and Ice Age National Scenic Trails across the backyards of the upper Midwest.

The “granddaddy” of the National Trails System is the Appalachian National Scenic Trail envisioned by Benton MacKaye in the 1920s and 1930s and stretching 2,180 miles from Georgia to Maine. The Appalachian Trail (AT) is a centerpiece of conservation efforts throughout the East. Acting as a spine that connects large tracts of forests, wilderness and more developed parkland, it traverses 14 states, runs through 88 counties, connects more than 75 public land units (federal, state and local) and has upward of 2.5 million visitors each year. The trail is managed and maintained by volunteers, providing substantial cost savings to federal agencies.

To date, LWCF has helped protect nearly 200,000 acres of the highest valued lands within the Appalachian Trail corridor, from the birthplace of the AT in New York’s Bear Mountain State Park, to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee, up the Blue Ridge Parkway to George Washington National Forest in Virginia and beyond. Recent trail protection projects at Crocker Mountain in Maine and Rocky Fork in Tennessee were funded in part through LWCF. Future projects are targeted in Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Vermont to protect the remaining unprotected miles of trail and lands along its corridor.



The Trust for Public Land

was leveraged by \$25 million in LWCF funding to protect lands in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) within Atlanta’s metro area. These federal dollars jump-started what became a model public-private conservation partnership that subsequently grew into a \$143 million land acquisition fund, the overwhelming majority of which consisted of non-federal contributions. As a result, 16,000 acres, eight new state parks and 76 miles of Chattahoochee riverfront are permanently protected, creating an exceptional corridor for river recreation and fish and wildlife habitat as well as protecting drinking water quality for millions of Georgians. North of Atlanta, the CRNRA provides more than 65 percent of the public green space for the metro area.

The National Trails System – Multi-agency

Indiana Dunes State Park, Indiana – NPS State and Local Assistance

Only an hour from Chicago, Indiana Dunes State Park consists of 2,182 acres of primitive, beautiful, historic and unique Hoosier landscape, including more than three miles of beach along Lake Michigan’s southern shore. Large sand dunes, which formed over thousands of years, tower nearly 200 feet above Lake Michigan. In the early part of the twentieth century, scientists, recreationists and nature enthusiasts recognized the value and potential of the Indian dunes area and fought to have the region preserved, resulting in the formation of the state park. Visitors are able to fish and swim in Lake Michigan, hike along nine miles of trails, and picnic. The state park, which has received more than half a million dollars in investment from the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program, is surrounded by Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, much of which has been protected through LWCF funding for National Park Service acquisitions. These two places provide outdoor recreational opportunities for millions of residents in Indiana and Chicago, and are another example of the synergy between separate LWCF program components.



One of the most popular beaches in Rhode Island, Salty Brine State Beach received an LWCF State and Local Assistance Grant of more than \$1 million to build its new pavilion.



LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants have been essential to protecting Nevada’s oldest and largest state park, Valley of Fire, which offers the public access to almost 42,000 acres of land just 55 miles from the Las Vegas Strip. A world away from neon lights and clanging slots, it is a haven for over 300,000 annual visitors to enjoy hiking, camping, RV camping, rock climbing and picnicking.



LWCF and Sportsmen’s Access

Public lands provide some of the most intact fish and wildlife habitats and quality opportunities for sportsmen, and nearly half of those who hunt and fish spend all or a portion of their time outdoors on public lands. In the West, lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are the primary destination for hunters and anglers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows hunting on 337 national wildlife refuges and fishing on 271 refuges and many state parks allow hunting and fishing access. Often, many of the best places open for sportsmen are available because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Recently sportsmen have noticed another trend—access to public lands being blocked by private landowners, often as a result of changing ownership patterns as development pushes further into previously forested or wild private lands. Working together, leaders in the hunting and fishing community have recognized that LWCF can help address this challenge of “making public lands public” by securing recreational public access to existing federal lands through easements, rights-of-way, or purchase from willing sellers. All of these tools make LWCF critical for securing sportsmen’s access.

Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch, Colorado – BLM

In June 2013, the Bureau of Land Management used funding from LWCF to acquire the 920 acre Cross Mountain Canyon Ranch. The ranch, located outside of Maybell, provides access to 2.5 miles of the Yampa River as well as to the Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area and adjacent lands. This area is known for outstanding fishing and hunting, but access to public lands had been limited to boat traffic or across private lands. The ranch offers unique access to quality big game hunting and is available to hunters with an over-the-counter license.

