



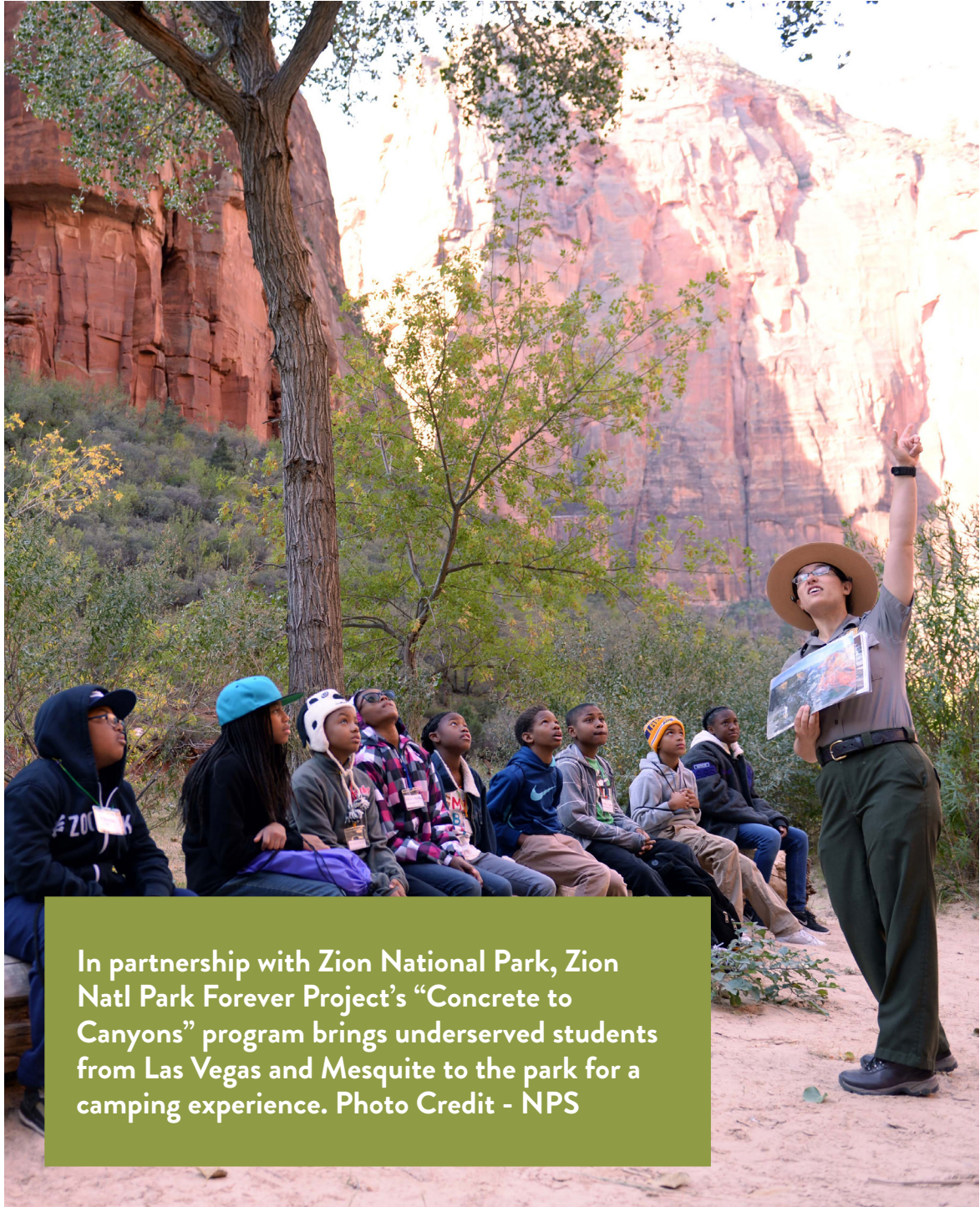
PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES FOR AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS


America's public lands preserve many of the world's most important natural and historical sites. Public use of these lands creates countless recreation opportunities, contributes greatly to the nation's \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy and adds to the social and economic vitality of the communities they serve. More than 630 million acres of land managed by the federal government attracts nearly 1 billion visitors annually from across all social and political boundaries.

Nonprofit partner organizations are essential to the public's continued access to and enjoyment of these lands. Partner groups know firsthand the opportunities presented by keeping the lands they support public, as well as the unique challenges inherent in sustaining each site.

