



Throughout its more than 50-year history, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has protected more than five million acres of land and supported more than 41,000 state and local park projects. North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest (pictured here) is just one of the many iconic landscapes across the country that has benefited from this fund.

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## Saving the Land and Water Conservation Fund

America's cherished national parks, monuments and wildlife refuges are entrusted to us to pass on to future generations. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the largest source of federal funds to protect these national treasures, as well as historical sites, community parks and ballfields all across the country.

But if lawmakers do not act, LWCF will expire on September 30, putting the future of our shared public lands in jeopardy.

**Communities and towns across the country depend upon the outdoor recreation industry, which contributes a total of \$887 billion annually to the economy and supports 7.6 million American jobs.**

Established in 1964, LWCF was born out of a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, protect clean water, preserve our cultural heritage and provide recreational opportunities to all Americans—using zero taxpayer dollars! The fund receives a small portion of royalties from offshore oil and gas leasing to invest in our communities, ensuring our outdoor resources are more accessible for people from all walks of life.

Despite being set up to receive and re-invest up to \$900 million per year, Congress has continually siphoned off dedicated conservation dollars for other purposes, leaving countless projects delayed or unfunded.

Even with consistent underfunding, LWCF has been a vital conservation tool. It has enhanced iconic national parks like Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains and Yosemite, and historical sites, such as Valley Forge and the battlefields at Gettysburg. In fact, it has benefited nearly every county in the

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## Dear Public Lands Champion,

I hope you are getting outside this summer and having some fun! This time of year, millions of people stream into our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests and other wildlands. They find all sorts of treasures there, beauty that inspires a sense of wonder at the vastness of the natural world and our little place in it, and new connections to each other and to nature.

Indeed, these places unite us in an increasingly divisive time. Our public lands reflect one of our greatest hopes as a democracy. They are the common ground that can bring us together around our common purpose in their protection. Now, more than ever, we need people who love our public lands to stand up for their protection.

You are part of this fight as a member of The Wilderness Society, and we look to you to be an ambassador for our public lands. Talk to your friends and neighbors and share your love of the wild! Tell everyone you know that you are defending bedrock environmental laws that protect our air and water quality. Talk about how smart energy policy means guiding development to the right places and keeping our iconic wildlands intact. And then tell them how they too can help.

Our focus now is to get Congress to re-authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a popular program that enjoys bipartisan support, before it expires on



The Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams with his two children.

September 30. This is our nation's single largest source of funding for conservation and recreation projects and has touched nearly every county in the U.S. You can learn more about the fund in our cover story.

The American people are on our side in this fight to protect our public lands from coast to coast. You stand with thousands of other public land champions, and together with your continued activism and support, I know we will prevail. Thank you for your commitment to protecting our wild places!

Sincerely,

Jamie Williams  
President



Ironwood Forest, Arizona

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UPDATE

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The Wilderness Society meets all standards as set forth by the Better Business Bureau/Wise Giving Alliance.

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U.S., opening new areas to hiking, boating, hunting and fishing; building ballfields; and creating community parks. Imagine what might be if our elected leaders upheld the real promise of this incredible resource!

LWCF continues to enjoy bipartisan support in Congress just as it did when it was signed into law by President Johnson. Despite the fund's popularity, anti-conservation politicians seek to divert these conservation dollars to other uses. Even more dangerous, they are attacking the very idea that conserving our

