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★ news release

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LAND CONSERVATION FUND LEGISLATION PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY

A proposal for financing an eight-year program to expand the Nation's outdoor recreation resources was proposed in legislation submitted to the Congress by President Kennedy, April 4.

The measure--a principal feature of the President's message of March 1 on conservation--proposes establishment of a land conservation fund and authorization of appropriations of \$500 million to the fund, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today.

A combination of new and existing Federal revenues are proposed to provide additional funds during the eight year program, and for repayment of appropriated funds beginning in Fiscal Year 1971.

Lands within authorized national park, monument, and related areas, lands within the national forest system and national refuges to preserve endangered wildlife species would be financed directly from the fund. Cost of acquiring recreational lands at Federal and federally assisted reservoirs would be offset on part by depositing a portion of receipts from the revenues into general treasury funds.

Proposed sources of revenue for the program are:

1. A new Federal boat use tax;
2. Receipts from the sale of surplus Federal nonmilitary real property;
3. Receipts from present and new admission and other recreation user fees on Federal land and water areas;
4. The refundable portion (2 cents per gallon) of the Federal gasoline tax paid on fuel used in recreational boating.

The draft bill proposes that revenues from these sources be deposited in a special account in the Treasury. The President would be authorized to determine how much of the account would go to the Land Conservation Fund, and how much would be transferred to the Treasury to help offset appropriations for acquiring additional lands for recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement at Federal and Federally assisted reservoirs.

The proposed legislation authorizes the appropriation of up to \$500 million for an eight-year period beginning in Fiscal Year 1963. Appropriations would be prepaid from the Fund, without interest, beginning in Fiscal Year 1971 with annual payments of at least 50 percent of the annual revenue of the fund.

Funds in the Land Conservation Fund would be appropriated annually by the Congress.

Users fees, admissions, and entrance fees could be established by the President at land or water areas administered by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Corps of Engineers, the United States section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (United States and Mexico), and land and water areas within projects constructed under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act open to the public.

The President, in a message to the Congress accompanying the bill, said he would establish by Executive Order a Land Conservation Fund Commission to advise him on administration of the fund and on recreation user fees.

Under the draft bill, the proposed boat tax would consist of \$5.00 annually on boats--propelled by machinery, motor, or sail--between 14 feet and 16 feet in length, plus \$2.00 for each foot or fraction thereof exceeding 16 feet. The tax would be imposed on boats operating in the United States or within three miles of the coastline.

Exemptions from the tax would be extended to boats used by State or local governments, certain boats used by the Federal Government, boats used for trade or commercial fishing, and boats used for certain charitable and educational purposes.

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