Furthermore, they provide critical funding and private sector expertise beyond what tightly compartmentalized government resources alone can provide.



In partnership with Zion National Park, Zion Natl Park Forever Project's "Concrete to Canyons" program brings underserved students from Las Vegas and Mesquite to the park for a camping experience. Photo Credit - NPS



PLA members serve more than 600 public lands, contributing more than \$250 million annually to their preservation and enrichment.

Chugach National Forest, Alaska

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE

The Public Lands Alliance (PLA) is the national voice for the nonprofit partners of America's public lands. Its members are nonprofit organizations that have a formal partnership with a land management agency to support parks, forests, refuges, conservation areas and other public lands sites. Today, PLA members serve more than 600 public lands, contributing more than \$250 million annually to their preservation and enrichment.

PLA works to strengthen policies and legislation that enhance public lands partnerships in order to protect America's natural and cultural heritage. PLA accomplishes this by:

- Engaging PLA members in educating elected leaders and policy makers about the value of public lands and public land partnerships.
- Informing PLA members about relevant policy and legislative issues in Washington D.C.
- Listening to PLA members to identify concerns and opportunities.
- Taking positions on issues of importance to PLA members.

PLA is nonpartisan in its education and advocacy. It endeavors to share the significance and value of public lands with leaders from every political stripe.

CRITICAL PUBLIC LANDS ISSUES

PLA leads advocacy efforts and engages in strategic coalitions at the national level to address the following issues facing public lands and their nonprofit partners:

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS

PLA advocates for government actions that recognize and leverage the resources, expertise and skills of nonprofit partner organizations. PLA works with land management agencies to streamline effective partnership agreements, policies and procedures that promote the development and long-term success of their partnerships with nonprofit organizations. PLA also encourages opportunities to authorize nonprofit partners to leverage and expand upon public funding to enhance the visitor experience.

FUNDING AND STEWARDING PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands belong to the American people. PLA believes the government must responsibly fund the land management agencies that steward them for the benefit of future generations. PLA advocates for funds that address the backlog of infrastructure, as well as funds to manage and maintain future infrastructure needs. PLA also engages its nonprofit members to lead efforts that preserve public lands and help them adapt to the effects of climate change.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands should be accessible to the public, regardless of circumstance. PLA supports policies that enable maximum responsible access by visitors to areas designated for authorized public uses, and that engage nonprofit partners as connectors to local communities and visitors.

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

PLA supports efforts and programs to celebrate each new generation's natural interest in the outdoors, as well to introduce them to their role in the stewardship of public lands. In support of this, PLA backs legislation and programs that bring youth outdoors for educational opportunities, employment and volunteerism.

2017-18 PRIORITIES

PLA is committed to work with the Administration and the 115th Congress to advance legislation and policies that improve public lands and support the work of public land nonprofit partners.

PLA has identified a number of priority action items for 2017-2018, and will regularly review and adjust its strategic priorities to reflect changes in the political or policy landscape. Additionally, PLA will stand by its members and aid them in advocating powerfully for their important local or regional issues.

PRIORITIES

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Washington Monument, National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS



Paria River
Grand Staircase-Escalante-National Monument, Utah

PARTNERSHIP POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

PLA works with land management agency leaders to help establish and update partnership agreements that benefit public land nonprofit partners.

- The Bureau of Land Management is reviewing a national policy regarding the acceptance of private donations that will guide the agency and its partners. Congress recently established a BLM Foundation to support the agency and its mission through private support.

PLA will provide BLM with perspectives and lessons learned by partners of other land management agencies and encourage the adoption of a policy that strongly promotes efficient and effective philanthropy by BLM partners.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted a friends policy in 2014 that placed unnecessary regulatory burdens on friends groups. Many friends groups have been forced to shutter nature stores on refuges, curtail recreational programs and cancel fundraising events due to the policy's provisions.

PLA will engage with the new USFWS Director and leadership team to revise the friends policy so that friends groups are authorized to function as independent nonprofit organizations with unique skills, practices and expertise.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIP POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- The National Park Service has adopted a forward-looking Director's Order #21 that encourages philanthropic opportunities. Now that the new order has been signed, NPS must craft guidance and agreements to implement the new policy.