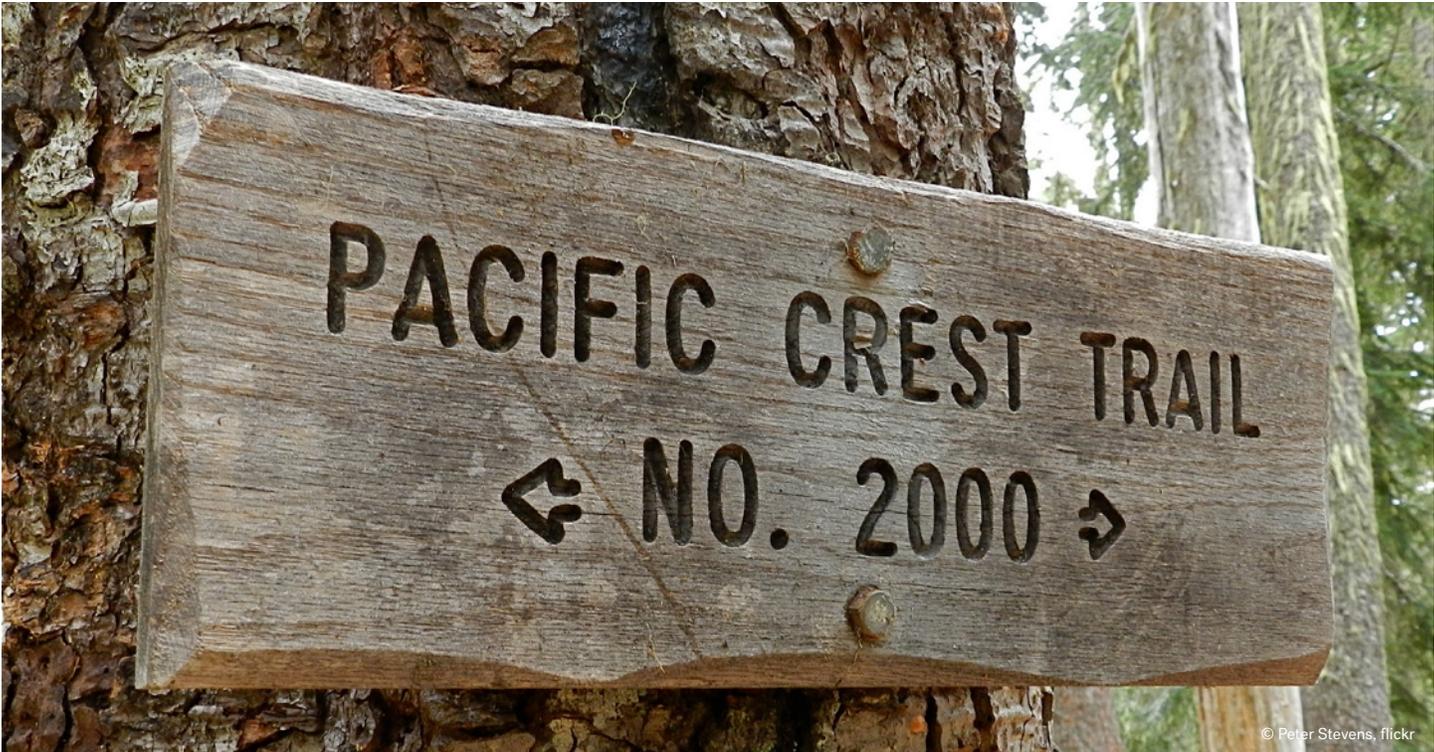
**Recognizing the therapeutic effects of long distance hiking, Marine Corps veteran Sean Gobin founded Warrior Expeditions to help other veterans transition back to civilian life. "LWCF is absolutely critical to protecting our country's unparalleled system of public trails—such as the Appalachian, Continental Divide and Pacific Crest Trails—not to mention the hundreds of local trails across the country which Americans use every day." says Sean. "LWCF helps ensure that our trails and public lands are protected for future veterans so that they have the same opportunity to heal in the outdoors."**

public lands is a fundamental American value. These attacks are why it is imperative that LWCF is reauthorized, and its existence remain securely cemented in law.

By supporting The Wilderness Society, you stand shoulder to shoulder with outdoor enthusiasts, small business owners, landowners, ranchers, farmers and millions of Americans who are united in the push to save LWCF.

More than our natural heritage is at stake. Communities and towns across the country depend upon the outdoor recreation industry, which contributes a total of \$887 billion annually to the economy and supports 7.6 million American jobs, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. And that industry, in turn, depends upon the fund to create trails, campgrounds and boating facilities that draw millions of outdoor enthusiasts to communities across the country.

You have been a stalwart champion of America's public lands, and your support and activism have enabled The Wilderness Society to lead the defense of our wild. Now help us save America's most important conservation and recreation program from a vocal minority who want to see it extinguished! Go to [wilderness.org/alert](http://wilderness.org/alert) and sign up for WildAlerts today, and then contact your elected representatives in Congress and tell them you want their support for re-authorization and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.



