

# How U.S. Forest Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program Acquisitions Impact Communities in Six Case Studies



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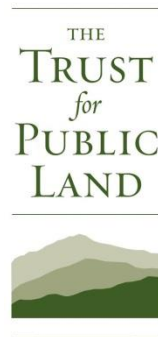


# How U.S. Forest Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program Acquisitions Impact Communities in Six Case Studies

*Conducted by The Trust for Public Land for the U.S. Forest Service*

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# Investing in land acquisitions in National Forests

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created by Congress in 1964 to provide monies to federal, state, and local governments for the acquisition of land, water, and conservation easements to enhance National Forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other public areas. The funding for these programs derives from offshore oil and gas drilling revenues. Nationwide, over 7 million acres have been purchased with \$9 billion in LWCF appropriations. Each year the Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management identify properties for purchase.<sup>1</sup> The Forest Service's LWCF program provides funding for land acquisition in 155 National Forests and Grasslands across the country.<sup>2</sup> Through acquisition, Forest Service LWCF funding has been used to protect more than 1.5 million acres of land located within or adjacent to existing National Forests and Grasslands.<sup>3</sup>

The Forest Service's LWCF investment in National Forests and Grasslands has ripple effects that extend far beyond the Forest Service and the land that is protected. The program strategically prioritizes conservation projects at the regional and national levels, considering such criteria as the landscape-level impacts, recreation and public access, public and partner support, urgency to the forest and community, water quality, and annual management savings or costs related to operations and maintenance.

LWCF investments very effectively leverage other conservation investments in a way that allows comprehensive, expansive, landscape level conservation projects to be completed. In addition to acquisitions of important lands for addition to the National Forest System, the Forest Service also impacts conservation accomplishments through the Forest Legacy Program. The Forest Legacy Program (funded through LWCF) provides grants to States to protect important forestlands from conversion to non-forest use. Forest Service LWCF investments garner support from federal, state, and local levels of government as well as the private sector.

With the help of LWCF, core areas of permanently protected forest and grasslands will continue to support local economies, generate jobs, as well as foster tourism related activities that exist because of the scenic vistas, wildlife amenities, and ample outdoor recreation opportunities provided by National Forests. These investments strengthen each community's economic base and are supported by the business sector. For example, Gordon Seabury is the CEO of Horny Toad, an activewear clothing apparel company. He says "our business is focused not only on the outdoor enthusiast of today but also the outdoor youth of tomorrow. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is critical to providing and maintaining outdoor recreation opportunities for our customers. It is sometimes easy to overlook the far reaching benefits that U.S. Forest Service LWCF acquisitions have to businesses like ours, but conservation lands that are accessible by the general public are crucial to fostering the active lifestyle and sense of exploration that our customers seek."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Peter Metcalf is the CEO and Founder of Black Diamond Equipment, a global, leading brand in the outdoor recreation equipment and apparel markets of climbing, backcountry skiing, and trekking. He says "the outdoor recreation industry depends on public lands and waters because they provide highly-sought after environments for the recreational opportunities on which our company depends. Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions, like those by U.S. Forest Service, provide unparalleled outdoor experiences that are integral to the vibrancy of the American outdoor recreation industry."<sup>5</sup>

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1 U.S. Forest Service, "LWCF Purchases - About the Fund" (accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/LWCF/about.shtml>).

2 U.S. Forest Service, "About Us - Meet the Forest Service" (accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/meetfs.shtml>).

3 U.S. Forest Service, "LWCF Purchases - About the Fund" (accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/LWCF/about.shtml>).

4 Personal Communication with Gordon, Seabury, Horny Toad, January 30, 2014.

5 Personal Communication with Peter Metcalf, Black Diamond Equipment, January 29, 2014.

These LWCF investments by the Forest Service also provide essential support for traditional working landscapes. Conservation in these areas offers support for the forest products and agriculture industries, which rely on intact landscapes to provide economic opportunity. Without these conservation investments to slow the fragmentation of the working landscape, many traditional economies would falter. Local ranchers, forest products employees, and conservation groups have been working with the Forest Service for decades to ensure that these natural resources will be available to future generations, and LWCF has been an essential component of these strategies.

This report will examine how LWCF investments in Forest Service land acquisitions have strengthened six unique communities across the country by assisting locally-initiated forest protection efforts. The Forest Service has made strategic investments in land that are mission driven and are often in response to, and supported by the public. Therefore, the levels of investment vary by region, state, and forest. Exhibit I shows the LWCF investments that have been made in each case study state from 1998 to 2011.

**Exhibit 1: LWCF investments in case-study states from 1998 to 2011<sup>6</sup>**

STATE	LWCF CONTRIBUTIONS	ACREAGE PROTECTED WITH LWCF
California	\$200,000,000	180,000
Georgia	\$5,120,000	834
Montana	\$112,000,000	76,400
New Hampshire	\$4,570,000	6,600
Oregon	\$9,820,000	4,630
South Dakota	\$12,700,000	4,270
Washington	\$47,900,000	15,600

<sup>6</sup> Data provided by The Trust for Public Land's Conservation Almanac ([www.conservationalmanac.org](http://www.conservationalmanac.org)). All data included in this report have been rounded three significant digits, unless otherwise specified.

# Consolidating the Sierra Checkerboard and drawing visitors to California

## Conservation in the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard

The Sierra Nevada Checkerboard is a mixture of land in public and private ownership that spans several hundreds of thousands of acres in the central Sierra region of northern California. When work began on the transcontinental railroad in 1863, the federal government granted railroad companies ownership of every other square mile of land, keeping the squares in between. The grant allowed railroads to pay for construction by selling their sections. In the mountains, railroads held on to their private sections, while many public sections become part of the National Forest System. Timber companies eventually acquired close to 75 percent of the private land, resulting in the current checkerboard pattern of alternating private and public land across much of the west. The land ownership pattern in this area was further fragmented by the 1872 Mining Act which facilitated hundreds of mining patents in the heart of the California motherlode.<sup>7</sup> This checkerboard ownership pattern poses significant management issues related to the forest-based economy, water quality, recreational access, and wildlife habitat.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, many of the private parcels in the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard are expected to convert to rural sprawl over the next 10 to 20 years if left unprotected. This development would increase congestion, hinder wildlife movement, and exacerbate fire management issues.<sup>9</sup>

Conservation efforts to consolidate Checkerboard lands have involved nonprofit land conservation organizations, the state, and local governments, as well Tahoe National Forest (TNF) and Eldorado National Forest (ENF) units of the Forest Service. The Sierra Nevada Checkerboard lands are located within an easy drive of Sacramento and San Francisco, California and Reno, Nevada. For example, TNF is located within a three hour drive from the San Francisco Bay Area; an hour from Sacramento and less than one hour from Reno.<sup>10</sup> TNF is an easy few hour drive on the interstate from 11 million people.<sup>11</sup> The area's proximity to major population centers in California makes it ideally located for outdoor recreation and tourism activities; however, the region's ability to provide such opportunities is closely linked with the quality of lands that permit public access. The ability to build trail networks and manage trail problems in the region is dependent on the goodwill of landowners. Public lands, such as those provided by the Forest Service, are essential to safeguarding this access. Additionally, funding provided by LWCF plays an important role in the regional effort to ensure recreation and tourism related activities are available for future generations.

## Leveraging LWCF

The Forest Service has shown its commitment to conservation and smart public land management in the Sierra Checkerboard by investing millions of LWCF dollars in projects to consolidate the checkerboard ownership pattern. This consolidation is strongly supported by state and private entities and LWCF investments facilitate state, local, and private contributions in the area. Between 2002 and 2013, 40 conservation projects were completed in the Sierra Checkerboard, conserving over 38,100 acres. These

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7 Personal communication with Fran Herbst, U.S. Forest Service, April 25, 2014.

8 According to Fran Herbst, of the U.S. Forest Service, this ownership pattern has been cited in numerous bioregional studies as a major barrier in providing sufficient habitat for late-successional dependent species.

9 Truckee Donner Land Trust, "Sierra Nevada Checkerboard" (accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.tdlandtrust.org/sierra-nevada-checkerboard>).

10 U.S. Forest Service, "Fishing" (accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/tahoe/recreation/fishing>).

11 Personal communication with Fran Herbst, U.S. Forest Service, April 25, 2014.

projects have been supported by \$22.2 million in federal investments, \$35.3 million in state investments, \$13 million in local investments, and \$16.5 million in private investments.<sup>12</sup>

Of the 40 Checkerboard projects completed between 2002 and 2013, 20 projects and 16,500 acres have received LWCF funding totaling almost \$16 million.<sup>13</sup> This investment specifically leveraged \$819,000 in private funding and \$1.39 million in state funding; however, when combined with the high profile Royal Gorge project that has received \$700,000 in federal appropriations to complete the current phase and is awaiting approximately \$2 million more, the Forest Service's LWCF investments will attract \$4.39 million, \$300,000, and \$10.8 million in state, local, and private funding, respectively.<sup>14</sup>

Conservation in the Checkerboard has received noteworthy support by federal, state, local, and private entities because its lands provide ample recreational opportunities that attract visitors and related economic activity. This region has attracted high levels of conservation activity from non-profit partners like The Nature Conservancy and Truckee Donner Land Trust. The case for private land protection is strengthened by the fact that funders understand that the Forest Service is also investing in Checkerboard protection. State and privately supported conservation easements and land trust acquisitions are playing a large role in the area. Many projects have been completed within TNF but without direct LWCF investments. Several of these projects have big recreation impacts including Independence Lake, Webber Lake/Lacey Valley, Sierra Buttes, and the Sierra Crest Working Forest Conservation Easements, which together have drawn \$29.4 million in nonfederal funds to the area and protected 13,400 acres, further strengthening the value provided by Forest Service acquisitions in the region.



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12 Personal Communication with Shelby Semmes, The Trust for Public Land, October 16, 2013. These numbers are conservative as they do not include Forest Service acquisitions through programs other than LWCF or donations to the Forest Service.

13 Ibid.

14 The Northern Sierra Partnership estimates that private contributions could be as high as \$25 million in the greater northern Sierra region.



## Community support

Local businesses have shown their support for the use of LWCF appropriations in their community because of the impact these land investments have on the area's ability to attract visitors. For example, the Royal Gorge project has garnered the support of many local businesses, recreation groups, and conservation organizations.

Steven Frisch, President of the Sierra Business Council, which represents over 700 businesses and individuals in the Sierra Nevada, wrote a letter in support of LWCF appropriations for the checkerboard consolidation in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, including the Royal Gorge. His letter cited a recent study that concluded 66 percent of all employment in the region is generated by visitors who in turn patronize small, locally-owned businesses. In fact, local small businesses account for 89 percent of all business establishments and are responsible for between 70 and 95 percent of the job growth in the community. Because the health of the economy is directly related to the number of people drawn to the region, the maintenance of the landscape and recreational resources is paramount.<sup>15</sup>

Conservation organizations, business owners, community leaders, and others have submitted letters supporting allocations for local projects. The list of supporters includes American Rivers, Defenders of Wildlife, Donner Summit Area Association, Folsom- Auburn Trail Riders Action Coalition, Forest Issues Group, Mountain Area Preservation, Northern Sierra Partnership (a coalition including Feather River Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Business Council, Truckee Donner Land Trust, and The Trust for Public Land), The Palisades, Serene Lakes Property Owners' Association, Sierra Business Council, Sierra Club, Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, Sierra Watch, Snow Lands Network, Truckee Trails Foundation, and Yuba River Wildlands. Additionally, local governments recognize the importance of conservation work in this area. In a letter of support, Nevada County's former 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor, Ted Owens, expressed that Forest Service acquisitions in the Royal Gorge area would provide a "tremendous regional benefit to the residents of both Placer and Nevada counties as well as our friends."<sup>16</sup> Placer County's District 5 Supervisor, Jennifer Montgomery, also supported conservation within the Royal Gorge, recognizing that federal funding was critical to making the acquisition successful.<sup>17</sup>

## Reducing the cost of government services

Local counties in the region have expressed support for conservation activities within their boundaries. The counties recognize that the protection of some of their more remote lands can provide an economic benefit to their communities by avoiding conflicts with resource uses. The counties avoid incurring additional government services by protecting certain areas from scattered, rural, residential development that would diminish scenic quality, complicate public access, and require expensive public services. According to a study by the Sierra Business Council, open spaces and working lands require \$0.36 of public services for every dollar in revenue raised, while residential lands require \$1.15 of every dollar of revenue raised.<sup>18</sup>

California has more homes in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) than any other state.<sup>19</sup> This is a particular area of concern in the TNF where 18 percent of private land adjacent to or within half a mile of

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15 Steven Frisch, Sierra Business Council, letter to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, undated.

16 Ted Owens, Nevada County, letter to Perry Norris, Truckee Donner Land Trust, August 30, 2012.

17 Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County, letter to Perry Norris, Truckee Donner Land Trust, August 31, 2012.

18 The Sierra Business Council and The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, *The State of the Sierra* (2007).

19 V.C. Radeloff, R.B. Hammer, S.I. Stewart, J.S. Fried, S.S. Holcomb, and J.F. McKeefry, "The wildland-urban interface in the United States" (*Ecological Applications* 15, no. 3, 2005, pp.799-805).

TNF is expected to experience an increase in housing density by 2030. This figure is 29 percent for private land within 3 to 10 miles of TNF.<sup>20</sup> For example, further development along the WUI within the checkerboard could affect the frequency, distribution, and suppression of wildfire activity. Increases in development activity could escalate the cost of wildfire management.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, the Federal government makes payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) to support the provision of public services in the local communities that contain National Forests and other federal entitlement land. The Department of the Interior is responsible for the PILT program. In 2012, California contained 44 million entitlement acres and received \$41.4 million in PILT. TNF and ENF are located in portions of Alpine, Amador, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, and Yuba counties. Together their Forest Service lands account for 93 percent of all of their counties' 2.14 million entitlement acres, and they receive a total of \$1.37 million in PILT annually.<sup>22</sup>

## Enhancing recreation opportunities and strengthening the state's tourism economy

In California, outdoor recreation is big business, generating \$85.4 billion in consumer spending, 732,000 direct California jobs, \$27 billion in wages and salaries, and \$6.7 billion in state and local tax revenue.<sup>23</sup> "Visit California" recently conducted a visitor survey and found that outdoor recreation is a driver of the state's tourism economy. The results of the survey indicate that outdoor adventure is among the vacation types preferred by visitors to California.<sup>24</sup> This is also evident in the numbers of visitors who participate in outdoor recreation activities. For example, 21.1 million U.S. residents visit California and participate in rural sightseeing, 15.5 million visit state and national parks, 11.8 million view wildlife, and 11.4 million go hiking or backpacking.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to attracting visitors who seek outdoor recreational opportunities and rural scenes, hunting and fishing are also big contributors to the California economy. Each year approximately 394,000 people hunt in California, and these hunters generate \$1.14 billion in retail sales, support 20,600 jobs with \$759 million in payroll, and create \$153,000 in state and local taxes. Additionally, fishing provides economic activity to the region. In the Golden Trout Wilderness, which is located in Inyo National Forest in the southern end of the Sierra Nevada, recreational fishing is estimated to provide between \$148,000 and \$713,000 in economic benefits annually.<sup>26</sup>

## Boosting local economic opportunity and building the region's reputation as a destination

There are a number of National Forests in the Sierra Nevada bioregion of California. In addition to Tahoe and Eldorado, Inyo, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Sequoia, Sierra, and Stanislaus National Forests provide a suite of outdoor recreation facilities including campgrounds and trails.<sup>27</sup> These lands, trails, and facilities provide bountiful outdoor opportunities and play an important role in attracting tourists and

20 U.S. Forest Service, *National Forests on the Edge: Development Pressures on America's National Forests and Grasslands* (General Technical Report, PNW-GTR-728, August 2007).

