

**Protecting America's Recreation and Conservation Act**  
**House Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Wednesday, November 18, 1324 Longworth House Office Building**

Travis Campbell, President and CEO, Far Banks Enterprise  
Vice Chair, Outdoor Industry Association Board  
Corporate Council, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Congressman Rob Bishop, Chair, House Natural Resource Committee  
Congressman Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Natural Resource Committee

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the Protecting America's Recreation and Conservation (PARC) Act. As you do the important work of finding a path towards Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reauthorization, I urge you to retain LWCF's focus on outdoor recreation and conservation, and its ability to address the full breadth of America's recreation priorities, from our backyards to the backcountry.

As the President and CEO of Far Bank Enterprises, which manufactures and distributes fly fishing equipment under the brands RIO Products, Redington and Sage; and as the Vice Chair and Treasurer of Outdoor Industry Association's (OIA) board of directors, I know firsthand the importance of LWCF to outdoor recreation businesses and the recreating public.

Further, in my position on the Corporate Council for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), and as a hunter and angler myself, I know the importance of this program to the sportsmen's community and our shared American heritage.

Hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation are part of the fabric of our nation. They are also huge economic drivers that contribute to healthy communities, healthy people and American jobs across the United States. Public access to, and the integrity of, our outdoor recreation assets, from our national public lands and waters to state and local parks, is profoundly important to the more than 142 million Americans who recreate outdoors each year and to the thousands of companies in the outdoor industry.

Americans spend \$646 billion on outdoor recreation each year. Outdoor recreation also contributes \$80 billion in local, state and federal tax revenue every year and our industry employs more than six million people. My company and the other members of OIA play an important role in what is today a thriving recreation economy, but our industry depends on availability of, and access to quality trails, waterways, forests and parks, some managed by states and local governments, some federally managed, but all owned by us as Americans.

As with any other industry, our businesses rely on investments in infrastructure. For example, just as the transportation sector needs funding and programs for our roads, the recreation sector needs a proven program like LWCF to invest in our land and water.

LWCF protected public lands are at the core of my business; these are the places people love to go fly fishing, from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and the Skagit River in Washington to the Madison River in Montana, Idaho's famed Henry's Fork, the Au Sable River in Michigan and the blue ribbon trout streams of Virginia. For over 50 years LWCF has been the most critical program for creating and protecting access for hunters, anglers, climbers, bikers, hikers as well as for families who simply want to enjoy their local parks and ball fields.

Some of these iconic places have relied on LWCF's state and local grants to ensure recreation access, protect critical wildlife habitat and conserve working private forests for the jobs and timber they produce and the recreation and other resources they provide. Other areas have depended on targeted federal conservation and recreation dollars to afford the public access and resource protection that are the keys to outdoor recreation in America. In my home state of Washington, this broad complement of LWCF programs has been essential to meeting important community recreation and conservation needs. We have relied on federal LWCF dollars to provide a number of vital linkages along the Pacific Crest Trail, including Snoqualmie Pass and Pyramid Peak. LWCF has helped secure the important western access to Mount Rainier National Park, protected the headwaters of the Yakima River in the Central Cascades – which is critical for both water storage and quality for agricultural use and drinking water in the Yakima Basin – and secured hunting and fishing access close to home as well as in key sportsmen's destinations.

We have used the Forest Legacy Program to ensure the productive private timberlands on the flanks of Mount St. Helens remain working forest, protecting jobs, recreation access and prime bull trout habitat. The LWCF Stateside program has helped create or enhance boat launches and river access sites in nearly every county in our state, including on the Cedar River where I learned to fly fish.

LWCF is a balanced program that has touched every county in the United States and works for all, not just for a few of us. Large Fortune 500 companies benefit from LWCF investments through healthier communities where they are located, but so too do the mom-and-pop specialty outdoor retailers near a park, the guides and outfitters who make a living running outdoor trips in our forests, the families who play on baseball and soccer fields in their local park, the specialty manufacturers who make outdoor gear and the thousands of non-recreation-related businesses who choose to locate near accessible public lands for a better quality of life.

Given that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring outdoor recreation access and conservation, we hope Congress will move forward quickly on a solution that builds on the program's 50 years of success and continues to provide flexibility among all of the LWCF tools to address the variety of community needs.

Recreation has no boundaries. Sportsmen, hikers, mountain bikers and paddlers don't see state or federal lands, they see the great outdoors. They see an adventure, the hunt for an elk, the bite of a small mouth bass, or the clean line to the top of a crag. Under LWCF's current approach, and as bills like H.R. 1814, Representative Grijalva's legislation to permanently reauthorize LWCF, and the Senate's Energy Modernization Act would maintain, communities can use LWCF in their own way so all Americans can reap the benefits of access to a nearby forest or refuge or for children to play in a local park.

Over the life of the program, LWCF has adapted to meet the changing needs of communities, with new opportunities for state and local recreation and conservation to complement the original stateside component of LWCF. The Forest Legacy and Cooperative Endangered Species programs, the Highlands Conservation Act and the American Battlefield Protection Program have been added by Congress over the last 50 years. These non-federal conservation and recreation investments are all consistent with the purpose of the Land and Water Conservation Act, providing for diverse outdoor experiences. For example, the South Puget Sound project in Mason County, Washington, is using Forest Legacy Program funding through LWCF to meet multiple community needs. It protects a private working forest and forest industry jobs, ensures water quality for a shellfish farm that also provides many jobs to people in the region and will provide permanent public access to complete the county's regional recreational trail system.

