

092415-Land-Water-ConservationFund

Land and Water Conservation Fund Set to Expire

As a local resident and business owner in Magdalena, I am always pleased when people visit our community and patronize our local businesses.

Visitors often stop on their way to the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge or while on hiking trips in the Cibola National Forest. They are drawn to these nationally protected places, and then they discover us along the way.

They stop at local restaurants and galleries, visit our historic Stock Yard and Box Car Museum and eat in local restaurants. Many spend the night in our motels or chose to lie beneath a canopy of stars taking in our very dark skies.

Each October stargazers from across the country come to our annual Enchanted Skies Star Party on Cibola National Forest Land often escaping the hustle and bustle of urban life.

One of the major reasons why these vast open spaces and dark skies still exist is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Established in 1965, LWCF was created to protect some of America's best places for future generations, and it has done so in spades. It has brought nearly \$261 million dollars to New Mexico. Every county in our state has received some funding from LWCF.

Funds have also been used to add important acreage, improve visitor facilities and enhance iconic New Mexico places, such as Chaco Canyon National Historical Park, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, Valles Caldera National Preserve, the Organ Mountains, and the Gila National Forest, to name a few.

New Mexico's state parks system has benefitted tremendously from LWCF, including the following locations: Pancho Villa, City of Rocks, Elephant Butte Lake, Navajo Lake, and Mesilla Valley Bosque state parks.

LWCF also helps our state economy by supporting the outdoor industry, which employs 65,000 people and generates \$6.1 billion in consumer spending in New Mexico.

Perhaps best of all, LWCF has helped conserve some of New Mexico's treasured landscapes without costing taxpayers a dime. The fund derives its revenue entirely from offshore oil and gas drilling royalties.

Year after year, however, Congress has failed to fulfill the promise of LWCF by diverting more than half of its allocated funds to other purposes every year since its creation with the exception of two years.

And now, in just a few days on September 30th, the program will expire altogether unless Congress takes action.

Losing this important fund would restrict future projects that benefit all New Mexicans, from local baseball parks and soccer fields to national wildlife refuges and dark skies designations.

We must show Congress that New Mexicans support LWCF and want to see it reauthorized and fully funded.

Our U.S. Senate representatives, Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich are spearheading the effort in Washington, D.C. to protect LWCF. I urge you to join me in speaking up for LWCF. It is so important to continue by send your supportive message to Senators Udall and Heinrich at <https://www.tomudall.senate.gov/?p=contact> Or (505) 346-6791 and www.heinrich.senate.gov/contact or (202) 224-5521.

I also urge you to voice your concerns to Congressman Steve Pearce and encourage him to act on the behalf of New Mexicans by reauthorizing and FULLY FUNDING the Land and Water Conservancy Fund. Our economy depends on it. <https://pearce.house.gov/contact-me> Or 202-225-2365

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