



The Land and Water Conservation Fund: Preserving America's Beauty

Grand Teton National Park, Wyo.

On Sept. 3, 1964, the same day President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, another important bill was signed that has had long-lasting and significant effects on protecting America's public lands: the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Over its 50-year history, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has conserved iconic landscapes in every state and is responsible for more than 42,000 state and local outdoor recreation projects. By far, it is our nation's most important conservation program for protecting parks and open spaces where we go to enjoy the great outdoors, and for preserving critical wildlife habitat.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is the only federal program dedicated to continued conservation and recreational opportunities in America—from our national parks and forests to historic battlefields and local cultural sites.

Unfortunately the Land and Water Conservation Fund will expire on Sept. 30 if Congress fails to reauthorize the program.

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HOW IT WORKS:

In the late 1950s, national parks were becoming overcrowded. To combat this problem and improve outdoor recreation access for all Americans more broadly, Congress enacted the bipartisan Land and Water Conservation Fund Act in 1964. The law authorizes money each year for a wide range of local, state and federal projects including buying "inholdings"—private land within the borders of parks and other public lands—to make those lands and wildlife habitat more connected and accessible.



WHO PAYS FOR THE FUND:

OIL & GAS COMPANIES

When energy companies drill for (publicly owned) oil and gas offshore, they pay a portion of their royalties from those leases to the federal government.



WHO DOES NOT PAY FOR IT:

THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER

Congress designed the Land and Water Conservation Fund this way so that there would always be money available—without burdening the American taxpayer—to offset the drain of one natural resource by protecting and enhancing others.



The Wilderness Society
President hiking in Boulder
Mountain Park in Boulder, Colo.

DEAR WILDERNESS SOCIETY SUPPORTER,

This summer, we are working to protect one of America's most important conservation programs: the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

This fund is responsible for protecting countless special places across America—from our most iconic national treasures like the Grand Canyon to our local neighborhood parks that give us respite from our busy urban lives.

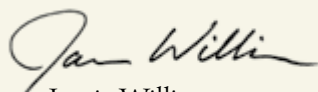
But the Land and Water Conservation Fund expires on Sept. 30, and as we focus our efforts on ensuring this bedrock conservation program is renewed, I am reminded of the incredible role our members have played in helping us achieve every single one of our conservation victories since we began in 1935—80 years ago.

This grassroots spirit was the driving force behind the enactment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This summer, we need your support to help us ensure that America's most important conservation fund is renewed.

Since our founding, our supporters have been the heart and soul of this organization and every single victory we have celebrated.

We can't thank you enough for your support and passion for keeping America's most important wild places wild—from the Arctic to the California Desert to the local parks in our urban backyards. Your support will be integral to the protection of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for helping us protect this American legacy.

Sincerely,


Jamie Williams

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND *continued*

Without reauthorization, critical lands and outdoor recreation sites all across the country will be at risk, including a host of time-sensitive conservation priorities associated with the National Park Service's Centennial next year.

With the support of our members, The Wilderness Society is working with national and community partners to ensure that this incredibly important conservation program continues to provide a dedicated and permanent means for protecting America's irreplaceable natural, historic, cultural and outdoor landmarks.



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Be an Advocate for Wilderness

When you make a generous gift of \$1,000 or more to The Wilderness Society, you provide the leadership support critical to protecting America's precious wildlands for generations to come. To learn more about becoming an *Advocate for Wilderness*, including special benefits, please visit wilderness.org/advocates or call Andrea O'Brien at **202-429-2626**.

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PRESIDENT:
Jamie Williams

DESIGN:
Studio Grafik

Questions or comments?
Please contact Jamie Clark at
Jamie_Clark@tws.org



The Wilderness Society meets all standards as set forth by the Better Business Bureau/Wise Giving Alliance.

#KeepItPublic

This land is your land:
Visit wilderness.org/thislandisyourland
to tell Congress to stop its assault
on your public lands.

