

# Illinois

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage



## LWCF Funded Places in Illinois

### Federal Units

- Chautauqua NWR
- Crab Orchard NWR
- Cypress Creek NWR
- Emiquon NWR
- Great River NWR
- Lewis and Clark NHT
- Lincoln Home NHS
- Mark Twain NWR
- Meredosia NWR
- Middle Mississippi River NWR
- Midewin NTGP
- Shawnee NF
- Two Rivers NWR
- Upper Mississippi River NWR

**Federal Total** \$32,757,722

### State Programs

Forest Legacy Program \$1,320,664

Habitat Conservation (Sec. 6) \$99,705

Stateside \$171,618,029

**Total** \$205,796,120

## LWCF Success in Illinois

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of Illinois' most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Illinois has received approximately \$205.8 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Shawnee National Forest and Cypress Creek and Emiquon National Wildlife Refuges.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP) grants are also funded under LWCF, to help protect working forests. The FLP cost-share funding supports timber sector jobs and sustainable forest operations while enhancing wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation. For example, the FLP contributed to places such as the Byron Rock River project in Ogle County and the Oblate/La Vista project in Madison and Jersey Counties. The FLP assists states and private forest owners to maintain working forest lands through matching grants for permanent conservation easement and fee acquisitions, and has leveraged approximately \$1.3 million in federal funds to invest in Illinois' forests, while protecting air and water quality, wildlife habitat, access for recreation and other public benefits provided by forests.

LWCF state assistance grants have further supported hundreds of projects across Illinois' state and local parks including Indian Boundary Park in the West Ridge neighborhood of Chicago and Washington Park on the South Side of Chicago. Additionally, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP), has annual funding opportunities for city park projects in economically disadvantaged areas.

## Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of Illinois' economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis has found that outdoor recreation generates \$21.9 billion in value added to Illinois' economy, 177,120 homegrown jobs, and accounts for 2.1% of the state's economy. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year 3.6 million people hunt, fish, or enjoy wildlife-watching in Illinois, contributing over \$2.4 billion in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.





## LWCF in Illinois

### Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge

The Cypress Creek NWR provides resting, nesting, and feeding habitats for a variety of birds and other wildlife. The Cache River and Cypress Creek Wetlands includes 91 percent of Illinois' high-quality swamplands and some of the oldest trees east of the Mississippi River. LWCF funds aid in the efforts to preserve, restore and manage the wetlands and bottomland forest of the Refuge. Visitors to the Cypress Creek NWR can utilize the many recreational opportunities available, such as hiking, fishing, hunting, canoeing, wildlife watching, and environmental education.

### Fiscal Year 2025 Agency LWCF Project List for Illinois

Agency	Project	Amount	Delegation
USFWS	Cypress Creek NWR	\$500,000	Durbin, Duckworth/Bost
USFWS	Middle Mississippi River NWR*	\$500,000	Durbin, Duckworth/Bost, Budzinski
USFWS	Hackmatack NWR*	\$3,290,000	Durbin, Duckworth/Schneider, Foster, LaHood

**LWCF is a simple idea:** that a portion of offshore drilling fees should be used to protect important land and water for all Americans. These are not taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, for 55 years the promise of LWCF was broken as \$22 billion was diverted from the program.

The **Great American Outdoors Act** ended the diversion and ensures that LWCF's permanently authorized \$900 million is used for conservation and recreation projects each year.

LWCF supports the acquisition of land and conservation easements to **protect our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, trails, and BLM sites**, grants funds to the states for local and state park needs, protects critical wildlife habitat, watersheds and recreational access, and conserves working farms, ranches and forestlands that enhance local economies.



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



## Status of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

In August 2020, permanent, dedicated funding for LWCF was secured through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) – ensuring that each year the \$900 million deposited into the LWCF account is directed to conservation and recreation priorities; however, in FY24 Congress backtracked on that promise when they rescinded \$94 million of unobligated LWCF funding (\$89M from the NPS State & Local Assistance Program & \$5M from BLM). GAOA has not eliminated the backlog of LWCF priorities that are waiting in line as nearly all LWCF programs remain oversubscribed - each year the LWCF supplemental project list includes about \$200 million in urgent needs that are authorized to use this funding. To support these critical projects, unspent LWCF funding should be reallocated to the states by the Secretary of the Interior (per the LWCF Act) or reprogrammed by Congress to LWCF sub-programs with outstanding funding need. If funding is rescinded rather than reallocated or reprogrammed, landowners and communities miss out on LWCF funding, and these critical priorities could be lost forever.

**FY25 Budget Update:** The Biden Administration's FY25 budget proposal included detailed LWCF priority project lists and balanced program allocations, as well supplemental project lists over and above LWCF's current \$900 million funding level. [Click here to view a map of past LWCF projects](#)