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Historic Victory as U.S Senate Votes to Fully Fund LWCF, Restore Our National Parks

Great American Outdoors Act Moves to the House of Representatives

WASHINGTON – The United States Senate today overwhelmingly voted to pass legislation to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and invest in critical repair needs within national parks and other public lands. The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) passed the Senate by a vote of (73-25), and will now move on to the House of Representatives, where the two issues have the support of a bipartisan majority.

“People across the country need healthier, safer and better access to public lands, parks and outdoor spaces where we can build community and care for ourselves physically and emotionally. The need to safeguard the funding that goes towards our public lands, ensure they are protected and maintained, and guarantee we are providing safe, welcoming opportunities for *all* people to benefit from them is more urgent than ever,” **said Jamie Williams, President of The Wilderness Society.** “Today’s Senate passage of the Great American Outdoors Act gets us a step closer to Congress keeping a promise to the people it serves to invest in the natural, cultural and recreational resources that anchor our communities. We now call on the House to keep up this energy and quickly get the Great American Outdoors Act to the President’s desk, and with it, finally get full, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund over the finish line.”

“It’s not often that lawmakers can say they helped pass legislation that will have an impact decades into the future, but today’s vote on the Great American Outdoors Act is one they can tell their grandchildren about,” **said Marcia Argust, project director of The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Restore America’s Parks campaign.** “The House of Representatives must step up and act next, so that our national parks and public lands can be repaired, restored, and protected for future generations.”

The Great American Outdoors Act has widespread support across party lines and among conservation and business leaders:

- [Hundreds of groups](#) representing state and regional tourism, local businesses, veterans groups, sportsmen and women, engineering and planning firms, conservation organizations, and the outdoor recreation industry.
- [6 Secretaries of the Interior](#) from both Republican and Democratic administrations
- In March, President Trump [called](#) on Congress to send this legislation to his desk to be signed into law.
- [The U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) expressed its support for GAOA in a recent letter.

About the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America's most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For 50 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, recreational construction and activities and the continued historic preservation of our nation's iconic landmarks from coast-to-coast.

LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments. Outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation activities contribute more than \$887 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 7.6 million jobs.

About the LWCF Coalition

The LWCF Coalition is the umbrella group of more than 1,000 state and local land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, outdoor recreationists and conservation organizations working to protect America's public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Coalition is united in its advocacy for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which will ensure the continued conservation of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, civil war battlefields, as well as state and local parks.

For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.com.

About the National Parks and Public Lands Maintenance Backlog

The National Park System is over 100 years old and its infrastructure—roads, trails, historic structures and artifacts, water and sewage systems, electrical systems, campgrounds, memorials, battlegrounds, seawalls—is aging and deteriorating. The agency can't keep up with the pace of repairs and has a maintenance backlog estimated at nearly \$12 billion, with ¾ of that amount attributed to priority needs.

Bipartisan Restore Our Parks efforts in Congress would direct non-taxpayer monies over a five year period to tackle the most critical repairs within parks and other public lands agencies. Providing consistent annual funding to maintain parks and public lands is a smart investment, as they are proven economic engines for adjacent towns and regions. Park visitor spending contributes over \$20 billion to local communities and generates over 326,000 jobs each year; addressing maintenance needs has the potential to create or support another 100,000 jobs.

About the Restore Our Parks Effort

The Restore Our Parks effort is supported by an informal coalition of national, state, and local organizations seeking to protect national park and public land resources by addressing the maintenance backlog. More than 3,000 national, state, and local organizations—elected officials, businesses, preservation advocates, contractors, engineer and design firms, conservation groups, tourism and marketing, the hotel and lodging industry, outdoor recreation interests—support dedicated resources for National Park Service deferred maintenance needs, and 82% of American voters support legislation to invest in park repairs. For more information, visit <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/restore-america-parks>