HOT ISSUES

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

The idea of states taking over our national public lands has spread to Congress. In late March, the Senate approved a budget amendment that would facilitate the transfer or sale of national forests, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges to states. In the House of Representatives, a budget resolution expressed support for the idea that state control over our shared public lands would lead to "increased resource production," which means that

these lands would be sold off to the highest bidder for activities such as oil and gas drilling, and mining. Both the Senate amendment and the House resolution speak to a broader agenda in this Congress to suppress Americans' rights to access and enjoy the lands that belong to each of us. You own these lands. They have been set aside for you and your family—to experience freedom, find respite in nature, learn about our history, and pass these wonders on to future generations of Americans. The Wilderness Society is building strong support both on the ground and online to tell Congress to stop its assault on your public lands. To make your voice heard, sign the petition at wilderness.org/thislandisyourland.

The Bureau of Land Management recently released plans to protect greater sage-grouse habitat across the western United States.

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE PLANS RELEASED

The Bureau of Land Management has released its plans to protect greater sage-grouse habitat across the western United States. These plans cover 10 states, mostly in the Rocky Mountain region, and will be a critical component of a decision to be made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in September about whether to add the birds to the endangered species list. The Wilderness Society has been working closely with the Bureau of Land Management, western state agencies and local stakeholders to ensure that these plans have strong habitat protections in place for the 60 million acres that will be affected. We must protect these iconic birds from declining dangerously closer to extinction, as well as the hundreds of other species, from songbirds to elk and deer that also depend on the same sagebrush ecosystem.



© Bob Wick, BLM

WILD PLACES

AMERICA'S OPEN SPACES:

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America's most important conservation program and has, in its 50-year life, protected many of America's most iconic landscapes. Pictured here is Wahclella Falls in Oregon's Columbia River Gorge.

© Michael Matti, flickr

Brought to you by the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Many of America's most iconic landscapes have been protected forever, in part or entirely, through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, including the Redwoods, Mount Rainier, the Great Smoky Mountains, the Everglades and the Grand Canyon. Because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Americans can explore iconic national parks, state parks and wildlife refuges or connect with the outdoors in urban parks and open spaces all over the nation. These wonderful havens for outdoor recreation are the places where we hunt and fish, backpack and camp, rock climb and paddle, experience our nation's heritage, and connect with each other. For 50 years, Land and Water Conservation Fund investments have protected parks and natural areas and funded the development of playgrounds, sports fields, bike paths and hiking trails. This network of public lands provides the foundation of America's strong outdoor recreation-based economy. Here are a few examples of the outdoor recreation havens that the fund has helped protect:





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Charlies Bunion, Appalachian Trail, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tenn.

AMERICA'S NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, in conjunction with the National Trails System Act, catalyzed trail protection efforts and established the system of national trails that lets us experience America's premier scenic and historic landscapes. This visionary plan has led to the creation of 11 long-distance national scenic trails and 19 national historic trails. In addition, more than 1,200 national recreational trails in all 50 states are part of this system including: the Pony Express Trail that extends from Missouri to California, Ala Kahakai in Hawaii, the Iditarod Trail in Alaska, the Pacific Crest Trail running the length of the West Coast, and the North Country and Ice Age National Scenic Trails across the backyards of the upper Midwest. To date, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped protect nearly 200,000 acres of land within the Appalachian Trail corridor, from the birthplace of the trail in New York's Bear Mountain State Park to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that straddles the border of Tennessee and North Carolina.

ALLPLAY SEYMOUR SMITH PARK, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Seymour Smith Park provides access to outdoor recreation activities for all of Omaha's residents—from nature trails to youth athletic fields. The entire complex utilizes barrier-free design concepts that allow people with mobility impairments and other disabilities to fully enjoy sports and recreation. Without the Land and Water Conservation Fund, this inclusive community park might not exist.

