Land and Water Conservation Fund

Giving Back to You and Your Community

Sean Gobin with four servicemen who completed their walk of the Appalachian Trail.
Photo: Cherri Crockett, Bethel, Maine

Supporting Veterans through our National Trails

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The United States is home to some of the longest trails in the world. Aside from providing outdoor recreational benefits, these long distance trails also support valuable programs such as Walk Off The War, which helps veterans transition back into their civilian lives. Trails such as the Appalachian Trail (AT), the Continental Divide Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail offer solace amid a setting of unrivaled natural beauty to our returning servicemen and women.

Local communities and friends groups support the protection and stewardship of our national trails, and work to connect communities and visitors to this spectacular network of recreational opportunities. Several of these long distance trails remain segmented or incomplete, and the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the primary tool available to preserve the land and complete these trails.

Walk Off The War

In 2012, after returning home from three combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Warrior Hike founder Sean Gobin hiked all 2,185 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Recognizing the therapeutic effects of long distance hiking, he created the "Walk Off The War" program, which is designed to support veterans transitioning from their military service by through-hiking America's National Scenic Trails.

Since 2010, the National Park Service and The Conservation Fund have worked with local businesses, community leaders and local agency representatives to protect the northern New Hampshire forestland directly surrounding the Appalachian Trail. Among the AT's most picturesque and rugged sections, the Mahoosuc Mountain Range provides a gateway between New Hampshire and Maine, and leads hikers across high elevations to a section of the AT known as the "toughest mile." Through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, this famed corridor is now protected for six miles along the crest of the Mahoosuc Mountain Range.

880,000 JOBS are created through recreation activities on your federal lands [1]

For every **$1** spent on the LWCF, communities receive **$4** in **ECONOMIC BENEFIT** [2]

The LWCF has invested in community projects for **EVERY COUNTY** in the United States [3]

The LWCF uses **ZERO TAXPAYER DOLLARS**

ABOUT Land and Water Conservation Fund

Using zero taxpayer dollars, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) uses earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help preserve our history and protect our lands. The LWCF is a balanced approach between using and preserving our natural resources, while giving back to American communities.

[1] Federal Interagency Council on Recreation, Fact Sheet on Outdoor Recreation: Jobs and Income, 2014.

[2] The Trust for Public Land, Return on the Investment from the Land & Water Conservation Fund, 2010.

[3] LWCF NPS Grant Program, http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/history.html, retrieved 2014.

[4] U.S. Forest Service, Off-Highway Vehicle Use and Collaboration: Lessons Learned From Project Implementation, 2005.

[5] International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, http://www.snowmobile.org/pr_snowfacts.asp, retrieved 2014.

Map: National Park Service

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana
Photo: U.S. Forest Service

Snowmobile Trails

Winter Access

Our public lands provide outdoor recreation opportunities for off-highway vehicles (OHV) while minimizing impacts to the natural resources. More than 36,000 miles of trails are open to motor vehicles in U.S. Forest Service lands alone.[4] On average 11-12 million visits annually contribute to OHV use in our national forests.[4] Snowmobiling is one of the largest growing OHV activities and is a $26 billion industry in the United States, generating more than **100,000 jobs.**[5]

The Longest Rail-Trail Completed in California

Bizz Johnson Trail, California

The Rails-to-Trails program converts no longer active railroad corridors to public recreational trails. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) spearheaded the conversion of the longest rail-trail in California, the Bizz Johnson Trail. Former California congressional representative Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson, for whom the trail is named, served in the House of Representatives from 1958 to 1980 and was instrumental in establishing the segment as a rails-to-trails conversion for recreational use. In 2011, the last of numerous key lots, was acquired by BLM in support of uninterrupted public access along the Bizz Johnson Trail. The Rails-to-Trails program has no designated financial support and relies heavily on funding resources such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund to repurpose these defunct infrastructure corridors.

Bizz Johnson Trail, California.
Photo: Bureau of Land Management