



David Brooks
Executive Director

September 17, 2018

Re: Reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Honorable Jon Tester
US Senate
311 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steve Daines
US Senate
320 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Greg Gianforte
US House of Representatives
1419 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Tester, Senator Daines and Representative Gianforte:

On behalf of the Montana Council of Trout Unlimited and our 4,300 members across the state, I and the undersigned chapter leaders urge you to support reauthorizing that Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and provide full, dedicated funding for this vital program. It is critical that this program be reauthorized before its expiration on September 30, 2018.

Over its 50-year history, the LWCF has become established as America's premier conservation program, acquiring new public lands and ensuring access to outdoor recreation in rural and urban parks in every state. LWCF has supported more than 42,000 state and local projects across the country, including fishing access sites and securing important habitat for trout and salmon fisheries.

In Montana, we regularly reap the benefits of LWCF projects. Our state has received \$597 million in LWCF to fund everything from half of our fishing access sites, to key public land acquisitions, such as along Tenderfoot Creek, a tributary of the Smith River, that help protect and conserve wild and native trout spawning habitat.

Although our mission is conservation, we fully recognize the benefits these access and acquisition projects have for our state's \$7.1 billion outdoor recreation economy, as well as our wildlife beyond just trout. Additionally, caring for our land and water in the ways that LWCF helps enable is about preserving and passing on core values for most Montanans. Who we are is closely linked to our relationships with our great outdoors. LWCF is part of maintaining and enriching those relationships, as well as passing them on to the next generations.

Because LWCF funds are primarily derived from oil and gas receipts paid by energy companies that extract publicly-owned resources from the Outer Continental Shelf, the program costs taxpayers nothing, but benefits the American public entirely. Congress created LWCF as a bipartisan promise to return precious resources back to the public by using these funds specifically for conservation and recreation purposes. It is now up to Congress to fulfill that promise for future generations by permanently reauthorizing and fully funding the program.

A mission to conserve, protect, & restore Montana's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

312 North Higgins Ave., Suite 200, Missoula, MT 59802

(406) 543-0054 – www.montanatu.org

Recently, the House Natural Resource Committee agreed on a bill to reauthorize LWCF. We appreciate your commitment to seeing this bill pass the full House and Senate free of amendments that would weaken the purpose of LWCF. The clock is ticking and we strongly urge you to make reauthorizing LWCF a top priority and include mandatory full funding in any LWCF reauthorization package. We look forward to working with you to resolve this pressing issue before the program expires.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Brooks".

David Brooks, Executive Director, Montana Trout Unlimited

Dave Ballman, President, Snowy Mountain chapter, Lewistown, MT

Greg Chester, President, Bitterroot Chapter, Hamilton, MT

Lyle Courtnage, MTU Council Secretary and President, Magic City Fly Fishers Chapter, Billings, MT

Mike Geary, President, Lewis & Clark Chapter, Twin Bridges, MT

Scott Gordon, President, Big Blackfoot Chapter, Ovando, MT

Mark Kuipers, President, WestSlope Chapter, Missoula, MT

Kris Kumlien, President, Madison-Gallatin Chapter, Bozeman, MT

Harry Murphy, MTU National Leadership Council Representative, Bozeman, MT

Brian Nielsen, MTU Council Treasurer and President, Missouri River Flyfishers Chapter, Great Falls, MT

Mike Rooney, President, Kootenai Valley chapter, Libby, MT

Chris Schustrom, Montana TU Council Chair, Interim President, Flathead Valley Chapter, Whitefish, MT

Sharon Sweeney Fee, PhD, RN, Montana TU Council Vice-Chair, Livingston, MT

Mark Thompson, President, George Grant Chapter, Butte, MT

Will Trimbath, President, Pat Barnes Chapter, Helena, MT