# AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

**AgendaTitle:**
Letter of Support; LWCF and PILT

**Action Requested:** Board of County Commissioners' Signature

**Parties to the Agreement:**

**Term Begins:** **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

**Summary:**
The Board has been asked to sign the attached correspondence by James Spehar.

**Fiscal Impact:**

**Submitted by:** Katherine Haase **Submitter's Email Address:** khaase@gunnisoncounty.org

**Finance Review:** ◉ Required ○ Not Required

Comments:

PILT is an important revenue source, reauthorization critical. Thanks for the letter of support.

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\lNienhueser Discharge Date: 8/12/2014

**County Attorney Review:** ◉ Required ○ Not Required

Comments:

ok db 8/14/14

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\dBaumgarten Discharge Date: 8/14/2014 Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ◉

**County Manager Review:**

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 8/15/2014

○ Consent Agenda ◉ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted:

Agenda Date: 8/19/2014 Follow Up Agenda Date: n/a

*Revised April 2013*

# Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

LWCF IN COLORADO

HELP PROTECT COLORADO'S QUALITY OF LIFE BY SUPPORTING FULL FUNDING FOR THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

## LWCF Funded Units in Colorado

**Federal Program**

Arapaho NF
Arapaho NRA
Arkansas River SRMA
Baca Ranch/NWR
Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP
Blanca Wildlife Habitat Area
Canyons of the Ancients NM
Colorado Canyons NCA
CO River/Ruby Canyon NCA
Comanche Nat Grassland
Cross Mountain NCA
Dominguez-Escalante NCA
Garden Park Fossil Area
Golden Bair Ranch
Grand Mesa Slopes SMA
Great Sand Dunes NP
Gunnison Basin ACEC
Gunnison Gorge NCA
Gunnison NF
Lake Fork of Gunnison SMA
McIntire Spring/Conejos River
Mesa Verde NP
Perins Peak WHA
Powderhorn WSA
Rio Grande NF

www.lwcfcoalition.org

## LWCF Success in Colorado

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of Colorado's most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Colorado has received approximately $231 million in LWCF funding over the past four decades, protecting places such as the the Great Sand Dunes National Park, Uncompahgre, Arapahoe-Roosevelt, Gunnison and Rio Grande National Forests, and Canyon of the Ancients National Monument.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP) grants are also funded under LWCF, to help protect working forests-- supporting timber sector jobs and sustainable forest operations while enhancing wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation at places such as the Catspaw Ranch along the headwaters of the Navajo River in Southern Colorado and Ben Delatour Scout Ranch along the Front Range near Fort Collins. The Forest Legacy Program 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 $15 million in federal funds to invest $10 million in Colorado'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 Colorado's state and local parks including trails development in Lory and Cheyenne Mountain State Parks and park acquisitions at Golden Gate Canyon, Boyd Lake, and Roxborough State Parks.

## Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of the Colorado economy. The Outdoor Industry Association has found that active outdoor recreation generates $13.2 billion in consumer spending in Colorado, 125,000 jobs which generate $4.2 billion in wages and salaries, and produces $994 million annually in state and local tax revenue. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year over 2.2 million people hunt, fish, or enjoy wildlife-watching in Colorado, contributing $3 billion in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.

Above: The Ophir Valley of the Uncompahgre National Forest
Top: Great Sand Dunes National Park

Rocky Mountain NP
Roosevelt NF
Ruby Mountain
Sand Creek Massacre NHS
San Miguel River
Two Ponds NWR
Unaweep/Tabeguache NSB
Uncompahgre/San Juan NF
Upper Huerfano River EMA
White River NF

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Approximate Federal Total** | $ | 157,000,000 |
| **State Program** Approximate Total Stateside Grants | $ | 59,000,000 |
| **Forest Legacy Program:** Approximately $15,000,000 | | |
| **Approximate Total** | $ | 231,000,000 |

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, the promise of LWCF has been broken. The program is authorized to receive up to $900 million each year—but most of these funds have been diverted elsewhere. Now is the time to fix this and ensure that funds retained in the LWCF account are used for their intended conservation and recreation purposes.

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.

# LWCF in Colorado

## Cross Mountain Ranch

LWCF funding in FY2013 was used to acquire the 920 acre Cross Mountain Ranch on the Yampa River in northwest Colorado. Previously, access to the area was difficult at best because the only feasible routes were through private property or by boat. Now, the conservation lands, as well as the access they provide, are open to all hunters, anglers, boaters, hikers and other outdoor recreationists. The project area includes 2.8 miles of frontage on the Yampa River and provides habitat to 400 elk (including a large number of trophy bulls), mule deer and all four species of Colorado warm-water fish.

