

Great American Outdoors Act Draws Widespread Support from Diverse Groups Across the Nation

“The conservation of our lands and waters is the cornerstone of thriving economies,” said **Tom Cors, Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesman for the LWCF Coalition**. “Fully funding LWCF and addressing maintenance needs in national parks and on public lands will help protect important natural spaces, create jobs and expand outdoor recreation opportunities nationwide. The Great American Outdoors Act will provide immediate jobs and will provide on-the-ground investment for our economy as we work to recover from this crisis.”

“Investing in the restoration of park and public lands infrastructure—at a time when job creation is so important—can help sustain gateway communities and small businesses that are dependent on park tourism,” said **Marcia Argust, project director for The Pew Charitable Trusts’ restore America’s parks campaign**. “The Great American Outdoors Act will address critical repairs within our aging national parks, which will not only add American jobs but will ensure visitor access to, and recreation opportunities in, our nation’s most treasured resources.”

“We join over 850 groups nationwide that support fixing our national parks and protecting more outdoor areas for nature to thrive,” said **Kristen Brengel, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the National Parks Conservation Association**. “From Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon, our national parks have crumbling roads, trails and water systems that are in desperate need of repair. Fixing our national parks will put thousands of people to work in every state and should be a part of our nation’s economic recovery.”

“The Lyme Timber Company has been fortunate to partner with State and Federal agencies to achieve last conservation of working forests in more than a dozen states comprising more than a million forestland acres that deliver jobs, clean water, carbon sequestration and public recreation,” said **Peter Stein, Managing Director, Lyme Timber Company**. “The LWCF was a critical public funding source for these actions, and permanent full funding will allow for essential increases in the pace and scale of land conservation, especially in these difficult times.”

“The endorsement of the Great American Outdoors Act by hundreds of organizations nationwide demonstrates the significant impact that passage of this legislation would have for our nation’s historic and cultural resources, as well as the opportunity for local communities and economies to flourish as a result of this investment in our public lands,” said **Tom Cassidy, Vice President for Government Relations and Policy, National Trust for Historic Preservation**. “The nearly \$12 billion National Park Service deferred maintenance backlog, of which 47% is for historic assets, puts historic buildings and other infrastructure at risk of permanent damage or loss. The Great American Outdoors Act is a bipartisan solution that would provide \$9.5 billion in dedicated funding over five years for much needed repairs of the National Park Service and other federal agencies. And by also providing full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, this bill would ensure preservation of some of our nation’s most iconic historic places.”

“We have a duty to be good stewards of God’s creation, to protect and defend the beauty of the land and water, and to have clean skies and fresh air for our children to enjoy,” said **Rev. Mitchell C. Hescox, President/CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network**. “It is vital that we restore our parks so that

the nearly 300 million annual visitors can have a safe, enjoyable, and sacred experience. Americans deserve safe and functional public lands, and that is why the Great American Outdoors Act is so crucial.”

Before this crisis hit, Congress was poised to pass the most important piece of legislation to support outdoor recreation access in a century – the Great American Outdoors Act,” **said Jessica Wahl Turner, Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable.** “As the nation shifts to longer-term economic investments and stimulus packages, we need Congress to act more than ever, to invest in our nation’s outdoor recreation infrastructure and get Americans outside and back to work. This bill would provide certainty for communities who are eager to invest in close-to-home park infrastructure, create opportunities for public access to the outdoors, and support the recreation economy. This will have a long-term economic impact on rural communities and will increase the outdoor experience tremendously once the worst of the pandemic is over.”

“The Great American Outdoors Act offers innovative solutions and sustainable funding that will address the deferred-maintenance backlog on federal lands, which is critical to improving and expanding national campgrounds,” **said RV Industry Association President Craig Kirby.** “Campgrounds on federal lands are currently showing distressing signs of wear: crumbling roads and bridges; deferred maintenance needs; and limited camping availability, jeopardizing not only the RV industry but the entire outdoor recreation industry.”