Big Rivers Wildlife Management Area, Kentucky – FLP

In 2013, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and conservation partners wrapped up a land conservation effort using funding from the Forest Legacy Program, adding over 4,000 acres of forestland to the Big Rivers Wildlife Management Area and State Forest and expanding the area to more than 6,800 acres. Tucked along the Ohio and Tradewater rivers in western Kentucky, the property has long been known as a premiere hunting spot. Big Rivers provides opportunities for deer, turkey and squirrel hunting as well as trapping and fishing at a time when many private landowners are becoming reluctant to open their properties for public access.

Craig Thomas Little Mountain Special Management Area, Wyoming – BLM

Conservation of the 11,179-acre Devils Canyon Ranch, located in Wyoming’s spectacular Bighorn Mountains, was a top priority for sportsmen and other outdoor enthusiasts for decades before LWCF funding ultimately secured this critical property. The ranch was the subject of a protracted battle over access, including an unsuccessful county lawsuit to open a closed, gated road through this sole public recreation access point to many thousands of acres of otherwise unavailable hunting and fishing lands. Perched on Little Mountain between Bighorn National Forest, Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark, and the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, the ranch offers unparalleled scenic vistas, unique archaeological sites, renowned blue-ribbon trout fishing, and varied big game. LWCF provided the only means to open these remarkable resources—and the vast expanse of public land that lies behind them—to the public.



Top: Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 to protect the native prairie ecosystem. Located just east of Des Moines, Iowa, the refuge also provides excellent public hunting for pheasants and quail. *Pheasants Forever*

Bottom: National wildlife refuges in the central flyway such as Red River in Louisiana, Cahaba in Alabama, Grand Bay in Mississippi and Cache River in Arkansas provide first-rate public waterfowl hunting opportunities. *Andy McDaniels*



LWCF State Grants for Sportsmen's Access

LWCF state and local assistance grants have been used extensively for sportsmen’s access. The state of Montana acquired fishing access to such storied rivers as the Missouri, the Big Hole, the Blackfoot, and many others across the state. In southern Ohio, anglers flock to the Little Miami River—thanks to access secured by LWCF state and local grants. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department used a state grant to purchase 17,639 acres of the Devils River Ranch securing 24 miles along the Devils River and Amistad Reservoir and providing outstanding, otherwise unavailable public hunting and fishing opportunities. And New Mexico’s Eagle Nest State Park and Seattle’s Don Armeni Park are just two of the many recipients of LWCF state grants that were used to build boat ramps accessing popular recreation waters.

Above: Fishing in Iberia Parish, Louisiana after launching from an LWCF-funded boat ramp. *Jared Mott*



Paddling the San Juan Islands
Hannah Clark

LWCF and Water Resources

The quality and quantity of available water depends on healthy and intact forestlands, grasslands and wetlands from high elevation watersheds to our coastlines. These areas filter pollutants, prevent riverbank erosion, decrease costly damage from floods and storm surges, provide critical habitat and migratory corridors for fish and wildlife, and enable water-based recreation. As demand for drinking and other water supplies increases, our water resources will be increasingly challenged.

Land and Water Conservation Fund projects in and around our national forests, parks, refuges, and other conservation areas help maintain the long-term integrity of our nation’s water quality and water supplies. On non-federal lands, the Forest Legacy Program provides a critical tool to maintain the benefits of working forests including protection of valuable watersheds. These proactive conservation efforts will ensure our nation has adequate water quality and water supplies, while giving our children and grandchildren the opportunity to have fun on the water.



Alden Warner

Highlands Region of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut

The forested foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in the Highlands of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut are within the metropolitan backyard of major cities like Philadelphia, Newark, New York, New Haven and Hartford. The Highlands are the

source of clean and plentiful drinking water supplies as well as outdoor recreation for these major population centers while also providing important habitat for dozens of rare and threatened species.

Conservation in the Highlands was catalyzed by the proposal to build an enormous residential and commercial development in the 15,000 acres of New York’s Sterling Forest. As a result, a large public/private partnership—including the adjacent State of New Jersey, millions of whose residents rely on Sterling Forest for their drinking water—came together to protect the Forest. The \$55 million assembled to protect Sterling Forest, including \$17.5 million from LWCF, enabled the largest addition to the New York State Park system in over 50 years. New Jersey has estimated that open space protection in the Highlands will save \$50 billion in future water treatment costs.

Recognizing a regional need, Congress passed the Highlands Conservation Act (HCA) in 2004. The HCA authorized funding from LWCF to protect lands with the highest conservation value in the four-state region, including Fishkill Ridge in New York, the Musconetcong River in New Jersey, the Hopewell Big Woods of Pennsylvania, and the Mad River headwaters in Connecticut. This has spurred further land protection efforts in the region, with increasing investments in open space protection by state governments. Related efforts through LWCF’s Forest Legacy Program have protected more than 16,000 additional acres in the Highlands.

Maumelle Water Excellence Project, Arkansas – FLP

Located 15 minutes west of Little Rock, Lake Maumelle supplies drinking water to over 400,000 Central Arkansas residents. Central Arkansas Water’s ownership and management of the lake and surrounding land has created a natural and forested buffer to a vital drinking water supply for the region. However, due to growth pressures in Pulaski County and increased development around the lake, Central Arkansas Water worked over a four-year period to protect 1,400 additional acres. The effort was a collaboration among multiple state agencies and supported by funding from several sources, including \$4 million from the Forest Legacy Program and \$8 million from the state. The protection of the 1,400 acres around Lake Maumelle not only helped to protect the drinking water supply for Arkansas’ largest metropolitan area but also opened up a large area for new recreational opportunities including hiking, fishing and hunting.

New River Gorge National River/Gauley River National Recreation Area, West Virginia – NPS

Although rivers themselves are public, often the land around them is not, and without appropriate access to launch a boat, one cannot paddle, float or enjoy that river. LWCF helps solve this problem by acquiring access and developing launch points on rivers across the country. Rafting and kayaking are major economic drivers along America’s most iconic rivers from the Colorado to the Upper Snake to the Rio Grande and the Columbia. But no better case study of LWCF’s impact on river running and the local economy exists than in southern West Virginia. All public access points along the renowned Lower and Middle Gauley River were made possible by LWCF funding. In addition, LWCF projects in the Gauley River National Recreation Area and the New River Gorge National River have secured over 2,000 named rock climbing routes and the remnants of 19th and 20th century mining towns. Roughly 1.2 million visitors enjoy these two parks annually, bringing \$53 million to the local economy and directly supporting more than 700 jobs.

San Juan Islands, Washington – Multi-agency

Year after year, the San Juan Islands in the state of Washington top national and international lists of the most beautiful and sought-after recreation destinations. Some of the best public access to beaches and rocky coastlines is now protected and accessible because of LWCF, including key historic, natural and recreation sites at San Juan Islands National Historical Park on San Juan Island, as well as Chadwick Hill, Watmough Bay and Iceberg Point at Point Colville on Lopez Island. Point Colville is one of the few publicly owned protected marine bluffs in the San Juan Islands hosting rare plant species, ancient Douglas fir and Sitka spruce and haul-out sites for seals and sea lions. Nearby Watmough Bay includes a heavily used beach, a near-shore nursery for juvenile Chinook salmon, and significant cultural sites for the Coast Salish people who reef-netted and hunted here for more than 1,800 years.



Cape Henlopen/Delaware Seashore State Parks: Delaware’s beaches attract hundreds of thousands of people from the Mid-Atlantic region every summer.



Bureau of Land Management

LWCF and a Changing Climate

Outdoor enthusiasts, sportsmen and natural resource managers recognize that climate change is causing serious damage. Catastrophic wildfires, floods, droughts and major storms create expensive destruction to communities across the nation. In 2012 and 2013, federal firefighting costs totaled nearly \$4 billion. The National Climatic Data Center reports that there have been 151 weather or climate related disasters in the United States since 1980 where overall damage costs topped \$1 billion with a total cost of these disasters topping \$1 trillion.

Our network of public lands will play a critical role in addressing the challenges that climate change poses to our forests, fish and wildlife, and riparian resources. America's forests naturally capture a remarkable 13 percent of U.S. carbon emissions each year, but the U.S. Forest Service projects that private forests storing more than two billion tons of carbon are at risk of development. In addition, coastal wetlands can lessen damages caused by major storms and land conservation in the wildland-urban interface can reduce home losses from major fires. Continued investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be essential to help buffer the impacts of a changing climate.

Protecting Land to Fight Fire

Fire-fighting costs are escalating with dramatic increases in housing development within our national forests. In the western states, more than 50 percent of new housing is being built within the fire-prone wildland-urban interface, the area where private lands border forested public lands. The solution to escalating wildfires in rural landscapes bordering public lands is complex and multifaceted, and local planning efforts are an important piece of the solution. However, LWCF is the primary federal tool to pursue strategic land purchases in and adjacent to public lands to prevent private development in the most fire prone areas. Land consolidation also allows agencies to implement better fire prevention management throughout federal units. In addition, the Forest Legacy Program provides states and private landowners with another important tool to maintain key areas bordering public lands as private working forests and to prevent residential development of important state and local forest resources.

