

**American Fisheries Society \* American Fly Fishing Trade Association \* American Sportfishing Association \* Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies \* Archery Trade Association \* B.A.S.S LLC \* Berkley Conservation Institute, Pure Fishing \* Boone and Crockett Club \* Catch-A-Dream Foundation \* Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation \* Conservation Force \* Dallas Safari Club \* Delta Waterfowl Foundation \* Ducks Unlimited \* Hellgate Hunters and Anglers \* Houston Safari Club \* Izaak Walton League of America \* Masters of Foxhounds Association of America \* Mule Deer Foundation \* National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses \* National Marine Manufacturers Association \* National Rifle Association \* National Shooting Sports Foundation \* National Trappers Association \* National Wild Turkey Federation \* National Wildlife Federation \* North American Bear Foundation \* North American Grouse Partnership \* Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association \* Orion—The Hunters' Institute \* Pheasants Forever \* Pope and Young Club \* Public Lands Foundation \* Quail Forever \* Quality Deer Management Association \* Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation \* Ruffed Grouse Society \* Safari Club International \* Shikar Safari \* The Wildlife Society \* Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership \* Tread Lightly! \* Trout Unlimited \* U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance \* Whitetails Unlimited \* Wild Sheep Foundation \* Wildlife Forever \* Wildlife Management Institute\***

Dear Senator:

The undersigned non-governmental organizations, representing millions of members across the United States, ask for your help to open and improve access to existing federal public lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes.

We urge you to support the Making Public Lands Public Act (S. 901), introduced by Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus leaders, Senator Tester and Senator Risch, which would require the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to direct 1.5% or \$10 million annually – whichever is greater – of the total Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) budgets -- for projects that secure recreational public access to existing federal lands through easements, rights-of-way, or fee title acquisitions from willing sellers. This will improve sportsmen's access to hundreds of thousands of acres of federal land annually.

These LWCF funds are needed to acquire small parcels, easements or rights of way that open access to inaccessible or significantly restricted federal lands. The Making Public Lands Public Act fully compliments the first purpose of the LWCF Act which is “to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources.”

For the millions of American hunters, anglers, and other outdoor recreationists, federal public lands are an increasingly important destination. Nearly half of all hunters conduct a portion of their hunting activity on these lands. Lack of access is cited as a primary reason that hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional activities. Numerous reports verify that access to Federal land is problematic in many places. In fact, a 2004 report to the House Appropriations Committee concluded that more than 35 million acres of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service have inadequate access.

Allowing federal agencies to identify and prioritize smaller parcels on the boundaries of federal lands that provide public access for hunting and other nature-based recreation is common sense policy. Directing a modest portion of LWCF funds to secure those parcels would help the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior maximize the value of their existing federal land holdings.

We applaud your efforts to improve outdoor recreation opportunities on our nation's federal lands and ask for your support for the Making Public Lands Public Act. Please contact Stephenne Harding in Senator Tester's office ([Stephenne\\_Harding@tester.senate.gov](mailto:Stephenne_Harding@tester.senate.gov)) or Darren Parker in Senator Risch's office ([Darren\\_Parker@Risch.senate.gov](mailto:Darren_Parker@Risch.senate.gov)), to become a sponsor of this legislation or if you have any questions.