LWCF Success in North Dakota

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped protect some of North Dakota’s most treasured places. North Dakota has received approximately $79.3 million over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site and the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site.

Dakota Grassland Conservation Area & Dakota Tallgrass Prairie WMA

Grasslands once covered 90% of the Dakotas. Today, less than 3% of the native prairie remains. These two prairie conservation projects will enable the Fish and Wildlife Service, working with private landowners across the Dakotas, to protect the largest remaining intact grassland habitats in North America. This area includes most of the famed “duck factory” which produces the vast majority of waterfowl in the U.S. and provides critical wetland and prairie habitat for an array of additional bird and vertebrate species. Over 147 species of breeding birds, including 40 species of neotropical migrants and 12 species of waterfowl, inhabit the area. Fragmentation and conversion to crop production are the primary threats. LWCF protection through conservation easement purchases can protect this vital ecosystem maintaining productive wetland and grassland habitats on private lands across this working landscape.

Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of the North Dakota economy. The Outdoor Industry Association has found that active outdoor recreation generates $3.1 billion annually in consumer spending in North Dakota, supports 30,000 jobs across the state which generate $848 million in wages and salaries and produces $179 million annually in state and local tax revenue. Fishing and hunting in North Dakota contributed an estimated $1.4 billion in annual input to the state’s economy, according to a report by the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics at North Dakota State University. Overall, anglers and hunters in North Dakota spent $642.9 million dollars on equipment, vehicles, boats, travel, lodging, food and many other items.
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.

**LWCF in North Dakota**

Over the past forty-five years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of North Dakota’s most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Public lands such as the National Park Service’s Fort Union Trading Post and Knife River Indian National Historic Sites, U.S. Forest Service’s Dakota Prairie Grasslands, numerous U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wildlife Refuges and Wetland Management Districts and landscapes in between have benefitted. LWCF state assistance grants have benefitted hundreds of state and local parks across North Dakota. There are pending and proposed projects in North Dakota that are in need of continued LWCF funding.

**Fiscal Year 2020 Agency Priority Project List for North Dakota**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Delegation</th>
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<tr>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt NP</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td>Hoeven, Cramer/Armstrong</td>
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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