21 S.M. Stein, J. Menakis, M.A. Carr, M.A., S.J. Comas, S.I. Stewart, H. Cleveland, L. Bramwell, V.C. Radeloff, *Wildfire, Wildlands, and People: Understanding and Preparing for Wildfire in the Wildland-Urban Interface* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, General Technical Report, RMRS-GTR-299, 2013).

22 U.S. Department of the Interior, *Fiscal Year 2013 Payments in Lieu of Taxes*.

23 Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: California* (accessed March 24, 2014, <http://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/economy.html>). Based on 2010-2011 data.

24 Personal Communication with Dan Mishell, Research Director, Visit California, October 16, 2013.

25 TNS TravelsAmerica, *2012 Domestic Travel to California: Trip and Travel Behavior and Stats* (2012).

26 Carolyn Alkire, *Economic Value of Golden Trout Fishing in the Golden Trout Wilderness, California* (A report for California Trout, March 21, 2003). The Golden Trout Wilderness is located outside of the checkerboard, but this study provides a sense of the economic impact fishing could have inside the checkerboard.

27 U.S. Forest Service, *Draft Bio-Regional Assessment* (R5-MB-257, May 2013).

tourist spending to the state. For example, in 2010 there were 1.85 million annual visits to TNF. Average trip spending per party was \$234 and 32.3 percent of these National Forest visits were made with an overnight stay away from home. In 2012 there were 899,000 visits to ENF, with average total trip spending per party of \$355 and 49 percent of visits being made on a trip with an overnight stay away from home. Additionally, in 2012 there were 726,000 visits to Sierra National Forest, with the average total trip spending per party of \$326 and 37.4 percent of visits being made on a trip with an overnight stay away from home.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to actual visits on agency lands, National Forests attract tourists by providing a bucolic landscape that draws people to travel scenic byways that pass near or through forests. These byways are traveled about 300 million times annually.<sup>29</sup> Visitors are particularly important to the local area because they spend money in local communities. For example, travel spending in Nevada, Placer, and Sierra counties is \$1.14 billion annually and this spending supports a large percentage of employees in each county. For instance, in Sierra County, 18.7 percent of total employment and 11.9 percent of total earnings are attributable to tourism.<sup>30</sup>

Outdoor recreation and tourism are clear components of the state's economy and tourists are specifically drawn to lands in the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard region; however, the pattern of alternating public and private ownership complicates the ability of the public to take advantage of the area's high recreational value. Many trail opportunities are truncated by private land. Additionally, many miles of roads and thousands of acres could be closed to the public at any time. The ability to build trails and resolve trail problems is dependent on the goodwill of landowners, and private landowners are often unwilling to grant recreational easements. LWCF acquisitions help safeguard public access in key areas of high interest. For example, an LWCF acquisition in the Castle Peak area allowed for continuous public ownership through most of the Roadless Area, which was particularly significant given the importance of the backcountry and the visual impacts that can result from alternate land uses.<sup>31</sup>

LWCF acquisitions in the Checkerboard have protected trail corridors, allowed for the completion of trail loops, provided for new recreational opportunities, and increased the scenic value of this recreational landscape. These projects include Barker Pass that protected a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail and a wilderness trail, numerous projects on the North Fork American River and Devil's Peak that provided river access and protected the views within the Wild River Canyon, conservation of the heavily-used Milk Lake backcountry area, the Middle Yuba project that protected a viewshed and a portion on the Pacific Crest Trail, and the acquisition of Webber Lake Falls, which provides access to a gorgeous waterfall. Additionally, the Lola Montez/Castle Peak projects add to the protection of the Pacific Crest Trail and allow for the completion of a trail a loop that has been called one of the top ten mountain biking trails in California. Other valuable projects include English Mountain, which protected a lake; Rubicon, which protected land within a wilderness area; Pierce Meadows, which protected a meadow impacted by off-road vehicle use; and other work to acquire Sierra Nevada inholdings.<sup>32</sup> Trails are a critical aspect of recreation since walking for fitness and pleasure one of the most heavily demanded recreational activity for adults in California.<sup>33</sup>

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28 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A05003.aspx/Round3>); U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A05015.aspx/Round3>).

29 U.S. Department of Agriculture, "U.S. Forest Service Reports Visitors, Local Communities Receive Health, Economic Benefits from Visiting National Forests and Grasslands" (accessed July 31, 2013, [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2013/07/0148.xml&navid=NEWS\\_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST\\_RELEASES&deployment\\_action=retrievecontent](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2013/07/0148.xml&navid=NEWS_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&deployment_action=retrievecontent)).

30 Dean Runyan Associates, *California Travel Impacts by County, 1992-2011* (prepared for the California Travel & Tourism Commission, May 2013).

31 Personal Communication with Fran Herbst, U.S. Forest Service, December 19, 2013.

32 Personal Communication with Fran Herbst, U.S. Forest Service, December 18, 2013.

33 California State Parks, *Summary Findings: Survey on Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California, 2009*.



Ongoing conservation efforts on Donner Summit provide another example of LWCF funds being used to protect recreational access and the tourism-based economy. Located near Donner Lake and the towns of Truckee and Soda Springs, the Donner Summit area is particularly important to the local outdoor recreation and tourism economy. The Summit is home to Royal Gorge, the largest cross-country ski resort in North America established in the 1970s. At its peak of operations, Royal Gorge enjoyed international acclaim and drew thousands of skiers to its scenic and well-groomed trails. Glenn Jobe, an Olympic Biathlete, believes that the scenery, snow, and trails at Donner Summit make it one of the best places to Nordic ski in the world.<sup>34</sup> In the summer, Donner Summit is a hikers' paradise with miles of trails, including the Pacific Crest Trail and the Donner Lake Rim Trail. Looming development pressure threatened to change the character and recreational value of the Donner Summit area. Developers had proposed a 950-unit subdivision when the property was sold in 2005. Current county zoning would have allowed for over 3,000 new houses to be built on approximately 3,000 acres; however, this development project failed due to the decline in the resort real estate market.<sup>35</sup>



MARK NADELL/MACBETHGRAPHICS

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34 Northern Sierra Partnership, *The Campaign to Conserve Royal Gorge* (Fall 2012); Personal Communication with Shelby Semmes, Trust for Public Land, October 16, 2013.

35 Northern Sierra Partnership, *The Royal Gorge Acquisition: Frequently Asked Questions* (accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.tdlandtrust.org/sites/default/files/Royal%20Gorge%20FAQs2.pdf>).

Donner Summit's Royal Gorge then became the focus of regional conservation efforts. Currently, a host of partners including the Forest Service and the Northern Sierra Partnership have been working together to ensure the future of Donner Summit and the local tourism economy. The Northern Sierra Partnership raised funds to acquire the entire Royal Gorge property with the intent of selling about one third to the Forest Service and retaining the rest in land trust ownership. The protection of Royal Gorge helps ensure that the area remains a center for recreation into the future. Project partners have been able to arrange a creative solution ensuring Sugar Bowl Corporation's involvement as the operator of the Nordic ski resort at Royal Gorge and the continuation of this beloved winter recreational activity on Donner Summit. Royal Gorge Nordic Ski Area currently employs over 50 people and generates nearly a million dollars of annual gross revenue. Additionally, Sugar Bowl has committed to making investments to improve the ski area and increase its ability to attract visitors, generate local revenue, and contribute to the region's economy.

The Forest Service is also working to complete several phases of LWCF funding to consolidate the ownership of 900 acres of land in and around the Van Norden Meadows. Van Norden Meadows is the largest sub-alpine meadow in the northern Sierra; the majority of these meadows in the Sierra are degraded or in private ownership. Thus, Van Norden is a candidate for meadows restoration and a desirable addition to TNF. The acquisition of these parcels by the Forest Service is integral to supporting the recreational opportunities in the area. The acquisition of this additional acreage by the Forest Service will provide remarkable value to TNF and bolster the year-round recreational opportunities offered by the Forest, in tandem with other National Forest lands in the Checkerboard region.<sup>36</sup> For example, the Forest Service currently administers permits for cross country ski trails on its lands around the core Royal Gorge property and has plans to issue an additional permit for Van Norden Meadow once it is transferred to the Forest Service. Combined with extensive public and state level conservation work, these LWCF investments will guard public recreational access, protect scenic values, and help build the region's status as an outdoor recreation mecca.

Local efforts have focused on strengthening the Sierra Nevada area's reputation as a destination, especially because of the local dependence on the tourism industry and the interest in maintaining tourism as a sustainable sector of the economy. A unique project by National Geographic and the Sierra Business Council created the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide, which consists of a travel planning map and a free mobile app that can be used by visitors to plan trips to the Sierra Nevada. The tourism guide, which National Geographic and its partners have only developed for a handful of locations across the globe, includes points of interest to visitors, including outdoor adventures, special events, natural areas, accommodations, historic places, and restaurants. Statistics about the Sierra Nevada Geotourism website support the importance of outdoor recreation and tourism in the local and regional economy. The website's six month average suggests the website receives approximately 38,000 unique visitors per month. This high level of use is an indication of interest in this area as a travel location and how significant tourism is to the area.<sup>37</sup>

Outdoor recreation and tourism provide the foundation of many local businesses in the region. As such, conservation partners including the Forest Service are committed to protecting areas of recreational significance in the area. For example, the Forest Service and its partners are currently working on a 16-acre LWCF acquisition on the banks of the North Fork Yuba River downstream of Downieville. The acquisition will assure public access to the river. Patty Sandoval, an innkeeper at Sierra Shangri-La Resort in Downieville, estimates that about 95 percent of their summer guests partake in outdoor recreation

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<sup>36</sup> Northern Sierra Partnership, *The Campaign to Conserve Royal Gorge* (Fall 2012); Personal Communication with Shelby Semmes, Trust for Public Land, October 16, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Personal Communication with Nicole DeJonghe, Sierra Business Council, October 22, 2013.

while on their visit. Including swimming and fishing in the river, Sandoval estimates that the number would be closer to 100 percent. Many guests make annual trips to this region of California for the purpose of recreating outdoors. The Shangri-La provides the Forest Service's promotional materials to their guests, and estimates that almost all outdoor recreation takes place on National Forest land. She said people often hike on the Pacific Crest Trail and other destinations in the area. New trails and places to explore do provide a benefit to Shangri-La guests. Maintenance of existing natural areas is also important.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to supporting local entrepreneurs, travelers have a direct impact on county budgets by providing revenue through the Transient Occupancy Tax that counties often levy to collect revenue associated with tourists staying in their unincorporated areas.<sup>39</sup> In 2012 the Transient Occupancy Tax generated \$324,000 for Sierra County, \$2.5 million for Nevada County, and \$12.9 million for Placer County.<sup>40</sup>

Cities and towns in California can also levy the Transient Occupancy Tax. In 2012, the Transient Occupancy Tax generated \$1.35 million in revenue for the Town of Truckee, a town located within the boundary of TNF that assists over 75,000 visitors to its California Welcome Center annually.<sup>41</sup>

## The need for LWCF

The Forest Service's LWCF investments in the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard have profound economic impacts that extend beyond the Forest Service and into local communities. This case study demonstrates how LWCF expenditures by the Forest Service protect lands that provide the basis for economic activity in the region and the state. These projects have garnered the support of the local and regional community because of their importance in reducing the cost of government services and their ability to strengthen the outdoor recreation and tourism industries on which so much economic activity depends. Continued investments by the Forest Service through the LWCF program will be essential to support these important sectors of the economy.

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38 Personal Communication with Patty Sandoval, Sierra Shangri-La Resort, November 5, 2013.

39 California State Controller's Office, "Chapter 13000 Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)" (accessed October 18, 2013, [http://www.sco.ca.gov/ardtax\\_ctcrefman\\_chap13000toc.html](http://www.sco.ca.gov/ardtax_ctcrefman_chap13000toc.html)).

40 Dean Runyan Associates, *California Travel Impacts by County, 1992-2011* (prepared for the California Travel & Tourism Commission, May 2013).

41 Dean Runyan Associates, *California Travel Impacts by County, 1992-2011* (prepared for the California Travel & Tourism Commission, May 2013); Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce (accessed November 15, 2013, <http://www.truckeechamber.com/>).

# Sustaining the New Hampshire forest-products industry and maintaining opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism

Forest-based industries are essential components of the economy in New Hampshire, particularly in the region surrounding the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF). Given their importance, and the recognized role the forest plays in the region's quality of life and sense of place, community members are committed to ensuring that the area can continue to support the host of individuals and businesses that depend on these forest resources.

## LWCF investments through the Forest Service in New Hampshire

The Forest Service plays a large role in providing lands that are important to the forest products and tourism industries in this region. It directly supports the conservation of working forestland through its LWCF investments. In WMNF specifically, the Forest Service protected through purchase 13,000 acres between 2002 and 2012 with \$8.58 million in LWCF funds.<sup>42</sup> This effort complemented substantial efforts to protect nearby working forests through Forest Legacy Program conservation easements, also funded by LWCF. There has been strong support for continued LWCF appropriations in New Hampshire because of their importance to the state's environment and the small businesses that depend on it. A recent letter to Senate Appropriators written by Senator Shaheen and Senator Leahy supported robust funding for LWCF. The letter was signed by 44 senators from both parties, which demonstrates how important the forest-based industries are to the state.<sup>43</sup>

## Supporting the local timber economy

Investments that protect working forests and the local forest-products industry are extremely important in a state with 4.67 million acres of productive timberland and a \$1.7 billion forest products industry.<sup>44</sup> Of the productive timberland that makes up 81.4 percent of total land area, 626,000 acres are located in the National Forest System.<sup>45</sup> This land provides economic opportunities for residents by supporting a forest economy that includes timber harvesting and related trucking, primary manufacturing (sawmills and wood energy plants), and secondary manufacturing (furniture and paper). The state has nearly 50 substantially-sized sawmills and specialty wood product mills and seven wood-fired electricity generation plants.<sup>46</sup> Commercial logging in New Hampshire generates \$313 million in economic output, adds value of \$163 million, and generates 2,840 jobs. Forest processing, which includes sawmills, wood preservation, pallet manufacturing, paper mills and paperboard manufacturing, generates \$899 million in economic output, adds value of \$368 million, and generates 4,270 jobs.<sup>47</sup>

WMNF and the greater Tri-County or North Country Region (Coos, Grafton, and Carroll Counties) of New Hampshire, are significant suppliers in the state's forest products industry. In 2010, the Coos,

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42 Personal Communication with Craig Young, U.S. Forest Service, August 20, 2013.