LWCF's federal component likewise has adapted to meet the changing needs of community recreation and conservation. Increasingly it has been used to protect working lands through conservation easements that are win-win solutions for ranches, farms and forests. In many cases, this tool keeps jobs in the forest communities and traditional ways of life in place while allowing for recreational access and critical habitat and water quality benefits. For example, LWCF funding is needed to help protect some of the last remaining ranches that line the entrance to the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Idaho, a hugely popular outdoor recreation and sportsman destination.

LWCF is also being used to protect important watersheds – from the Cascades, Sierra Nevada and Wasatch Front, to the Highlands of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey – that are crucial to downstream water quality and supply and on which millions of people and the fishing industry depend. Consolidating inholdings has helped resolve access issues, improve public lands management and reduced wildfire mitigation costs. In Tennessee, the Rocky Fork acquisition in the Cherokee National Forest helped the Forest Service use prescribed burns that cost 93 percent less than the cost of fire suppression in a previous year. At Mount Rainier, LWCF allowed the National Park Service to purchase lands and relocate a campground out of a flood-prone area, ending years of repeated repairs to the road and campground that were costly drains on Park Service maintenance budgets.

Increasingly, LWCF has helped secure battlefields and other sacred, irreplaceable places that represent our unique American history, including the battle road at Lexington and Concord, Civil War sites like Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, and the Flight 93 National Memorial. Visiting these places is a priceless educational experience. I can't think of another federal program that helps support so many facets of our country, yet with no cost to American taxpayers.

Among its most vital roles, LWCF is critical for sportsmen's access to public lands. Over and over access is cited by hunters and anglers as one of their biggest concerns. A survey by Southwick Associates in 2012 found that in the previous year 23 percent of hunters lost access to land they had hunted and 20 percent of anglers reported losing access to certain waters. LWCF is one of the most valuable funding tools we have to keep our public lands truly public. LWCF has provided access to some of the most premier fly fishing in this country. LWCF has secured

fishing access to Yakima River Canyon in Washington and recreational amenities nearby that provide critical infrastructure for our largest retailer in Washington, Red's Fly Shop. It has protected over 88 miles of public access to the South Fork of the Snake River, a world class trout fishery that our Idaho operation considers its home waters.

At our Idaho Falls location we conduct product testing, guide our customers on the river and fish for recreation. In Montana, LWCF investments in the renowned Crown of the Continent region complemented large-scale conservation on the part of various state and local partners by protecting Swan Valley, Clearwater Valley and Lolo Creek. The resulting protected core habitat and critical linkages will enhance the survival of the bull trout and the westslope cutthroat trout. The land has been cherished by generations of outdoor enthusiasts and would have been lost to the public without LWCF.

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, nearly all of LWCF acquisitions improve public recreational access, with road access as the most common outcome, as well as trail access and boundary elimination, which is critical for hunters in their ability to track game. An analysis by Headwaters Economics found that since 2011, LWCF funds have opened access for hunters, anglers and other recreation enthusiasts on 322,000 acres of public lands.

We thank you for the opportunity to review the PARC Act as a discussion draft prior to the introduction of a bill. The draft you are considering at today's hearing makes a significant commitment to state and urban parks, and I wholeheartedly agree that these investments are critical to create healthy, vibrant economies and expand outdoor opportunities close to home. These investments, like the critical investments LWCF makes in federal public lands, create the backbone of the recreation economy and help fuel the businesses I help represent. This is why it is important that we not shrink the federal portion of LWCF to just 3.5 percent of the fund, nor place undue limits on other key state and local grant programs under LWCF, all of which would impair the program, the communities it serves, and our industry.

In that context, I am concerned by the strict limits the PARC Act would place on our national parks, trails, national forests, national wildlife refuges and Bureau of Land Management lands as well as a number of state and local recreation and conservation grant programs within LWCF – including Forest Legacy and Section 6 grants– which would impair most of the critical recreation access and conservation achievements I have described.

I also believe that we need to recommit LWCF's revenues explicitly to the recreation and conservation investments our communities need most and not tap into the fund to subsidize other government spending projects. If changes to LWCF's rule book and allocations are contemplated, I recommend a look at the last ten successful years of LWCF investments, and to make sure that the tools, mechanisms and funding that were used for those projects remain intact in a balanced and flexible way such as what is proposed in the Senate's Energy and Modernization Act for future recreation priorities.

As the committee considers the future of this vital program, OIA, TRCP and I look forward to engaging with you on moving quickly to full reauthorization of LWCF. This program is vital to the growth and success of the outdoor industry.

On behalf of the outdoor industry, the sportsmen's community and the millions of Americans who recreate outside each year, please reauthorize LWCF. This hugely successful program brings money to each of our communities for local projects, increases access to special places and supports thousands of American businesses across the country. We look forward to working with you to find a solution for this important, bipartisan and uniquely American priority.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Travis Campbell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

S. Travis Campbell  
CEO & President  
Far Bank Enterprises