



THE CASE FOR REAUTHORIZING AND FULLY FUNDING
THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND
WHY CONGRESS MUST ACT



The Mountain Pact

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The Mountain Pact is a nonprofit project that provides policy analysis and mobilizing support to western mountain towns on federal policy issues related to public lands and climate change.

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WHAT IS THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND?

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created with bipartisan support in 1964 and has since [increased](#) the conservation and health of public lands and waters in every state and nearly every county in the United States.¹ The LWCF draws funds from offshore oil and gas royalties, not taxpayers, to provide financial support through grants dedicated to expansion, development, and improvement of national parks, forests, monuments, rivers, lakes, wildlife refuges, community parks, trails, and ball fields. The [funds](#) are used for recreation infrastructure, conservation, preservation, access, and restoration of natural ecosystems.²

After more than 50 years of successful programming, funding for the LWCF is set to expire in September 2018 – unless Congress acts to reauthorize it. Recently, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke requested a mere \$8.1 million for LWCF, a 90% reduction in funding. Public land agencies are struggling with countless land management issues that are routinely intensified by insufficient financial resources and a reduction of this size in funding for the LWCF would only

increase these financial challenges.

Each year \$900 million in royalty payments are paid into the fund, but often Congress funnels this money elsewhere, leaving many key conservation projects without funding. Projects funded by LWCF double return on investment. In fact, the \$214 million that the Department of Interior (DOI) spent on LWCF land acquisition projects in 2010 [created](#) an estimated \$442 million in economic activity and about 3,000 jobs.³

Many of the land deals that LWCF helps support locally can be complicated real estate transactions that can take years to complete. Various stakeholders from private landowners, local governments, federal and state officials, as well as banks and local charities need the certainty that the LWCF program and its funding will be there year after year.

Fully funding and permanently reauthorizing the LWCF is imperative to ensure the restoration, protection, and conservation of our American natural heritage.





IMPACT ON MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

Mountain communities across the West are among the most threatened communities if the LWCF is not reauthorized. Their reliance on visitation to public lands for recreation is key to their economic and cultural vitality. Public lands provide incredible access for residents and visitors of mountain communities to enjoy hunting, biking, skiing, wildlife viewing, hiking, and so much more.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) [pilot study](#) aimed at valuing the outdoor recreation economy, outdoor recreation contributed an incredible 2 percent of the United States Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 and is growing at a rate of 3.8. This is faster than the overall United States economy which is growing at

2.8 percent.⁴ Additionally, the Outdoor Industry Association [found](#) that the outdoor recreation economy contributes \$887 billion to the United States economy, and supports 7.6 million jobs.⁵

Public lands are essential to the outdoor recreation industry. Outdoor recreation and proximity to open spaces - many of which have been enhanced through use of the LWCF - draw residents and tourists to mountain communities which provides significant economic support and a distinct way of life. Without funding for the further protection and enhancement of America's public lands, the economic success and cultural vitality of mountain communities may be at risk.



Mountain communities across the West are among the most threatened communities if the LWCF is not reauthorized due to the importance of healthy public lands for our economic and cultural vitality.

HOW HAS LWCF IMPACTED THE 11 WESTERN STATES?⁶

The LWCF has supported projects in every state and nearly every county in the United States. Below is a breakdown of specific projects that have been funded by the LWCF in Western states.

ARIZONA In Arizona, the LWCF has funded the protection and enhancement of 26 sites including Petrified Forest National Park, Saguaro National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, and Coconino National Forest. Through four different grant programs Arizona has received approximately \$228.9 million in LWCF funding over the last 50 years. Funding from the LWCF supports the \$21.2 billion outdoor recreation industry in Arizona, an industry that also supports 201,000 jobs in the state. These jobs generate \$5.7 billion dollars in wages and salaries.



CALIFORNIA California has received approximately \$2.4 billion in the last 50 years from LWCF. The funds have gone towards the protection and enhancement of 85 sites. These sites include: the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, Kings Canyon National Park, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Sequoia National Park, Redwood National Park, Pinnacles National Monument, and Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge. The protection of these lands and others funded by LWCF, contribute to outdoor recreation access which is a \$92 billion industry in California. Outdoor recreation provides approximately 691,000 jobs which generate \$30.4 billion in wages and salaries.

