

## Conservation Funding and Appropriations



### Natural Resource Adaptation

As Congress debates global warming in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, any carbon cap-and-trade emissions limitation bill should include dedicated annual funding for natural resource adaptation based on an auction system, a significant share of the allowance value dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural environment, and auction proceeds should provide dedicated funding, not subject to annual appropriations, for climate-related ecosystem protection. *(See page 54 for details)*

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) federal program has preserved 4.7 million acres of land for conservation and recreation purposes, including the Redwoods National Park in California, Everglades National Park in Florida, Denali National Park in Alaska and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail stretching from Maine to Georgia. The stateside program has provided more than \$3.5 billion in matching grants to states and localities over the past 40 years, completing more than 40,000 projects.

LWCF is the premier land acquisition tool that the federal land management agencies have, and robust funding for the program will help mitigate the effects of global warming by connecting landscapes, preserving migration corridors, and protecting our clean water sources. *(See page 54 for details)*

### Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program helps preserve working forestlands and critical forest resources. Forest Legacy payments of \$221.7 million have leveraged the protection of more than one million acres of forested lands. *(See page 55 for details)*

### Community Forest and Open Space Program

The Community Forest and Open Space Program will enable communities to acquire forest areas that are economically, culturally, and environmentally important to that locality and that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The Forest Service will be writing regulations for this program in FY 2009; the FY 2010 recommendation will provide the agency with the necessary funds to implement the program. *(See page 56 for details)*

### **National Landscape Conservation System**

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System, comprising some 26 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated lands and waters, such as National Monuments and National Conservation Areas, represents some of the best places where one can experience the history and wild beauty of the West. The System provides innumerable recreational opportunities, critical wildlife habitat, clean water, wilderness, and open space near fast-growing cities. *(See section 7 for details)*

### **National Park System**

Our National Park System, comprised of 387 units, includes some of our nation's most beautiful landscapes and culturally significant areas. Increased funding for operations of the National Park System can help ensure that visitors have safe, enjoyable, and educational experiences in the park system. *(See section 8 for details)*

### **National Wildlife Refuge System**

The National Wildlife Refuge System, with its 548 refuges on nearly 100 million acres of land, helps protect critical wildlife habitat, ensuring that wildlife protection remains a priority of these lands. There is a wildlife refuge in every state and within an hour's drive of most American cities. More than 35 million people visit refuges annually, generating nearly \$1.7 billion for local economies and supporting almost 27,000 private sector jobs. *(See section 9 for details)*

### **National Forest System (U.S. Forest Service)**

Wildland fire (the biggest portion of which is suppression) now accounts for close to 50 percent of the U.S. Forest Service budget. These increased fire suppression costs are overwhelming the agency's other mission areas and experts are predicting that a changing climate will only increase the length of the fire season. As suppression activities continue to increase, so does suppression funding since it is based on a rolling average for the previous 10 years. Because the agency's budgets are essentially flat year to year, the ability to offset increased funding for critical programs has been significantly reduced. The result is a diminishing capacity to deliver core agency duties and programs, which is harmful to long-term prospects for reducing wildfire costs.

As a first step in addressing this problem, Congress must fix the fire suppression funding structure. A new suppression funding structure should include the creation of a separate emergency fund for unanticipated large fire events from the already constrained federal wildland firefighting budgets so the necessary funds are freed up to be invested into the goals of the National Fire Plan and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. *(See National Forest Program section 6 for details)*

### **Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) - including Carbon Accounting and Research**

Climate change will not only increase both stresses on our forests, but also will increase demands to manage them for carbon sequestration, biomass fuels and other outputs. Timely, complete, and accurate information about the state of our nation's forests, both private and public, is critically important. As the U.S. moves toward binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is critical that we make realistic assumptions about how our forests can contribute to offsetting other sources. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **Inventory and Monitoring**

The Forest Service Inventory and Monitoring program funds the collection and analysis of data to be used in land management planning. Monitoring of fish and wildlife populations, along with habitat assessment



and monitoring, is fundamental for effective planning and high-quality decision making under a sound National Forest Management Act regulatory framework. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness Program**

The Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness program makes up the largest of the forest uses, and demand for outdoor recreation is growing fast. With the imminent threat of climate change, the Forest Service should emphasize providing recreational opportunities close to where people live and emphasize muscle-powered forms of recreation over those that expend fossil fuels.. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **Roads Maintenance Program**

Ongoing logging and mineral extraction has not only led to the gradual creation of an enormous and unsustainable road system in the national forests but also to forest fragmentation and widespread unmanaged off-road vehicle driving and related damage. The Forest Service needs to transform its currently oversized, decaying, and obsolete road system to a streamlined system that will meet the nation's needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a fiscally responsible way by decommissioning and restoring roads that are no longer needed, and properly maintaining those roads that are needed. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **Deferred Maintenance**

The Forest Service should address its \$10 billion road maintenance backlog by focusing on roads that are in immediate need of attention and where ecological benefits will be greatest. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program**

The new Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program is a vehicle for accomplishing road decommissioning and other remediation activities that will significantly improve water quality and fish habitat, reduce fragmentation of wildlife habitat, and aid in restoring stability and resilience to watersheds and large tracts of forests. *(See section 6 for details)*

### **State, Tribal and Local Fire Assistance**

Increased population in the wildland urban interface is one of the primary reasons fire suppression costs have skyrocketed to over \$1 billion annually since 2000. In addition, because climate change will increase the length of the fire season and potentially the number and size of fires that burn in any given year, it is more critical than ever to help these communities prepare for inevitable wildland fires. State Fire Assistance is the primary federal program that can help communities become “firesafe” and is a key program to reducing suppression costs—and ultimately restoring functional and fire-resilient wildlands. *(See section 11 for details)*

### **Preparedness Program—Appropriate (Strategic) Management Response Training**

Appropriate (Strategic) Management Response is an approach to firefighting that treats each fire individually, accounting for threats to lives and property first, but also weighing factors like ecology and landscape and then applying the appropriate response—which can include the full range of tactical responses from monitoring to aggressive attack. This change will lead to healthier landscapes and less costly fire seasons in the future. *(See section 11 for details)*

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## Natural Resource Adaptation

Scientists now agree that the concentration of heat-trapping gases already in the atmosphere is causing and will cause significant adverse impacts to the United States and the world. Thus, legislation must address not only the causes of worsening global warming, but also the effects of the unavoidable global warming we already face.

Therefore, any comprehensive climate legislation must include:

- Dedicated Annual Funding Based on an Auction System. A carbon cap-and-trade emissions limitation bill should include an auction system for the distribution of emissions allowances. Proceeds from this auction system should be devoted to confronting the climate change challenge, including actions to address the harmful impacts of climate change on the natural environment.
- Auction Proceeds for Protecting Wildlands and Natural Ecosystems. A significant share of the allowance value generated from any cap-and-trade program should be dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural environment, including wildlands, fish and wildlife habitat and the natural ecosystems on which human health depends. Protecting the habitats of fish and wildlife, including terrestrial, freshwater aquatic, estuarine, coastal and marine species, serves all Americans by protecting the clean water, clean air, biodiversity, open space and working natural landscapes that define our quality of life and are the foundation for a strong economy.
- Broad Authority for Ecosystem and Wildland Protection. Auction proceeds under this bill should provide dedicated funding, not subject to annual appropriations, for climate-related ecosystem protection to ensure that federal, state, and tribal resource agencies and their partners can meet the new challenge of conserving land, water and habitat in the face of an altered and rapidly changing climate. Eligible activities may include conservation, restoration, land acquisition, fish and wildlife protection, habitat enhancement, planning, research, monitoring, and education activities that are carried out pursuant to comprehensive ecosystem climate adaptation strategies.
- Federal Multi-Agency Comprehensive National Strategy. The activities of the federal resource agencies needed to restore and protect fish, wildlife and ecosystems against the impacts of climate change should be directed and coordinated through a comprehensive national strategy, developed in close consultation with the states, tribes, and other stakeholders, and with advice from the National Academy of Sciences and a science advisory board.
- Enhanced Scientific Capacity. The scientific capacity of the federal resource agencies to evaluate and address the impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife, and ecosystems should be enhanced through, among other things, the establishment of national climate change and fish and wildlife science centers, housed within agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

### *The Land and Water Conservation Fund*

Federal Program, FY10 Goal: Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal Program at \$325 million

- The LWCF federal program has preserved 4.7 million acres of land for conservation and recreation purposes, including the Redwoods National Park in California, Everglades National Park, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail stretching from Maine to Georgia.

