

Connecticut

Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage



LWCF Funded Places in Connecticut

Federal Units

- Appalachian NST
- Stewart McKinney NWR
- Silvio Conte NFWR
- Weir Farm NHS

Federal Total \$50,550,274

State Programs

Forest Legacy Program Highlands	\$5,936,942
ORLP	\$7,924,037
Stateside	\$1,125,000
Total	\$73,844,243
	\$139,380,496

LWCF Success in Connecticut

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding to help protect some of Connecticut's most special places and ensure recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Connecticut has received approximately \$139.4 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and Weir Farm National Historic Site.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP) grants are also funded under LWCF, to help protect working forests. The FLP cost-share funding supports timber sector jobs and sustainable forest operations while enhancing wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation. For example, the FLP contributed to places such as the Skiff Mountain in Kent and Great Mountain Forest in Norfolk. The Forest Legacy Program assists states and private forest owners to maintain working forest lands through matching grants for permanent conservation easement and fee acquisitions, and has leveraged approximately \$5.9 million in federal funds to invest in Connecticut's forests, while protecting air and water quality, wildlife habitat, access for recreation and other public benefits provided by forests.

LWCF state assistance grants have further supported hundreds of projects across Connecticut's state and local parks including Waterfront Park in Bridgeport, Riverside Park in Hartford, Cockaponset State Park and Mill River Park in Stamford. Additionally, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP), which funds city park projects in economically disadvantaged areas, supported Johnson Oak Park in Bridgeport and the Colt Park Athletic Fields in Hartford.

Economic Benefits

Active outdoor recreation is an important part of the Connecticut economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis has found that outdoor recreation generates \$4.6 billion in value added to the Connecticut economy, 45,776 homegrown jobs, and accounts for 1.4% of the state's economy. Further, the U.S. Census reports that each year 1.5 million people hunt, fish, or enjoy wildlife-watching in Connecticut, contributing over \$873 million in wildlife recreation spending to the state economy.





LWCF in Connecticut

Stewart McKinney National Wildlife Refuge

Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge was established to protect migratory bird habitat along Long Island Sound. Given its importance to water and habitat conservation in Connecticut, units of the refuge now extend along 60 miles of Connecticut’s coastline on the Sound. In addition to the increase in habitat protection over the years, the refuge now provides opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, and fish and wildlife-oriented recreation. With the large population along the coast and the pressures from development, funds provided by LWCF are critical to the refuge’s conservation efforts.

Fiscal Year 2025 Agency LWCF Project List for Connecticut

Agency	Project	Amount	Delegation
USFWS	Silvio Conte NFWR*	\$2,000,000	Blumenthal, Murphy/Larson, Courtney, DeLauro, Hayes
USFWS	Great Thicket NWR*	\$1,500,000	Blumenthal, Murphy/Courtney, Hayes



LWCF is a simple idea: that a portion of offshore drilling fees should be used to protect important land and water for all Americans. These are not taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, for 55 years the promise of LWCF was broken as \$22 billion was diverted from the program.

The **Great American Outdoors Act** ended the diversion and ensures that LWCF’s permanently authorized \$900 million is used for conservation and recreation projects each year.

LWCF supports the acquisition of land and conservation easements to **protect our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, trails, and BLM sites**, grants funds to the states for local and state park needs, protects critical wildlife habitat, watersheds and recreational access, and conserves working farms, ranches and forestlands that enhance local economies.



www.lwcfcoalition.org

Status of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

In August 2020, permanent, dedicated funding for LWCF was secured through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) – ensuring that each year the \$900 million deposited into the LWCF account is directed to conservation and recreation priorities; however, in FY24 Congress backtracked on that promise when they rescinded \$94 million of unobligated LWCF funding (\$89M from the NPS State & Local Assistance Program & \$5M from BLM). GAOA has not eliminated the backlog of LWCF priorities that are waiting in line as nearly all LWCF programs remain oversubscribed - each year the LWCF supplemental project list includes about \$200 million in urgent needs that are authorized to use this funding. To support these critical projects, unspent LWCF funding should be reallocated to the states by the Secretary of the Interior (per the LWCF Act) or reprogrammed by Congress to LWCF sub-programs with outstanding funding need. If funding is rescinded rather than reallocated or reprogrammed, landowners and communities miss out on LWCF funding, and these critical priorities could be lost forever.

FY25 Budget Update: The Biden Administration’s FY25 budget proposal included detailed LWCF priority project lists and balanced program allocations, as well supplemental project lists over and above LWCF’s current \$900 million funding level. [Click here to view a map of past LWCF projects](#)