43 Jeanne Shaheen, US Senator for New Hampshire, "Shaheen: Outdoor Recreation a Boon for New Hampshire Economy" (September 14, 2012, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.shaheen.senate.gov/news/speeches/speech/?id=c1ad02e1-d404-48d2-bc33-44eeadac9f9a>).

44 American Wood Council, *Wood Products Industry at a Glance: New Hampshire* (January 2013, accessed August 15, 2013,

[http://www.awc.org/AWC/awc\\_state\\_report/Pages/New%20Hampshire.pdf](http://www.awc.org/AWC/awc_state_report/Pages/New%20Hampshire.pdf)); University of New Hampshire, Cooperative Extension, *Guide to New Hampshire Timber Harvesting Laws* (November 2012, accessed August 15, 2013, [http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/resource000253\\_rep274.pdf](http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/resource000253_rep274.pdf)).

45 American Wood Council, *Wood Products Industry at a Glance: New Hampshire* (January 2013, accessed August 15, 2013,

[http://www.awc.org/AWC/awc\\_state\\_report/Pages/New%20Hampshire.pdf](http://www.awc.org/AWC/awc_state_report/Pages/New%20Hampshire.pdf)).

46 North East State Foresters Association, *The Economic Importance of New Hampshire's Forest-Based Economy* (accessed August 15, 2013,

<http://www.nefainfo.org/NEFA%20NH%20Forest%20Econ%20Impor%202011.pdf>).

47 Rigoberto Lopez and Chris Laughton, *The Overlooked Economic Engine: Northeast Agriculture* (Farm Credit East, 2012).

Grafton, and Carroll Counties produced 47.6 percent of the state's wood harvest.<sup>48</sup> While the WMNF's contribution to the state and regional pulpwood and fuelwood harvest has fallen over the last decade, the contribution to the higher value regional sawtimber harvest has increased over the same period. Furthermore, WMNF has managed its forestland with an emphasis on producing high-value sawlogs, which has significant impact on the local economy. In 2010, WMNF contributed 3.5 percent of the Tri-County's wood volume, but almost 6 percent of its value, indicating that WMNF produces higher value wood than other areas in the region and state.<sup>49</sup>

## Linking conservation land and creating a national model for community forests

In Randolph and Jefferson, New Hampshire, LWCF funds from the Forest Service enabled a host of entities to work together to link over 800,000 acres of Forest Service land and create a national model for community forests. Community forests are town forests that secure access and rights to the forest resource at the community level, promote community participation in management decisions, ensure communities receive value and benefits from the land that can support community priorities and economic development objectives, and secure permanent protection of the conservation values of the forest land. The Town of Randolph, with a population of 310 and 44.9 percent of its housing stock designated for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, saw this conservation project as a way to manage risk related to increasing residential growth because the town increasingly felt the effects of residential developments that demand more in local government services than they pay in taxes.<sup>50</sup> The community forest already provides expansive recreational opportunities and is expected to produce increasing forest-products revenue for the town over time.

This collaborative project provides an example of how the region's conservation entities and diverse land interests worked in tandem to protect the forested landscape and promote forest and economic health. This project would not have been possible without the support of the Forest Service through LWCF and the Forest Legacy Program or the ability of these investments to attract other forms of interest and support in the area. Specifically, between 2002 and 2003, WMNF acquired a 3,200-acre area known as the Pond of Safety using \$1.06 million in LWCF appropriations. The Pond of Safety has cultural, historic, and recreational significance to the local community and is located adjacent to the 10,200-acre Randolph Community Forest, which was established around the same time. The community forest part of the project used \$2.11 million in Forest Legacy Program funds to purchase a conservation easement that is held by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development on land that is currently owned by the Town of Randolph for their community forest. While the Town of Randolph was unwilling to raise funds for the project in a way that would increase the local tax burden, the enthusiasm of the local community mobilized philanthropic funding interests to successfully raise \$2.21 million.<sup>51</sup>

This quilt of forest ownership, including Randolph Community Forest and the Pond of Safety, is complementary to the region's forest based economy. Together these lands contribute to the timber and outdoor-recreation based interests in the area and are allowing for these industries to thrive. Randolph Community Forest has become a national model for community forests and LWCF investments are increasingly being used in a similar way to complement community forest conservation. This type of collaboration is being implemented in several places including Freedom, New Hampshire in the southeastern end of WMNF and Errol, New Hampshire which abuts Umbagog National Wildlife

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48 U.S. Forest Service, *White Mountain National Forest: Socio-Economic Assessment–2012* (Draft Report, 2013).

49 U.S. Forest Service, *White Mountain National Forest: Socio-Economic Assessment–2012* (Draft Report, 2013).

50 U.S. Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder, Community Facts* (accessed November 13, 2013,

<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>).

51 Randolph Community Forest, "Randolph Community Forest is National Model!" (August 9, 2013, accessed October 1, 2013, <http://randolphforest.org/>).



Refuge.<sup>52</sup> John Scarinza, chairman of both the Coos County Planning Board and Randolph Forest Commission says that “it is a tremendous asset to have these lands protected but maintained as working forestland that contributes to the local economy. We don’t have the road network or other assets that the southern part of the state has, but what we do have is people that want to live and work here. The protection of forests, and working forests specifically, will allow the forest-based economy in northern Coos County to continue into the future.”

LWCF investments were part of a comprehensive funding strategy that enabled a suite of land protection to occur in this region. Considered together, these lands add real value to the local community. Sustainable forestry practices are being implemented in Randolph Community Forest, which has tangible economic implications for the municipality and its residents. For example, four timber sales have occurred in the last four years despite ice storm damage. These sales have generated \$494,000 and enabled the forest to pay for itself, including maintenance, property taxes and local payments in lieu of taxes. Additionally, loggers in New Hampshire are required to pay a 10-percent timber tax to the town, which has generated approximately \$45,000 over the ten year period. The returns are expected to increase over time as the timber matures, further adding to the host of benefits that are provided by these conservation projects in the future.



JERRY AND MARCY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY

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<sup>52</sup> David Willcox, “The Story of the Randolph Community Forest: Building on Local Stewardship” (in *Natural Resources as Community Assets*, Sand County Foundation and the Aspen Institute, 2005); Personal Communications with Rodger Krussman, Trust for Public Land, December 6, 2013.

## Enhancing recreation opportunities

Forest-based recreation and tourism are also significant players in the New Hampshire economy. Recreational opportunities include camping, hiking, hunting, skiing, snowmobiling, ATV riding, fall foliage viewing, and wildlife viewing.<sup>53</sup> Outdoor recreation generates \$4.2 billion in consumer spending, 49,000 direct New Hampshire jobs, \$1.2 billion in wages and salaries, and \$293 million in state and local tax revenue.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to outdoor recreation, hunting is an important part of the state's economy and the WMNF contributes to its value. A 2007 game management survey by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department found that over 60 percent of the hunters surveyed hunted on public land.<sup>55</sup> Hunting and trapping are allowed on all WMNF lands, including wilderness areas, pursuant to state regulations. In 2011, there were 56,200 hunters in New Hampshire that spent 1.4 million days hunting. This hunting supported 923 jobs and generated \$60.4 million in retail sales, \$43.5 million in salaries and wages, \$7.6 million in state and local taxes and \$8.4 million in federal taxes.<sup>56</sup>

The forested landscape provided by the WMNF serves as a critical outlet for outdoor recreation and hunting. The area's rural scenery also draws visitors seeking refuge from nearby metropolitan areas in the northeast. WMNF is located within a day's drive of Boston, New York City, and Montreal and contains 1,200 miles of hiking trails, 400 miles of snowmobile trails, 175 trailheads or day use areas, and 23 developed campgrounds.<sup>57</sup> Visitors to the forest support the tourism-based economy by spending money in local businesses. For example, in 2010, 2.22 million visits were estimated in WMNF with 65.5 percent of visits being made with an overnight stay away from home. Average spending by visitor party was \$641.<sup>58</sup>

Since 1995, the Forest Service has acquired over 20 LWCF projects in WMNF that have high recreational value. These acquisitions have been essential in maintaining overall recreational opportunities and sustaining overall numbers of visitors to WMNF. For example, the Sylvan Way acquisition provides public pedestrian access to the Presidential Range, America's highest mountain range east of the Mississippi River and North of the Smoky Mountains. Additionally, the acquisition in Rumney safeguards a northeastern mecca for rock climbers. Furthermore, the Owl's Head acquisition from River Oaks Partnership Limited is located within a half-mile of the Appalachian Trail and protects an important cliff that draws visitors for rock and ice climbing. Conservation of the land around Lake Tarleton provides access for fishing and other recreational opportunities. Moreover, conservation of the first few hundred feet of Castle Trail in 2003 helped ensure this trail up Mt. Jefferson will remain open to the public. These and other recreation-focused LWCF acquisitions have been supported by the Appalachian Mountain Club, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, other nonprofit land conservation organizations, state officials and local municipalities, among others.

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53 North East State Foresters Association, *The Economic Importance of New Hampshire's Forest-Based Economy* (accessed August 15, 2013, <http://www.nefainfo.org/NEFA%20NH%20Forest%20Econ%20Impor%202011.pdf>).

54 Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: New Hampshire* (accessed March 24, 2014, <http://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/economy.html>). Based on 2010-2011 data.

55 Personal Communication with Kent Gustafson, New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, November 18, 2013.

56 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

57 U.S. Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest, Appalachian Mountain Club, Plymouth State University Center for Rural Partnerships, U.S. Department of Transportation, John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, *White Mountain National Forest Alternative Transportation Study* (June 2011, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/43000/43100/43132/DOT-VNTSC-USDA-11-01.pdf>).

58 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed on January 16, 2014, <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A09022.aspx/Round3>).



As previously discussed, the WMNF's Pond of Safety also provides exceptional recreational value to residents and visitors. The project provided the physical recreation connection between the Presidential and Kilkenny units of WMNF. Visitors can hike, cross country ski, and snowshoe on the dozens of miles including the Pond of Safety Trail, Mount Crescent Trail, Ice Gulch Path, Carlton Notch Trail, and others. A local group has developed a variety of backcountry skiing routes in the area. The Pond of Safety acquisition is also an important resource for hunting, fishing, and trapping. Additionally, snowmobiling is permitted on the interconnected Randolph Community Forest trails that are maintained by the local snowmobile clubs and allow riders to connect to Jefferson, Gorham, and the Kilkenny area.<sup>59</sup>

LWCF investments in New Hampshire are essential to supporting the local outdoor recreation economy. In fact, former CEO of Eastern Mountain Sports, Will Manzer, says "the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the only national mechanism to fund permanent protection of 'close to home' recreation, and that is where the customer base lives, so Forest Service LWCF acquisitions, like those in the White Mountains National Forest, absolutely have a direct impact on our local economies in New Hampshire and across the country."<sup>60</sup>

## The need for LWCF

This case study demonstrates the economic value of LWCF investments by the Forest Service in WMNF and New Hampshire. These National Forest acquisitions help sustain the quilt of working forestland on which the forest-products industry depends. Additionally, these lands enable the maintenance of recreational access which is essential to the outdoor recreation and tourism economy. Overall, LWCF acquisitions in WMNF have been crucial to providing economic opportunities to the area's residents. Continued LWCF investments will be essential to maintaining this economic activity into the future.

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<sup>59</sup> Randolph Community Forest, "What to do" (accessed November 15, 2013, <http://randolphforest.org/what-to-do/>).  
<sup>60</sup> Personal Communication with Will Manzer, January 14, 2014.

## Providing habitat, outdoor recreation opportunities, and elk management options in South Dakota

Between 1998 and 2011, over \$12.7 million in LWCF program funding was used in South Dakota to protect 4,270 acres of conservation land. One recent project in the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) represents over half of all LWCF protected acreage in the state. The Lady C Ranch, located in Custer County, South Dakota, connects two sections of BHNF and also shares a boundary with Wind Cave National Park (WCNP). The 2,400-acre ranch was purchased by the Forest Service in several phases using \$7.15 million in funding from the LWCF program. Protecting the Lady C Ranch was economically, environmentally, and culturally important to the region, which has a fairly large proportion of public lands that are owned and managed by a host of federal and state government entities. The Forest Service, National Park Service, and South Dakota's Custer State Park (CSP) have related management responsibilities due to the fact that their lands, as well as the private lands around them, provide habitat for an array of wildlife species and provide recreational opportunities for the public. Increased residential development in this area would jeopardize the character of wildlife habitat and detract from the economic benefits related to wildlife-related outdoor recreation. Protection of the Lady C Ranch increases access for hunting and boosts the tourism economy while lowering management costs. These are all important in protecting South Dakota's way of life and ensuring economic prosperity.

### Providing hunting opportunities to residents and visitors

Hunting is culturally important and a deeply embedded component of life for residents of South Dakota. This activity is very popular, but it is becoming more difficult for local hunters to find land on which to hunt. Public lands, such as BHNF are essential to providing access for individuals. A survey of 2012 Black Hills Firearm Elk license-holders found that 85 percent of respondents hunted mostly on public land, further illustrating the need for high-quality elk habitat on public lands that are open to the general public for hunting.<sup>61</sup> Forest Service land is an increasingly important outlet for this type of recreation and the Lady C Ranch, which is home to approximately 200 elk, provides opportunities for hunters that are willing to access the property by foot.<sup>62</sup>

Elk hunting is popular in the Black Hills and generates state revenue from hunting applications and permits. In 2012, over 21,000 applications were submitted by South Dakota residents for highly-desired elk licenses, of which 771 were sold. For elk hunting opportunities in the Black Hills, 9,670 residents submitted applications for the Black Hills Firearm Elk tag, of which only 570 licenses were sold. Each application is submitted with a \$5 fee; statewide elk hunting applications generated \$108,000 in 2012. Tag recipients then must then pay the full license fee of \$105. The sale of elk licenses alone generated \$116,000, \$85,500 of which was from the sale of Black Hills Firearm Elk Licenses.

Elk is one of many species that are hunted in South Dakota. Licenses can be purchased to hunt deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, mountain lion, turkey, and other small game species. In 2012, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) sold 149,000 licenses to residents and these sales generated \$4.72 million in application, preference point, and license fees. In the same year, SDGFP sold 19,300 non-resident licenses and generated \$2.78 million in sales. There were also 193,000 non-resident

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61 South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, *Elk (Black Hills, Archery, Prairie Elk & Custer State Park)* (accessed November 1, 2013, <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/harvest/default.aspx>).

