



**The Land and Water Conservation Fund:
From the Mountains to the Bayou,
Connecting America's Sportsmen for 50 years**





“The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

Nearly 50 years ago a far-sighted, bipartisan group in Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund, tapping a fraction of the royalties from offshore oil and gas production to give all Americans a lifetime of outdoor recreational opportunity. Congress intended the Fund to be used for “preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to ... outdoor recreation resources ... and to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States ...”

Despite the fact that Congress typically does not fund LWCF at the \$900 million level authorized, every state has benefited from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It has built swimming pools and softball fields, improved hiking trails and campgrounds, and provided access to public land of incomparable beauty for the enjoyment of Americans of every age, background and place of residence.

Sportsmen like us have benefited as much as any, through the wise use of LWCF grants to protect areas with remarkable fish and wildlife resources. These grants

have helped make our hunting and fishing opportunity in America the envy of the world.

But those resources – our elk, deer and antelope, our trout, bass and panfish – are threatened by pressures large and small, from new development on remote mountain streams to global climate change. It is imperative that we protect the habitat these species rely on, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of our most valuable tools in that effort. The steady and ongoing investment in protecting public lands is simply good, conservative



management of some of our most valued natural resources.

Continued investment in public lands also makes good economic sense. Every year, Americans spend some \$650 billion on outdoor recreation – on gear, vehicles, travel-related expenses and more – in large part to enjoy public lands. This spending is a crucial part of the U.S. economy, supporting more than 6 million jobs, providing much-needed economic development in rural communities and generating billions of dollars in local, state and federal tax revenue.

LWCF is more than an economic driver, however. Investing in watershed protection keeps our cities' drinking water clean, prevents disastrous flooding and provides the agriculture industry with a reliable, sustainable source of water to put food on our tables.

For hunters and anglers, the Fund has been a valued partner in protecting core cultural

traditions that in many parts of the country go back three and four centuries. Traditional lifestyles help make up the unique character of our nation, and protected public lands are where the vast majority of hunters and anglers go to pass on these traditions to our kids and grandkids.

The scope and scale of LWCF-funded projects that directly affects sportsmen, fish and game has been staggering. Below are but a handful of examples of how LWCF has enhanced the lives of U.S. sportsmen and women. These projects also are among the many reasons we believe Congress should fully fund LWCF now and in the future as a crucial investment in our nation's health and well-being.



MONTANA: Tenderfoot Creek



- » 70 percent of Montana's fishing access sites were created using LWCF funds
- » 10.9 million visitors come to Montana each year – more than 10 times the population
- » Outdoor recreation supports 64,000 jobs and generates \$5.8 billion in consumer spending
- » Montana's 335,000 hunters and anglers invest \$983 million into their communities and support 16,515 jobs

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Montana:
Tenderfoot Creek

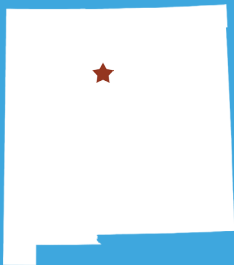
The mighty Mississippi River grows out of thousands of small headwater creeks and streams, including many in Montana like Tenderfoot Creek, which flows into the Smith River, then the Missouri and finally the Big Muddy. Unfortunately, many uplands along these streams also produce harmful runoff from agricultural chemicals and fertilizer, eventually contributing to the “Dead Zone” in the Gulf of Mexico. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is vital to conserving these neighboring uplands, which benefits critical wildlife habitat and hunter opportunity and also reduces harmful downstream effects in Louisiana.

A multi-year project, led by Montana sportsmen with help from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, has leveraged LWCF funds to protect valuable wildlife habitat along Tenderfoot Creek and provide public access to one of the premier streams in Montana. Tenderfoot Creek is a vital feeder stream to the Smith River, which many people have called “the best floating, fishing and camping trip in the United States.” More than 5,000 people put in for its 740 permits annually.

In the summer of 2013, the total number of acres acquired through LWCF and private funds and transferred to public ownership in the Lewis and Clark National Forest stood at 5,760. Had LWCF been fully funded as its founders envisioned, the project would be whole, but the 8,000-acre project is still not done and needs one more round of LWCF funding (\$3.2 million) to be complete. In this case, what's good for Montana, is good for Louisiana.