COLORADO Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Rocky Mountain National Park, Gunnison National Forest, and the Uncompahgre/San Juan National Forest are among the 34 sites in Colorado that have received funding from the LWCF in the last 50 years. Approximately \$268 million worth of LWCF money has been spent on these programs, supporting the \$28 billion Colorado outdoor recreation industry. This industry sustains 229,000 jobs that generate \$9.7 billion in wages and salaries.



IDAHO In the last 50 years, Idaho has seen 30 sites protected and enhanced because of approximately \$262 million from the LWCF. These sites include: the Sawtooth National Forest, Craters of the Moon National Monument, City of Rocks National Reserve, and Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The outdoor recreation industry in Idaho that is sustained by these public lands supports \$7.8 billion in consumer spending also supports 78,000 jobs that generate \$2.3 billion in wages and salaries.



MONTANA The LWCF has provided approximately \$578 million in grants for the protection of 34 sites in Montana over the last 50 years. These sites include state treasures such as Flathead and Gallatin National Forests, Glacier National Park, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The outdoor recreation industry supported by these lands generates \$7.1 billion annually as well as 71,000 jobs. These jobs generate \$2.2 billion in wages and salaries.

NEVADA Nevada has protected and enhanced nine sites with approximately \$102 million from the LWCF. These grants have helped preserve and protect areas such as Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Humboldt National Forest, Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and Toiyabe National Forest. These public lands support the \$12.6 billion in consumer spending related to the outdoor recreation industry which helps to maintain 87,000 jobs that generate \$4 billion in wages and salaries.



NEW MEXICO The LWCF has supported the protection and enhancement of 32 sites in New Mexico with approximately \$312 million in grants. These sites include the White Mountains Wilderness, Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, Aztec Ruins National Monument, Bandelier National Monument, and the Gila National Forest. The outdoor recreation industry that is sustained by these lands produces \$9.9 billion annually in consumer spending and supports 99,000 jobs that generate \$2.8 billion in wages and salaries.

OREGON In Oregon, approximately \$305 million in LWCF grants have been utilized to protect and enhance 46 sites including Mt. Hood National Forest, Siskiyou National Forest, Three Sisters Wilderness, Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, and the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. Oregon has a \$16.4 billion outdoor recreation industry that is supported by these public lands. This industry maintains 172,000 jobs in the state that generate \$5.1 billion in wages and salaries.



UTAH LWCF grant programs totaling \$176 million have helped Utah protect and enhance 19 sites including Uinta National Forest, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, and Capitol Reef National Park. These public lands support the \$12.3 billion outdoor recreation industry in Utah. This industry also supports 110,000 jobs which generate \$3.9 billion in wages and salaries.

WASHINGTON Over the past 50 years, Washington has received approximately \$675 million in LWCF funding for the protection and enhancement of public lands. This money has been used for 41 different sites including the beautiful North Cascades National Park, Olympic National Park and Forest, Alpine Lakes Wilderness, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. These public lands support the \$26.2 billion outdoor recreation industry in Washington. This industry sustains 201,000 jobs which generate \$7.6 billion in wages and salaries.



WYOMING Wyoming has received approximately \$122 million in grants from the LWCF over the last 50 years for the protection and enhancement of public lands. These funds have been used for 12 sites including Grand Teton National Park, the National Elk Refuge, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and Fossil Butte National Monument. These public lands support the \$5.6 billion outdoor recreation industry in Wyoming. This industry also supports 50,000 jobs in the state that generate \$1.6 billion in wages and salaries.



NEXT STEPS

THE LCWF IS AT RISK. We urge Congress to fully fund and permanently re-authorize the LWCF before it expires on September 30th, 2018. The public lands protection and enhancement provided by the LWCF has touched every state and is felt by all residents and visitors across the country. Not only do public lands contribute greatly to nearby communities economically, but they also provide for clean water and clean air through ecosystem preservation and species conservation. This fund is critical to mountain communities and if it is allowed to expire, we - along with all Americans - risk losing our natural heritage and lasting public lands legacy.



FOOTNOTES

¹<https://bit.ly/2MgM0yU>

²<https://bit.ly/2Oc4EbU>

³<https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/about-lwcf>

⁴<https://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/industry/orsa/2018/orsa0218.htm>

⁵<https://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/>

⁶<https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/tools/>