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**Wild Places:**

## Defending America's forests

Amid efforts to cut national monuments and drill or mine every piece of public land possible, Congress and the Trump administration are also embarking on an effort to force roads through some of the wildest portions of America's national forests by dismantling a rule that protects them from development.

The 2001 Roadless Rule established that "inventoried roadless areas" within the National Forest system should not allow road construction, timber harvesting or other development. These patches of forest where the Roadless Rule is in effect make up nearly 30 percent of national forest land and are some of America's favorite places to hike, camp and enjoy nature.

Despite these remarkable values, anti-conservation forces in Congress have sought to advance provisions threatening roadless areas as part of the House version of the 2018 Farm Bill. The measure included a roadless "loophole" that would allow harmful logging and roadbuilding in millions of acres of inventoried roadless areas. The House has yet to pass this measure, but we remain vigilant in guarding against further attempts to undermine this important conservation rule in the coming months.

In addition, the state of Alaska has officially asked the Trump administration to exempt the Tongass National Forest from

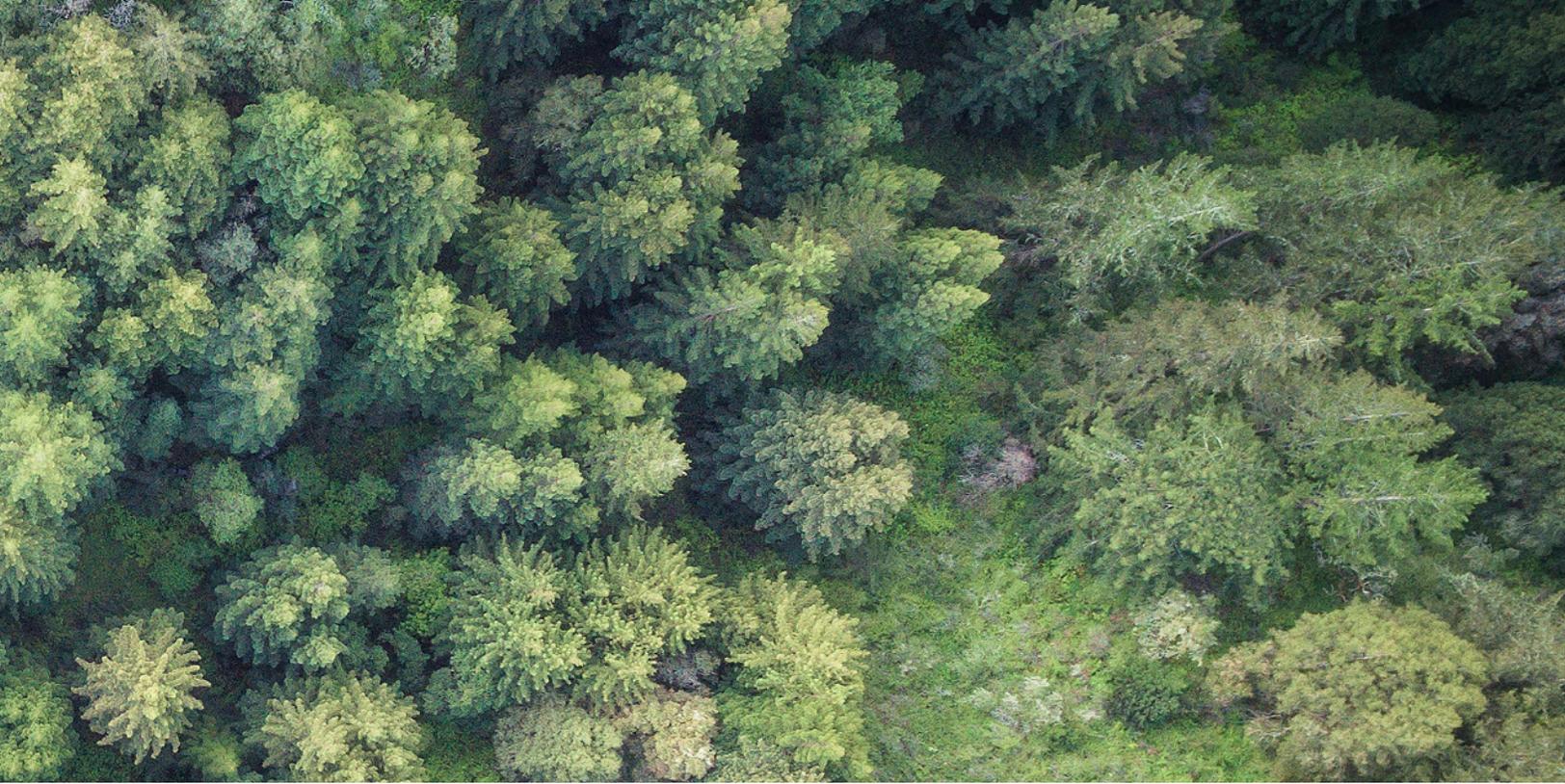
the Roadless Rule—a move that both threatens to open up millions of acres of old-growth forest to development in Alaska and sets a precedent that effectively dismantles the underlying rule, endangering forests across the nation. Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski has attempted numerous policy "riders"—provisions attached to a larger piece of legislation—to exempt the Tongass from the rule. So far these have failed, but we expect to see them revived in the coming months.