## Colorado and the Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget:

Below is information regarding Colorado's projects recommended for LWCF funding in the President's Fiscal Year 2015 budget. These projects enhance recreation and conservation, protect clean water, often reduce management costs resulting in savings to the agencies, and support jobs and economic vitality across Colorado's communities.

| Agency | State | Project | Funding Request | District and Rep. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BLM | CO | Canyons of the Ancients National Monument | $1,200,000 | 3- Tipton |
| BLM | CO | Colorado River SRMA | $2,000,000 | 2- Polis |
| BLM | CO | Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area | $288,000 | 3- Tipton |
| BLM | CO | McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area | $1,835,000 | 3- Tipton |
| BLM | CO | Upper Rio Grande: Blanca Wetlands ACEC/SRMA | $6,426,000 | 3- Tipton |
| FLP | CO | Sawtooth Mountain | $3,000,000 | 3- Tipton |
| NPS | CO | Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site | $1,690,000 | 4- Gardner |
| NPS | CO | Upper Rio Grande: Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve | $3,365,000 | 3- Tipton |
| USFS | CO | Upper Rio Grande: Rio Grande NF | $4,700,000 | 3- Tipton |

## The Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget:

Below is a list of investments recommended for LWCF funding in the President's Fiscal Year 2014 budget. The Colorado projects above are included within these budget totals. The President has proposed to fully fund LWCF at $900 million, which includes the following allocation of funds among projects and programs:

| | | 2015 President's Request |
|---|---|---|
| **Bureau of Land Management:** | **Federal Projects** | **$79.4 million** |
| | **Sportsmen & Recreational Access** | **$10 million** |
| **US Fish and Wildlife Service:** | **Federal Projects** | **$166.3 million** |
| | **Sportsmen & Recreational Access** | **$2.5 million** |
| **National Park Service:** | **Federal Projects** | **$155 million** |
| | **American Battlefield Protection Grant Program** | **$13.5 million** |
| | **Recreational Access** | **$2.5 million** |
| **US Forest Service:** | **Federal Projects** | **$123.7 million** |
| | **Priority Recreational Access** | **$2 million** |
| | **Sportsmen & Recreational Access** | **$2 million** |
| **State Grants:** | **NPS State Assistance Grants** | **$100.1 million** |
| | **NPS Urban Parks and Recreation Fund** | **$25 million** |
| | **Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund** | **$100 million** |
| | **Forest Legacy Program** | **$100 million** |

For more information:
Brandon Helm, The Wilderness Society, brandon_helm@tws.org

August 19, 2014

Senator Michael Bennet
458 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mark Udall
Hart Office Building, Suite SH-730
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Reauthorization of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Dear Senators Bennet and Udall,

Fifty years ago, congress created the LWCF to help support our parks, clean water and wildlife areas and the benefits that they offer to all Americans. The primary source of revenue for the fund comes from fees paid by energy companies drilling offshore for oil and gas – not from taxpayers. The intention behind this fund was to contribute towards the conservation of one important American resource, the great American outdoors, as we develop another.

Unfortunately, nearly every year, Congress diverts almost all of this money to other purposes. Also, of great urgency, LWCF needs to be re-authorized in order to avoid the sunset of this critical conservation legislation. Congress needs to reauthorize LWCF and honor its original commitment to conserve our parks and public lands. Not only is there a growing conservation need in America, but also the benefit of this conservation to local economies is exceedingly important.

Every year tens of millions of Americans visit our public lands. Outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation activities contribute more than a trillion dollars annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 9.4 million jobs.

LWCF funds are critical to efforts to protect our nation's public lands, provide essential grants and assistance to state and local communities for parks and the development of recreation facilities, help ranchers and farmers stay on their land through the Forest Legacy Program and have been vital in funding urban parks, playgrounds and trails as well. LWCF has created outdoor recreation opportunities in every state and 98 percent of counties across the country. This fund plays a significant role in sustaining our local economies.

There is a great need in our communities to find mandatory, long-term solutions to fully fund LWCF as well as other federal commitments including PILT. Both LWCF and PILT represent longstanding unmet promises made by the federal government to the American people. They are good investments for local communities and complement one another. As each program seeks a more stable and long-term source of permanent funding, we hope that congress will follow your lead and take up the opportunity to permanently and fully fund both at the same time.

DRAFT

*Senator Michael Bennet and Senator Mark Udall*
*RE: Reauthorization of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)*
*8/19/14*

As elected officials responsible for the economic stability, healthy environment and high quality of life in our communities we thank you for your leadership and support of LWCF and PILT and urge you to find permanent solutions to reauthorize and fund these programs as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Paula Swenson, Chairperson | Phil Chamberland, Commissioner | Jonathan Houck, Commissioner |