The Sierra Checkerboard, California – USFS

In California's Sierra Nevada, land was given to railroad companies in every-other-square mile parcels as an extra incentive to build the Transcontinental Railroad across the rugged mountains. This checkerboard pattern left a legacy of scattered ownership and fragmentation that presents daunting challenges in managing the forests to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The consolidation of these checkerboard parcels has been the work of a joint partnership with the Forest Service, the State of California, and land trusts. Many LWCF projects have combined to achieve landscape-wide conservation in the northern Sierra Nevada. As consolidation of this landscape allows for comprehensive forest management and treatment, preventing and suppressing fire becomes much more efficient.

Climate Change and Natural Resource Adaptation

As the impacts of climate change accelerate, we must conserve and connect large, healthy ecosystems and habitats to make sure that biological systems stay resilient. Providing opportunities for species to migrate or shift their ranges as temperatures and other conditions change is essential to the survival of plants, fish and wildlife. LWCF is supporting the strategic acquisition of wildlife migration corridors within and adjacent to existing public lands to enhance adaptation efforts by conserving intact landscapes.

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, New England – FWS

In the Northeast, LWCF has invested \$23 million to build the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the only refuge with a legislated project area based on a watershed. The Connecticut River is the longest river in the Northeast, and the 7.2 million acre watershed descends from the highest elevation in New England at the summit of New Hampshire's Mount Washington to sea level, where it contributes 70 percent of the freshwater to the Long Island Sound. With a focus on habitat connectivity, the 36,000-acre refuge includes tremendous diversity in elevation, latitude, aspect and substrate—important considerations when preparing for changes in climate and land use. It conserves and improves habitat for important species, like moose, pine marten, American shad, Atlantic salmon, shortnose sturgeon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, black ducks, and many others.

Chippewa Flowage Forest, Wisconsin – FLP

The Forest Legacy Program has conserved almost 2.4 million acres of forest that store more than 539 million tons of carbon dioxide. For example, a Forest Legacy easement on Wisconsin's Chippewa Flowage has protected 18,000 acres of resource rich forest, connecting it to nearly one million acres of adjacent protected forestlands. This and other working forests, along with the network of other private, state and federal forests across the country, are essential "carbon sinks" that can help slow the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.



Above: Volunteers at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina collect loggerhead turtle eggs from a nest for relocation to a site less vulnerable to ocean changes. *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge
Alden Warner



Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge's wetlands, beaches and forests, purchased with help from LWCF, sustained damage while protecting inland resources and infrastructure by absorbing floodwaters from Superstorm Sandy.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Limestone Canyon, Orange County Parks' Irvine Ranch Open Space
Irvine Ranch Conservancy



Western Riverside County, California

In Southern California, rapid growth and a unique ecosystem have created significant challenges, but HCPs in 22 California counties are helping to ease the resulting conflicts. In California alone, planning areas total 11.7 million acres and encompass habitat for nearly 600 rare, imperiled or important species. These plans will conserve more than two million acres of habitat and provide streamlined permitting for projects with a total market value in excess of \$1.6 trillion.

In Southern California's Western Riverside County, the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) protecting 146 native species of plants and animals and preserving half a million acres of their habitat was the result of a comprehensive effort to shape the county's future. Rapid growth in the 1980s and 1990s, the challenges of traffic congestion, and the listing of species as threatened or endangered led to a vision for a unified plan that would guide development and economic growth while protecting the environment. This effort to set aside habitat and protect species clears the way for a healthy economy to move ahead without sacrificing the environment or quality of life for residents.

Forty percent of the 1.26 million acres covered by the MSHCP is designated for conservation. So far more than a quarter of that acreage has been protected, including Section 6 grant-funded projects like the 119-acre Nelson property east of Interstate 15 in the City of Wildomar. The property's vital coastal sage scrub habitat is home to a tremendous diversity of plants and animals—at least five listed species. On the other side of the balance sheet, the new I-15/French Valley Parkway in Temecula relied heavily on the Western Riverside County MSHCP to satisfy Endangered Species Act permitting. This \$17 million project to reduce congestion and improve safety broke ground in 2012.

Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan, Utah

Utah's Washington County is one of the fastest growing retirement and recreational areas in the nation. New residents are attracted in part by the exceptional red rock landscape, and tourists converge to visit Zion National Park and the Dixie National Forest. The county is also home to the highest density of Mojave desert tortoises in the United States. From 1980 to 1990, the population of the county increased 86 percent, and this trajectory has continued since then. In order to protect the desert tortoise, along with a number of other species, Section 6 funding has helped to build a 62,000-acre reserve, allowing for continued growth and development elsewhere in the county in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. This investment of nearly \$23 million from LWCF has prevented further fragmentation of habitat, established wildlife corridors and connectivity, and brought stakeholders together to manage the community's resources collectively and solve a very difficult problem.

Mount St. Helens (Pine Creek area), Washington

Mount St. Helens towers above Pine Creek, and its snowmelt feeds the creek to create the cold, clear stream habitat that federally endangered bull trout need to survive. But those same mountain views, lake frontage and scenic rivers put the area at risk for residential subdivision. Such development would permanently eliminate long-term forest viability and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Most importantly, though, it would create major burdens on the county to service a hard-to-access area with utilities, fire suppression and roads. In 2008, the Columbia Land Trust and the largest private timberland owner in the area came together with county leadership to protect working forest and habitat at the base of Mount St. Helens, including Pine Creek. Through negotiations, the partners developed a cooperative plan that limits development, supports timber harvest and conserves habitat. The unprecedented project leveraged LWCF funding through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Program and the Forest Legacy Program with state funds to protect working forest and habitat on approximately 20,000 acres at the base of Mount St. Helens.

LWCF Resolving Land Use Conflicts

In recent years, LWCF has become an important source of funding for some of the most innovative and ambitious conservation efforts in the U.S. In certain regions, unique climates and geographic features give rise to plants, animals and natural communities that live nowhere else on earth. When threatened and endangered species coincide with rapid population growth, the result is often economic and environmental stalemate where important development projects are stymied and poor planning fragments ecosystems. Fortunately, over the past two decades, visionary leaders in the public and private sectors have collaborated to develop an efficient and effective approach to this challenge. The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund ("Section 6") and its land acquisition components, funded by LWCF, have been crucial to the success of this innovative collaboration.

One solution to an otherwise lose-lose scenario involves the development and implementation of large-scale, local government-led Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). HCPs bring together developers, community stakeholders and public officials to create long-term plans that minimize land-use conflicts by balancing critical habitat protection with needed economic development. Under an HCP, commitments to conserve key habitat for listed species are met with expedited state and federal regional permits for public infrastructure and private development projects. Where these agreements are in place, the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund provides land acquisition grants to non-federal entities for additional state and local habitat conservation. This vital tool advances species recovery and facilitates economic growth that otherwise would be hindered.

Above, L-R: Desert Tortoise. *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*; Mt. St. Helens. *Columbia Land Trust*; Fremont Canyon, Orange County Parks' Irvine Ranch Open Space. *Irvine Ranch Conservancy*



www.lwcfcoalition.org

Report production managed by: Jodi Stemler, Jodi Stemler Consulting, LLC – jodi@stemlerconsulting.com
Amy Lindholm, The Wilderness Society – amy_lindholm@twc.org

Report designed by: Chandra Wroblewski – chandra@thedesignski.com

Special thanks to Lesley Kane Szynal and Gareth Jones, Outdoors America; Kathy DeCoster, Nicole Doss, Dan Chapin and Marsha Runnigen, The Trust for Public Land; Alan Front, Conservation Pathways; Tom Cors, The Nature Conservancy; Hannah Clark, Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition; Alan Rowsome and Brandon Helm, The Wilderness Society; Mark Zakutansky, Appalachian Mountain Club, and many others for their writing, editing and review support.

Cover photos courtesy of Irvine Ranch Conservancy, ThinkStock and Jerry and Marcy Monkman/EcoPhotography.com.

Reports Cited:

Headwaters Economics. *West is Best: How Public Lands in the West Create a Competitive Economic Advantage*. 2012

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Climatic Data Center. *Billion Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters*. 2013

National Park Service. *Economic Contributions to Local Communities, States, and the Nation*. 2014

The Outdoor Foundation. *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report*. 2014.

Outdoor Industry Association. *National Outdoor Recreation Economy Report*. 2012

Southwick Associates for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. *The Conservation Economy in America: Direct investments and economic contributions*. 2013

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research. *Outdoor Recreation Trends and Futures: a technical document supporting the Forest Service 2010 RPA Assessment*. 2012

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. *Land Values 2013 Summary*. 2013