The Great American Outdoors Act: Overview

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Agenda

- Legislative History
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund
- The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund
- Implementation Update
Public Law 116–152
116th Congress

An Act

To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Education, and to provide permanent, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Great American Outdoors Act”.

Aug. 4, 2020
[H.R. 1957]

Great American Outdoors Act.
54 USC 100101 note.
The Path to Public Law 116-152

• The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was introduced on March 9 in the Senate (S. 3422)
• Companion bill, H.R. 1957, introduced March 28
• Passed House April 9; Passed Senate June 17
• House agrees to Senate amendments on July 22 and it is signed into law on August 4
• Combined the Restore Our Parks Act (S. 500) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act (S. 1081)
The Land and Water Conservation Fund

Photo: Joel Prince, NASF
The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Permanently reauthorized in 2019 as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act
  - At least 40% federal land acquisition
  - At least 40% granted to states for recreation projects
- GAOA authorized $900M annually in perpetuity
  - $360M a year each for federal land acquisition and state recreation projects
- USDA Forest Service administers two LWCF programs:
  - State and Private Forestry Forest Legacy program (FLP)
  - National Forest System Land Acquisition program
The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund
The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund

• Up to $9.5B over the next five years
  – 70% for the National Park Service
  – 15% for the USDA Forest Service
  – 5% for the US Fish and Wildlife Service
  – 5% for the Bureau of Land Management
  – 5% for the Bureau of Indian Education

• At least 65% of the money from the Legacy Restoration Fund must be spent on non-transportation projects
  – Non-roads side focusing on public facing/visitor experience
  – For the up to 35% funding for transportation, the focus will be on connecting recreation and on improving access for active management and wildfires
The National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund

• Projects analyzed based on seven criteria:
  – Reduce deferred maintenance
  – Promote management of America’s forests
  – Improve visitor experience
  – Contribute to rural economic development
  – Improve visitor access
  – Ensure health and safety
  – Leverage partner contributions and resources

• Deferred Maintenance Project List:
Implementation Update
Implementation Update

• Priority list for FY2021 deferred maintenance projects delivered to Congress on November 2
• WFLC State Forester Dialogue November 10
  – Emphasized the need to communicate with Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors to discuss priorities
  – A success measuring dashboard is being developed for deferred maintenance projects
• LWCF FY2022 projects are due to from the USDA Forest Service to OMB by early December
• State Forester LWCF/FLP working group
Questions?

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