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## Trout Unlimited Priorities for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress Public Land and Sportsmen Provisions

In the final weeks of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, legislators have an opportunity to advance several important public lands and conservation bills, to protect fish and wildlife and their habitat and to support recreational opportunities on public lands. Trout Unlimited urges Congress to advance a public lands package that includes the following bipartisan, proposals:

### **S.569/ H.R. 502: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):**

September 30, 2018, marked the expiration of one of the most powerful public access and habitat conservation programs in existence – the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). To safeguard our sporting traditions, TU asks Congress to act swiftly to permanently reinstate the program with full, dedicated annual funding.

For more than fifty years, the Fund has conserved over 5 million acres of public lands, invested over \$16 billion in conservation and outdoor recreation, established new public fishing areas, opened previously inaccessible public lands, and enabled strategic acquisitions of new lands for the benefit of hunters, anglers, and all Americans. Hunting and fishing are big business in America and constitute a vital pillar of the \$887 billion annual outdoor recreation economy. Reauthorizing this program with full, dedicated funding is critical to the preservation of the recreation economy, and our national heritage as anglers, and outdoorsmen and –women.

### **S. 282 / H.R. 825: Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act (PLREDA).**

The Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act ensures public lands renewable energy development runs apace with the conservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat. Anglers and hunters understand the importance of energy development of all kinds on public lands. However, that energy development must be done in a way that thoughtfully balances development with fish and wildlife habitat. PLREDA strikes this important balance between the development of new clean energy infrastructure and the conservation of our natural resources.

PLREDA guarantees communities benefit from renewable energy development by distributing a portion of the revenues generated to states and counties, and a portion to improve access to public land and for conservation efforts. In addition, the revenue sharing model laid out in PLREDA will help permitting agencies and potential developers to advance renewable energy by securing the necessary resources to efficiently manage, review and advance applications for new projects.

### **S. 1514: The Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act.**

The Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act is a bipartisan bill designed to enhance recreational hunting and sport fishing activities, ensure commonsense environmental regulations, and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Help for Wildlife Act includes critical reauthorization for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and EPA's Chesapeake Bay restoration program. Additionally, the bill contains the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act, which would improve fish habitat and expand recreational fishing access.

**S. 826 / H.R. 5885: The Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act (WILD Act).**

The Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act (WILD Act) would reauthorize the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which is a critical program to support voluntary restoration projects with willing landowners who want to restore fish and wildlife habitat on private property. The bill would also establish funding dedicated to the management of invasive species, and promote innovative solutions to protect endangered species, among other steps.

**S. 513 / H.R. 1308: The Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area Designation Act.**

This bill would permanently protect roughly 100,000 acres of public lands and clean waters in Douglas County, would safeguard drinking water, critical wildlife habitat, and cultural resources in a watershed that includes some of the Pacific Northwest's best wild steelhead habitat, and would preserve world-class opportunities for fishing and other types of outdoor recreation, boosting the local economy which depends on safeguarded public lands and waters. It is named for Frank Moore, a World War II veteran, and his wife, Jeanne, a native plant expert.

**S. 32 / H.R. 857: The California Desert Protection and Recreation Act/California Off-Road Recreation and Conservation Act.**

Trout Unlimited strongly supports this legislation, its protections for approximately 76 miles of streams in the California Desert. Some 12,000 of our members reside in California, and many of those members reside in Southern California, where coldwater fishing opportunities are scarce. Among the proposed river designations is Deep Creek, which provides a rare opportunity for freshwater fishing in Southern California and is one of the region's few designation Wild Trout streams. The fish, and rare fishing opportunities, will be enhanced and sustained by better protecting their habitat as Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River segments. Permanently protecting the outstanding recreational, scenic, and habitat values of California Desert rivers—like Deep Creek—is vital to ensuring we will continue to enjoy these pursuits in the future.

**S.1548: The Oregon Wildlands Act.**

The Oregon Wildlands Act protects some of the most iconic fisheries in the lower 48 states. Names like the Rogue, Chetco, and Molalla are highly esteemed in the hearts and minds of salmon and steelhead anglers across the country, and cherished resources for Oregonians and the 3,500 TU members in the state. S. 1548 will provide permanent protections for 86,000 acres of new Wilderness, nearly 120,000 acres of new National Recreation Areas, and nearly 250 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers in Oregon on land managed by the BLM and US Forest Service.

The economic benefit of a healthy fishery for these southwest Oregon towns and cash-strapped counties cannot be overstated. Thousands of anglers from all over the country visit these iconic fisheries and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars at local hotels, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores and tackle shops, often during winter seasons that would otherwise be devoid of tourism income for local businesses. Long-term protections for these valuable economic engines is crucial. This bill would provide benefits to many of Oregon's great wild lands and the people, fish and wildlife that depend upon them.

**S. 1633 / H.R. 3400: Recreation Not Red-Tape Act.**

Outdoor recreation has become a major economic driver nationwide, especially in rural areas. Visits to national parks, forests, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges and national heritage sites generate an estimated \$646 billion in consumer spending and support more than six million jobs annually, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. But recreation opportunities aren't always easily accessible. Getting outdoors often requires permits, parking passes and camping fees that are important to help maintain public lands, but too often involve confusing, complicated and lengthy processes. The Recreation Not Red-Tape Act removes barriers to outdoor recreation, making it easier for more Americans to get outdoors--enjoying its benefits and generating jobs.

**S. 1372 / H.R. 6510: Parks and Public Lands Maintenance Backlog.**

The Restore our Parks Act (S. 3172) and The Restore our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 6510) create the National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund. The National Park System includes more than 84-million acres of parks and historical sites, attracts more than 330 million visitors annually, and supports nearly \$36 billion in economic activity. Despite the vast benefits National Parks and other public lands provide for the American public, the Park Service's important job is made harder due to agencies \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog. Aging infrastructure and increased visitation are stretching NPS thin, requiring them to postpone and backlog critical Maintenance projects on aging trails, roads, bridges, and public facilities.

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For questions about these bills or about Trout Unlimited's public land legislative priorities, please contact:

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