"Exempting the Tongass from Roadless Rule protections will set a terrible precedent that could put all roadless areas in national forests at risk," said Megan Birzell, national forest defense campaign manager at The Wilderness Society. "These attempts underscore the unrelenting attack on public lands we're seeing repeatedly from the Trump administration."

### **Tongass National Forest, Alaska: the canary in the coal mine**

The Tongass National Forest has long stood at the core of controversy over the proper role of national forests. As we defend these places from industry, this singular landscape bears some examination—and admiration.

Besides possessing some of America's oldest trees, the Tongass is an enchanting and fertile land of water, woods and



mist. Mostly made up of Sitka spruce, western hemlock and western red cedar, it accounts for nearly one-third of all the old-growth temperate rainforest left on earth, an unusually rich habitat. About 5.7 million acres of the Tongass is protected as wilderness, including habitat for grizzly bears, moose, river otters, harbor seals, wolves and much more.

Significantly, the waterways of the Tongass National Forest produce a huge number of pink, sockeye, coho and king salmon that help sustain local fishing communities—some 80 percent of all commercial salmon harvested from

Southeast Alaska—earning it the unofficial designation “America’s Salmon Forest.”

### **Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia**

If the efforts to exempt national forests in Alaska from the Roadless Rule are successful, a dangerous precedent could be set that would have far-reaching effects on inventoried roadless areas in forests across the nation. Voted one of the best day hikes in the nation by Backpacker Magazine, the North Fork Mountain to Chimney Top trail in the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia is just one of many examples of national treasures that could be opened for road development and timber production.

### **The Wilderness Society is standing guard**

The Wilderness Society, with support from our donors, played an integral role in developing the Roadless Rule, and we have successfully protected this important policy from myriad threats since its inception in 2001. The law is on our side. As recently as last September, the District Court in Washington, DC dismissed a lawsuit brought by the state of Alaska against the Roadless Rule. This is why opponents of the rule are seeking to overturn the rule legislatively and administratively. We continue to bring our finest policy and legal teams to the forefront of America’s national forest defense so that future generations can enjoy clean water, wildlife and boundless outdoor recreation provided by these important public lands.



Tongass National Forest, Alaska

## Hot Issues:

### Interior fast-tracks Arctic drilling

On April 20, the Department of the Interior initiated the first phase of gathering public comments on the proposed lease sale in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This lease sale would target the biologically rich coastal plain, an area that the indigenous Gwich'in people, who have subsisted off the land for millennia, consider sacred. The 60-day comment period is the Trump administration's first action to advance drilling in the Arctic Refuge. This advancement comes only months after oil industry allies in Congress snuck a drilling provision into the unrelated federal tax bill in December. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge would imperil wildlife and harm our climate. That is why we are working tirelessly to stop drilling from ever occurring there.

