House Committee on Natural Resources Advances Bill to Fully Fund the LWCF

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Funding Bills
The long battle over funding for the LWCF, America's best conservation program, continues as bills requiring full funding for the program advance through the House and Senate.

In April, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act (S. 1081) was introduced in the Senate. The Senate held a hearing to discuss LWCF on June 25, but must hold a hearing and advance the legislation forward as soon as possible.

The House of Representatives has been leading the charge with H.R. 3195, introduced by Jeff Van Drew (D-NJ), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). On June 18, with a 21-13 vote, the House Committee on Natural Resources advanced H.R. 3195 to the House for a full vote.

Both bills have sweeping bipartisan support and would ensure full, permanent funding for the LWCF. We are extremely pleased to see the House moving forward and urge the Senate to pass full funding for LWCF as soon as possible. Permanent funding for the LWCF represents a bipartisan solution for public lands protection, something that benefits all Americans.

ACTION: This week, during the July 4th Congressional recess you can turn up the heat by calling your Senators and Representatives and telling them we need full LWCF funding now!

Background on LWCF
In March, Congress took the first step towards saving the LWCF, which had expired in September 2018, by passing a bill that permanently reauthorized the fund. However, following permanent reauthorization, the fund would still be subject to annual reviews. Functioning under this current structure, the LWCF has lost $22 billion throughout its 54 years because Congress has funneled money to other unknown, non-conservation related activities. This leaves the maintenance, conservation, preservation, and access to our nation's public lands and waters unpredictable. Communities and land managers need to know if they can rely on consistent funding for their big, multi-year projects. LWCF needs permanent, dedicated and full funding at $900 million per year.
Now, despite the Trump Administration's budget proposal that would slash the LWCF and gut environmental and wildlife protections, Congress is moving toward an LWCF funding fix. The administration's Fiscal Year 2020 Budget would reduce funding for the Department of Interior (DOI) by 14%, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 31%, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) by 15%, and funding for renewable energy research and development by nearly 70%. This clearly shows the Trump Administration's priorities, making the passage of the LWCF Permanent Funding Act that much more important.

The Mountain Pact's Work to Secure Permanent Reauthorization and Full Funding

Earlier this month, 151 local elected officials representing 46 towns, cities, and counties in the 11 Western states sent a letter to their congressional delegations urging them to advance legislation that would provide full funding for the LWCF. Funding from LWCF has enhanced conservation, preservation, and access in every state and nearly every county in the United States. The Summit Daily, Sierra Sun, and Missoula Current covered the letter in local media stories.