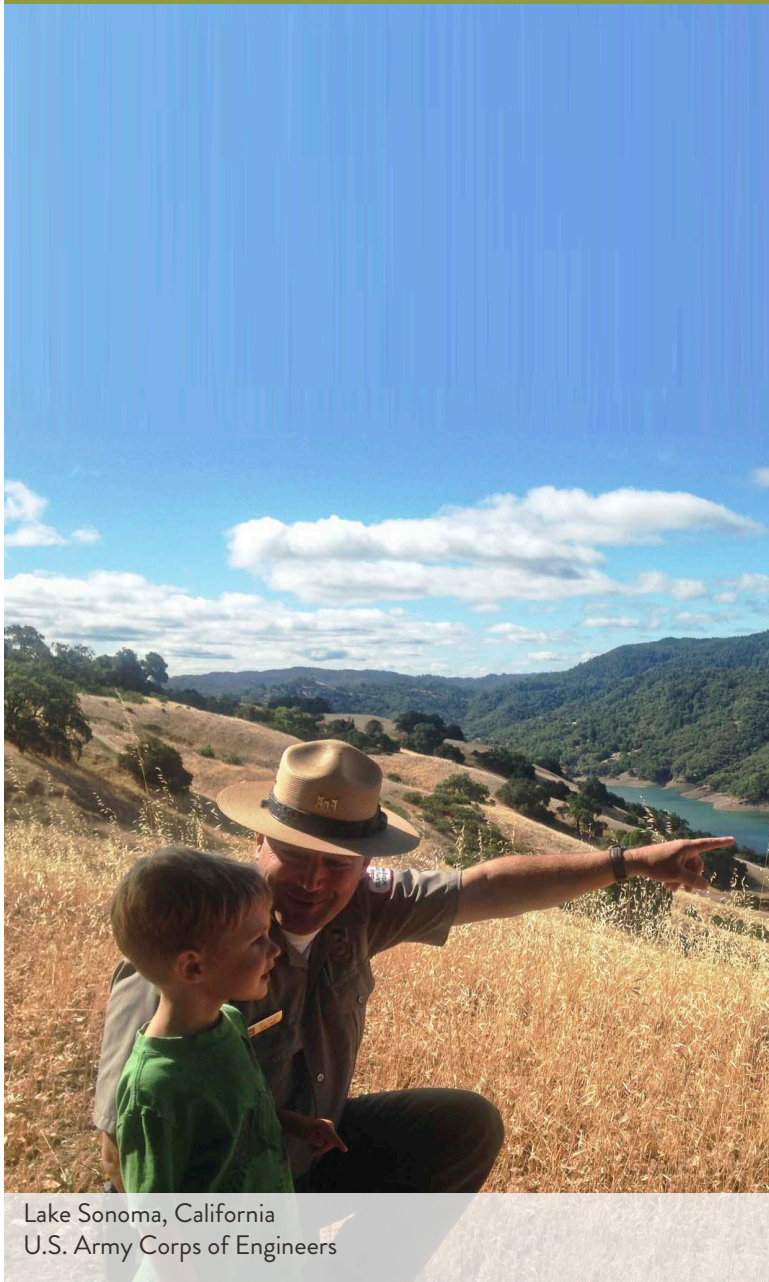
PLA will collaborate with NPS to develop a reference manual and agreements that nonprofit partners and NPS staff will see as empowering. Key areas of interest include the stewardship and recognition of donors, the acceptance of donations, the length of agreements and the scope of annual work plans.

- The U.S. Forest Service Partnership Authority will expire in September 2019. Since 2014, PLA has worked with the USFS to provide educational opportunities that help both cooperating associations and USFS staff use the agreement.

PLA will work closely with the USFS to track the successes and visitor experience enhancements that have resulted from this agreement in order to pursue a permanent authorization in the 115th or 116th Congress.

- The US Army Corps of Engineers discontinued its Cooperative Joint Management Program in 2013. For decades, this program enabled nonprofit organizations to cooperatively manage recreational facilities and reinvest fees collected for the maintenance and improvement of lakes and reservoirs.

PLA will encourage Congress to give the USACE an important tool to partner with nonprofit organizations and once again leverage limited federal funding. By enabling regular maintenance and operation through private support, this program prevents significant long-term costs and guarantees continued access to facilities that taxpayers have paid to construct.