NEW MEXICO: Valles Caldera National Preserve



- » More than 300,000 people hunt or fish in New Mexico every year, spending \$579 million – more than the combined receipts of chile, pecans, cotton, corn and hay
- » Hunting and fishing support \$258 million in salaries and wages, contribute \$58 million to state and local taxes and support some 7,700 jobs annually
- » Wildlife watching is a huge draw for residents and nonresidents, who spend more than \$250 million
- » Active outdoor recreation contributes \$3.8 billion to the state's economy, supports 47,000 jobs, generates \$184 million in annual state tax revenue and produces nearly \$2.75 billion annually in retail sales and services, accounting for 4.6 percent of gross state product

The jewel of New Mexico public lands – and the darling of New Mexico sportsmen – is the 89,000-acre Valles Caldera National Preserve. The preserve offers public lands sportsmen some of the finest elk and turkey hunting in the state. San Antonio Creek and the East Fork of the Jemez River run through the heart of the Preserve and provide outstanding angling opportunities, as well as a critical supply of water to downstream agricultural communities and municipalities.

Purchased with \$101 million in LWCF funds in 2000, Valles Caldera is known as the “Yellowstone of New Mexico.” The area was created by the collapse of a supervolcano millions of years ago and today consists of grassy meadows, thick forest and crystal streams. The preserve also contains numerous cultural sites, some dating back thousands of years, which are revered by the neighboring Native American pueblos.

Valles Caldera is an irreplaceable New Mexico heirloom, and it is open to the public today thanks to LWCF.



COLORADO: Cross Mountain Acquisition



- » Active outdoor recreation contributes over \$10 billion annually to Colorado's economy
- » Outdoor recreation supports 107,000 jobs across the state and generates nearly \$500 million in annual state tax revenue
- » Hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation produces \$7.6 billion annually in retail sales and services across Colorado, accounting for 4 percent of gross state product
- » The U.S. Census Bureau reports that each year more than 2.2 million people hunt, fish or watch wildlife in Colorado, contributing \$3 billion to the state economy

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Colorado:
Cross Mountain
Acquisition

Northwestern Colorado is known for its healthy big game populations, wild backcountry habitat and a rich hunting and fishing tradition. The area is home to the largest elk herd in North America, trophy mule deer that attract hunters from across the country and excellent public hunting.

Unfortunately access to much of the region's best backcountry hunting is cut off by long, narrow stretches of private land. As land ownership patterns transition from working farms and ranches to seasonal villas and subdivisions, public access is becoming harder to come by. In addition to habitat loss from residential development, the region is experiencing extraordinary energy development pressure. Conservation of low-lying winter habitat is vital to ensuring the area's rural character and wildlife persist.

That's why conservation projects through the Land and Water Conservation Fund are so important. One recent example is the acquisition of 920 acres bordering the Bureau of Land Management's Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area. This purchase provided much needed access to the eastern side of the Cross Mountain WSA, while protecting 2.5 miles of riparian wildlife habitat along the Yampa River. The acquisition will also help improve water quality and habitat for four species of endangered native fish.

The acquisition of this prime hunting land was facilitated by the Western River Conservancy. Using LWCF funding, the land was then transferred to the BLM.



LOUISIANA: Bayou Sauvage




Established in 1990 with \$11 million in LWCF funding and located within the city limits of New Orleans, the 24,000-acre Bayou Sauvage is the largest urban National Wildlife Refuge in the country. The refuge contains a variety of habitats, including freshwater and brackish marshes, coastal hardwood forests, lagoons, canals, borrow pits and natural bayous.

The diverse habitats meet the needs of more than 340 bird species throughout the year. Peak waterfowl populations of over 25,000 use the wetland areas during the fall, winter and early spring. The proximity to New Orleans provides ample opportunities to educate school children, and in 2011 the refuge opened a youth waterfowl season, the first hunting season since the refuge was established. Now, area youths accompanied by an adult can enjoy the wonders of waterfowl in their backyard.

