

Connecticut

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

#SaveLWCF

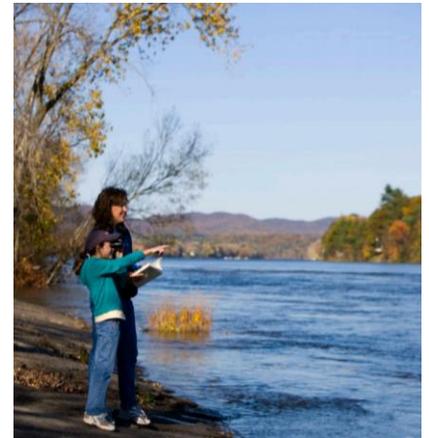
America's most important conservation and recreation program will expire in less than a year unless Congress acts. For 52 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has protected national parks and open spaces in every corner of the United States. But in less than 52 weeks, it could be gone forever and along with it, future protection of the places we love.

[LWCF](#) has invested more than \$117 million over the past five decades to protect Connecticut's outdoor places, open access for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities, and to build close to home parks. From community playgrounds and ballfields to Connecticut's wildlife refuges and historic sites, LWCF has protected places like the Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, Weir Farm National Historic Site, the Highlands, and Cockaponset State Park.

Connecticut's \$9 billion [outdoor recreation industry](#) is an economic powerhouse – supporting 69,000 jobs which generate \$2.9 billion in wages and salaries and produces \$734 million annually in state and local tax revenue.

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

LWCF has invested over \$33 million to build the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge, the only Refuge based on a watershed. The Connecticut River is the longest in the Northeast and its 7.2 million acre watershed from Mount Washington to Long Island Sound is within driving distance of 70 million people in this densely populated area. The Refuge includes tremendous geologic diversity and habitat connectivity-- critical when preparing for changes in climate and land use. It conserves habitat for keystone species, like moose, pine marten, American shad, Atlantic salmon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and many others. In FY17, LWCF funds were sought for a 545-acre project in the refuge located at the confluence of the Salmon and Connecticut Rivers in Haddam Neck, including 3 miles of river frontage and serving as an important stopover for migrating birds. This property is the former site of the Connecticut Yankee Atomic Power Plant, one of the very few decommissioned nuclear sites in the U.S. to be declared completely clean. To transfer this land to the Refuge would cap a truly amazing transformation and provide more access points for hikers, paddlers, and birdwatchers.



Silvio Conte NFWR, Credit: Friends of Silvio Conte NFWR

The New England National Scenic Trail (NET) traverses the entirety of MA and CT in its 215-mile route from the Long Island Sound to the NH border. As our country's newest National Scenic Trail, designated in 2009, there is important work ahead in protecting the NET experience with funding support from LWCF. 40% of the trail in CT is hosted by private landowners. The trail is fortunate to have volunteer trail hosts who welcome the trail on their land, but this situation is untenable in the long term. Landowners leave, property changes hands and the trail can become fractured. Because trail continuity is so important, LWCF is critical to protect trail corridor lands when necessary. Without LWCF, how will we be able to permanently protect this recreational treasure for future generations? –Bridget Likely, New England National Scenic Trail Planner, Appalachian Mountain Club

The Highlands Conservation Act in Connecticut

There has been over \$34 million in LWCF funds invested in the Highlands – key forested watersheds in PA, NJ, NY and CT that provide drinking water for millions of residents in the major metropolitan areas of the Northeast. Connecticut is a model of public/private partnership-- in Northwest CT, HCA funding has protected over 1,500 acres with an average of \$3.5 dollars in matching state and private funding for every dollar of federal investment. Robust HCA funding in FY16 and FY17 has enabled the movement forward on several large conservation projects, including a 420 acre acquisition by the State of Connecticut using HCA and matching funds. A recent project in Connecticut protected 91 acres of wetlands and rugged mountainside along the Hollenbeck River in Cornwall.



Hollenbeck River Project, Credit: Housatonic Valley Association

#SaveLWCF to protect the places we love in Connecticut!

www.lwcfcoalition.org/lwcf52weeks/