LWCF Success in Arizona

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of Arizona’s most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Arizona has received approximately $247 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Grand Canyon and Saguaro National Parks, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Coconino National Forest, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, and San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.

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 the unique riparian forest ecosystem at Cedar Springs in Coconino County. The FLP assists states and private forest owners to maintain working forest lands through matching grants for permanent conservation easements and fee acquisitions, and has leveraged approximately $5 million in federal funds to invest in Arizona’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 Arizona’s state and local parks including Lost Dutchman and Patagonia Lake State Parks.

Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of the Arizona economy. The Outdoor Industry Association has found that active outdoor recreation generates $21.2 billion annually in consumer spending in Arizona, supports 201,000 jobs across the state which generate $5.7 billion in wages and salaries and produces $1.4 billion annually in state and local tax revenue. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that each year over 1.5 million people participate in hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching in Arizona, contributing $2.1 billion to the state economy.
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, the promise of LWCF has been broken. The program is authorized to receive up to $900 million each year—but most of these funds have been diverted elsewhere. Now is the time to fix this and ensure that funds retained in the LWCF account are used for their intended conservation and recreation purposes.

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.

Coconino National Forest

The 56,000-acre Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area is one of the jewels of the Coconino National Forest. The Forest Service used funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) to protect the Packard Ranch property. The tract is adjacent to the wilderness area and at the trailhead of two hiking trails, the Parson’s and Packard trails that lead into Sycamore Canyon. Two perennial streams that join on the property, the Verde River and Sycamore Creek, provide habitat for several endangered and threatened fish species and are important sources of drinking water for Phoenix. The area in which this property is located also has archeological resources of national and international importance.

Fiscal Year 2020 Agency Priority Project List for Arizona

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Delegation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>Aravaipa Canyon Access</td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
<td>Sinema,McSally/O’Halleran</td>
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</tbody>
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Status of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

In 2019, permanent authorization of LWCF was secured as part of S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. Passage of the Dingell Act ensures that LWCF no longer faces the uncertainty of potential expiration, and that the unique structure and inflow of funds to LWCF is protected. The focus is now on permanent full funding for LWCF—ensuring that each year the $900 million deposited into the LWCF account actually goes towards conservation and recreation priorities. Over the 55 years of the program, over $22 billion has been diverted from LWCF to other, unknown purposes. That means that our public lands, waters, and historic sites have been put in peril. As open space continues to shrink, LWCF investments become even more critical to providing the outdoor opportunities for all future generations.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act – S. 1081 and H.R. 3195 – have passed through their respective committees and are ready for floor votes in both chambers.

LWCF Appropriations FY2000-FY2020

Note - All approximate totals derived from appropriations bills
- Forest Legacy Program & Sec. 6 funded from LWCF starting in 2004