

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  
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 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