

West Virginia

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage



LWCF Funded Places in West Virginia

Federal Units

- Appalachian NST
- Canaan Valley NWR
- Chesapeake & Ohio NHP
- Gauley River NRA
- George Washington & Jefferson NF
- Harpers Ferry NHP
- Monongahela NF
- New River Gorge NR
- Ohio River Island NWR
- White Sulphur Springs NFH

Federal Total \$187,587,955

State Programs

Forest Legacy Program	\$3,990,593
Habitat Conservation (Sec. 6)	\$1,812,081
American Battlefield Protection Program	\$5,967,986
Stateside	\$48,570,338
Total	\$247,928,953

LWCF Success in West Virginia

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of West Virginia's most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. West Virginia has received approximately \$247.9 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Harpers Ferry National Historic Park, Monongahela National Forest and New River Gorge National River.

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 Potomac River Hills in Morgan County. 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 \$4 million in federal funds to invest in West Virginia's 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 West Virginia's state and local parks including Valley Park, Cacapon State Park and Canaan Valley State Park. 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 West Virginia's economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis has found that outdoor recreation generates \$1.6 billion in value added to West Virginia's economy, 20,018 homegrown jobs, and accounts for 1.7% of the state's economy. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year 994,000 people hunt, fish, or enjoy wildlife-watching in West Virginia, contributing over \$905 million in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.





LWCF in West Virginia

Gauley River National Recreation Area and New River Gorge Recreation Area

All public access points along West Virginia’s Lower and Middle Gauley River, which is used by over 50,000 people annually, were made possible by LWCF funding. LWCF has also protected 57,000 acres in the Gauley River and New River Gorge Recreation Area that includes not just river access but over 2,000 named rock-climbing routes. LWCF has also funded protection of the remnants of 19th and 20th century mining towns in the New River Gorge. These historic sites protect unique West Virginia heritage and diversify the base of visitors to the area. Roughly 1.2 million visitors enjoy these two parks annually, bringing \$53 million to the local economy and directly supporting more than 700 jobs.

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



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](#)