Lake Sonoma, California
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIP RECOGNITION AND OPPORTUNITIES

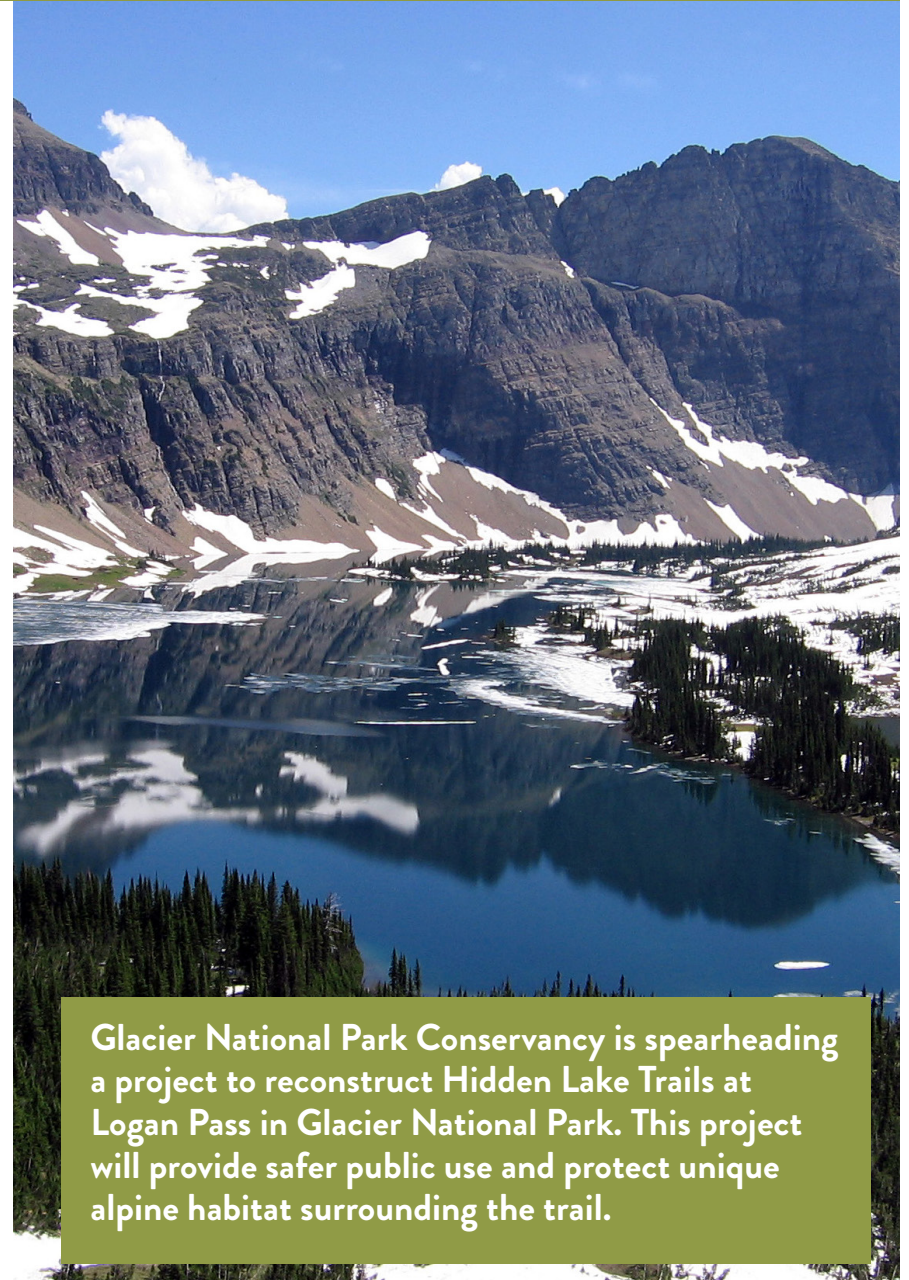
Nonprofit organizations play an integral role in the growth and success of public lands in America. Often, the public does not fully comprehend the extent to which their tax dollars are leveraged, extended and conserved thanks to the actions of nonprofit partners.

- Federal law does not uniformly encourage federal land management agencies to develop public-nonprofit partnerships that are exemplified by friends groups, cooperating associations and site-based educational institutes.

PLA is exploring legislation that would recognize the unique role of nonprofit public lands partners with federal land management agencies. Like the recent National Park Service Centennial Act, such legislation would encourage agencies to partner with nonprofit organizations to the greatest extent possible to achieve their missions.

- Current law does not easily permit a land management agency and nonprofit partner to combine their funding and for that partner to construct mission-supporting facilities on public lands. This leads to inefficiencies and greater costs to taxpayers, and negatively impacts the relationships that nonprofit organizations have with their donors and supporters.

