



CONSERVATION FUNDING

HISTORY

Federal funding is a catalyst for conservation across the country. The federal land management agencies of the departments of Agriculture and Interior oversee hundreds of millions of conservation acres that are open to public hunting and fishing. The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manages our marine fisheries, while the Environmental Protection Agency ensures that our fish and wildlife have the clean air and water they need to thrive. Cooperative programs focusing on private lands, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, State Fish and Wildlife Grants program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Conservation Reserve Program, Voluntary Habitat Incentives Program (Open Fields), Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Wetlands Reserve Program, use federal seed money to leverage state and private funds and volunteer labor to conserve fish and wildlife.

Investment in conservation has been steadily declining for the last 30 years and now amounts to approximately 1.25 percent of the federal budget. Yet conservation funding means real jobs and income, especially in rural America. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, economic activity related to outdoor recreation adds more than \$730 billion to the U.S. economy annually. Hunting and fishing generate more than \$6.3 billion in annual tax revenues and create more than 900,000 sustainable American jobs.

In 2011 the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution 1, a funding bill that eliminated and/or drastically cut most of the programs that form the foundation of fish and wildlife conservation in America. This bill served as a wakeup call for sportsmen-conservationists. In response, the TRCP's partners asked the organization to take a central role in organizing the conservation community behind conservation funding and help build the bridge to other sectors equally impacted by the proposed cuts, including the outdoor recreation and historic preservation communities.

CHALLENGE

Like other components of the federal budget, conservation programs must justify their existence. Duplication among programs signals the need for consolidation. Programs that don't work should be cut or eliminated. Wholesale cuts to some of the most successful and cost-effective programs in the federal budget, however, will have direct and significant impacts on the ground and in the water. As Congress decides how to address the budget deficit in 2011 and beyond, the TRCP is working to ensure that the conservation community makes its voice heard by citing compelling economic numbers and success stories from the field. We also will continue working with the broader outdoor recreation and historic preservation sectors to emphasize the need for federal conservation funding from both economic and environmental perspectives.

GUARANTEEING ALL AMERICANS A PLACE TO HUNT AND FISH



Photo: Dusan Smetana

OUR STRATEGY

When individual interests fight for single programs at the expense of others, we may win the battle but lose the war – along with our fish and wildlife and quality places to hunt and fish. By bringing together the disparate voices in the hook-and-bullet community and uniting them with the voices of outdoor recreationists and historic preservationists, the TRCP is helping drive a coalition and a message Washington cannot ignore. For long-term success, our unity – within and outside the conservation community – must last well beyond the 2011 budget crisis and become the blueprint for success in coming years.

“As sportsmen we know the importance of good conservation. We now have to remind our elected officials that funding for conservation is not only good for our natural resources, but it provides jobs and can help the country grow our way back to fiscal health.”

Vaughn Collins

Director of Government Affairs



ACTION

The TRCP is a leader in America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation. This diverse new coalition represents more than 650 groups and tens of millions of Americans who are concerned about our nation's fiscal health and passionately support continued American investment in jobs and economic benefits sustaining conservation, recreation and historic preservation activities in the United States.

WHY THE TRCP?

As a partnership organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have quality places to hunt and fish, the TRCP is not aligned with any one species or program. The TRCP's expertise in communications, coalition building and working with Congress and federal agencies facilitates our leadership of the hunting and angling community's effort to support federal conservation funding. The TRCP is uniquely positioned to unite the conservation, outdoor recreation and historical preservation communities in achieving common goals.

To learn more about the TRCP and the work we're doing, visit www.trcp.org or contact Meg McKinnon, development manager, at mmckinnon@trcp.org or 202-639-8727, ext. 24

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