

Montana

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage



LWCF Funded Places in Montana

Federal Units

- Bear Creek Flats
- Beaverhead River
- Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF
- Big Hole National Battlefield
- Bighorn Canyon NRA
- Bitterroot NF
- Blackfoot River
- Blackfoot ValleyCA
- Charles M. Russell NWR
- Creston National Fish Hatchery
- Custer Gallatin NF
- Custer NF
- Elkhorn Mountains
- Flathead NF
- Fort Union Trading Post NHS
- Four Dances ACEC
- Garnet Ghost Town
- Glacier National Park
- Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS
- Helena-Lewis and Clark NF
- Kootenai NF
- Lake County WPA
- Lake Mason NWR
- Lee Metcalf NWR
- Lewis and Clark NHT
- Lolo NF
- Lost Trail NWR
- Medicine Lake NWR
- Meeteetse Spires
- National Bison Range
- Nez Perce NHP
- Powell County WPA
- Red Rock Lakes NWR
- Rocky Mountain Front CA
- Sheridan County WPA
- Upper Missouri River Breaks NM
- Yellowstone NP

LWCF Success in Montana

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of Montana's most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Montana has received approximately \$649.5 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Rocky Mountain Front, Glacier National Park and numerous other landscapes.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP) grants are also funded under LWCF, to help protect working forests. The FLP cost-share funding supports timber sector jobs and sustainable forest operations while enhancing wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation. For example, the FLP contributed to places such as Kootenai River watershed in northwest Montana and the North Swan River Valley. The FLP assists states and private forest owners to maintain working forest lands through matching grants for permanent conservation easement and fee acquisitions, and has leveraged approximately \$77.3 million in federal funds to invest in Montana's forests, while protecting air and water quality, wildlife habitat, access for recreation and other public benefits provided by forests.

LWCF state assistance grants have further supported hundreds of projects across Montana's state and local parks including Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park, Lone Pine State Park in Flathead County and hundreds of fishing access sites across the state. Additionally, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP), has annual funding opportunities for city park projects in economically disadvantaged areas.

Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of Montana's economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis has found that outdoor recreation generates \$2.9 billion in value added to Montana's economy, 29,453 homegrown jobs, and accounts for 4.3% of the state's economy. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year 950,000 people hunt, fish, or enjoy wildlife-watching in Montana, contributing over \$1.1 billion in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.

Federal Total \$485,507,958

State Programs

Forest Legacy Program \$77,637,000

Habitat Conservation (Sec. 6) \$40,500,502

Stateside \$45,866,186

Total \$649,511,646

LWCF is a simple idea: that a portion of offshore drilling fees should be used to protect important land and water for all Americans. These are not taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, for 55 years the promise of LWCF was broken as \$22 billion was diverted from the program.

The **Great American Outdoors Act** ended the diversion and ensures that LWCF 's permanently authorized \$900 million is used for conservation and recreation projects each year.

LWCF supports the acquisition of land and conservation easements to **protect our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, trails, and BLM sites**, grants funds to the states for local and state park needs, protects critical wildlife habitat, watersheds and recreational access, and conserves working farms, ranches and forestlands that enhance local economies.



www.lwcfcoalition.org

LWCF in Montana

Rocky Mountain Front

The US Fish & Wildlife Service recently purchased an easement using LWCF on a 12,130 acre ranch – the largest US Fish & Wildlife Service easement in the lower 48 states – that protects critical grassland grizzly bear and bird habitat. The conservation of this multi-generational family ranch also accomplished protection on 17 miles of riparian habitat along the Teton River, extending from the Mountains onto the plains. LWCF dollars were matched in excess of 2:1 by private funds, and will be recycled into the local economy through the continuation of this traditional agricultural operation. Home to 3 million acres of large cattle ranches and prime grizzly bear habitat, the Rocky Mountain Front boasts over 150,000 acres of ranches with conservation easements (many used LWCF) and another 100,000 acres of current easement demand “in the pipeline.”

Fiscal Year 2025 Agency LWCF Project List for Montana

Agency	Project	Amount	Delegation
BLM	Blackfoot River Watershed	\$7,000,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
BLM	Blackfoot River Watershed (Supplemental List)	\$14,500,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFWS	Rocky Mountain Front CA	\$1,500,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke, Rosendale
USFS	Lolo NF, Phase I	\$7,500,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFS	Kootenai NF	\$1,600,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFS	Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF I	\$1,740,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFS	Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF I (Supplemental List)	\$1,400,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFS	Lolo NF, Phase II (Supplemental List)	\$7,500,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke
USFS	Custer Gallatin NF (Supplemental List)	\$2,000,000	Tester, Daines/Rosendale
FLP	Stimson Timberland Legacy	\$10,200,000	Tester, Daines/Zinke

Status of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

In August 2020, permanent, dedicated funding for LWCF was secured through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) – ensuring that each year the \$900 million deposited into the LWCF account is directed to conservation and recreation priorities; however, in FY24 Congress backtracked on that promise when they rescinded \$94 million of unobligated LWCF funding (\$89M from the NPS State & Local Assistance Program & \$5M from BLM). GAOA has not eliminated the backlog of LWCF priorities that are waiting in line as nearly all LWCF programs remain oversubscribed - each year the LWCF supplemental project list includes about \$200 million in urgent needs that are authorized to use this funding. To support these critical projects, unspent LWCF funding should be reallocated to the states by the Secretary of the Interior (per the LWCF Act) or reprogrammed by Congress to LWCF sub-programs with outstanding funding need. If funding is rescinded rather than reallocated or reprogrammed, landowners and communities miss out on LWCF funding, and these critical priorities could be lost forever.

FY25 Budget Update: The Biden Administration’s FY25 budget proposal included detailed LWCF priority project lists and balanced program allocations, as well supplemental project lists over and above LWCF’s current \$900 million funding level. [Click here to view a map of past LWCF projects](#)