PLA champions legislation such as the Park Partner Enhancement Act that clarifies the inherent public purpose in construction projects that enhance the visitor experience on public lands and encourages the use of public and private funds in ways that maximize efficiencies and reduce costs to taxpayers.



Glacier National Park Conservancy is spearheading a project to reconstruct Hidden Lake Trails at Logan Pass in Glacier National Park. This project will provide safer public use and protect unique alpine habitat surrounding the trail.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIP RECOGNITION AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Federal land management agencies have challenge cost-share authorities that enable them to share costs or services in carrying out their functions and responsibilities with nonprofit partners. Generally, the cooperating partner is required to provide at least 50% of the costs. Congress rarely appropriates funding equal to the potential private investment that could be leveraged to meet public lands needs.

PLA strongly encourages Congress to incentivize private support for public lands through challenge cost-share opportunities. Recent appropriations for and authorization of the NPS Centennial Challenge serve as a model to replicate across public lands.



“In 2016, we were able to secure \$400,000 in private philanthropy which was matched by \$250,000 in NPS Centennial Challenge funding. This allowed us to open a new, interactive visitor center with our agency partner in downtown St. Paul, MN.”

- Katie Nyberg, Mississippi Park Connection

FUNDING AND STEWARDING PUBLIC LANDS

OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The government is responsible for funding the operations and maintenance of our public lands.

- For years, our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests and other public lands have fallen far behind in core funding for basic operations, ranging from visitor services to administration to habitat management. While partners can help fill some gaps, they cannot be expected to replace most central functions.

PLA advocates for federal funding to fully meet the operational needs of our public lands.

- PLA will support partners in efforts to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog in order to improve roads, bridges and facilities, restore historic and cultural resources and enhance the visitor experience.

PLA advocates for an intensive effort to reduce the public lands maintenance backlog and for ways to leverage public-private resources such as the National Park Service Legacy Act of 2017.

- The cost to suppress wildfires across public lands has grown dramatically. Congress has not consistently allocated enough funding for wildfires through its regular order appropriations process, and so dollars intended for recreation, education and wildfire prevention have been diverted.

PLA urges Congress to develop wildfire emergency funding processes similar to those of other natural disasters, like hurricanes, floods and tornadoes. PLA advocates for legislation like the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act that stabilizes the level of funding for suppression within land management agencies, accesses disaster funding and reduces the need to transfer from non-suppression accounts and programs.



Lodgepole Fire in the Salmon-Challis National Forest near Challis, Idaho in July 2013. Photo Credit - U.S. Forest Service.

FUNDING AND STEWARDING PUBLIC LANDS

PUBLIC LANDS DESIGNATIONS

Public lands not only protect unique cultural, historical, and natural resources, they benefit the American people as economic drivers. PLA supports the responsible creation and authorization of public lands.