62 Personal Communication with Phil Lampert, Lampert & Associates, October 16, 2013; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, "Elk Foundation: Another 330 Acres Protected in Black Hills" (April 4, 2008, accessed December 4, 2013, <http://www.rmef.org/NewsandMedia/PressRoom/NewsReleases/ElkFoundationAnother330AcresProtectedinBla.aspx>).

and 221,000 resident licenses sold by vendors, generating \$20 million, and 157 CSP licenses sold, which generated \$90,700.<sup>63</sup>

Shooting, hunting, and the outdoors are key industries in South Dakota and the State ranks first in the nation for the number of non-resident hunters.<sup>64</sup> In 2011, 144,000 out-of-state visitors hunted, generating \$405 million in retail sales. In total, there were 270,000 hunters and 3.74 million days of hunting that generated \$723 million in retail sales, \$302 million in salaries and wages, 11,000 jobs, \$62 million in state and local taxes and \$73 million in federal taxes.<sup>65</sup>

## Boosting outdoor recreation and tourism

Hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities are essential components of the region's economy. About four million people visit the Black Hills annually, and tourism is one of South Dakota's leading industries.<sup>66</sup> Tourism related activities represent one of the biggest economic resources in Custer County and BHNF is also one of the leading employers.<sup>67</sup> The nearby gateway communities of Custer and Hot Springs have 2,070 and 3,710 residents, respectively.<sup>68</sup> The municipalities have motels, grocery stores, gas stations, and sporting goods stores that are dependent on tourists who come to the area to participate in hunting and other outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, camping, and sightseeing.<sup>69</sup> Outdoor recreation in South Dakota generates \$3.7 billion in consumer spending, 44,000 direct jobs, \$1 billion in wages and salaries, and \$243 million in state and local tax revenue.<sup>70</sup>

Land acquisition in BHNF is beneficial for the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors of the economy. BHNF contains over 1.33 million acres. Its 30 campgrounds, 11 reservoirs, 13,000-acre wilderness area, 350 miles of trails, and two scenic byways attract nearly a million visitors each year. The area provides recreational opportunities that include hiking, horseback riding, pleasure driving, rock climbing, and bike riding, among many other activities. The Forest Service estimates that in 2009 there were 953,000 visits to BHNF. These visitors spend money in the local economy. Average total trip spending per party was \$497 in 2009, and 35.8 percent of 2009 visits to BHNF were made on a trip with an overnight stay away from home.<sup>71</sup> Spending associated with non-local visitors totaled \$88.5 million and spending associated with local and non-local visitors totaled \$97 million.<sup>72</sup> These expenditures also support local employment opportunities. Each year, BHNF supports 268 permanent employees and 248 seasonal employees. BHNF also supports almost 50 outfitter guides that operate within the forest boundary by providing access to recreational opportunities.<sup>73</sup>

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63 Personal Communication with Nancy Potts, South Dakota Department of Game, November 5, 2013.

64 South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development, "Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoors: Our Lifestyle Works" (accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.sddreadytowork.com/Key-Industries-Firearms.aspx>); Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

65 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

66 Senator for South Dakota: Tim Johnson, "About South Dakota: County of the Month" (accessed December 4, 2013, <http://www.johnson.senate.gov/sd/county/custer.cfm>).

67 Black Hills Knowledge Network, "Custer County - Work and Economy" (accessed December 4, 2013, <http://blackhillsknowledgegenetwork.org/topic-hub/custer-county/work/summary>).

68 U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, *Community Facts* (accessed December 4, 2013, [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml#none](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#none)).

69 Personal Communication with Phil Lampert, Lampert & Associates, October 16, 2013.

70 Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: South Dakota* (accessed November 27, 2013, [http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/SD-southdakota-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf](http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/SD-southdakota-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf)).

71 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (accessed March 24, 2014, <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A06005.aspx/Round2>).

72 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (accessed August 23, 2013, <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A06005.aspx/Round2>).

73 U.S. Forest Service, "Black Hills National Forest: Recreation" (accessed November 4, 2013, (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/blackhills/recreation>)); U.S. Forest Service, *Black Hills National Forest* (accessed November 4, 2013, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/publications/briefing/BB-BlkHills.pdf>).

Furthermore, the Lady C Ranch offers distinct recreational opportunities of its own. The project opens up four square miles of newly accessible land to the public, allowing space for horseback riding, hiking, and sightseeing.<sup>74</sup> Elk bugles can also be heard on the property.

## Lowering elk management costs

The Lady C Ranch project appealed to the local conservation community, including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), SDGFP, WCNP, and BHNF because of its pristine wildlife habitat, its adjacency to WCNP and its remarkable herd of elk, and the importance of providing hunting and other recreational opportunities in the Black Hills. The project also received attention because the ranch was located within the Forest Service boundary and its acquisition could help lower management costs, including those related to boundary line maintenance and elk herd management. An estimated one-third to one-half of WCNP's elk herd spends its summers outside the park, exiting over a low fence in the southwest corner of the park, which is adjacent BHNF and the Lady C Ranch acquisition. One study by the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Park Service tracked elk movement and found that 80 percent of collared females leaving the park stayed within a 5.6 mile area on the west side of the park and 80 percent of collared males roamed a 16.8 mile area to the north, south, and west.<sup>75</sup> While BHNF does not manage elk populations directly, it does manage wildlife habitat and provide hunting access, which impacts the elk population.

The management of elk using the park and surrounding areas is an important part of the management of the elk in the southern Black Hills. In 2003, a count of the herd by WCNP indicated that the elk using the park represented approximately 36 percent of the total elk population in the southern Black Hills and 11 percent of the entire population in the Black Hills. WCNP also estimated that there were 700 elk present in the park, a population that is 300-350 elk higher than its management goals.<sup>76</sup> An oversized elk population can lead to large impacts on shrublands, hardwoods, and riparian areas. Additionally, elk populations can damage private property by destroying fences and crops. SDGFP pays for projects to mitigate this private property damage. In 2005, SDGFP spent approximately \$87,000 on preventive and mitigation measures.<sup>77</sup>

The herd size has been managed using many methods over the years, more recently using a technique of trapping and relocating the animals; however, the identification of Chronic Wasting Disease eliminated this technique as a management option. One alternative management option is to take advantage of hunting on public and private lands outside the park, including BHNF and the Forest Service's newly acquired Lady C Ranch.<sup>78</sup> Using this strategy, elk would be allowed to leave the park in the spring, but discouraged from returning in the summer or fall by park officials raising the adjustable fences, particularly along the boundary with BHNF. WCNP acknowledged that increased hunter access to private lands around the park would help make this alternative feasible and the addition of Lady C Ranch to BHNF makes important lands accessible to hunters. Additionally, the ranch's former owners invested extensive resources into developing pristine elk habitat, which could continue to attract elk and keep them off private property if maintained over time.

By protecting the Lady C Ranch from residential development and making it accessible to the public, hunting can be used as a tool to manage the herd that travels between BHNF, national park, and state park. Making this area accessible to the general public for hunting not only lowers public land

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74 Danny Lawhon, "Lady C Ranch Property a Gift to Wildlife" (*Rapid City Journal*, June 16, 2011).

75 Wind Cave National Park, *Final Elk Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement: Purpose of and Need for Action* (2009).

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Hunting is not allowed in WCNP.

management costs in the region, but combined with this elk management strategy, could potentially raise revenues for the management of land conservation in South Dakota. Transferring the ownership of the Lady C Ranch to the Forest Service allows critical hunting access and facilitates land management that would not be possible in private ownership.

## The need for LWCF

Local and regional communities around BHNF depend on a host of public lands to support their economies. The Forest Service and BHNF, provide recreational and hunting opportunities on which local businesses and employees rely. Investments by the Forest Service through the LWCF program, on projects like the Lady C Ranch have economic impacts that extend beyond the Forest Service. As outlined above, this project along with other National Forest lands in the area lower elk management costs, generate hunting revenue, and attract visitors to the area. Continued investments through the Forest Service and LWCF will be essential to maintaining the habitat and recreation related economies in this region of South Dakota.

One of the Forest Service’s mission-driven criteria for determining where to make investments is the recreational use and improved public access provided by the potential acquisition. While each of the national forests included in this report provides opportunities for different types of recreational activities, visitation is consistently robust. Exhibit 2 shows visitation and trip spending in each of the National Forests included in the six case studies.

**Exhibit 2: National Forest visits and trip spending by National Forest**

FOREST	STATE	NATIONAL FOREST VISITS	VISITS MADE WITH AN OVERNIGHT STAY AWAY FROM HOME	AVERAGE TOTAL TRIP SPENDING PER PARTY	YEAR DATA COLLECTED
Black Hills National Forest	SD	953,000	35.8%	\$497	2009
Chattahoochee Oconee National	GA	1,880,000	26.8%	\$280	2009
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area	OR, WA	1,370,000	30.1%	\$347	2011
Eldorado National Forest	CA	899,000	49.0%	\$355	2012
Lolo National Forest	MT	1,270,000	12.6%	\$67	2011
Tahoe National Forest	CA	1,850,000	32.3%	\$234	2010
White Mountain National Forest	NH	2,220,000	65.5%	\$641	2010

Source: U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/>).

## Ensuring Georgia's water quality, creating habitat, and drawing recreational users

The Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forest (CONF) in Georgia is an essential component of the regional conservation landscape. Chattahoochee National Forest (CNF) and Oconee National Forest (ONF) are two geographically distinct National Forests, located in northern and central Georgia, respectively; however, they are described and managed by the Forest Service as one unit. Combined, the Forests consist of 868,000 acres, 751,000 of which are located in CNF.<sup>79</sup> The Forest Service has continually recognized the importance of National Forests to Georgia. Between 1998 and 2011, \$5.12 million in Forest Service LWCF funding helped protect 834 acres in Georgia. Specifically, \$3.64 million of LWCF funds were used to conserve 321 acres of CNF and \$1.48 million were used to conserve 513 acres in ONF.<sup>80</sup>

The rivers and National Forest lands in northern Georgia bolster the state's quality of life and provide critical economic opportunities. As such, the Forest Service is particularly interested in investments in this area and its recent acquisitions have included parcels that protect water quality, provide wildlife and trout habitat, increase public access to areas for hunting and fishing, and strengthen the state's tourism economy. These projects have garnered support from local businesses, governments, and nonprofit organizations that recognize the benefits realized through the protection of these lands.

For example, The Nature Conservancy acquired the 23.2-acre L&K parcel with \$506,000 from the Georgia Wetlands Trust Fund. Then, in 2008, the Forest Service used LWCF funds to purchase the property from the Nature Conservancy at the discounted price of \$23,000. This tract brought high values to CNF, particularly because it is accessible from a local highway and provides access to Edmunston Creek. This part of the forest provides many recreation opportunities including fishing, hunting, and backcountry camping. Additionally, the Forest Service acquired a nearby 40-acre parcel, close to the Etowah River, with \$472,000 in LWCF funding in 2007. This purchase protects wildlife habitat, provides hunting opportunities, and allows for fishing and camping.

These projects, especially when combined with other recent and ongoing projects in northern Georgia, are important components in a landscape-scale conservation effort that seeks to protect water quality and provide public access to water resources. These goals are critical in an area that depends on the rivers and forestlands to provide economic opportunity. As such, conservation efforts around the Etowah and Chattahoochee Rivers and their tributaries have garnered support from a host of conservation organizations, including Trout Unlimited, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy, as well as municipalities, such as the City of Helen, and local landowners.

### Mitigating threats from increasing residential development

CONF has been designated as an urban National Forest. This categorization requires one million people located within one hour of the forest. CONF easily meets this designation as its forests are less than an hour from five million people in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area alone.<sup>81</sup> Increasing population and housing density in Georgia are cause for concern related to the health of its watersheds and the

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79 U.S. Forest Service, *Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest: 2012 Quick Facts* (accessed March 24, 2014, [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5228377.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5228377.pdf)).

80 The Trust for Public Land, *Conservation Almanac Database* (August, 2013).

81 U.S. Forest Service, "Planning: Recreation on the Oconee National Forest Chattahoochee-Oconee National Fore [sic]" (accessed December 4, 2013, [http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/conf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsm9\\_029217&width=full](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/conf/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsm9_029217&width=full)).



economies they support. Over one third of private land adjacent to CONF is expected to experience an increase in housing density by 2030.<sup>82</sup> The CNF draws visitors and seasonal home development to northern Georgia. Private lands within the boundaries of CNF are at very high risk for development due to their proximity to Atlanta and its suburbs. Seasonal homes represent a significant percentage of housing stock in areas around the CNF. The Etowah and Coosawattee watersheds are of particular concern because of their proximity to CNF. Within these watersheds seasonal homes represent 10 and 40 percent of all housing units, and the number of seasonal homes is growing. By 2030, much of the Etowah watershed is projected to have housing unit densities greater than 64 units per square mile. In the Coosawattee watershed, the highest housing unit densities are projected for the area surrounding the town of Ellijay and in the Interstate 75 corridor.<sup>83</sup>

This residential development is particularly concerning because of the impact it has on water quality. The areas around the Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers have received well-deserved attention from the conservation community due to their importance in maintaining water quality for millions of Georgians who rely their water for everyday use. For example, the Chattahoochee River, which drains into Lake Lanier, supplies more than 70 percent of metro Atlanta's water for drinking and other needs at an annual average rate of about 450 million gallons per day.<sup>84</sup> The Etowah River is a major tributary of the Coosa River, which provides drinking water to a significant portion north Georgia's population. Specifically, the Etowah River is the water source for the Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority, and the cities of Canton, Etowah, and Rome.<sup>85</sup>

Forest lands, such as those provided by the Forest Service, are valuable in Georgia because of their ability to protect and improve water quality. Recent studies demonstrate just how valuable forests are for water protection. A study in the Red Hills region of southern Georgia and North Florida found that water supply protection and groundwater recharge were worth \$615 million and \$229 million each year, respectively.<sup>86</sup> A study conducted on Florida Forest Stewardship Program lands estimated an average value of water purification to be \$3,300 per acre (2010\$).<sup>87</sup> Additionally, a report by the University of Georgia found that ecosystem services provided by private forestlands are worth an estimated \$37.7 billion annually, with \$20.0 billion of that value attributable to water regulation and supply.<sup>88</sup> While these numbers cannot be applied directly to forests on LWCF acquisitions by the Forest Service, they provide a sense of the magnitude of values that are potentially provided by publically owned forestland in Georgia, including forestland in CONF.

The Forest Service is currently working to protect a 200-acre tract in Gilmer County called the Whitecliffs Tract. The first phase of the Whitecliffs project was completed with \$775,000 in LWCF funding. Work is ongoing to acquire the second phase of the project and The Conservation Fund has been deeply involved in these conservation efforts. These tracts have high-resource values related to water quality, pristine scenery, and proximity to federally designated wilderness areas. There has been widespread support for these projects. For example, Gilmer County has shown its support for this project

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82 U.S. Forest Service, *National Forests on the Edge: Development Pressures on America's National Forests and Grasslands* (General Technical Report, PNW-GTR-728, August 2007).

83 Eric M. White, *Forests on the Edge: A Case Study of Northwest Georgia Watersheds* (U.S. Forest Service, Corvallis, OR, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/fote/georgia-casestudy-ew-103006.pdf>).

84 Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, "10 Facts About the Chattahoochee River" (accessed December 4, 2013, <http://www.chattahoochee.org/river-facts.php>).

85 Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, *Coosa River Basin Plan* (accessed January 10, 2014, [http://www.gaepd.org/Files\\_PDF/plans/coosa/chapt-3.pdf](http://www.gaepd.org/Files_PDF/plans/coosa/chapt-3.pdf)).

86 Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, *Valuing Ecosystem Services in the Red Hills Region of Southwest Georgia and North Florida* (accessed August 23, 2013, <http://www.talltimbers.org/images/ttlc/ValuingEcosystemServices-RHR-SWGANF.pdf>).

