

# Making Public Lands Public



Enhancing Hunting, Fishing & Other Recreational Access to Federal Public Lands

OVERVIEW



► *These are typical scenes when trying to access Federal public lands.*

## SUMMARY

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) comprising the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) request that no less than \$15,000,000 be made available annually as a new Access category within the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to be divided among USFS (\$6.75M), BLM (\$6.75M) and FWS (\$1.5M). This will improve hunting, fishing and other recreational access to hundreds of thousands of acres of Federal land annually.

## THE ROUNDTABLE

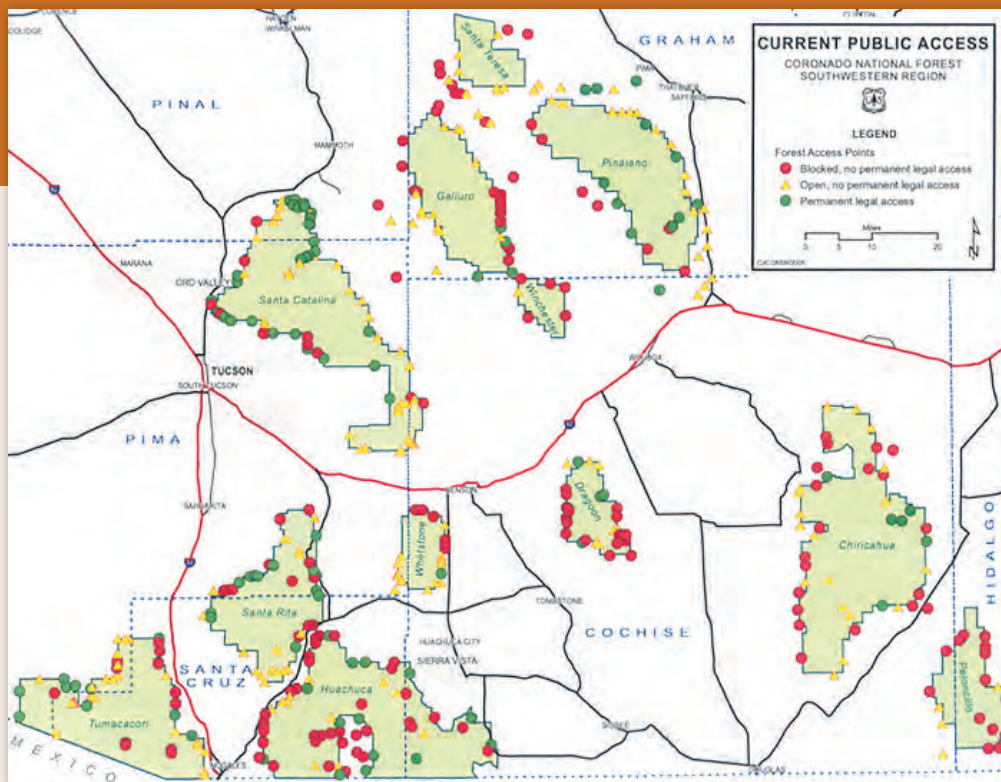
The Federal Lands Hunting and Shooting Sports Roundtable (Roundtable) was created through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and 40 national hunting, fishing and shooting sports organizations. The Roundtable was created to improve partnership efforts between these Federal agencies and these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address issues impacting access to Federal lands for hunting and shooting sports activities.

## THE ISSUE

Federal public lands are an important destination for many Americans, including hunters and anglers. Nearly half of all hunters conduct a portion of their hunting activity on these lands. However, numerous reports verify access to Federal land is problematic in a number of areas. In fact, a 2004 report to the House Appropriations Committee concluded that more than 35 million acres of BLM and USFS land have inadequate access. Lack of access is cited as a primary reason that hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional sports.

## THE PROCESS

Each year, in partnership with the Roundtable, the USFS, BLM, and FWS should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to all agency field offices, NGOs, private landowners and to state fish and wildlife agencies for projects that significantly improve public access to Federal lands for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. The Roundtable will consult and coordinate with the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC) and the Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC), Federal advisory committees established by DOI and USDA, at all stages of the RFP process. Thereafter, the Secretaries shall select projects from the recommendations forwarded by the aforementioned RFP process.



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### Enhancing Hunting, Fishing & Other Recreational Access to Federal Public Lands

#### CONTACTS

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► Blocked access to Federal lands as illustrated by the Coronado National Forest, Arizona.

#### PROJECT SELECTION

Proposals should be reviewed by the Roundtable, in coordination with the WHHCC, the SFBPC and LWCF program staff to identify quality projects that can be completed quickly once funding is secured.

*The proposals should be evaluated to determine priority projects based on the following guidelines:*

- Willing landowners
- Significant acreage of improved access
- State fish and wildlife agency priorities
- Access to quality hunting and fishing areas
- Provides additional recreational opportunities
- Good relative value (cost/acre accessed)
- Relatively simple transaction

#### PRIORITY PROJECTS

Projects should include easements, rights-of-way and fee acquisition. If a state has a task force or working group that is assisting with project identification, those access projects should be considered priority projects.

A 2008 Request for Proposals, from the Roundtable, resulted in 51 project submissions from the USFS and the BLM. Combined, the top 5 projects for each agency would improve access to 155,780 acres of Federal land at a cost of only \$9.03 per acre. This is a tremendous bargain considering the cost of acquiring new public lands is hundreds to thousands of dollars per acre.

#### THE GROUP



Archery Trade Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Bear Trust International  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance  
Buckmasters American Deer Foundation  
Camp Fire Club of America  
Catch a Dream Foundation  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Conservation Force  
Dallas Safari Club  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Ducks Unlimited

Houston Safari Club  
International Hunter Education Association  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Masters of Foxhounds Association of America  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Bear Foundation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope and Young Club  
Public Lands Foundation  
Quail Forever

Quail Unlimited  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Sand County Foundation  
Shikar Safari Club  
Texas Wildlife Association  
The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance  
Whitetails Unlimited  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Forever  
Wildlife Habitat Council  
Wildlife Management Institute