

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Over 50 years ago, Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a program that uses revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling in public waters to purchase land and easements for conservation and public recreation. The program has supported more than 42,000 national, state and local parks and outdoor recreation projects in all 50 states.

These projects conserve public lands in or near national parks, refuges, and forests; increase access for hunting and fishing; and provide grants to states for close-to-home recreation and conservation on non-federal lands. For every \$1 invested through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, there is an estimated return of \$4 in local economic activity.

Despite bi-partisan support, the law creating the fund expired last year. In his 2016 budget proposal, President Obama has proposed the return of the fund, with \$900 million and a desire for permanent authorization and mandatory annual funding.

Depending on what, if anything, is passed by Congress and signed by the President, there is the potential for some of this money to make its way to the Southern Appalachians to support the nascent Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge, National Forests, and National Park Service units, in addition to state and local parks.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.