

PRESS RELEASE
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

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New Poll: Nine in ten Oregonians Support Federal Investment in Wildlife Habitat, Local Parks, and Public Lands

Portland, Oregon: A new survey reveals that nearly nine in 10 Oregonians (89%) support the continued use of fees from offshore drilling to finance the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which protects rivers and working forests across Oregon.

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been a critical tool for the conservation of Oregon’s clean water and forest heritage,” said U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, a long-time supporter of the fund and incoming Chair of the Senate Finance Committee. “I am going to be working hard this year to ensure full, dedicated funding and reauthorization of the LWCF for the good of Oregon families, farmers, and small businesses that depend on the outdoors.”

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in 1965 to help preserve, develop and ensure access to outdoor recreation for the benefit of all Americans. Congress authorized LWCF to receive \$900 million in funding annually, however, nearly every year Congress diverts a majority of the funding. LWCF funds come from use of fees from offshore drilling and are not taxpayer dollars.

In FY 2013, critical Oregon conservation projects that didn’t move forward because of diverted LWCF funding include protecting a family forest along Upper Klamath Lake and expanding fishing and recreation access on the Crooked River in Central Oregon.

The bipartisan polling team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) completed the survey of 600 Oregon voters on DATE on behalf of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts.

Land trusts in Oregon use LWCF to support community projects to conserve working forests, farms and recreation areas, while also protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. Last year, LWCF funds were approved to help expand the Gilchrist State Forest, conserve a working farm near Corvallis, and expand the Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge on the Oregon Coast. Many Oregon projects were left unfunded, however, due to insufficient LWCF funding to match local dollars.

“With LWCF’s funding set to expire in 2015, it will be up to the White House and Congress to ensure the future of this incredibly successful program,” said Kelley Beamer, Executive Director of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts.

“Oregonians from all political backgrounds support this program and clearly want to see this funding source continue.”

The President’s proposed fiscal year 2015 budget for LWCF will be released March 4th.

Poll respondent break-down (full results attached)

Continued funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund enjoys broad support among Oregonians, across all demographic and attitudinal subgroups, including:

- 88% of men and 90% of women;
- 95% of Democrats, 80% of Republicans, and 91% of independent voters;
- 94% of liberals, 85% of conservatives, and 94% of moderates;
- At least 86% of voters at all income brackets;
- 89% of voters under age 50, 89% of voters aged 50 and over, and 87% of voters aged 65 and older;
- At least 85% of voters in all large counties in the state; and
- 91% of outdoorsmen, including hunters and fishers, and 88% of non-outdoorsmen.

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