

Access Fund ♦ American Canoe Association ♦ American Hiking Society ♦ American Whitewater ♦ Appalachian Mountain Club ♦ California State Parks Foundation ♦ City Parks Alliance ♦ Civil War Preservation Trust ♦ Defenders of Wildlife ♦ Eastern Forest Partnership ♦ Highlands Coalition ♦ International Mountain Bicycling Association ♦ Land Trust Alliance ♦ National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers ♦ National Parks Conservation Association ♦ National Recreation and Park Association ♦ National Wildlife Refuge Association ♦ New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation ♦ Northern Forest Alliance ♦ Outdoor Alliance ♦ Outdoor Industry Association ♦ Outdoors America ♦ Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests ♦ Sonoran Institute ♦ Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition ♦ The Conservation Fund ♦ The Nature Conservancy ♦ The Trust for Public Land ♦ The Wilderness Society ♦ Western Rivers Conservancy ♦ Winter Wildlands Alliance

NEWS RELEASE

News for Immediate Release

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Coalition Supports Conservation Funding at House Hearing

WASHINGTON, DC – A broad coalition of national, state and local conservation and recreation organizations thanked House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall today and urged Committee members to maintain full and permanent funding for land conservation and outdoor recreation in their sweeping energy bill.

The Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act of 2009, HR 3534, was introduced on September 8 and includes provisions that would annually fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at its authorized level of \$900 million. At that level, the beleaguered program would be able to proactively address backlogged conservation and recreation needs at the state and federal level.

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund was designed to provide an ongoing stream of funding to be used by both the federal government and the states for land conservation and outdoor recreation. Unfortunately, these funds have historically been diverted to other purposes,” said Theodore Roosevelt IV with Barclays Capital. “Reinvesting in assets like our public lands through the sale of other capital assets is prudent fiscal management. As our population increases, these investments become even more critical to the American public. We must restore the Land and Water Conservation Fund to its full and authorized funding level of \$900 million per year.”

Since its creation in 1965, LWCF money has protected some of America’s most iconic and significant places, including Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Redwood National Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, Valley Forge National Historical Park, the Appalachian Trail National Scenic Trail, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site. The LWCF program also includes an important state matching grants component that supports state and local parks. The state grants help develop park facilities and

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recreational amenities – creating jobs and supporting the quality-of-life factors that allow communities to attract employers and a strong work force. Whether it is close-to-home ball fields or trails, large expansive wilderness areas, or important wildlife habitat, connecting people to recreation and outdoors activity promotes good health and support local economies.

“The visionary LWCF program has had a profound impact on the creation of parks and recreational facilities throughout the country. Without even knowing it, Americans have visited one of the thousands of local or state LWCF-funded parks,” commented Carol Ash, commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. “But even with the heroic efforts of some key players in Congress, funding for LWCF has been in a downward spiral over the past few years. It’s time to reverse the trend.”

The fund has only received its authorized amount of \$900 million once and posted a low of \$155 million in 2008. As a result, there is a substantial backlog of federal land acquisition needs estimated at more than \$30 billion. The states also report a huge unmet need for local parks and recreation resources totaling more than \$27 billion in eligible projects.

Yet, at the same time, a recent national poll reports that a broad cross-section of the American public overwhelmingly supports preserving natural areas and open space. Eighty-one percent of the public believes the continuance of a dedicated funding stream from federal oil and gas leasing should be used to fund the LWCF.

“The irony is that billions of dollars are collected every year from existing offshore oil and gas leasing revenues – the designated revenue stream for LWCF – and yet that money is regularly diverted for other purposes,” stated Will Rogers, President and CEO of The Trust for Public Land. “The bill discussed in the House Natural Resources Committee today would set that right and ensure this important program gets its due. On behalf of the coalition, we thank Chairman Rahall for his leadership to restore LWCF funding to help communities protect and enhance their most cherished places.”

Parks, refuges, forests and other public lands greatly enhance communities’ quality of life, which in turn helps large and small localities to attract new residents and businesses and to generate tourism-related jobs and revenues. Outdoor recreation including hunting, fishing, camping, climbing, hiking, paddling, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other activities contributes a total of \$730 billion annually to the economy, supporting 6.5 million jobs (1 of every 20 jobs in the U.S.) and stimulates 8 percent of all consumer spending according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation.

“The outdoor industry has long held a goal of ensuring every child in America has access to a trail or park within one mile of their home. Many studies show that this type of commitment to our nation's recreation infrastructure would easily pay for itself in the resulting reduction in health care costs and the increase in the mental well-being of our children,” said Frank Hugelmeyer, president of Outdoor Industry Association.