87 Amr AbdElrahman, Damian Adams, Tatiana Borisova, Sonia Delphin, Francisco Escobedo, Alexis Frank, Namyun Kil, Melissa Kreye, Timm Kroeger, Taylor Stein, and Nilesh Timilsina, *Final Report: Stewardship Ecosystem Services Survey Project* (editors: Francisco Escobedo and Nilesh Timilsina, University of Florida, accessed August 23, 2013, <http://www.idahoforests.org/img/pdf/EcosystemServicesFloridaStewardshipReport.pdf>).

88 Rebecca Moore, Tiffany Williams, Eduardo Rodriguez, Jeffrey Hepinstall-Cymerman, *Quantifying The Value Of Non-Timber Ecosystem Services From Georgia's Private Forests* (final report submitted to the Georgia Forestry Foundation, January 2011).



and the use of LWCF funds to support it, particularly because of the impact its development would have on streams, roads, and other infrastructure.<sup>89</sup> In letters of support written by Mark Chastain, Chairman of the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, to U.S. Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson, he recognized that while he did “not philosophically support the expansion of government or the removal of private lands from the tax rolls, this large isolated tract within the National Forest would pose certain problems and expenses to the Gilmer County government if it were developed when the economy rebounds, such as increased road maintenance and emergency services to a remote area. That is why the immediate acquisition of the property is so important.” This project is also near the Benton MacKaye Trail, which passes to the east and the Cohutta Wilderness Area. It will become part of the Cohutta Wildlife Management Area. Funding for the second phase of this project is in the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2015.<sup>90</sup>

## Providing opportunities for outdoor recreation

The protection of lands abutting the Chattahoochee, Etowah, and Soque Rivers is also extremely important for providing public access to the rivers, which are popular recreation destinations. Outdoor recreation, angling, and hunting are all large industries in Georgia that depend on clean rivers, high quality habitat, and public access to land and water resources. Outdoor recreation, which does not include hunting or fishing, in Georgia generates \$23.3 billion in consumer spending, 231,000 jobs, \$7.0 billion in wages and salaries, \$1.4 billion in state and local tax revenue.<sup>91</sup>

CONF provides abundant recreational opportunities to the general public. It has 10 wilderness areas, 1,370 miles of trout streams, and 430 miles of trails. Often referred to as a “Hiker’s paradise,” there are four long distance trails including the Benton MacKaye, Bartram, Duncan Ridge, and Appalachian. Within CONF, tourists can explore two scenic byways, visit Lake Conasauga (Georgia’s highest lake at 3,000 feet above sea-level) or scale Brasstown Bald (Georgia’s highest peak, at 4,784 feet). The Chattooga Wild and Scenic River also provides opportunities for guided rafting trips and the Chattahoochee and Toccoa rivers are available for canoeing and kayaking. Angling on Lake Blue Ridge and in the many rivers and streams is also popular.<sup>92</sup>

The Forest Service estimated that 1.88 million visits were made to CONF in 2009. These visitors spent money in the area and supported the local economy. Average and median total trip spending per party were \$280 and \$45, respectively. Total annual spending associated with non-local visits was \$44.2 million, while total annual spending associated with all visits was \$66.8 million (2007\$).<sup>93</sup> These expenditures demonstrate that outdoor-recreation related tourism is an important component of the local economies in Georgia.

The Forest Service’s current conservation efforts are focused on protecting an approximately 270-acre parcel with 1.5 miles of frontage on the Etowah River. The Upper Etowah River Alliance supports this acquisition because of the area’s high habitat protection value. There are 76 species of fish found in the Etowah Watershed, which is more than the Colorado River and the Columbia River Watersheds combined. Specifically, this list of species includes the Etowah Darter, which is federally endangered and

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89 Mark Chastain, Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, letter to U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, March 27, 2010; Mark Chastain, Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, letter to U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, March 27, 2010

90 Personal Communication with Al Foster, U.S. Forest Service, January 9, 2014.

91 Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Georgia* (accessed November 27, 2013, [http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/GA-georgia-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf](http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/GA-georgia-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf)).

92 U.S. Forest Service, “Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests Recreation Overview” (accessed August 22, 2013, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/conf/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5090627&width=full>).

93 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed August 22, 2013, <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results/A09022.aspx/Round2>).

endemic to the Etowah; the Amber Darter, which is federally endangered and endemic to the Etowah and the Conasauga Watersheds; and the Cherokee Darter, which is federally threatened and endemic to the Etowah. In addition, there are numerous other aquatic species that are listed as endangered or threatened in Georgia.<sup>94</sup> Habitat protection is important in this area as the ecosystem diversity attracts kayakers, canoeists, and fishermen.

## Supporting local businesses

Many local businesses depend on the CNF for the recreational opportunities it provides and the tourists it attracts. CNF is a destination on which many local guides and outfitters depend. Ben LaChance, owner of Appalachian Outfitters in Dahlonega says “we all benefit in an area that has a lot of outdoor recreation and access to these opportunities. Someone who hikes the Jones Creek Loop Trail, located in Chattahoochee National Forest, might come paddle with me while they’re in the area. Hotels, gas stations, other guides—they all benefit from this recreational environment.”<sup>95</sup> Similarly, James Bradley, the owner of a local guiding service based in Ellijay, says that National Forest lands allow his business to offer its clients special trips. He estimates that his company would potentially lose about 25 percent of their business if they were unable to take advantage of the recreational opportunities on these lands. Additionally, many guides and trout fishermen recognize that wild trout require cold and clean water, a resource that is protected by National Forest lands. Some outfitters have supported National Forest lands through their involvement with stream improvement projects and barrier construction.<sup>96</sup>

## Improving water quality and angling prospects

Water quality and outdoor recreation are closely related in Georgia, where fishing is an integral part of the regional economy. Brook trout are extremely sensitive to changes in water quality and populations are heavily impacted by land use activities that fill streams with sediment and pollution. Together, urbanization, poor land management, and roads that cause sedimentation and stream fragmentation impact over 75 percent of brook trout subwatersheds in Georgia.<sup>97</sup>

In Georgia and South Carolina, the genetically distinctive Southern Appalachian brook trout has largely retreated into isolated headwater streams on public lands managed by the Forest Service.<sup>98</sup> The Georgia Department of Natural Resources does not stock brook trout, which is done in some areas of the country to ensure recreational opportunities are available. As such, wild brook trout that live in the waters on public lands are a valuable public resource.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, almost 100 percent of cold water stream fishing on public lands in Georgia occurs within the CNF and approximately 90,000 fishermen generate over \$43 million in revenue for Georgia from National Forest land.<sup>100</sup> The economic impact of angling in Georgia is over \$1.5 billion annually and fishing on public lands is particularly important to the local and regional economies in Georgia.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, CNF plays an important role in providing access to fishing opportunities. The Soque River is a pristine stretch of water that flows into the Chattahoochee River. It has a great reputation for

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94 Diane Minick and Lori Forrester, Upper Etowah River Alliance, letter to Alton Foster, Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest, 2013.

95 Personal Communication with Ben LaChance, Appalachian Outfitters, January 23, 2014.

96 Personal Communication with James Bradley, Reel'em In Guide Service, October 28, 2013.

97 Trout Unlimited, *Eastern Brook Trout: Status and Threats* (prepared for the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, Arlington, VA, 2006).

98 Ibid.

99 Trout Unlimited Georgia Council, “Brook Trout in Georgia” (accessed October 24, 2013,

[http://www.georgiatu.org/index.php?mid=conservation&iid=btinga&sid=](http://www.georgiatu.org/index.php?mid=conservation&iid=btinga&sid=))).

100 Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center, “What to do: Chattahoochee National Forest” (accessed October 24, 2013,

[http://www.blueridgemountains.com/chattahoochee\\_national\\_forest.html](http://www.blueridgemountains.com/chattahoochee_national_forest.html)).

101 Rebecca Moore, Tiffany Williams, Eduardo Rodriguez, Jeffrey Hepinstall-Cymmerman, *Quantifying The Value Of Non-Timber Ecosystem Services From Georgia's Private Forests* (final report submitted to the Georgia Forestry Foundation, January 2011).

producing large brown and rainbow trout, and is one of the most popular cold water streams in northeast Georgia for fly fishermen. In 2013, the Forest Service acquired a 20-acre parcel with frontage on the Soque River using \$150,000 in LWCF funding. This project provided direct public access to an additional 575 feet of cold-water habitat for fly fishing, but also opened up the upper stretches of the Soque River and a large swath of the 9,700-acre Tray Mountain Wilderness Area that previously had limited public access. Located adjacent to the wilderness area, this acquisition provides backcountry and fly fishing opportunities. This project received support from The Trust for Public Land, Turner Foundation, and Trout Unlimited and is managed by the Forest Service to preserve its scenic values and enhance opportunities for trout fishing, hunting, and wilderness access. This relatively small parcel of land demonstrates how even tiny land acquisitions can provide recreation opportunities and attract tourist by ensuring critical access to the river and land resources in an area that is facing increasing development pressure and the restriction of access. The Forest Service's ability to use LWCF is essential for completing projects in this area.



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## Hunting

Hunting is an important sector of the economy in Georgia, particularly because the role the industry plays in attracting non-residents to the state. Georgia ranked seventh in the nation in terms of the number of non-resident hunters.<sup>102</sup> These hunters travel to Georgia to hunt and as a result spend money in local economies. In 2011, a total of 392,000 hunters spent 8.92 million days hunting. Of these hunters, 98,000 were non-residents and these hunters generated \$174 million in retail sales. In aggregate, hunting in Georgia by residents and non-residents supported 24,000 jobs and generated \$799 million in retail sales, \$600 million in salaries and wages, \$107 million in state and local taxes and \$145 million in federal taxes.<sup>103</sup>

Georgia contains approximately one million acres of public hunting land.<sup>104</sup> CNF provides public access for hunting, which is critical in a state where less than 5 percent of its surface area is publically available for this outdoor activity.<sup>105</sup> A recent survey conducted for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources found that 25 percent of hunters hunted on public land.<sup>106</sup> This is likely attributable to the relatively low availability of public lands for hunting. The same survey found that 65 percent of bear hunters hunted in North Georgia. Additionally, the Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area, which contains 38,900 acres within the CNF, offers opportunities to hunt deer, turkey, bear, small game, and furbearers.<sup>107</sup> As such, LWCF acquisitions, such as the previously mentioned projects in 2007 and 2008, are especially important because they provide access to the lands that the public can use to participate in wildlife-related activities, including hunting.

Todd Holbrook, President and CEO of Georgia Wildlife Federation, says “hunting is a major component of Georgia’s culture, quality of life, and economy. While most hunting occurs on private land, many of Georgia’s hunters only have access to public lands. These lands are necessary to recruit and retain future generations of hunter-conservationists. In particular LWCF acquisitions by the Forest Service protect water, wildlife, and forest providing high-quality hunting opportunities.”

## The need for LWCF

The economic impact of conservation projects in northern Georgia extend far beyond the Forest Service and into the surrounding communities. The recent and ongoing projects in CNF provide great examples of how these investments by the Forest Service support local economies that are dependent on clean water and outdoor recreation. LWCF funds have been particularly helpful in ensuring the protection of several critical parcels in Georgia that are essential to supporting fisheries, the sportsmen and guides that depend on them, and a recreation and tourism based economy that requires access to healthy forests and watersheds.

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102 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

103 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

104 Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, “Hunting” (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting>).

105 Tony Hansen, “Public Land: Hunting and Fishing in Georgia” (*Outdoor Life*, April 24, 2013).

106 Responsive Management, *Harvest of Wildlife in Georgia 2012-2013* (Conducted for Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 2013).

107 OhRanger.com, “Blue Ridge Wildlife Management Area” (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.ohranger.com/ga/blue-ridge-wildlife-management-area>).



# Collaborating to protect the watershed and provide opportunities for Montana residents

## Conservation in the Blackfoot Watershed

The Blackfoot River runs through some of the most productive fish and wildlife habitat in the Northern Rocky Mountains. The Blackfoot River Watershed spans 1.5 million acres of land in Montana and contains parts of Lewis and Clark, Missoula, and Powell Counties. The ranchers, loggers, and outfitters in the area all rely on healthy ecosystems and habitats for their livelihoods and as such, community members in the Blackfoot Watershed have been working together for decades to ensure the natural resources there will continue to meet the needs of those who depend on them.

The Blackfoot Challenge is a nonprofit group consisting of private landowners, federal and state land managers, local government officials, and corporate landowners that support resource stewardship through the cooperation of public and private interests. The working landscape in the Blackfoot Watershed is provided by a host of landowners and managers including the Blackfoot Challenge, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bureau of Land Management, Montana University, Montana State Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and an array of private landowners, many of whom own land on which conservation easements have been placed.

The Forest Service has made significant investments in Montana and the Blackfoot River Watershed through the LWCF program. In Montana, \$112 million in LWCF funds helped protect 76,400 acres between 1998 and 2011. The successful conservation of the Blackfoot River Watershed landscape depends on LWCF funds, especially because these acquisitions attract other conservation investments to the area. Other LWCF programs such as the Forest Legacy Program, and other funding sources, including Qualified Forest Conservation Bonds, build off of one another to create an even larger and more dynamic conservation landscape.

Two large conservation efforts in the Blackfoot River Watershed have provided remarkable contributions to the surrounding community, offering foundational examples of collaborative conservation at the landscape level. The Blackfoot Community and Montana Legacy Projects both used Forest Service LWCF funding to acquire significant sections in the Lolo, Flathead, and Helena National Forests. The conservation acquisitions that have been part of these projects include important wetland areas and connect habitat and travel corridors in key drainages that link to larger protected and wilderness areas. The parcels of land acquired by the Forest Service using LWCF are situated within a network of conservation lands, including Bureau of Land Management lands, State of Montana Trust lands, national wildlife refuges, and private holdings that are protected with conservation easements. These LWCF acquisitions are used for recreation, restoration, timber production, and as a means to safeguard water and air quality. Overall, protection of the ecosystem and the provision of recreational opportunities are the primary goals of these amalgamated lands. The combined outcome of these intertwining projects is seen in the large wooded areas comprising the view shed, the protected watersheds contributing to the health of the ecosystem, and the preserved habitat for threatened or sensitive species, including the grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and cutthroat trout. Additionally, these acquisitions enhance recreational access and opportunities across larger areas of public land including into the nearby Scapegoat Wilderness Area.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, December 31, 2013.

The Blackfoot Community Project, which was a partnership between the Blackfoot Challenge and The Nature Conservancy of Montana, protected over 89,000 acres of timberland in 2003.<sup>109</sup> This project includes four Forest Service acquisitions that protected approximately 21,600 acres with the help of \$18.8 million in LWCF funding.<sup>110</sup> These acquisitions were adjacent to National Forest land within the Blackfoot River Watershed and are visible along the Blackfoot River corridor from Clearwater Junction east past the town of Lincoln.