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CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA, GEORGIA

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area preserves 76 miles of Chattahoochee riverfront from the headwaters in north Georgia downstream to the city of Columbus. The area includes an exceptional corridor for river recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. Furthermore, it protects drinking water for millions of Georgia residents and provides more than 65 percent of the public green space for the Atlanta metro area.



Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Ga.



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WILDERNESS AND YOU

SARAH JAMES

When 12 million acres within Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge were recommended for designation as wilderness in January 2015, no one celebrated this historic announcement more than its closest neighbors—the indigenous Gwich’in people and their tribal leaders. Among them is Sarah James, who has made it her lifelong quest to protect the fragile ecosystem that sustains her people and their traditional way of life and culture.

For Sarah, defending the coastal plain—the biological heart of the refuge—from oil exploration and drilling is not just about doing the right thing for the environment. More than that, she says, “it is an urgent human rights issue.” The calving and nursery ground for the Porcupine caribou herd that has nourished the Gwich’in for thousands of years, this vast landscape also functions as vital wildlife habitat for polar bears and throngs of bird species. “We believe we were put here by God to take care of this part of the world. I learned this way of life from my parents. It is our responsibility, and this place is integral to us.”

“If oil and gas development drove away the caribou, altered their migrations or habitats, or reduced their numbers, or if industrial activity and pollution cost us our other sources of sustenance, we would lose our culture and our communities.”

The effects of climate change pose an enormous risk to this revered wild place and its web of life. And in the eyes of the Gwich’in, until the refuge is permanently protected, the pressure to drill threatens its integrity for future generations. “If oil and gas development drove away the caribou, altered their migrations or habitats, or reduced their numbers, or if industrial activity and pollution cost us our other sources of sustenance, we would lose our culture and our communities,” Sarah says.



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From her home in Arctic Village, Sarah serves as a spokesperson for the tribe and a board member of the Gwich'in Steering Committee. She travels all over the world, speaking out for the protection of the refuge and the rights of indigenous peoples. These efforts were recognized in 2002 when she and two of her fellow tribal leaders received the Goldman Environmental Prize. And this June, The Wilderness Society bestowed on her its highest civilian honor—the Robert Marshall Award, named for wilderness visionary Robert Marshall—for her outstanding contributions to conservation and her fostering of a strong land ethic. The 30th award recipient, Sarah joins an inspiring group of conservation leaders that includes Margaret Murie, Wallace Stegner and Terry Tempest Williams.

As Sarah continues the fight, The Wilderness Society is very grateful for her leadership and commitment to achieving permanent protection for the spectacular crown jewel that is the Arctic Refuge.



You can give at work

Thank you to the many donors who contributed to The Wilderness Society last year through corporate, state, city and county workplace giving campaigns. If you are a federal employee, you can support our work by designating #10638 on your pledge sheet during the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

The Wilderness Society is a founding member of EarthShare, a federation of America's leading nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations working together to promote environmental education and charitable giving through workplace giving campaigns.

For more information regarding The Wilderness Society, EarthShare or workplace giving, please contact The Society's Membership Services Dept. at 1-800-The-Wild or member@tws.org.



Make a lasting difference for Wilderness

Help protect our precious wild spaces forever by making a gift to The Wilderness Society through your will or estate plan. Contact Kristie Malley to learn more about how to create your wilderness legacy.

888-736-4897
legacygifts@tws.org
wilderness.org/legacy



The Wilderness Society
1615 M St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
www.wilderness.org
1-800-THE-WILD

Monthly Giving Makes the Most Sense — For You and the Wilderness

The Friends of the Wilderness is an essential group of our most dependable supporters. Their sustaining gifts of as little as \$10 each month ensure we have the resources to protect America's precious wildlands for generations to come. To join today call us at 1-800-THE-WILD or go to wilderness.org/friends.



Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colo.

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Crater Lake National Park, Ore.

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