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The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition is an informal partnership of national, state and local conservation and recreation organizations working together to support full and dedicated funding for LWCF.

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION GROUPS SPEAK OUT!

Quotes on the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

September 17, 2009 – House Natural Resources Committee Hearing

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

“In difficult economic times, the need for close-to-home recreational opportunities is even greater. In addition, we shouldn’t forget the importance of protecting the many special outdoor places around the nation to make sure they are not lost forever. Funding for LWCF is critical to our organization’s efforts to protect the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic U.S., and connect people with the outdoors.”

- Andy Falender, Executive Director of the Appalachian Mountain Club.
Press Contact: Rob Burbank, RBurbank@outdoors.org, 603-466-2721

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been the primary source of critical funding for the past 30 years to support land acquisition along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail—America’s premier long-distance footpath. Nearly 200,000 acres in 14 states have been acquired, providing a permanent right-of-way accommodating more than three million annual visitors as well as a protective greenway bordering the trail that encompasses some of the finest natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the eastern United States.”

- Dave Startzell, Executive Director, Appalachian Trail Conservancy.
Press contact: Brian King, bking@appalachiantrail.org 304-535-6331

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

“At this fragile time for the economy, full funding of Land and Water Conservation Fund would be a shot in the arms for parks and their communities. In California State Parks, numerous projects throughout the state would create critical jobs over the next five years, if adequate funding were made available.”

- Elizabeth Goldstein, President, California State Parks Foundation
Press contact: Jerry Emory, jerry@calparks.org, 415-262-4414

CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is the primary source of federal matching grants for saving America's remaining Civil War battlefields. Without this critical program, thousands of acres of hallowed ground would have been lost to development. LWCF grants have enabled the private sector to preserve more than 15,000 acres of battlefield land in the past decade.”

- Jim Campi, Policy & Communications Director, Civil War Preservation Trust
Press contact: Jim Campi, jcampi@civilwar.org, 202-367-1861 x7205

THE CONSERVATION FUND

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been one of the best tools we have for protecting our natural resources and world-class recreational opportunities for present and future generations. As we look toward the conservation opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, it is imperative that this critical funding source be restored to its historic levels to ensure that all citizens and visitors are able to enjoy the natural beauty that this great nation of ours has to offer.”

- Larry Selzer, President and CEO, The Conservation Fund.
Press contact: Vanessa Vaughan, vvaughan@conservationfund.org, 703-525-6300

DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of our nation’s most successful programs for protecting wildlife and wild places. As our nation continues to struggle with the devastating impacts of global warming, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is needed now more than ever to protect the habitat that fish and wildlife will depend on for their survival.”

- Mary Beth Beetham, Director of Legislative Affairs, Defenders of Wildlife

Press contact: James Navarro, jnavarro@defenders.org, 202-772-0247

EASTERN FOREST PARTNERSHIP

“LWCF has protected a ribbon of special places throughout the Eastern United States. From the great Northern Forests to the Highlands, to the Southern Appalachian Mountains, now more than ever we need a program that will preserve the natural tapestry that are our Eastern Forests.”

- Pat Byington, Chair, Eastern Forest Partnership

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NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

“Congress and the new Administration have an opportunity to restore essential funding to this program, and protect America’s national parks. National park visitors don’t want to see commercial and residential development inside their national parks, but this is a real threat to national parks across the country. The National Park Service has not had the needed funding for the past several years to buy land within park boundaries from willing sellers. This puts wildlife, natural and cultural treasures, the experiences of visitors, and the very future of our national parks at risk.”

- Ron Tipton, Senior Vice President for Policy, National Parks Conservation Association

Press contact: Andrea Keller, akeller@npca.org, 202-454-3915

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

“The federal investment in national, state and local parks through the Land and Water Conservation Fund has paid extraordinary dividends in solving numerous national issues: getting kids active and outdoors, improving the health of individuals and communities, providing choices for teens for healthy lifestyles, making public lands available for hunting and fishing, and protecting wetlands and wildlife habitat. Parks at all levels teach citizens how to be stewards of natural resources, introduce urban children to outdoor wonders and increase the quality of life for every American by providing the places, spaces and opportunities to recreate. America needs LWCF now more than ever in order to maintain this progress.”

- Barbara Tulipane, CEO, National Recreation and Park Association

Press Contact- Phil Hayward, phayward@nrpa.org , 703-858-0784

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION

“LWCF is an indispensable tool for ensuring the long-term ecological integrity of our national wildlife refuges. Now is the time to bring the fund to its full strength and to put those dollars to work conserving the lands and waters that support healthy wildlife and healthy people across the American landscape.”