The Montana Legacy Project, led by The Nature Conservancy, protected over 310,000 acres in the watershed. The project area encompasses a large region, extending north into the Swan Valley, south along Missoula, and west along the Clark Fork Watershed. In addition to one donation to the Forest Service in 2010, these acquisitions have protected approximately 129,000 acres with the help of \$21.1 million in LWCF; roughly 82,500 of these acres are located in the Lolo National Forest (LNF).<sup>111</sup> The fourth phase of this project is expected to be completed in 2014. The recently protected 25,000-acre Marshall Creek Wildlife Management Area (MCWMA) provides an example of LWCF's ability to stimulate other large-scale conservation impacts in the Blackfoot as part of the Montana Legacy Project. In 2011, this important tract of land was conserved with the help of \$5.9 million in Forest Legacy Program funding and over \$12 million in other sources.<sup>112</sup> MCWMA is located to the northwest of Seeley Lake in Missoula County and in close proximity to recent LWCF investments that protected timberland as part of the Blackfoot Community Project.

The main impetus for both of these initiatives flows from the goals of keeping ecosystems intact, providing recreational opportunities, maintaining the working landscape, and coordinating landscape-level land conservation and stewardship. Both projects received widespread support because of the community's agreement on the benefits the lands would have in managing access to working lands and protecting its natural resource-based economy. In this region, there are long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts provided by the extensive network of working lands. The fragmentation of this landscape would lead to a loss of productivity and livelihoods.<sup>113</sup>

## Maintaining working landscapes

Agriculture is the largest industry in Montana. In 2010, agriculture generated \$2.6 billion in income on 29,400 farms and ranches. Together, wheat and beef account for about 75 percent of the state's agricultural receipts.<sup>114</sup> In 2007, the value of cattle and calves sales in Montana totaled \$1.37 billion, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation. In terms of inventory, Montana had the 11<sup>th</sup> highest number of cattle and calves in the U.S. in 2007, with 2.59 million. Furthermore, over half of all principal farm operators in the state report farming as their primary occupation and the average net cash farm income per farm is approximately \$28,000.<sup>115</sup>

Ranching is an important component of Montana's economy, especially in northwestern Montana and in the Blackfoot River Watershed. Approximately 20 percent of Montana's farms and ranches are located in its northwest region and in 2010 these farms and ranches generated \$117 million in livestock and

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109 Gary Burnett, "Community-Based Approach to Conservation for the 21st Century" (In *Conservation and the Environment: Conservative Values, New Solutions*, Conservation Leadership Council, P. Lynn Scarlett (ed.), January 2013).

110 Personal Communication with Greg Lambert, The Nature Conservancy, December 4, 2013 and December 9, 2013; Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, December 31, 2013.

111 Personal Communication with Greg Lambert, The Nature Conservancy, December 3, 2013; Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, December 31, 2013.

112 Personal Communication with Jay Kolbe, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, November 4, 2013.

113 Personal Communication with Gary Burnett, Blackfoot Challenge, November 18, 2013.

114 Montana Department of Agriculture, "Ag Facts" (accessed January 21, 2014, <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Consumer/AgFacts/>).

115 U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2011 *State Agricultural Overview: Montana*.



products receipts.<sup>116</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service, there are 675 farms, 971,000 acres of farmland (representing 43.9 percent of total land area), and 50,000 head of cattle in Lewis and Clark County.<sup>117</sup> In Missoula County there are 699 farms, 282,000 acres of farmland (representing 17 percent of total land area), and 8,100 head of cattle.<sup>118</sup> In Powell County there are 273 farms, 670,000 acres of farmland (representing 45 percent of total land area) and 45,000 head of cattle.<sup>119</sup> These statistics all demonstrate the importance of farming, and cattle production in particular, to these local economies.

Within the Blackfoot River Watershed, the Blackfoot Challenge works to find solutions to ranching challenges in the region with a group of 35 to 40 ranches.<sup>120</sup> Successful ranching in the region depends on an intact working landscape. As such, preserving the rural way of life is a priority for ranchers. LWCF investments are part of the strategy to ensure that the environment remains supportive of such industries.

David Mannix, of Mannix Brothers Ranch in Helmville, says "there is no question that Forest Service lands help our ranch." Their ranching operation supports his family, his two brothers' families, and enables them to employ a ranch hand. Ranching requires large areas of land; however, development potential increases the value of lands beyond what ranchers can afford. The Mannix Brothers Ranch depends on access to public lands for grazing. The Mannix family is committed to helping conserve the larger working landscape that includes public and private owners. The ranch has sold two conservation easements on its property, which allowed them to expand the capacity and integrity of the ranch. "When you're able to keep the landscape intact, you're able to support healthy wildlife and agricultural populations that you can manage. The tools for managing these populations go away when [these lands] develop."<sup>121</sup> The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and LWCF fund conservation easements on private ranches in the Blackfoot Valley and Rocky Mountain Front that provide roughly 300,000 acres of additional protection of the critical lower elevation areas, a necessary part of the larger conservation of the Crown ecosystem.

The forest products industry is another component of the working landscape in Montana as well as the areas in and around the Blackfoot River Watershed and LNF. The Montana Wood Products Association's membership includes a diverse group of companies and individuals involved in all facets of Montana's wood products industry. This includes sawmills, manufacturers of plywood, particle board, fiberboard, pulp and paper, posts and poles, log homes, as well as timberland owners and managers and logging contractors. This industry produces value-added products through manufacturing and provides thousands of direct jobs for Montana residents.<sup>122</sup>

During 2012, the forest industry in Montana employed 6,650 workers earning \$295 million.<sup>123</sup> In the same year, the value of Montana's primary wood and paper products sales was estimated to be \$580

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116 Montana Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service, *Montana: 2012 Agricultural Statistics* (ISSN: 1095-7278, volume XLIX, October 2012). This report defines the northwest region to include Deer Lodge, Flathead, Granite, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Powell, Ravalli, and Sanders Counties.

117 U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "Lewis & Clark County, Montana" (accessed January 21, 2014, [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12049.HTM](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12049.HTM)).

118 U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "Missoula County, Montana" (accessed January 21, 2014, [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12063.HTM](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12063.HTM)).

119 U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "Powell County, Montana" (accessed January 21, 2014, [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12077.HTM](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/Publications/county/profiles/2012/C12077.HTM)).

120 Personal Communication with Gary Burnett, Blackfoot Challenge, November 8, 2013; Rob Chaney, "Up to 13 Wolf Packs Roaming Blackfoot River Watershed" (*Missoulian*, November 1, 2013).

121 Personal Communication with David Mannix, Mannix Brothers Ranch, December 20, 2013.

122 Montana Wood Products Association, "About the Montana Wood Products Association" (accessed December 2, 2013, <http://www.montanaforests.com/aboutus/>).

123 Todd A Morgan, Charles E Keegan III, Steven W. Hayes, Colin B. Sorenson, *Forest Products Outlook: Montana's Forest Products Industry* (2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/forest/Outlook/forestproducts2013.pdf>). This report defines the forest industry to include private sector foresters and loggers, primary and secondary wood product manufacturers, and forestry support activities.

million and the sales value of Montana's secondary wood products was approximately \$300 million.<sup>124</sup> An estimated 351 million board feet of timber were harvested statewide, about 24 percent of which was harvested from Montana's National Forests. In general, Montana mills rely on National Forest land for a quarter to a third of their timber inputs.<sup>125</sup> LNF is located in the western region of the state. It has 1.26 million acres of suitable timberland and productive potentials of 80ft<sup>3</sup>/acre/year.<sup>126</sup> Five counties in Montana contain non-reserved timberland within LNF: Granite, Mineral, Missoula, Powell, and Sanders. Twenty-three percent of the total harvest in these five counties was from LNF.<sup>127</sup>

The Blackfoot River Watershed is located in Lewis and Clark, Missoula, and Powell Counties.<sup>128</sup> Together, these counties have 45 forestry and logging firms with over 230 employees and an average payroll of \$8.2 million; additionally, there are 121 firms without employees that generate over \$6.9 million in forestry and logging receipts.<sup>129</sup> Public and private forestlands are essential to the forest products industry in this region, as approximately 20 percent of the Blackfoot River Watershed is owned by corporate timber companies and 49 percent is federally owned.<sup>130</sup> Ensuring that the Watershed's working landscape remains intact is critical to the health of the forest products industry and LWCF is an important component in making sure that happens.

The land conserved as part of the Montana Legacy and Blackfoot Community Projects was timberland formerly owned by Plum Creek Timber Company, one of the largest landowners in the nation. The land was protected because of its high conservation value related to wildlife habitat, public recreation, and sustainable forestry. Jerry Sorensen, Senior Director of Land Asset Management for Plum Creek, says that the company "supports LWCF funding and sees it as a great tool for the public to acquire land that they see as important for conservation and outdoor recreation."<sup>131</sup> A condition on the Montana Legacy Project allows Plum Creek to harvest a certain amount of timber from the land for 10 to 15 years.<sup>132</sup> This will help continue to support some of Plum Creek's 750 Montana employees in the short-term.<sup>133</sup> Additionally, the Forest Service has also worked with the Blackfoot Challenge and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to ensure forest-related economic opportunities extend into the future. For example, they formed the Biomass Working Group in 2009 as part of an effort to encourage small wood heating facilities that will use excess woody biomass from fuel reduction projects.<sup>134</sup>

## Strengthening opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism

Land conservation efforts in Montana and LNF have focused on biodiversity to support working lands and the growing tourism and outdoor recreation industry. In Montana, outdoor recreation generates \$5.8 billion in consumer spending, 64,000 direct Montana jobs, \$1.5 billion in wages and salaries, and \$403

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124 Todd A Morgan, Charles E Keegan III, Steven W. Hayes, Colin B. Sorenson, *Forest Products Outlook: Montana's Forest Products Industry* (2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.bber.unt.edu/pubs/forest/Outlook/forestproducts2013.pdf>).

125 Ibid.

126 Property and Environment Research Center, "Turning a Profit on Public Forests (Full)" (accessed December 3, 2013, <http://perc.org/articles/turning-profit-public-forests-full>).

127 Chelsea P McIver, Colin B Sorenson, Charles E Keegan, Todd A Morgan, *Capacity and Capability of Mills in the Lolo National Forest Timber-Processing Area* (Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, August 7, 2012).

128 Blackfoot Challenge, "Blackfoot Watershed" (accessed December 3, 2013, [http://digitool.library.colostate.edu//eXlibris/dtl/d3\\_1/apache\\_media/L2V4bGlicmlzL2R0bC9kM18xL2FwYWNoZV9tZWRRpYS83NDQwNQ==.pdf](http://digitool.library.colostate.edu//eXlibris/dtl/d3_1/apache_media/L2V4bGlicmlzL2R0bC9kM18xL2FwYWNoZV9tZWRRpYS83NDQwNQ==.pdf)).

129 U.S. Census Bureau, "2011 Nonemployer Statistics" (<http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/nonemployer/nondetl.pl>); U.S. Census Bureau, "2011 County Business Patterns (NAICS)" (<http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/cbpnaic/cbpdetl.pl>).

130 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Blackfoot River Watershed" (accessed December 3, 2013, <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pfw/montana/mt5d.htm>).

131 Personal Communication with Jerry Sorenson, Plum Creek Timber Company, January 10, 2014.

132 Dan Testa, "Baucus, Plum Creek, Conservation Groups Announce Massive Land Deal: Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Lands [sic] to Buy 320,000 Acres" (*Flathead Beacon*, June 30, 2008).

133 Plum Creek Timber Company, "Plum Creek Montana" (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.plumcreek.com/Timberland/nbsByState/Montana/tabid/244/Default.aspx>).

134 Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, "Montana Biomass Working Group" (accessed January 2, 2014, <http://dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/assistance/biomass/workinggroup.asp>).

million in state and local tax revenue.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, hunting provides economic benefits. In 2011, there were 150,000 hunters who spent 2.5 million days hunting and generated \$634 million in retail sales. This hunting supported 11,100 jobs, \$281 million in salaries and wages, \$64.8 million in state and local taxes and \$71.2 million in federal taxes.<sup>136</sup>

Montana ranks fifth in the nation in per capita tourist spending. The nonresident travel industry comprises 3.9 percent of the state's total employment, making it the seventh largest employer. In a recent survey, the most frequent attractions for vacationers in Montana included mountains and forests, national parks, and open spaces or uncrowded areas. The most popular activities were scenic driving and wildlife watching.<sup>137</sup>

When tourists visit Montana they spend money in local businesses and support the local economy. For example, 2012 nonresident visitor expenditures in Montana totaled \$3.27 billion. This local spending directly supported \$2.64 billion of economic activity and supported an additional \$1.59 billion of economic activity indirectly. Additionally, these nonresident visitor expenditures supported 29,800 jobs with an associated \$690 million in compensation and generated \$115 million in proprietor income.<sup>138</sup> Montana's tourism industry has grown since 2009 when travel expenditures by nonresident visitors totaled \$2.27 billion. At that time, Montana was visited by approximately 10 million individual nonresident travelers, with 4.1 million nonresident travel groups.<sup>139</sup>

Tourism is important in western Montana and the Blackfoot River Watershed as well. For example, in Missoula County the average annual nonresident visitor spending of \$259 million directly supports \$167 million of economic activity in the region. The total contribution of nonresident spending to the regional economy is \$280 million, which generates \$22.2 million in state and local taxes.<sup>140</sup>

The National Forest draws visitors and outdoor recreationalists to this region of the state. The Forest Service estimated that there were 1.27 million visits to LNF in 2011. These visitors spend an average of \$67 per visitor party.<sup>141</sup> These visitors are attracted to the areas because of its numerous trails and areas of interest, including Blue Mountain Nature Trail, Cabin City Interpretive Trail, Grand Menard Discovery Trail, Kreis Pond Mountain Bike Trails, Lewis and Clark Historic Trail, Ninemile Remount Depot and Ranger Station, Pattee Canyon Recreation Area, Quartz Flat Interpretive Trail, Rattlesnake National Recreation Area, and Seeley Lake Recreation Area. Recreational opportunities include camping, cycling, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, nature viewing, OHV riding, outdoor learning, picnicking, scenic driving, and water sports.<sup>142</sup>

By providing scenic lands and recreational access to land and water resources, the Forest Service supports the local economy. Many visitors are attracted to Montana and the Blackfoot River Watershed because of the natural resources that they can experience. LWCF acquired lands provide an abundance of recreation opportunities which generate tourism and recreation dollars for local communities and support jobs

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135 Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Montana* (accessed March 24, 2014,

<http://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/economy.html>).Based on 2010-2011 data

136 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

137 Kara Grau, *The Economic Review of the Travel Industry in Montana* (Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana, July 2010).

138 Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana, *2012 Montana Nonresident Traveler Expenditures and Economic Contribution*;

Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana, "Nonresident Visitor Expenditures" (accessed December 3, 2013,

[http://www.tourismresearchmt.org/component/option,com\\_traveltrends/Itemid,24/](http://www.tourismresearchmt.org/component/option,com_traveltrends/Itemid,24/)).

139 Kara Grau, *The Economic Review of the Travel Industry in Montana* (Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana, July 2010).

140 Kara Grau, *Economic Contribution of Nonresident Travel Spending in Montana Travel Regions and Counties* (Institute for Tourism and Recreation

Research, University of Montana, Research Report 2013-9, May 2013). These are statistics for a two year average from 2011 and 2012.

141 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed January 16, 2014,

<http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A01016.aspx/Round3>).

