



2011 Budget Debate: A Conservation Crisis Sportsmen's Checklist for Members of Congress

Below is a list of proposed conservation cuts in H.R. 1 that would adversely impact our nation's ability to conserve open spaces, clean water and valuable fish and wildlife habitat for future generations. These programs are critically important to America's 34 million sportsmen, whose outdoor pursuits, travel and purchasing power inject more than \$192 billion into our economy every year. But it all starts with the habitat.

Please use this checklist during the continuing budget debate to ensure that the United States maintains its commitment to our natural resources conservation and to hunters and anglers across the country. American sportsmen strongly oppose the following budget cuts:



Land and Water Conservation Fund: The LWCF provides funds to acquire land and water for recreation and habitat conservation purposes as well as to conserve working farms and ranches.

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The LWCF has helped conserve some of America's richest habitat and most popular sporting destinations. **Proposed cuts would slash LWCF funding by almost 90 percent from 2010 funding. Originally slated to receive \$900 million annually, LWCF programs would receive a mere 5 percent of this amount.**



Restoring Clean Water Act Protections for Small Streams and

Wetlands: The proposed budget cuts prevent the use of funding by the EPA to implement, administer or enforce a change to a rule or guidance document pertaining to the definitions of waters under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act).

- The Environmental Protection Agency is charged with responsibly overseeing the nation's wetlands, streams and other waterways and is working to revise regulations for their management in the wake of confusing and controversial Supreme Court decisions. The EPA also establishes guidance and rules for enforcing protections for our nation's waters prescribed by the Clean Water Act. **Proposed cuts would prevent the EPA from using funds to revise regulations addressing the management of America's waters – jeopardizing the EPA's ability to responsibly oversee 20 million acres of wetlands, small streams and other waters important to fish, wildlife and sportsmen.**



Wild Lands Policy: Secretarial Order 3310 establishes common-sense policy guidelines allowing the U.S. Department of the Interior to conserve backcountry lands that provide high-quality fish and wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for citizens.

- The guidelines established by Secretarial Order 3310 establish a transparent, public process for evaluating lands that can contain valuable backcountry fish and wildlife habitat. **Proposed cuts would prevent the DOI from carrying out the order, which allows for the administration of BLM lands to achieve management objectives designed to conserve high-quality habitat.**



State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program: This grant program helps states and tribes effectively manage fish and wildlife species facing habitat threats or other conservation challenges.

- State and tribal wildlife grants provide federal money to states, territories and tribes for efforts aimed at preventing fish and wildlife from becoming endangered. **Proposed cuts would completely eliminate current funding for the program – currently set at \$90 million.**



North American Wetlands Conservation Fund: This fund helps states leverage non-federal funding and foster public and private partnerships to implement wetlands conservation projects.

- The North American Wetlands Conservation Act has generated more than \$3 billion in funding for wetlands restoration and conservation during the past 20 years. NAWCA grants, along with matching funds from the private sector, have helped conserve more than 20 million acres of habitat in North America. **Proposed cuts would withdraw funding for NAWCA, equating to a loss of \$47 million in support of wetlands habitat conservation crucial to fish and wildlife.**



Wetlands Reserve Program: The WRP helps farmers, ranchers and landowners restore and conserve wetlands on their properties while also focusing on improving habitat for waterfowl and fish and wildlife species.

- The Wetlands Reserve Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and tribes to restore, protect and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. More than 1.9 million acres of wetlands are currently enrolled in the WRP. **Proposed cuts would cap the WRP enrollment at 202,218 acres, permanently reducing the program by 47,782 acres.**



Interior Department Climate Change Adaptation Efforts: With our public lands already experiencing visible climate impacts, efforts to understand how fish and wildlife will respond to climate change are of paramount importance.

- Finding ways to help natural resources adapt to climate change will be a critical undertaking for federal, state, and tribal fish and wildlife agencies. Scientists have found that climate change will continue to significantly affect fish, wildlife and their habitats. **Proposed cuts would slash funding for natural resources adaptation programs by more than 30 percent.**



Environmental Quality Incentives Program: EQIP provides technical assistance and payments for farmers, ranchers and other landowners to improve land management and farming practices.

- EQIP has been successful in reducing pollution to watersheds and groundwater and helping landowners to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. **More than \$350 million would be cut from levels authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill for FY11.**



USDA Farm Services Agency: Cuts to overall discretionary funding.

- **More than \$190 million is cut from the FSA budget, which will diminish the agency's ability to implement vital Farm Bill conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program.**



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service: Cuts to overall discretionary funding.

- **The \$170 million cut from NRCS discretionary funding will result in less technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and landowners interested in implementing conservation efforts on their land.** A lack of adequate technical assistance has been identified as one of the biggest barriers to participation in and effective implementation of these programs.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Cuts to operations budget.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages fish and game species across the country and provides research, monitoring and expertise to other federal agencies and state wildlife agencies. **Cutting \$65 million from its resource management budget will hinder the FWS's ability to study, monitor and effectively manage our nation's fish and wildlife, even as they face increasing challenges from problems like climate change.**