- Evan Hirsche, President, National Wildlife Refuge Association

Press contact: Desiree Sorenson-Groves, dgroves@refugeassociation.org, 202-292-3961

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

“The nation needs a secure, reliable source for land protection funding. As states and federal agencies work to conserve large landscapes, dependable funding is an essential tool to ensure our heritage of natural wonders and working landscapes.”

- Robert Bendick, Director, U.S. Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy

Press contact: Blythe Thomas, bthomas@tnc.org, 703-841-8782

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

“The visionary LWCF program has had a profound impact on the creation of parks and recreational facilities throughout the country. Without even knowing it, Americans have visited one of the thousands of local or state LWCF-funded parks. But even with the heroic efforts of some key players in Congress, funding for LWCF has been in a downward spiral over the past few years. It’s time to reverse the trend.”

- Carol Ash, Commissioner, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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NORTHERN FOREST ALLIANCE

“We are excited at the possibility that the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) may finally have a viable chance to be funded at the level promised so many years ago. Thanks to LWCF and Forest Legacy, we all have the opportunity to visit and enjoy our region's treasures like the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Forest, the White Mountain National Forest, the Green Mountain National Forest, the Silvio Conte Refuge, Acadia National Park, the Lake Umbagog Refuge, the High Peaks Reserve of New York's Adirondack State Park, and a multitude of state and local forests and parks across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. We are thankful for the leadership of Chairman Rahall and the Northern Forest’s House and Senate champions of this critically important program. The wonderful forested character of our region will be ensured for future generations thanks to them.”

- Bruce Clendenning, Policy Director, Northern Forest Alliance

Press contact: Bruce Clendenning, bclendenning@nfainfo.org, 603-832-3559

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

“Now, more than ever, Americans need close-to-home places to recreate, both on land on the water. Full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the best way to provide these opportunities. ACA and its partners in the Outdoor Alliance urge Congress to provide full funding for LWCF.”

- Martin Bartels, Executive Director, American Canoe Association

Press Contact: Paul Sanford, psanford@americancanoe.org, 540-907-4460 x106

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

“The outdoor industry has long held a goal of ensuring every child in America has access to a trail or park within one mile of their home. Many studies show that this type of commitment to our nation’s recreation infrastructure would easily pay for itself in the resulting reduction in health care costs and the increase in the mental well-being of our children.”

-Frank Hugelmeier, President, Outdoor Industry Association

Press contact: Amy Roberts, aroberts@outdoorindustry.org, 303-327-3511

THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

“The LWCF is crucial to our efforts to add private lands we’ve purchased from willing sellers to two of our nation's most treasured landscapes: Yosemite National Park and Oregon’s Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument – we currently hold 6,600 acres in those regions until LWCF funds are available to pay for their transfer to public ownership. Without LWCF funding, it will be extremely difficult - if not impossible - for conservation groups like ours to safeguard these vital lands for all their public benefits, including revenue from tourism and the timber industry, sustainably harvested wood, water, wildlife habitat and a well-balanced climate.”

- John Bernstein, Vice President for Conservation, The Pacific Forest Trust

Press contact: Christine Harrison, charrison@pacificforest.org 415-561-0700 x17

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

“In the Southern Appalachians rapid population growth and land-use patterns are creating fragmentation of our forested land at an alarming rate -- even and especially within Forest Service proclamation boundaries. Without urgent action we stand to lose our hunting and fishing heritage and our ability to secure sufficient drinking water and outdoor recreation areas for future generations.”

- Jay Erskine Leutze – Trustee, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

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THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

“All of us have seen lands we care about covered with shopping centers and housing developments. We're not against growth, but there are special places around America that we all love and which should be kept open and wild and not be developed. The LWCF is a critical tool to help communities seeking a balance between development and preservation, and we should be using the entire fund to protect those places.”

- Will Rogers, President & CEO, The Trust for Public Land

Press contact: Tim Ahern, tim.ahern@tpl.org, 415-495-4014

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

“As global warming continues to imperil plant and animal species, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program will be critical to mitigate for and adapt to the affects of climatic changes. Acquiring critical inholdings also allow the land management agencies to manage their lands more effectively and help return balance to our communities by providing recreational and conservation opportunities that lead to higher property values and economic vitality.”

- David Moulton, Director, Climate Policy & Conservation Funding, The Wilderness Society

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