

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Major Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

On behalf of our millions of members, we greatly appreciate your leadership to conserve our nation's natural resources and expand outdoor recreational opportunities.

We are exceptionally supportive of the Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422) led by Senators Gardner, Manchin, Daines, Heinrich, and 50 other bipartisan cosponsors. This strongly bipartisan package represents the largest single direct investment in conservation since the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps 80 years ago. We are heartened that natural resource conservation and our public lands are uniting both parties and receiving the support of the president.

We enthusiastically support the Great American Outdoors Act's inclusion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act (S. 1081 by Senators Manchin and Gardner). The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has helped conserve some of the most important lands in our nation for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. We are grateful for your collective leadership in securing permanent authorization for the program earlier last year through the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (S.47), which also included the Making Public Lands Public provision that requires that a dedicated portion of the funds be used to expand opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other sporting activities. We urge the Senate to finish the job by securing permanent, dedicated full funding for LWCF that will ensure this access to our shared public lands and conserve important wildlife habitat.

We also wholeheartedly support the Great American Outdoors Act's inclusion of the Restore Our Parks Act (S.500 by Senators Portman and Warner), especially with the critically important addition of support for the National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, Bureau of Land Management lands, and the Bureau of Indian Education schools. Repairing the crumbling roads, trails, stands, blinds, piers, campsites, parking lots, boat ramps, and other recreational infrastructure is essential to the millions of Americans who hunt, fish, hike, camp, climb, and otherwise enjoy our public lands. Since the vast majority of America's sportsmen and sportswomen hunt and fish on National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, and BLM lands (which collectively host more than 261 million visitors per year), the inclusion of the major land management agencies demonstrates the Senate's strong support for the tens of millions of American sportsmen and sportswomen who treasure our public lands.

Enacting the Great American Outdoors Act will be among the greatest conservation victories in our lifetime. It will expand outdoor recreational opportunities for millions of hunters and anglers, while spurring local economic development in communities across the country. We urge you to pass this legislation, as proposed without amendments, as expeditiously as possible. Thank you for all that you do for America's outdoor heritage.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl Association
Camp Fire Club of America
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force

Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion – The Hunter’s Institute
Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Pope and Young Club
Professional Guides and Outfitters of America
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen’s Alliance
Texas Wildlife Association
The Conservation Fund
The National Wildlife Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi