

Lands Package

February 2019

S. 47 is the culmination of years of committee consideration and months of bipartisan, bicameral negotiations conducted in the 116th Congress. The final package includes components of over one hundred individual bills, permanently authorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), designates over 1 million acres of wilderness, and protects over 1 million acres of public land from future mining operations, including a sensitive area at the gateway of Yellowstone National Park. Taken together, S. 47 is a balanced package that promotes conservation, recreation, historic preservation, and cultural resource protection throughout the country.

LWCF Permanent Authorization

LWCF has been the nation's most successful conservation program for over 50 years. The fund primarily uses royalties collected from extraction on the outer continental shelf to support conservation and recreation projects that conserve open space and enhance access to public land. Despite these benefits, the authorization that ensures ongoing deposits into LWCF lapsed last September and has not been reauthorized.

S. 47 permanently authorizes LWCF- this will ensure that the program can continue supporting conservation and recreation in communities across the United States. This section also includes a provision to ensure U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia receive a full state-equivalent share of annual LWCF grants.

40,000+ sites have been protected by LWCF.

LWCF has funded projects in nearly every county in the country, protecting millions of acres across all 50 states.

Wilderness

S. 47 designates over 1 million acres of wilderness on federal land in California, Oregon, Utah, and New Mexico. Protections for California deserts would add five new recreation areas, establish more than 300,000 acres of wilderness, and expand Joshua Tree and Death Valley national parks and Mojave National Preserve. The Emery County Public Land Management title alone would protect over 600,000 acres, making it the biggest wilderness bill in nearly 25 years.

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S. 47 is a broad package of public land bills that, on balance, charts a historic course for the future of American conservation.

Wildlife

African American & Civil Rights History

S. 47 would: protect the home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, passionate advocates for justice and equity during the Civil Rights Movement; expand the Reconstruction Era National Monument into a National Historic Park; create a Reconstruction Era National Historic Network to coordinate historical preservation and education efforts; and reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation Program.

S. 47 reauthorizes the Fish and Wildlife Partners program, which would give assistance to private land owners for restoring, enhancing and managing their land to improve fish and wildlife habitats; reauthorizes the Multinational Species Conservation Funds which makes targeted investments to protect African elephants, Asian elephants, great apes, marine turtles, tigers, and rhinos; and establishes prize competitions for innovative approaches to wildlife conservation, invasive species control, and poaching and trafficking issues.

Conservation & Heritage Benefits

In addition to all the pieces described above S.47 expands protections under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to over 370,000 riparian acres, including segments along the Lower Farmington, Salmon Brook, Wood-Pawcatuck, and Nashua rivers in New England, expands the Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia, designates several new National Heritage Areas in Arizona, Washington, and West Virginia, and establishes the 21st Century Civilian Conservation Corps to increase job training opportunities for youth, veterans, and Native Americans on public and tribal lands.

Public Lands Access & Recreation

S. 47 includes the text of the Every Kid Outdoors Act, and a seven year authorization of this Obama administration program that provides every fourth grader in the U.S. free access to public lands. The bill also includes a bipartisan sportsmen's package designed to enhance access for hunting, fishing, and other recreation activities on public lands and waters.