142 U.S. Forest Service, "Recreation" (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/lolo/recreation>).

statewide. Most of these jobs are in rural communities, where restaurants, motels, gas stations and convenience stores rely on outdoor recreation visitors. In addition, retailers that sell hunting and fishing licenses experience additional retail sales when customers visit to purchase their licenses.

Juanita Vero, owner of E Bar L Ranch in Greenough, says that their “guests come to Montana in part because they value visiting one of the last intact ecoregions on the planet. They may never see a grizzly bear or wolverine or bull trout, but knowing that these creatures simply exist is important to our visitors’ experience. Healthy, functioning Forest Service lands are an important component to the ‘state of mind’ that is Montana.”<sup>143</sup>

Lands supported by the LWCF program consolidate ownership in areas of concentrated public use and increase the effectiveness of recreational planning, road and trail maintenance, and right-of-way acquisition. For example, LWCF acquisitions that were part of the Blackfoot Community Project strengthen this area’s recreation opportunities. In the first phase of the project in which 11,300 acres became part of LNF, the Forest Service acquired the Bear Creek trailhead and a portion of a trail that leads into the Scapegoat Wilderness. In the second phase of the project, the Forest Service acquired 9,100 acres, a portion of which contain old logging roads that are used for horseback riding. Rich Ranch and Double Arrow Outfitters, private landowners adjacent to this land, use the area for guided horseback rides. Additionally, roads on the property are used by snowmobilers in the winter. The lands protected as part of this phase are used extensively by outfitters, horseback riders, skiers, and hikers. The third phase of this project included 1,200 acres of land in the Blackfoot drainage. These properties unite State of Montana and National Forest land in this area for public recreation access and help to make up a larger, contiguous block of land for public recreation and enjoyment.<sup>144</sup>

Montana Legacy Project LWCF projects contribute to the connectivity of the extensive trail system in this region and enhance the quality of the view shed. The first phase of the project acquired land in Lolo Creek along the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trails. The second phase protected a 2,700-acre section of Pattee Canyon Recreation Area, which contains a network of roads that are used heavily by bikers, runners, skiers, and hunters. This land provides a continuous block of public land along with Montana University System’s lands. In the third phase of the project, acquisitions provided public riverfront access to the Blackfoot River. Additionally, the 2013 acquisition of land in Marshall Canyon, provides trails that recreationalist can use to connect to other areas including the nearby Rattlesnake National Recreation Area and Wilderness. This area attracts mountain bikers and hikers and boasts views of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers and surrounding forestland.<sup>145</sup> Additionally these acquisitions, and those that are part of the Blackfoot Community Project, provide opportunities for wildlife watching as they protect important habitat for many animals, including bear, wolf, lynx, and elk.<sup>146</sup>

## Attracting business development and supporting local businesses

Montana’s natural resources and outdoor opportunities not only attract visitors; they attract and retain residents and businesses as well. A coalition of companies across the state have joined forces to create Business for Montana’s Outdoors, which believes that standing up for Montana’s outdoor places also protects Montana’s businesses and economy. The outdoors is what gives many businesses a sharp competitive edge. A recent poll by Public Opinion Strategies surveyed 200 business owners and top-level employees in every county in Montana and found 70 percent of business owners said “the Montana

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143 Personal Communication with Juanita Vero, E Bar L Ranch, January 5, 2014.

144 Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, January 3, 2014.

145 Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, December 19, 2013.

146 Personal Communication with Alayna DuPont, U.S. Forest Service, December 31, 2013.

outdoor lifestyle” was a factor in deciding to locate or grow their business in Montana. The second highest factor for businesses was the “presence of public lands like National Forests, national parks and wildlife refuges, and access to rivers and trails.” They also found that 89 percent of the surveyed Montana business owners said national parks, forests, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Montana’s economy.<sup>147</sup>

Several businesses located in Missoula County and the Blackfoot River Watershed depend on outdoor recreation. These businesses, including guest ranches, outfitters, and sporting goods stores, depend on land with access for outdoor recreation, hunting, and fishing. For example, Rich’s Montana Guest Ranch is located in Seeley Lake, Montana in close proximity to both the Montana Legacy Project and Blackfoot Community Project areas. This second-generation family business leads horseback, fishing, and hunting trips in LNF and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.<sup>148</sup> WTR Outfitters is another business that has a permit on LNF and recognizes the importance of conservation to protecting the livelihoods of its owners and staff. WTR Outfitters is an official member of Trout Unlimited’s Outfitters, Guides and Business Members Program and recognizes the Forest Service as one of its partners.<sup>149</sup>

## The need for LWCF

LWCF investments by the Forest Service have strengthened the local economy in this region of Montana by preserving the forested landscape on which many of its critical industries depend. For example, conservation work in the Blackfoot River Watershed, including the Montana Legacy and Blackfoot Community Projects, supports the forest products industry and ranching way of life. With its ability to leverage a diverse array of conservation partners and funding sources, LWCF monies are helping to ensure the working landscape remains intact for generations to come. It also boosts the outdoor recreation and tourism based economy by ensuring access to land and water for recreational and scenic purposes that will continue to draw visitors long into the future.

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147 Marne Hayes and Shannon Hughes, “Public Lands Help Businesses Grow” (*Missoulian*, October 4, 2013, accessed October 9, 2013, [http://missoulian.com/news/opinion/columnists/public-lands-help-businesses-grow/article\\_feeef32-2cfb-11e3-a81b-0019bb2963f4.html](http://missoulian.com/news/opinion/columnists/public-lands-help-businesses-grow/article_feeef32-2cfb-11e3-a81b-0019bb2963f4.html)).

148 Rich’s Montana Guest Ranch and Outdoor Adventures, “Premier Big Game Hunts” (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://richranch.com/montana-hunting-trips.php>).

149 Buck Creek Guide Service, “Buck Creek Guide Service” (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.buckcreekguideservice.com/>); WTR Outfitters, “WTR Outfitters” (accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.wtroutfitters.com/index.php>).



# Providing recreational opportunities, ensuring quality of life, and attracting businesses in Washington and Oregon

## Conservation in Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

Washington and Oregon are rich with valuable land resources. The conservation of these resources has garnered support from conservation agencies and organizations because of their importance in the local economy. The Forest Service has worked to protect land in National Forests throughout both states and has made several investments through LWCF. Between 1998 and 2011, \$47.9 million in LWCF funds were used to protect 15,600 acres in Washington. During the same time period, 4,630 acres were protected in Oregon with \$9.82 million in LWCF funding.<sup>150</sup>

Congress, recognizing its world class significance, established the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) in 1986. The Columbia River Gorge is the only sea level pass through the Cascade Mountain Range, and is made up of dramatic cliffs towering up to 4,000 feet above the river, an exceptional combination of spectacular vistas, unsurpassed recreation opportunities, multicultural history, as well as an abundance of natural resources, including pristine waterfalls, profuse wildflowers, anadromous fisheries, and unique geologic formations. Over 70 waterfalls tumble from the glaciers and snowfields of Mount Hood, including Multnomah Falls, the second highest year-round waterfall in the United States and a top tourist destination in the State of Oregon. Complex geology and climatic conditions combine to create unique plant communities with many rare and endangered species, with some only found in the Gorge.

The proximity of the Gorge to large urban centers including the Portland metro area, as well as its natural beauty and exceptional recreation opportunities—including a huge selection for hiking, mountain biking, camping, boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, birding, photography, picnicking, white water rafting, world-class windsurfing, and kite boarding—attract millions of visitors each year.

The Scenic Area encompasses portions of six counties located in both Oregon and Washington. At its creation, only 42,000 acres of the total 292,500 acreage of the Scenic Area were managed by the Forest Service. Acquisitions through LWCF funding have enabled the purchase of roughly 19,400 additional acres, and the Forest Service now manages approximately 81,500 acres within the CRGNSA. Over the history of the CRGNSA, some 351 individual land acquisitions have been completed, resulting in significant ownership consolidation within the National Forest System. This consolidation has allowed for landscape level projects including watershed improvement, wetland restoration, habitat improvements, improved public access, and the creation of popular trail systems amongst stunning natural beauty.

## Outdoor recreation and tourism in Washington and Oregon

Opportunities for outdoor recreation attract visitors and residents to Washington and Oregon. For example, at least 63 percent of Washington residents participate in outdoor recreation each year.<sup>151</sup> In Washington, outdoor recreation generates \$22.5 billion in consumer spending and \$1.6 billion in state

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150 The Trust for Public Land, *Conservation Almanac* ([www.conservationalmanc.org](http://www.conservationalmanc.org)).

151 Outdoor Industry Foundation, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Washington*; Outdoor Industry Foundation, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Oregon*. Statistics in report are based on surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012.

and local tax revenues annually. This spending supports 227,000 direct jobs that provide \$7.1 billion in wages and salaries.<sup>152</sup> In fact, Washington ranks sixth in the nation for outdoor industry employment.<sup>153</sup>

In Oregon, 68 percent of residents participate in outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation in Oregon generates \$12.8 billion in consumer spending and \$955 million in state and local tax revenues annually. This spending supports 141,000 direct jobs that provide \$4.0 billion in wages and salaries.<sup>154</sup>

Several businesses based in Washington and Oregon are built upon the outdoor recreation industry. For example, Travis Campbell is the President and CEO of Far Bank Enterprises, the parent company of Sage Manufacturing, Redington Tackle and Apparel, and RIO Products, based in Bainbridge Island, Washington. Far Bank engages in the manufacturing and sale of fly fishing equipment and apparel. He articulated that "Far Bank understands that our businesses depend on clean water and healthy fisheries. Our priorities include preserving high quality angling opportunities and anglers' subsequent demand for high performance fly fishing equipment. The Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Service are vital to helping us reach these goals."<sup>155</sup>

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching are important contributors Washington and Oregon's economies. For example, there were 282,000 hunters in Washington in 2011. This hunting supported 5,610 jobs and generated \$370 million in retail sales, \$211 million in salaries and wages, \$39.7 million in state and local taxes and \$50.6 million in federal taxes. Additionally, over \$1.7 billion is spent annually in Washington on wildlife watching activities. Wildlife watching activities support more than 21,000 jobs, making it second only to Boeing and 5.2 times larger than Microsoft's employment in Washington. Wildlife watching yields \$427 million in job income and generates \$56.9 million in state and \$67.4 million in federal tax revenues each year. Wildlife viewing opportunities occur primarily on public lands and have a significant positive impact on local economies in small towns and rural areas.<sup>156</sup>

In Oregon, 196,000 hunters participated in 2011. Hunting supported 3,730 jobs that provide \$132 million in salaries and wages. Additionally, hunters generated \$248 million in retail sales and \$59 million in state, local, and federal taxes.<sup>157</sup> In Oregon, approximately 1.7 million people participated in wildlife viewing in 2008. These visits generated 13.7 million wildlife viewing trips that generated \$462 million in travel-related expenditures, \$33.2 million in local recreation expenditures, and \$528 million in equipment expenditures.<sup>158</sup>

## Outdoor recreation and tourism in CRGNSA<sup>159</sup>

There are many opportunities to enjoy the scenic beauty of CRGNSA and participate in outdoor recreation activities, including bicycling, boating (non-motorized) camping, fishing, hiking, horse riding and camping, nature viewing, outdoor learning, picnicking, scenic driving, and swimming.<sup>160</sup> Within CRGNSA there are four developed campgrounds, seven day use sites, and 13 state parks. Additionally, visitors are drawn to the area's archaeological sites and historic landmarks, including Broughton Flume, Eagle Creek Recreation Area, and Horsethief State Park pictographs and petroglyphs. The area also

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152 Outdoor Industry Foundation, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Washington*. Statistics in report are based on surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012.

153 Chris Thomas, "It's Booming: New Stats on WA's Outdoor Recreation Economy" (*Public News Service*, February 15, 2013).

154 Outdoor Industry Foundation, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Oregon*. Statistics in report are based on surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012.

155 Personal Communication with Travis Campbell, Far Bank Enterprises, January 30, 2014.

156 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Wildlife Viewing" (accessed August 27, 2013, <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/tourism/>).

157 Southwick Associates, *Hunting in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* (Produced for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2012).

158 Dean Runyan Associates, *Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Viewings and Shellfishing in Oregon: 2008 State and County Expenditure Estimates* (May 2009).

159 Personal Communications with Pam Campbell, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, March 5, 2014 to March 11, 2014).

160 U.S. Forest Service, "Recreation" (accessed March 6, 2014, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/crgnsa/recreation>).

includes 57 Forest Service trails (totaling 218 miles) and two national trails: the Pacific Crest Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.<sup>161</sup>

CRGNSA attracts visitors to the area and helps support the tourism economy. The area has received a lot of media attention and is well known in the travel world. Recent examples include:

- Travel Oregon recently launched an advertising campaign called “The Seven Wonders of Oregon,” which includes the Columbia River Gorge.<sup>162</sup>
- Timberline Adventures’ Columbia River Gorge Hiking Tour in Oregon was featured in a “Best Tours in North America 2013” article in National Geographic’s Traveler magazine, where it was recognized as one of the top 50 tours of a lifetime.<sup>163</sup>
- The New York Times listed White Salmon River in its list of 46 places to go in 2013, citing the area as a “white-water paddler’s dream come true.”<sup>164</sup>
- The August/September 2013 issue of National Geographic Traveler included the historic Columbia River Highway in its list of amazing road trips.<sup>165</sup>
- In 2009 the Columbia River Gorge region of Oregon and Washington was the 6<sup>th</sup> best-rated place by National Geographic Traveler magazine.<sup>166</sup>

This media helps draw tourists who visit CRGNSA and contribute to the local economy. The Forest Service estimated that in 2011 there were 1.37 million visits to CRGNSA, with 30.1 percent of visits being made on a trip with an overnight stay away from home.<sup>167</sup> Estimated average total trip spending per visitor party was \$347.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, Casey Roeder, Executive Director of the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce says “tourism is an important economic driver for Skamania County and the entire Columbia River Gorge. Land and Water Conservation Fund projects have helped increase, enhance, and encourage the visitor experience and for that we are very appreciative.”<sup>169</sup> Acquisitions by the Forest Service are critical to ensuring lands and trails are available to outdoor recreationalists, who spend money in the local economy.

## Increasing the quality and quantity of outdoor recreation opportunities in CRGNSA<sup>170</sup>

LWCF land acquisitions in CRGNSA protect valuable recreational resources that attract visitors to the region. Many of the acquisitions that have occurred in the last few decades have made great contributions to the recreational opportunities available within the scenic area. In some cases, these acquisitions have provided access in areas that were previously inaccessible. In other cases, the acquisitions have enabled the Forest Service to provide higher-quality recreational opportunities. In many of the examples described below, the Forest Service has invested resources in creating and maintaining trail systems and other recreational infrastructure that were highly demanded by visitors to these conservation lands.

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161 U.S. Forest Service, “Fun Facts About the CRGNSA” (accessed March 6, 2014, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/crgnsa/home/?cid=STELPRDB5385766>).

162 Travel Oregon, “The Columbia River Gorge” (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://traveloregon.com/cities-regions/columbia-river-gorge/>).