- Funding for the LWCF federal land acquisition program has been cut by more than seventy-five percent over the past four years.
- The vast majority of federal land acquisition priorities are inholdings. Over eighty percent of lands acquired in recent years are within the boundaries of federal parks, refuges, forests or recreation areas. Acquisition of critical parcels results in resource consolidation rather than fragmentation, ensuring better recreational opportunities, more successful wildlife habitat, endangered species protection and public access.
- The landowners in federal acquisitions are willing sellers. They have indicated a desire to sell to the federal government for conservation purposes. Timely and adequate federal acquisition funds are needed to support those landowners who wish to have their property added to our public lands.
- Federal land acquisition also facilitates good management, helps reduce costs, funds recreation, protects cultural resources, leverages private and community investments, protects drinking water supplies, and helps to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Stateside Program, FY10 Goal: LWCF state assistance program funded at \$125 million

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund state assistance program has provided more than \$3.5 billion in matching grants to states and localities over the past 40 years, completing more than 40,000 projects.
- The state/local program provides 50 percent matching grants to the states, and through the states to local governments, to conserve land and to develop recreation facilities and infrastructure that support public use. State and local governments agree to manage grant assisted resources in perpetuity with non-federal funds.
- Federal funds have been equally matched by state and local contributions for a total LWCF grant investment of over \$7 billion.
- Of the total number of grant projects, more than 10,000 have helped states and localities conserve about 2.55 million acres of land.

***The Forest Legacy Program***

FY 10 Goal: Fund the Forest Legacy program at \$125 million

- Authorized by Congress in 1990, the Forest Legacy Program helps preserve working forestlands and protect critical forest resources. Between 1982 and 1997 the nation lost more than 10 million acres of forest to development, with five million of that occurring over the five-year period between 1992 and 1997
- Forest Legacy is a state-grant program. The Forest Legacy Program was created to assist the states with the management and preservation of their forest resources. Under federal oversight, participating states work with local communities and private landowners to preserve the multiple benefits found on forest lands. As a state-administered program, Forest Legacy provides the flexibility necessary to keep local shareholders involved in the decision making process that will ultimately affect their communities.
- Forest Legacy supports working forests
  - Forest Legacy ensures the continuation of a traditional working forest rather than fragmentation and subdivision.
  - When critical community forest lands are put up for sale, the potential impacts of their conversion to non-forest uses are often of significant concern to communities whose economic base is entirely or in large part dependent on timber production.
  - Forest Legacy conservation easements prohibit development on land under new ownership, as well as reduce the financial incentives to large timberland owners for divesting themselves of more land.

- Under a Forest Legacy easement, the landowner or other parties may continue to harvest timber according to the terms of the agreement, which are often more restrictive than existing state laws.
- Forest Legacy promotes partnerships and leverages funds  
While the program requires a minimum of 25 percent non-federal match, over its history the program has leveraged twice that amount.
- Forest Legacy protects drinking water supplies  
In a number of parts of the country, drinking water supplies for urbanized areas are located within undeveloped forest areas.

### ***The Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program***

#### FY 10 Goal: Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program funded at \$75 million

A new Forest Service program in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program will help American communities conserve threatened forests for watershed protection, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat and sustainable forest management. The program will:

- Enable communities to acquire forest areas that are economically, culturally, and environmentally important to that locality and that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses,
- Establish forests to be owned by communities,
- Have a management plan subject to a public process,
- Provide technical assistance to communities for community forest management, and,
- Be established under the U.S. Forest Service system and in cooperation with appropriate state and local units of government.

#### The Threat:

- More than 40 million acres are expected to be converted from forestlands to developments by 2030,
- The top 15 watersheds in the nation that are projected for development are located and will have significant impacts on eastern forests,
- Few communities have the necessary capacity to conserve forestlands that protect their water supply, support a timber-based economy, or enhance recreational opportunities, scenic beauty and quality of life for local residents.

Community forests can provide an increasingly urban and suburban population with opportunities to enjoy forests close to home. These forests are essential for future generations to enjoy.

## Recent Decline in the Land & Water Conservation Fund

