

Land and Water Conservation Fund *Giving Back to You and Your Community*

Lolo Fire, Montana.
Photo: Kurt Wilson/Missoulian

Saving Taxpayer Dollars; Reducing Firefighting Costs

Lolo National Forest, Montana

Acquiring federal public lands protects important natural and cultural resources and secures recreational access, but it often delivers an additional financial benefit: tremendous cost savings for American taxpayers. Many of our public lands are scattered creating a “checkerboard” land ownership pattern that is more time-consuming and expensive to manage. Wildland fire management is a prime example: Wildfires are two times larger and three times more expensive than they were a decade ago, and the cost of protecting communities falls to the taxpayer. To stem the growth of this increasing liability, local and federal agencies have targeted lands for protection in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) – areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire. Purchasing the WUI lands to prevent development in these vulnerable areas is a win-win: fewer firefighters in harm’s way to protect high-risk areas and fewer tax dollars spent on firefighting.

Currently only 16 percent of the WUI is developed with homes. If 50 percent of the WUI were to be developed, the cost of defending the homes would be equal to 100 percent of the entire U.S. Forest Service budget.⁴

In 2013, the Lolo Complex fire became the top national priority of the 2013 fire season. Started by lightning, the fire quickly grew to more than 10,000 acres and threatened the town of Lolo, Montana. The checkerboard ownership pattern in the area complicated efforts to fight the fire and protect nearby communities, but the next time fire threatens the Lolo, the job will be easier: Just weeks after the fire, several private inholdings in the forest were acquired with Land and Water Conservation Fund appropriations. This land is now part of the adjoining National Forest and will be seamlessly integrated in the forest’s fire prevention and management activities. The devastating Lolo Complex fire illuminates the benefits of fire risk reduction through the purchase of parcels that would otherwise be subject to

Cost Savings



880,000 JOBS
are created through
recreation activities on
your federal lands¹

For every **\$1** spent on the
LWCF, communities receive
\$4 in **ECONOMIC**
BENEFIT²



The LWCF has invested in
community projects for
EVERY COUNTY
in the United States³

The LWCF uses **ZERO**
TAXPAYER DOLLARS



ABOUT Land and Water Conservation Fund

Using zero taxpayer dollars, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) uses earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help preserve our history and protect our lands. The LWCF is a balanced approach between using and preserving our natural resources, while giving back to American communities.



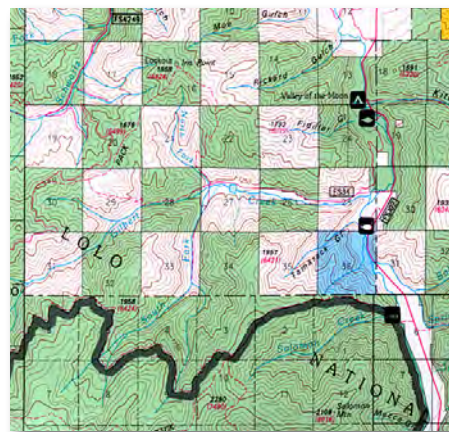


Cost Savings



North Cascades National Park, WA.
Photo: National Park Service

rural residential development. The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps create contiguous areas of federally managed lands, which improves fire management efficiencies and reduces fire-related costs. Through the Land and Water Conservation Fund the U.S. Forest Service purchased former properties that were checkerboard, inholdings, or adjacent to larger National Forest Areas, facilitating land management efficiencies across the board and saving taxpayers money.



Lolo National Forest, Montana.
Map: Bureau of Land Management

Reducing Management Costs

San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, California

Many public lands, such as national parks and forests, contain inholdings – lands that are privately owned within a federal unit. Land and Water Conservation Fund resources have been used to acquire inholdings from willing sellers, making it easier and less costly to manage existing public lands. The acquisition of inholdings can reduce maintenance and manpower costs by reducing boundary conflicts, simplifying resource management activities, and easing access to and through public lands for agency employees and the public.

At San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the purchase of inholdings through the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped reduce management costs while creating habitat corridors. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added six small, but important, inholdings to San Diego NWR in California. These acquisitions on Mount San Miguel helped to consolidate federal ownership in the heart of the refuge and to protect areas of coastal sagebrush and chaparral that support a variety of rare plants and animals. .



The endangered Bay Checkerspot Butterfly.
Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife

¹ Federal Interagency Council on Recreation, Fact Sheet on Outdoor Recreation: Jobs and Income, 2014.

² The Trust for Public Land, Return on the Investment from the Land & Water Conservation Fund, 2010.

³ LWCF NPS Grant Program, <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/history.html>, retrieved 2014.

⁴ Headwater Economics: http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/wildfire_homes_solutions_presentation.pdf, retrieved 2014.