With many marshes leased for hunting, public opportunities like those at Bayou Sauvage are at a premium. Bass fishing is outstanding and Bayou Sauvage was a favorite for professional anglers in the BASS Master Classic hosted in New Orleans in 2011. Large redfish can also be found on the edge of the refuge. Bayou Sauvage is a prime example of how LWCF funds can be used not only for habitat conservation and education, but also for hunting and fishing opportunity. Like many wetland areas in coastal Louisiana, Bayou Sauvage also provides much needed storm surge protection.



WASHINGTON: Pacific Northwest Streams Initiative



- » Active outdoor recreation contributes more than \$11.7 billion annually to Washington's economy
- » Hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation support 115,000 jobs, generate \$650 million in state tax revenue and produce \$8.5 billion annually in retail sales and services
- » More than 2.7 million people hunt, fish or watch wildlife in Washington, contributing more than \$3 billion to the state economy

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Washington:
Pacific Northwest
Streams Initiative

Washington supports one of the most vibrant Pacific salmon fisheries in the United States. These fish are dependent upon water quality and multi-state habitat protection for their survival, with some species swimming up coastal rivers 900 miles or more to spawn. Degraded watersheds and water quality can undermine runs of Pacific salmon, yet time and time again LWCF has come to the rescue, purchasing key inholdings as well as working with the timber industry through Forest Legacy Grants to ensure that a viable industry and quality habitat go hand in hand.

The Pacific Northwest Streams Initiative was part of the U.S. Forest Service response to initial listings of Snake/Columbia River basin salmon stocks under the Endangered Species Act. Parcels critical to Pacific salmon populations were identified for acquisition to enhance management and habitat restoration. As additional fish stocks were proposed for listing (such as bull trout, steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout), the Forest Service expanded acquisitions and restoration plans beyond the Columbia River Basin and also included important "resident" fish habitat. In many cases, parcels have been purchased for recreational fishing benefits. Since 2002, approximately 10,000 acres of critical salmon and trout habitat have been purchased and restored using LWCF.

SUMMARY

Theodore Roosevelt said it best: “The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

We believe that dedicated LWCF funding at its authorized level of \$900 million a year is an acknowledgement of Roosevelt and others who gave America one of its greatest gifts – public land. These lands set the United States apart from the rest of the world, and we owe Roosevelt our thanks. We also owe it to future generations to protect these lands and pass them on in better condition than we received them.

Since Roosevelt was in the White House, we have learned much about fish and wildlife, and about the interconnection of quality habitat, watershed health and our ability to hunt and fish. In order to pass on our hunting and fishing tradition to future generations, landscape-scale habitats must be continually restored, protected and enhanced as our growing populations put more and more demands upon them. What is great for one state’s fish and wildlife resources is often equally beneficial across state borders and even across entire regions of the country. Dedicated LWCF funding is one way to ensure a bright future for American sportsmen and women.

Sportsmen’s lifestyle and tradition are not the only issues at stake when it comes to dedicated LWCF funding. Hunting and fishing dollars diversify and sustain rural

economies and create job opportunities that would not be possible without protected public lands. Hunting and fishing are a \$650 billion industry in the United States and their full potential has only just begun to be developed.

The integrity of our watersheds and water quality not only benefit the fish and wildlife sportsmen most cherish, but benefit America as a whole. LWCF funding helps ensure that our watersheds function at optimal levels, supplying clean water to our agricultural communities and municipalities. Water is the lifeblood of America and the health and reliability of its natural systems cannot be taken for granted.

In the previous pages we showed just a few of the many examples of how the Land and Water Conservation Fund has benefited sportsmen. LWCF has also played a critical role in creating conservation and recreation opportunities through state assistance grants apportioned to each state by population. But so much more needs to be done. In virtually every state there are priority lists of projects that would protect critical wildlife habitat, restore watershed health and improve access to public lands where hunters and anglers can pass on outdoor traditions to the next generation.

We urge Congress to carefully consider the LWCF’s funding potential and to champion both full funding and permanent reauthorization of this invaluable land and water management tool, not only today but far into the future.



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