### Mining threatens Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon watershed, the centerpiece one of the most iconic American landscapes, was put at risk when members of the House of Representatives' Western Caucus, a committee of anti-public lands Congressional members, sent a letter to the Trump administration demanding a 'review' of mining withdrawals. One of these withdrawals, which were previously put in place during the Obama administration, protects the drinking water and the outstanding natural and cultural significance of the Grand Canyon watershed. The letter is a wish list for special interests and, if heeded, would benefit mining companies at the expense of one of America's most beloved national parks and the surrounding area, which is important for tribal communities and wildlife of the Colorado Plateau. The Caucus' requests are another attempt in the Trump administration's agenda to sell



Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

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out America's public lands to industry players. If new uranium mines are allowed in the region, the groundwater of the landscape—which includes the land of the Havasupai tribe—could be contaminated with uranium and other toxic substances. The Caucus letter not only demands that the administration "scrap" protections in the Grand Canyon watershed, but also in other areas like the Superior National Forest near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, and the California desert.

### Sage-grouse habitat at risk

America's most unique bird is threatened, once again, as the Trump administration favors the oil industry and prioritizing oil and gas leases in greater sage-grouse habitat. The Wilderness Society and partners filed suit on April 30 in U.S. District Court in Montana against

the Bureau of Land Management and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to demand that the administration uphold Obama-era conservation plans created to save the greater sage-grouse and its habitat in 10 western states. Under the Trump administration, oil and gas leasing and proposed leasing in sage-grouse habitat have increased. In early May, the Bureau of Land Management recommended gutting some of the most important protections for the sage-grouse, putting the fate of this iconic bird and other species like the pronghorn, golden eagle, elk and mule deer at risk. The Wilderness Society is firing on all cylinders to ensure the progress made to protect sage-grouse habitat will carry forward despite this administration's attacks on the common-sense conservation measures put in place by the Obama administration.

## Wilderness and You:

# Sigal Wilnai Tzoore

For Portola Valley, California resident Sigal Wilnai Tzoore, day-to-day life is often a hectic blur of teenagers, chickens and chihuahuas. Luckily, the writer and mother of two discovered a way to calm her busy routine and create space for herself in the form of mindfulness meditation in nature. “Meditating outside has the potential to heal and strengthen us, reminding us that we too are part of the Wild,” she says. “I live for the connection with nature, for the sense of well-being it provides me.”

Originally from Israel, Sigal’s passion for the natural world was reflected in her childhood dream to be a backcountry ranger. After spending more than two decades hiking and backpacking in wild places in California and across the United States, she revisited that dream by enrolling in a park management course three years ago. She devoured the class reading list, which contained the names of conservation giants like Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall and Mardy Murie. Inspired by their common connections to The Wilderness Society, she signed up as a member in 2016.



A year later, Sigal visited the place that had fully captured her imagination through her readings—Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. She was amazed, not just by the vastness of the landscape and the impressive number of fossils it held, but also by the tedious travel and pounds of gear the trip demanded. “I couldn’t help but ask why we are threatening to destroy a place that is so wild, so fragile and so inaccessible just to get a drop of oil? It doesn’t make sense.” Upon returning home, she did something she had never done before. She called her representatives in Congress and asked them to protect the Refuge. “If I can speak up with my trembling voice, anyone can do it!” she insists.

Certified as a California Naturalist and trained to respond to medical emergencies in the outdoors as a Wilderness First Responder, Sigal regularly leads hikes for schoolchildren in two local parks in San Mateo County. She also teaches mindfulness courses to help others cultivate happiness, resiliency, and creativity through meditation in nature. In fact, she recently volunteered to demonstrate her mindfulness techniques at a gathering of Wilderness Society staff in California. “Even the toughest wilderness warriors need to be reminded that there is value in slowing down to savor and connect with the wild places we cherish. More than just a material resource, nature has the power to propel us forward on our quest for self-discovery and growth.”

## Advocate for Wilderness

By making a gift of \$1,000 or more to The Wilderness Society, you join a team of conservation leaders in the fight to protect our wild for this and future generations. To learn more about becoming an Advocate for Wilderness, including special member benefits, please visit [wilderness.org/advocates](https://www.wilderness.org/advocates).



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San Juan National Forest, Colorado

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