

# Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

AMERICA DEPENDS ON THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

## OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

### Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program

Established by Congress in 2014 and administered through the National Park Service, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP) is funded by the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program. This grant program helps urban communities address outdoor recreation deficits by supporting projects in cities and urbanized areas that create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate already existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors.

ORLP is the only federal program focused exclusively on supporting parks and outdoor recreation opportunities in cities. The program provides grants directly to cities and localities, giving easier access to necessary funding and bypassing the state granting process. Grants are matched at a minimum 1:1 ratio, at least doubling the impact of the federal investment in these communities, with a priority given to projects located in economically disadvantaged areas and places lacking in outdoor recreation opportunities. Grants for project proposals have ranged in size from \$250,000 to \$750,000, and planning grants can be up to \$75,000. The grant is open to state and local government agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes. Since 2014, \$28.2 million in federal funds have supported 50 ORLP projects, while leveraging more than \$60 million in non-federal funds.

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a simple idea: to invest a small portion of federal offshore drilling fees towards protecting important land, water and recreation areas for all Americans. LWCF is paid for using a very small percentage of offshore oil and gas drilling receipts. These are not taxpayer dollars. However, the promise of LWCF remains elusive. Each year the authorized amount of \$900 million from off shore royalties is deposited in the LWCF account in the federal treasury – yet far less has been appropriated to LWCF annually. In fact, more than \$22 billion of those funds have been diverted, vanishing into the general revenue stream with no accountability on where the money was actually spent. As a result, LWCF has been funded far below the authorized level.

Despite chronic underfunding, LWCF has had positive conservation and recreation impacts throughout the country, supporting public land protection and outdoor recreation opportunities at the federal, state and local levels. These investments also provide significant boosts to tourism, jobs and local economies.



Montbello Open Space Park in Denver, CO  
Credit: TPL Archive



Fort Dupont Park  
Credit: NPS



## Benefits of ORLP funding:

- Creating and improving local parks in economically disadvantaged areas and places lacking in outdoor recreation
- City parks are an essential component to attracting and retaining a strong workforce and spurring local investment
- Conserves natural areas, wildlife habitat and open space in urban parks
- Promotes active, healthy lifestyles and gets kids and families outdoors
- Supports recreational access sites and open spaces in denser urban areas
- Promotes the development of new or enhanced partnerships in urban communities across the nation



[www.lwcfcoalition.org](http://www.lwcfcoalition.org)

## Distribution of ORLP Funds

Currently, three sets of ORLP funding awards have been distributed to communities hoping to improve close-to-home access to the outdoors. The first round of grants, awarded in 2015, gave a total of \$2.9 million towards eight pilot projects. Communities and partners matched that money totaling \$6.1 million in funding. Grants went to projects such as the Three Mile Creek Greenway Project in Mobile, AL, the Thomas Cully Park Development in Portland, OR, and the Belle Isle Park Athletic Complex Renovation in Detroit, MI. In 2017, the second round of grants were awarded to 22 projects for a total of \$13.3 million in funding. With matching grants from local governments, private firms, and non-profit organizations, \$34.5 million were provided to projects such as, the North Camden Waterfront Park in Camden, NJ, the Buffalo Bend Hidalgo Park Greenway in Houston, TX, and the Skyway Park Revitalization in King County, WA.

In late 2019, the third round of grants were awarded to 18 projects for a total of \$11.8 million. An additional \$20 million in matching grants were leveraged from local and state governments, non-profits, and private firms to support these projects. The third round of funds continued the work of supporting places that plan, build, and enhance parks and other outdoor recreation facilities in underserved communities, Below is a table of the third round of ORLP grants.

### ORLP Grants Awarded in 2019

State	Project Title	Federal Amount
Arkansas	May Branch Railroad Trail Phase I	\$750,000
Arkansas	Western Hills Park Legacy Project	\$750,000
California	Zamora Park Renovation	\$750,000
Georgia	Athens Street Park Development	\$750,000
Indiana	Rev. Charles Williams Park Development	\$750,000
Kentucky	Bowling Green Riverwalk Park	\$750,000
Maine	Portland Landing Park Development Project	\$750,000
Massachusetts	Clippership Connector - Mystic River Reservation	\$732,434
Minnesota	Midway Peace Park	\$250,000
New Mexico	Apodaca Park Renovation	\$750,000
North Carolina	Peeler Community Park	\$600,000
Ohio	Downtown Waterfront Metropark	\$750,000
Pennsylvania	Mifflin Square Park Phase I Redevelopment	\$750,000
Rhode Island	Woonasquatucket River Adventure Park Phase II	\$375,000
Tennessee	Douglass Park Redevelopment	\$485,000
Washington	South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield	\$750,000
Wisconsin	Galena Park Development	\$372,050
Wisconsin	Modrzejewski Playfield Redevelopment	\$750,000