

Making Public Lands Public



Enhancing Hunting, Fishing & Other Recreational Access to Federal Public Lands

OVERVIEW



► *These are typical scenes when trying to access Federal public lands.*

SUMMARY

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) comprising the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) request that an access category be created within the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to be used by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service to open or improve access to existing Federal lands for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. No less than 1.5% of the funds appropriated annually from LWCF or a minimum of \$10 million, whichever is greater, will be made available for access projects that can open to the public hundreds of thousands of acres of lands in Federal ownership. **We request your support of S. 901 and H.R. 1997, which will amend LWCF to achieve this request.**

THE ROUNDTABLE

The Federal Lands Hunting and Shooting Sports Roundtable (Roundtable) was created through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2006 by the USFS, BLM, USFWS and 40 national hunting, fishing and shooting sports organizations. The Roundtable was created to improve

partnership efforts between these Federal agencies and these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address issues impacting access to Federal lands for sportsmen and women. One of the Roundtable's initiatives was to address the problem of landlocked Federal lands that hold the key to expanding recreational opportunities for the public.

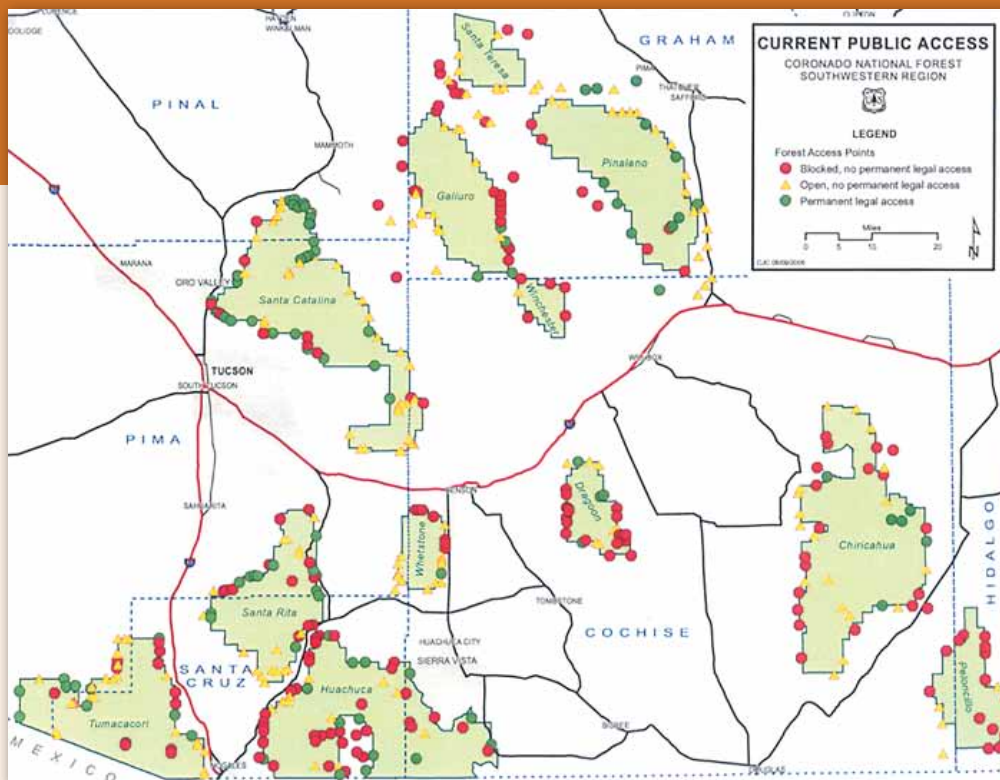
THE ISSUE

Federal public lands are an important destination for many Americans, including hunters and anglers. Nearly half of all hunters conduct a portion of their hunting activity on these lands. However, numerous reports verify access to Federal land is problematic in a number of areas. In fact, a 2004 report to the House Appropriations Committee concluded that more than 35 million acres of USFS and BLM land have inadequate access. Lack of access is cited as a primary reason that hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional activities.

A limited and targeted 2008 Request for Proposals, from the Roundtable, resulted in 51 project submissions from the USFS and the BLM. Combined, the top 5 projects for each agency would improve access to 155,780 acres of Federal land at a cost of only \$9.03 per acre. This is a tremendous bargain considering the cost of acquiring new public lands is hundreds to thousands of dollars per acre.

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► Blocked access to Federal lands as illustrated by the Coronado National Forest, Arizona.

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THE SOLUTION

Specifying a portion of LWCF for access related projects through S. 901 and H.R. 1997 will positively impact the American public by allowing them increased access to America's great outdoors. Priority projects could include easements, rights-of-way, and fee acquisition projects. Such priority projects from willing landowners could include some or all of the following characteristics:

- Significant acreage of improved access
- State fish and wildlife agency priorities
- Access to quality hunting and fishing areas
- Provides additional recreational opportunities
- Good relative value (cost/acre accessed)
- Relatively simple transaction

THE GROUP



Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bear Trust International
Boone and Crockett Club
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Camp Fire Club of America
Catch a Dream Foundation
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Ducks Unlimited

Houston Safari Club
International Hunter Education Association
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association of America
Mule Deer Foundation
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Trappers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Bear Foundation
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion, The Hunters Institute
Pheasants Forever
Pope and Young Club
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever

Quail Unlimited
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Shikar Safari Club
Texas Wildlife Association
Tread Lightly!
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute