

How West Virginia Stands to Benefit from the Great American Outdoors Act

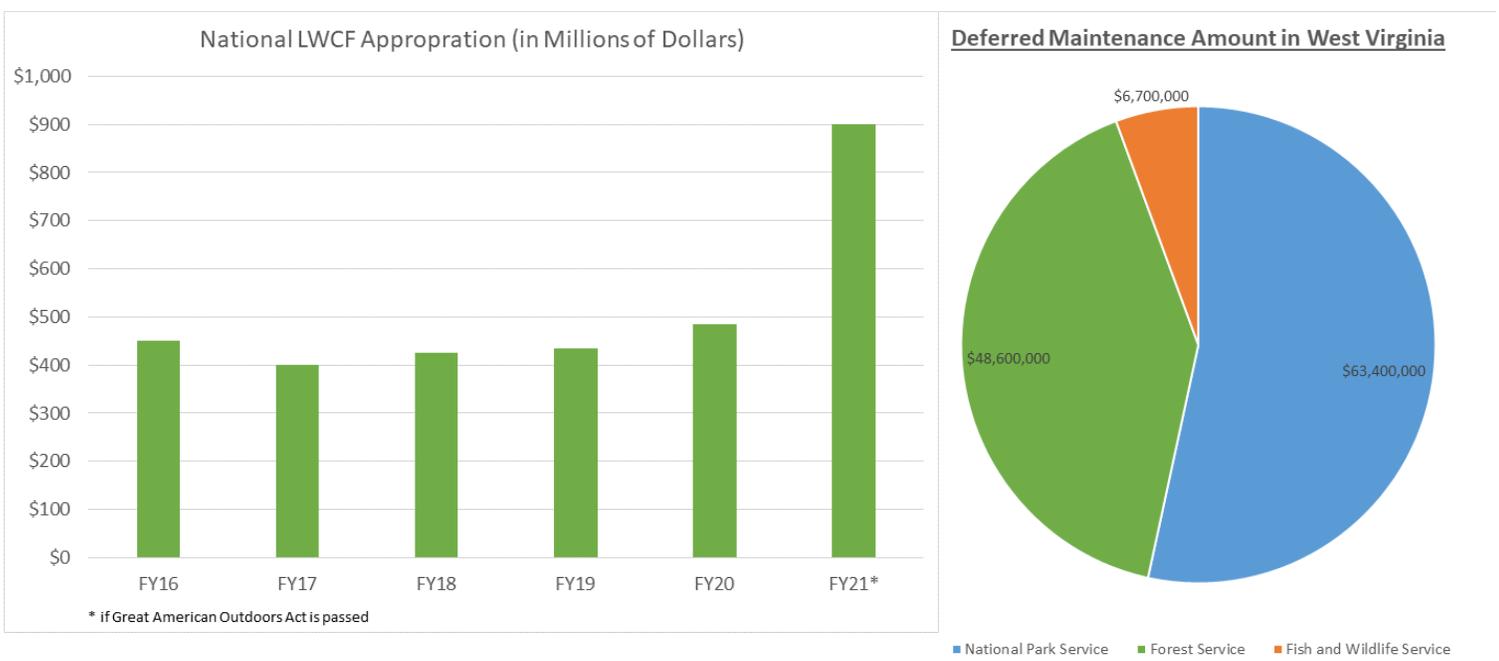
What the Great American Outdoors Act Does:

- The Great American Outdoors Act provides \$900 million per year in permanent funding for programs funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- ◇ Since its creation in 1964, LWCF has provided over \$250 million to West Virginia, having benefited 54 of 55 counties
- ◇ For the last several years, funding for the LWCF has been under \$450 million
- ◇ LWCF funding is used for programs that create more access to places to hunt, fish, and shoot; programs that increase opportunities for outdoor recreation; and programs that ensure timber will be continuously harvested from working forests
- ◇ LWCF has funded projects as diverse as securing river access in the Gauley River National Recreation Area and constructing a public gathering space (now known as Discovery Junction) in Marlinton, WV
- The Great American Outdoors Act also provides \$9.5 billion in funding for deferred maintenance projects on Federal lands, such as National Parks and National Forests.
- ◇ This funding would come from Federal energy development projects, energy development (primarily oil and gas leasing) within onshore Federal lands or offshore Federal waters
- ◇ National Parks would receive 70%; National Forests 15%; and National Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Land Management lands, and Indian schools—5% each
- ◇ In West Virginia, National Parks have accumulated \$63.4 million in deferred maintenance; the Monongahela National Forest has \$48.6 million; and the Fish and Wildlife Service has \$6.7 million
- ◇ This includes crumbling roads and bridges, outdated wastewater and electrical systems and deteriorating monuments
- ◇ Last year, 1.66 million visitors enjoyed units of the National Park Service in West Virginia, spending \$75.4 million in the surrounding communities according to the 2019 National Park Visitor Spending Effects report

Impact to the U.S and West Virginia Economies:

- Two studies have been published that project the nationwide economic impact of the Great American Outdoors Act:
 - ◇ A Boston University study indicates that the LWCF portion of the bill would support an additional 15,000 – 28,000 jobs.
 - ◇ A study commissioned by Pew Charitable Trusts indicates that addressing the deferred maintenance backlog of the National Parks could generate nearly 110,000 additional infrastructure-related jobs.
- According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor recreation industry in West Virginia generates 22,202 jobs; provides \$668.5 million in salaries; and contributes \$1.498 billion in economic output each year.

Senator Manchin managed the Great American Outdoors Act on the Senate Floor on behalf of Democrats, which resulted in the bipartisan bill passing in the Senate with a vote of 73-25.



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