



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

DESIGNATION OF AUGUST 4 AS FEE-FREE DAY IN HONOR OF  
PRESIDENT TRUMP'S SIGNING OF THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

By the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the American people treasure their national parks and other Federal lands, which provide awe-inspiring landscapes that serve as refuges to both visitors and wildlife; offer opportunities to learn, discover, and recreate; and allow us to connect with nature and reflect on our history; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior (Department) oversees approximately 20 percent of the land in the United States, which serves nearly 500 million visitors per year, through the work and dedication of nearly 70,000 Department employees and 280,000 volunteers; and

WHEREAS, visitation to and recreation at our national parks and other Federal lands makes significant contributions to our Nation's economy, creates jobs, and provides much-needed revenue to local communities—many of which are in rural and remote locations; and

WHEREAS, for decades our national parks and other Federal lands have enjoyed increased visitation, but this use has taken a toll on aging infrastructure and facilities, which are increasingly in need of repair and restoration; and

WHEREAS, maintaining the roads, bridges, visitor centers, campgrounds, trails, and historic structures that the Department manages is crucial to ensuring the preservation of our national natural and historic treasures and to providing for visitor access and enjoyment of these special places now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was established by Congress in 1964 to use a portion of the funds from the development of oil and natural gas to carry out important conservation projects and to provide recreation areas for public use and enjoyment—ensuring that all Americans, whether rich or poor, have the opportunity to be stronger, healthier, and fitter, and have access to outdoor spaces and outdoor sports that build body and mind; and

WHEREAS, while the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been fully funded only twice in five decades, it has resulted in over 40,000 projects, with billions of dollars contributed to conservation and recreation in every geographic region and nearly every county of the United States, and has proven to be America's most important conservation and recreation funding source; and

WHEREAS, previous Presidents and their Administrations advocated for dedicated, mandatory funding for conservation programs and for addressing our public-land infrastructure and maintenance needs, but made little significant or lasting progress; and

WHEREAS, President Trump, from the beginning of his Administration, advocated that we use revenues from the development of our energy resources to address the backlog of deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs at our national parks and Federal lands; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2019, President Trump signed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Public Law 116-9), which made the Land and Water Conservation Fund a permanently authorized program, the first step in a historic effort to pass this legacy conservation program on to future generations; and

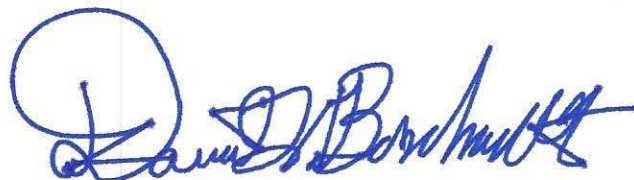
WHEREAS, on March 3, 2020, the President boldly called on Congress to enact legislation that would make a once-in-a-generation investment in the public facilities and infrastructure at our national parks and other Federal lands and, at the same time, permanently dedicate, forever and without the need for appropriation, energy development revenues to the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and

WHEREAS, not since President Theodore Roosevelt put his mark on American conservation has a President worked with Congress and delivered on such a bold, forward-looking, and historic measure that combines a financial commitment to conservation and recreation in perpetuity for future generations with an investment in the facilities Americans depend upon to enjoy their national treasures; and

WHEREAS, President Trump's leadership and commitment to the noble idea of America's national parks and public lands and the value of recreation opportunities for the American people has resulted in enactment of this historic legislation by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in both the United States Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives and cemented a conservation legacy for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the landmark nature and national importance of this historic conservation achievement, the Great American Outdoors Act, signed today by President Donald J. Trump, I, David L. Bernhardt, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, do designate August 4, Great American Outdoors Day. I issue this proclamation to acknowledge and honor this historic event. In order to provide all Americans with the opportunity to experience the majesty of the national parks and Federal lands managed by the Department and reflect on the importance of today's actions, I am forever designating August 4 as a fee-free day when our national parks, public lands, and national wildlife refuges can be visited by all, free of charge.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, in recognition of this historic day, I have hereunto set my hand on this fourth day of August, the two hundred and forty-fifth year of Independence of the United States of America.



Secretary of the Interior