

The 115th Congress has an opportunity to support conservation and outdoor recreation by passing well-developed and vetted legislation to protect special landscapes and waters, ensure adequate funding to manage and acquire lands, and improve public lands management. Our three organizations, which represent outdoor businesses and recreationists, request that Congress work to pass the following bills in the balance of 2018.

NATIONWIDE

Permanent Reauthorization and Full Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund ([H.R. 502](#) / [S. 569](#))

The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funds and matching grants to federal, state, and local governments to acquire lands and waters for recreation and habitat. For more than 50 years, LWCF has supported recreation and conservation across the country, and the program—which Congress allowed to expire in September—enjoys an almost unprecedented level of bipartisan support. Reauthorization bills have passed out of committee in both the House and Senate.

Recreation Not Red Tape Act ([S. 1633](#) / [H.R. 3400](#))

Introduced by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Congressman Rob Bishop (R-UT), the Recreation Not Red Tape Act (RNR) would protect and improve outdoor recreation on our public lands. The bill helps improve permitting for outfitters and guides, adds a recreation mission to land management agencies currently lacking one, directs land managers to be evaluated in part on how they meet recreation objectives, and helps facilitate stewardship by creating new volunteer opportunities and improving cross-jurisdictional trail maintenance. The House bill has passed out of committee with strong, bipartisan support.

Restore Our Parks Parks/ Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act ([S. 3172](#) / [H.R. 2584](#))

With more than 200 cosponsors in the House and 33 in the Senate, this bipartisan legislation is supported by the administration and offers a thoughtful solution to the growing problem of deferred maintenance on our public lands. Much of this backlog affects recreation, and without swift action, it will continue to have a negative effect on our nation's iconic recreation assets and the millions of outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy them each year. Bills have passed out of House and Senate committees. The bill's purposes should be expanded to include maintenance needs on National Forests as part of its ultimate passage.

CALIFORNIA

California Desert Protection and Recreation Act ([S. 32](#) / [H.R. 857](#))

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Representative Paul Cook (D-CA-8) introduced legislation to protect 278,230 acres of Wilderness, expand Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks, and designate 77 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers in the California Desert. The bill would enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation while enabling renewable energy development. The House bill has passed, and the Senate companion has passed out of committee with bipartisan support.

COLORADO

San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act ([S. 2721](#))

Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced legislation to provide better management and protections for lands in San Miguel, Ouray, and San Juan counties in southwestern Colorado. The bill would protect

60,000 acres in the heart of the San Juan Mountains by expanding and designating Wilderness for the Mt. Sneffels Range, Lizard Head area, and McKenna Peak. The bill would also ensure management protections for areas including Ice Lakes Basin, Vermillion Peak, and Naturita Canyon, and thoughtfully addresses the needs of local mountain bikers. The bill has had a hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

MONTANA

Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act ([S. 941](#) / [H.R. 4644](#))

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) and Representative Greg Gianforte (R-MT) introduced legislation to permanently withdraw federal mineral rights on public land in Custer Gallatin National Forest. The bill would protect 30,000 acres of National Forest Lands adjacent to the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park from industrial scale gold mining. The bills have both passed out of committee with strong bipartisan support.

NEW MEXICO

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Conservation Act ([S. 441](#))

Senators Tom Udall (D-NM) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) introduced legislation to designate eight Wilderness areas within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument totaling 241,067 acres. Eighty percent of the proposed Wilderness is already managed as recommended Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area, and management changes created by the bill will help to address the needs of the climbing community. The areas that would be protected include sky island mountains, native Chihuahuan Desert grasslands, caves, limestone cliffs, and winding canyons that draw visitors to Doña Ana County. The bill has passed out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support.

OREGON

Oregon Wildlands Act ([S. 1548](#))

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced the Oregon Wildlands Act to secure Wilderness protection for 107,800 acres in the Wild Rogue and Devil's Staircase areas. The bill would also designate 252 miles of wild and scenic rivers, preserve 119,120 acres of the Rogue Canyon and Molalla rivers as National Recreation Areas, and protect the Chetco River from mining activity. These protections are of key significance for protecting riverrunning opportunities in southern Oregon. The bill passed out of committee with bipartisan support.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Wilderness Act ([S. 973](#) / [H.R. 2218](#))

Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Bob Corker (R-TN) and Representative David Roe (R-TN-1) introduced legislation to protect 19,556 acres of public land in Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest as wilderness. The bill would preserve premium hiking areas including stretches of the Appalachian Trail.

UTAH

Emery County Public Land Management Act of 2018 ([S. 2809](#) / [H.R. 5727](#))

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Representative John Curtis (R-UT-3) introduced legislation to protect public lands in Emery County, Utah for their conservation and outdoor recreation values. The bill seeks to protect nearly one million acres of public land, including more than 530,000 acres of Wilderness, 380,000 acres of Recreation Area with mineral withdrawal, and 63 miles of Wild and Scenic River. While some issues remain to be resolved with this bill, we are hopeful for their resolution in a fashion timely for passage this Congress. Bills have moved through committee in both the House and Senate.

WASHINGTON

Methow Headwaters Protection Act ([S. 566](#))

Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced legislation that would withdraw 340,079 acres of federal land within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest from any mining activity. The area supports a thriving outdoor recreation economy and myriad recreation opportunities. The bill has passed out of committee in the Senate.

Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Act ([S. 713](#)/[H.R. 1791](#))

Introduced by Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), the Mountains to Sound NHA would help provide coordinated management for public lands invaluable for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River east of Seattle. Mountains to Sound has passed the House of Representatives and has been reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ([S. 483](#) / [H.R. 1285](#))

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA-6) introduced legislation to protect 126,000 acres of Wilderness and 469 river miles on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The legislation would preserve salmon streams and wild lands adjacent to Olympic National Park.