163 National Geographic, “Best Tours in North America 2013” (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/tours/north-america-tours-2013/>); OutdoorsNW, “Gorge Hiking Tour Lauded by National Geographic” (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://outdoorsnw.com/2014/national-geographic-honors-timberline-adventures/>).

164 The New York Times “The 46 Places to Go in 2013” (accessed March 11, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/01/10/travel/2013-places-to-go.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/01/10/travel/2013-places-to-go.html?_r=0)).

165 National Geographic, “Amazing Road Trips” (accessed March 11, 2014, [http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/road-trips/drives-photos-traveler/#/05-multnomah-falls-oregon\\_67259\\_600x450.jpg](http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/road-trips/drives-photos-traveler/#/05-multnomah-falls-oregon_67259_600x450.jpg)).

166 National Geographic, “133 Best Places Rated: The List, by Score” (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2009/11/destinations-rated/list-text>).

167 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed March 6, 2014, <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A06022.aspx/Round3>).

168 U.S. Forest Service, *Natural Resource Manager* (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, Version 2.1.2.37, accessed January 16, 2014, <http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/results/A06022.aspx/Round3>).

169 Casey Roeder, Skamania County (Washington) Chamber of Commerce, letter, March 10, 2014.

170 Personal Communications with Pam Campbell, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, March 5, 2014 to March 11, 2014).

The \$1.2 million Lauterbach acquisition in 1988 consisted of 1,910 acres and was one of the earliest and largest single land-acquisitions in the history of the CRGNSA. Located in Klickitat County, Washington, acquisition of this property formed the backbone for future land conservation efforts. The property is bisected by Catherine Creek and comprised of a diversity of priority habitats, sensitive cultural sites, and rare flora. The many different attributes, combined with favorable topography and a relatively dry climate, make it appealing to a wide variety of user groups. In 1998, a paved and universally-accessible trail was constructed on the southern portion of the parcel highlighting the sweeping views of the Columbia River, Mt. Hood, and remarkable wildflower displays. In 2011, the Forest Service formalized a system of trails that balance natural resource protection with extensive use by mountain bikers and hikers. Existing user-created trail systems were modified to remove them from sensitive areas and private land crossings and to make them more sustainable. A nearby trailhead was constructed in 2013 to accommodate the high level of use made by mountain bikers in the winter and spring months. Today the area enjoys substantial use by hikers due to the parcel's open vistas. Use is especially high in the spring when the area's spectacular wildflowers are on display.

The 1,380-acre Sandy River Delta project was completed in 1991 using \$2.76 million in LWCF funding. The parcel is located in Multnomah County, Oregon at the western boundary of the Scenic Area and is very close to large metropolitan areas such as the Portland and Vancouver. The Sandy River Delta experiences great levels of recreation use, the majority of which is by dog walkers. Besides dog walking, other substantial uses include hiking, angling, waterfowl hunting, horseback riding, water play along the beaches, and mountain biking. Under Forest Service management, a 100-vehicle parking area and restroom facility were constructed. A wildlife viewing blind, designed by Maya Lin, was also created by The Confluence Project, an arts non-profit working in the Columbia River Basin at the confluence of the Sandy and Columbia Rivers in honor of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The Forest Service trail from the parking area to the site is now one of the most popular trails at the Delta. Partnerships with local nonprofit organizations have led to increased scenic and recreational opportunities. For example, the multi-user aspect of this project has garnered support from Friends of the Sandy River Delta, Oregon Equestrian Trails, Confluence Project, Sandy River Basin Watershed Council, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership and other non-organized user groups. Jeff Schuh, President of Friends of the Sandy River Delta says "the Sandy River Delta is clearly a valuable recreational site and a model of cooperation between numerous volunteer organizations and the Forest Service. It's unknown what would have have [sic] become of the site as private land, but it is clear that the public ownership of the land together with the involvement of volunteer organizations and the restoration efforts underway, that the Sandy River Delta has clearly been worth the acquisition."<sup>171</sup> Courtney Yilk, Outreach and Grants Coordinator at the Confluence Project says "under ownership and management of the US Forest Service the Sandy River Delta has been evolving into a rich environmental, recreational, educational and cultural resource for communities in the Portland/Vancouver metro area and Columbia River Gorge communities."<sup>172</sup>

In 1994, the Forest Service purchased the 358-acre Starr Acquisition with \$870,000 in LWCF. The parcel has sweeping views up and down the Columbia River and is now one of CRGNSA's developed day use sites, which contains a parking area, restroom facilities, and a 0.7-mile paved interpretive trail (most of which is ADA accessible). The site, named the Balfour-Klickitat Day Use Site, has been designated a Forest Service Nature Watch site and a Washington Audubon birding trail, and is particularly well known for winter bald-eagle viewing. Interpretive programs for bird watchers, school children, and

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171 Jeff Schuh, Friends of the Sandy River Delta, letter, March 10, 2014.  
172 Letter from Courtney Yilk, Confluence Project, March 11, 2014.

others are frequently held on-site. The parcel's location adjacent to the Town of Lyle enhances recreation opportunities and scenic beauty for the residents of Lyle as well as for out-of-town visitors.

In 2001, the Forest Service acquired the Gross property using \$306,000 in LWCF funding. In the Act creating the CRGNSA, portions of the White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers were designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, but both rivers were surrounded exclusively by private land at the time of designation. Whitewater boating on the White Salmon River already existed, with many kayakers and rafters paying a private landowner to winch their boats down to the river while they walked down a steep trail to the launch site. This location was the only launch site available to the public and the steep trail and private winch system limited the safety and accessibility of the site. Upon federal acquisition, substantial site improvements were made to the site including the construction of a well-designed parking lot, restroom, and kiosk. The trail down to the river was also relocated to make it less steep and a method was established for easy self-transportation of river rafts and kayaks to the river. This launch site today remains the only public launch site on the Lower White Salmon Wild and Scenic River, and one heavily used by both private parties and river guides under permit by the Forest Service. For example, Wet Planet Whitewater is a whitewater rafting and kayaking guide service that has a special use permit for CRGNSA. They are located 15 minutes from Hood River and 75 minutes from Portland. Their website says "Wet Planet takes advantage of the crystal clear water and stunning scenery of the Pacific Northwest to offer whitewater rafting trips for all skill levels of rafters in the Columbia River Gorge."<sup>173</sup> The trail is also used as a general river access trail by the public.

The Cape Horn Trail is an approximately 7.7-mile loop. While it is one of the newest trails in the CRGNSA, it is quickly becoming one of the experiences most favored by hikers. For example, in January 2013, an estimated 800 hikers used the trail each week.<sup>174</sup> Teresa Robbins, President of Cape Horn Conservancy says "the trail brings regional, national, and international visitors to Skamania County, [Washington] and provides much needed economic benefits to local and gorge businesses."<sup>175</sup> The provision of this exquisite recreational resource for the local and international hiking communities led to a unique collaboration involving local residents, the Cape Horn Conservancy, Skamania County Commissioners, the U.S. Forest Service, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Washington Trails Association, Washington State Department of Transportation, and members of Washougal City Council. The business community and Chamber of Commerce are recognizing the economic asset that the trail is to Skamania County as it draws visitors who enjoy the trail and then go on to visit the nearby restaurants, brewpubs, gas stations, and retail stores.<sup>176</sup>

Acquisition of the Cleveland parcel, located at the top of a prominent Cape Horn ridge, made the creation of the trail possible. The top of Cape Horn was originally planned as a subdivision in the 1980s. A partnership of open space advocates, including the Forest Service, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, and The Trust for Public Land, worked together to prevent development on 15 of 16 total lots, transferring the ownership of 57 acres to the Forest Service with \$500,000 in LWCF. The remaining parcel encompassed one of the area's best viewpoints, but contained substantial infrastructure including a house, garage, outbuildings, and other structures. Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust purchased this parcel and worked to remove all buildings and naturalize the site. After the restoration was complete, the Forest Service acquired this parcel in 2008, with \$570,000 in LWCF funding. This partnership ensures the scenic and recreational values of this area remain for future generations.

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173 Wet Planet Whitewater "Wet Planet Whitewater" (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.wetplanetwhitewater.com/>).

174 Teresa Robbins, Cape Horn Conservancy, letter to Lynn Burditt, U.S. Forest Service, March 9, 2014.

175 Teresa Robbins, Cape Horn Conservancy, letter to Lynn Burditt, U.S. Forest Service, March 9, 2014.

176 Casey Roeder, Skamania County (Washington) Chamber of Commerce, letter, March 10, 2014.



Since its protection, a beautiful overlook was constructed on the site, made possible by \$135,000 in financial contributions from the Friends of the Columbia Gorge. Additionally, the Forest Service has connected the overlook to the Cape Horn Trail and the site is now one of the most picturesque overlooks in the Scenic Area. The site is used by the public for weddings, picnics, and sightseeing. The trail also engages significant volunteer stewardship. For example, in November 2013, a group of volunteers planted approximately 600 native trees and shrubs. The group included neighbors, students, conservationists, climbers, hikers, and retirees from many area communities including Portland, Oregon and Washougal, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and White Salmon, Washington. The effort was made possible through a National Forest Foundation Forest Stewardship Fund grant and matching funds were provided by Stevenson’s Skamania Lodge. These funds were generated through a special program in which guests can choose to contribute money to support National Forests. Skamania Lodge recognizes their longstanding partnership with the Forest Service and CRGNSA’s importance to attracting visitors to their lodge. Their website states that “Skamania Lodge was built in 1993, and was a true public-private partnership involving four primary parties: The Columbia River Gorge Commission, the U.S. Forest Service, Skamania County [Washington] and Salishan Lodge.” The site then goes on to explain that “Skamania Lodge is proud of its heritage and continued relationship with the U.S. Forest Service. Our lobby is host to a Forest Service Information Center that is a great partner in providing visitors to our area professional information about the Gorge and all of the recreation wonders that it has to offer.”<sup>177</sup> Future Forest Service plans include the creation of a universal access trail along the top of Cape Horn and a trailhead/day use area. These additions are expected to increase access and the number of visitors.



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<sup>177</sup> Skamania Lodge, “Skamania Adventures: Columbia River Gorge” (accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.skamania.com/columbia-river-gorge/>).

## Improving and ensuring the scenic assets in CRGNSA<sup>178</sup>

In addition to the valuable recreational opportunities that have been ensured for future generations with LWCF funding, the Forest Service has also protected several acquisitions that provide the essential scenic values that are critical to attracting visitors to the area.

In 2003, the Forest Service acquired seven parcels comprising 108 acres from Nancy Russell, founder of Friends of the Columbia Gorge. The properties were located in the Major Creek area of Klickitat County, Washington and were purchased using \$1.22 million in LWCF. The properties, adjacent to land acquired in the 1988 Lauterbach acquisition, have 180-degree close up, panoramic views of the Columbia River. The presence of Major Creek on the west boundary, with its rocky pools and small waterfall is an exception to the otherwise dry, open, flat property with its sparse vegetation of oak and pine. The property is both highly scenic and highly visible. Its contribution to the natural look of the Scenic Area is exemplary.

The 17-acre Harvey parcel was purchased by the Forest Service in 2003 for \$235,000. The general area surrounding the Harvey parcel is known as the Collins Point Slide Area. It is a geologically unstable area of active but slow land movement that is credited with creation of the multitude of ponds that exist in the area and provide habitat for the western pond turtle, which is listed as an endangered species by the State of Washington. The Dog Mountain trail and trailhead, located to the east of the Harvey Parcel, receive heavy visitor usage especially in the spring when the hillsides are covered with wildflowers. Portions of the trail overlook the Collins Point Slide Area, which is also considered an important scenic resource.

The Major Creek acquisition, which occurred in two phases, was one of the most significant acquisitions in the history of CRGNSA. The Major Creek drainage represents a vitally important wildlife corridor between the Columbia River and the uplands above the Gorge Walls. The entire Major Creek drainage was designated Special Management Area (SMA) with a predominant land use designation of Open Space, giving it the highest level of protection in the Scenic Area. It is a wild, undeveloped area of steep canyons, old growth trees, creeks and springs with a diversity of habitats and an abundance of wildlife. In 2009, the Forest Service acquired 1,800 acres for \$1.64 million in LWCF. In 2012, it purchased 159 acres using \$247,000 in LWCF. This acquisition involved a partnership between a private landowner, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and The Trust for Public Land. The acquisition helped consolidate ownership in that area and also contributed to the scenic quality of CRGNSA.

### The need for LWCF

These projects provide great examples of how LWCF projects add value to the local economy in this region of Washington and Oregon. The acquisition of lands considered the most environmentally and visually sensitive by the Forest Service has contributed tremendously to conserving the scenic wonders of the Gorge, while also allowing for present and future recreation opportunities. By adding such important lands to CRGNSA, the Forest Service is bolstering the outdoor recreation and tourism industries and maintaining the attractiveness and scenic beauty that draws so many residents and visitors to the area. Continued LWCF support for acquisitions in this region will help ensure the public will enjoy attractive scenery and have high-quality opportunities to recreate.

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<sup>178</sup> Personal Communications with Pam Campbell, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, March 5, 2014 to March 11, 2014).

## A continuing need for LWCF program support

The six case studies presented above demonstrate the benefits of LWCF acquisitions by the Forest Service. While many, if not all, of these projects help lower management costs and provide efficiencies for the Forest Service, the real benefit of these investments are realized in the local communities. For example:

- In California, LWCF contributions are attracting considerable investments from state, local, and private entities. Tahoe and Eldorado National Forest acquisitions in the Sierra Checkerboard have garnered wide-ranging community support, due in large part to how LWCF appropriations are being used to protect lands that are essential to the local recreation and tourism economy.
- In New Hampshire, these investments are facilitating the maintenance of outdoor recreation opportunities and ensuring long-term access to key destinations in the White Mountain National Forest. Furthermore, these acquisitions are helping to safeguard the forest products industry and have been used to leverage nonfederal sources of funding to create a locally-managed community forest.
- In South Dakota, recent LWCF funding has added high conservation value to the Black Hills National Forest. These contributions have led to the protection of a sizable ranch that will provide high-quality wildlife habitat, hunting and other recreational opportunities. Additionally, these lands will aid efforts to manage the local elk herd that travels on federal, state, local, and private lands in the area.
- In Georgia, the LWCF program has provided necessary support for water quality, trout habitat, and the tourism industry in Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. Current and ongoing projects have mitigated threats from imposing residential development by protecting land around some of the state's most important rivers, which supply drinking water to northern Georgia and the metropolitan Atlanta area. Moreover, these acquisitions have provided opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism-based businesses in an area with limited public access to critical water resources.
- In Montana, conservation efforts in the Blackfoot River Watershed have been fueled by contributions from LWCF in Lolo National Forest. Numerous entities are engaged in efforts to maintain the forest products and ranching industries and the intact working landscape on which they depend. Additionally, Montana's scenery attracts visitors and tourist spending to the area, which supports many local businesses.
- In Washington and Oregon, LWCF investments by the Forest Service are essential to providing high quality scenery and accessible recreational opportunities. Outdoor recreation is a large industry in Washington and Oregon and its natural resources draw visitors to the area each year. Several businesses have been established to take advantage of the opportunities for outdoor recreation in the state and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in particular.

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