“As many Americans are increasing the use of federal, state, and local parks it has become clear that the need for repairs and maintenance of these treasured spaces is paramount. The National Park Service needs nearly \$12 billion to address deferred maintenance needs while the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is continuously raided for non-conservation purposes. Luckily, the Great American Outdoors Act would offer a remedy to both these issues, and the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) is proud to endorse this legislation,” **said Wendy Miller, FASLA, President of the American Society of Landscape Architects.** “Landscape architects helped design the first national parks and have been involved in their planning and protection ever since. We look forward to continuing our work with Congress and partners on the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act.”

“The National Park Foundation strongly supports the Great American Outdoors Act and encourages its inclusion in a future infrastructure-related legislation,” **stated Will Shafroth President and CEO, National Park Foundation.** “This bipartisan proposal would invest in critical needs for our beloved national parks, providing a much-needed boost to local economies.”

“Our nation’s parks, which help fuel the economy and create a space for all Americans to enjoy, are in a crisis, with a deferred maintenance backlog of nearly \$12 billion,” **said K.N. Gunalan “Guna”, Ph.D., P.E., President, American Society of Civil Engineers.** “The bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act will address priority repairs that are so badly needed within our national parks and other public lands, so that nature can thrive, and communities can flourish. We urge Congress to pass this bill swiftly, as it is one step closer to raising America’s ‘D+’ parks grade.”

"Sportsmen and women across the country are thrilled with the introduction of the Great American Outdoors Act," **said CSF President Jeff Crane.** "The resources provided through this legislation represent one of the most significant contributions ever made to addressing the federal lands maintenance backlog and increasing public access for sportsmen and women. We are extremely grateful for the leadership and commitment of the bill sponsors."

“Full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund would be an enormous boost for the millions of people who need access to parks and public lands, and I’m pleased to see the bipartisan leadership in Congress moving parks and conservation funding forward through the introduction of S.3422, The Great American Outdoors Act. I urge Congressional leaders to continue their commitment to ensuring full and dedicated funding to LWCF,” **said Diane Regas, president and CEO of The Trust for Public Land.** “LWCF has long enjoyed bipartisan support, and it will help ensure that hikers, bikers, hunters and birders can experience the beauty of the outdoors close to where they live.”

“America’s forests are languishing under a massive funding shortfall. Millions of acres of forestland don’t have the protection they need, which jeopardizes the clean water, carbon storage, jobs and outdoor recreation they provide for all Americans. This bill is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect and restore America’s precious natural heritage,” **said Jad Daley, President & CEO, American Forests.**

“The past two months have spotlighted the crucial role public lands and outdoor recreation play in supporting the health of people, businesses and communities across the country. The Great American Outdoors Act was teed up for passage before the pandemic hit, and the need for Congress to act is even clearer now. Passing this ready-to-go legislation will promote economic growth and recovery by putting people to work on infrastructure projects and investing in gateway communities as well as recreation, travel and tourism businesses particularly hard-hit by the current economic crisis. In the months to come, investment in our beloved outdoor spaces will be integral to our collective emotional and economic recovery – as individuals and a nation,” **said Drew McConville, Senior Managing Director for Government Relations, The Wilderness Society.**

"All residents of urban communities deserve great parks and public spaces. They are the heart of our cities and investing in them will help us emerge stronger, economically and socially, from the current health crisis," **said Catherine Nagel, Executive Director of City Parks Alliance.** "The more than fifty members of the bipartisan Mayors for Parks Coalition have advocated for full and dedicated funding for LWCF for years. Now more than ever that funding is needed to stimulate other investments and to help our cities recover and provide equitable access to nature."

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is currently BHA’s top legislative priority. Investing in America by providing readily available jobs that benefit our \$778 billion outdoor recreation economy and providing relief to American families is also critical. That’s why we encourage Congress to support the Great American Outdoors Act and elevate the importance of fully dedicating funds to LWCF and our public land management agencies’ maintenance backlogs. By leveraging the unique diversity of LWCF support programs and addressing maintenance backlogs, we can restore and reconnect wildlife habitat, stabilize resources to support and stimulate local communities, enhance the health of our public lands and waters and seize opportunities to expand public access,” **said John Gale, conservation director at Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.**