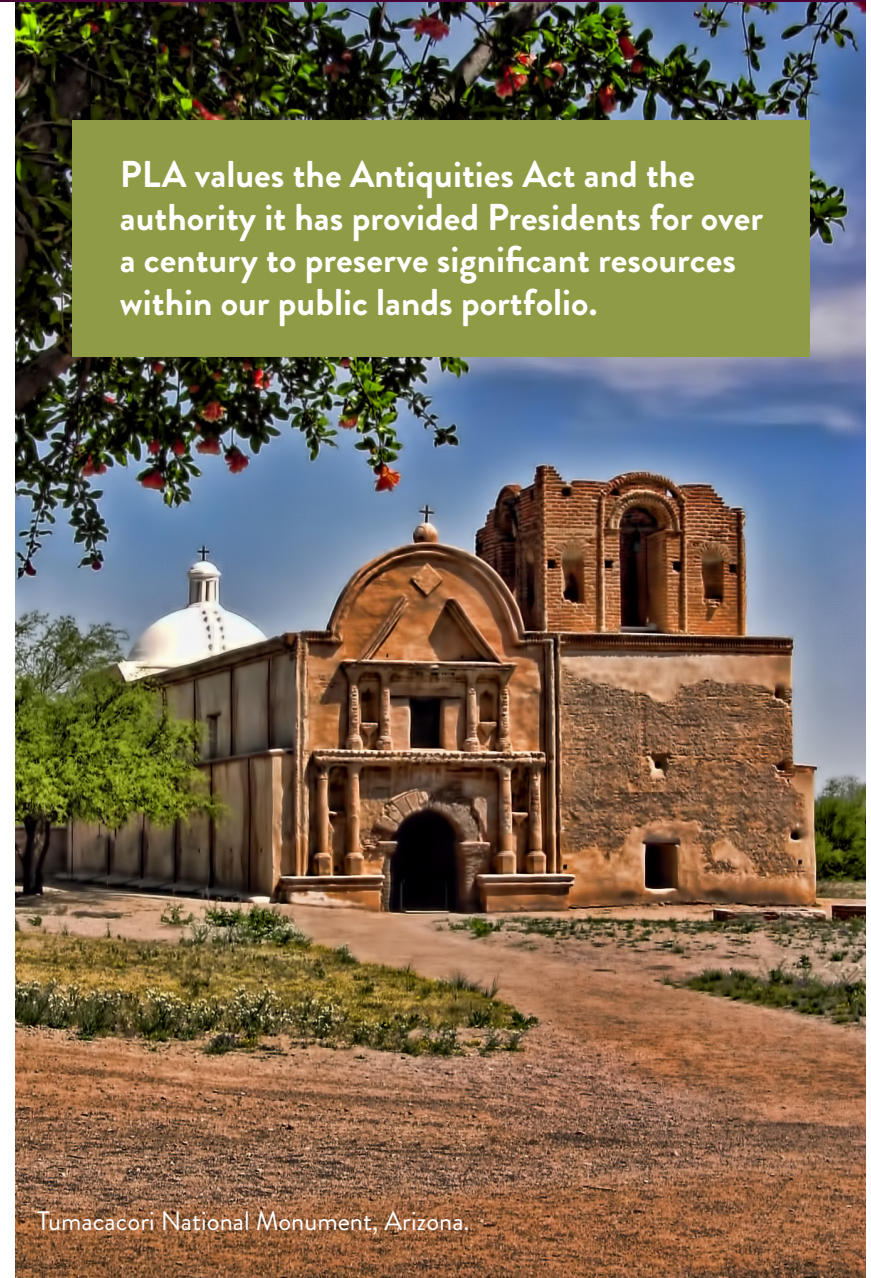
- Congress enacted the Antiquities Act in 1906, empowering the President of the United States to declare national monuments in areas controlled by the federal government. Presidents from both parties have used the act to protect areas of natural, historical, cultural and scientific interest to the nation.

PLA values the Antiquities Act and the authority it has provided Presidents for over a century to preserve significant resources within our public lands portfolio. PLA strongly supports existing monuments, especially those established through the effort and continued engagement of nonprofit partners. PLA members partner with many monuments created through the Antiquities Act and serve as bridges between land management agencies and local communities. PLA believes local perspectives are essential to the long-term success of public lands designations and the promotion of visitor and recreational use. Nonprofit partners help facilitate greater citizen engagement in all public lands, helping to build and empower a community of stewardship for these resources.

- The National Heritage Area Act establishes a system that recognizes areas of the United States that tell nationally significant stories about U.S. heritage and that works to conserve, enhance and interpret them.

PLA supports formalizing the National Heritage Areas System and increasing recognition and support of the nonprofit partners that interpret resources, increase tourism and boost local economies.

PLA values the Antiquities Act and the authority it has provided Presidents for over a century to preserve significant resources within our public lands portfolio.



Tumacacori National Monument, Arizona.

FUNDING AND STEWARDING PUBLIC LANDS

UPHOLDING INTENDED USE FOR PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands are held in trust by government for designated purposes and for the enjoyment of the American people. PLA members routinely collaborate with agencies in shaping long-term management plans, as well as fund preservation and construction projects, habitat restoration efforts, trail building and other public lands improvements.

- Open and transparent public comment processes provide valuable opportunities for American citizens to help land managers understand the levels of community support or concern for proposed projects.

PLA advocates for sustainable planning on public lands, especially with regard to construction projects and major developments that have a primary purpose beyond resource protection and the visitor experience. PLA supports its members' efforts to educate the public about projects that could negatively affect their public lands and works at the national level to educate elected officials.

ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- Extreme weather events, sea level rise, ocean acidification, invasive species, catastrophic wildfires and other symptoms of global climate change affect our public lands and cause significant management challenges.

PLA will lend its voice to initiatives aimed at supporting public lands as they adapt and transition to a new climate reality. PLA will encourage its members' efforts to prepare for climate change through programs, research and public engagement.



Green Jays, Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Texas
Photo: C.V. Vick, Creative Commons

EXPANDING ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

RESOURCES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

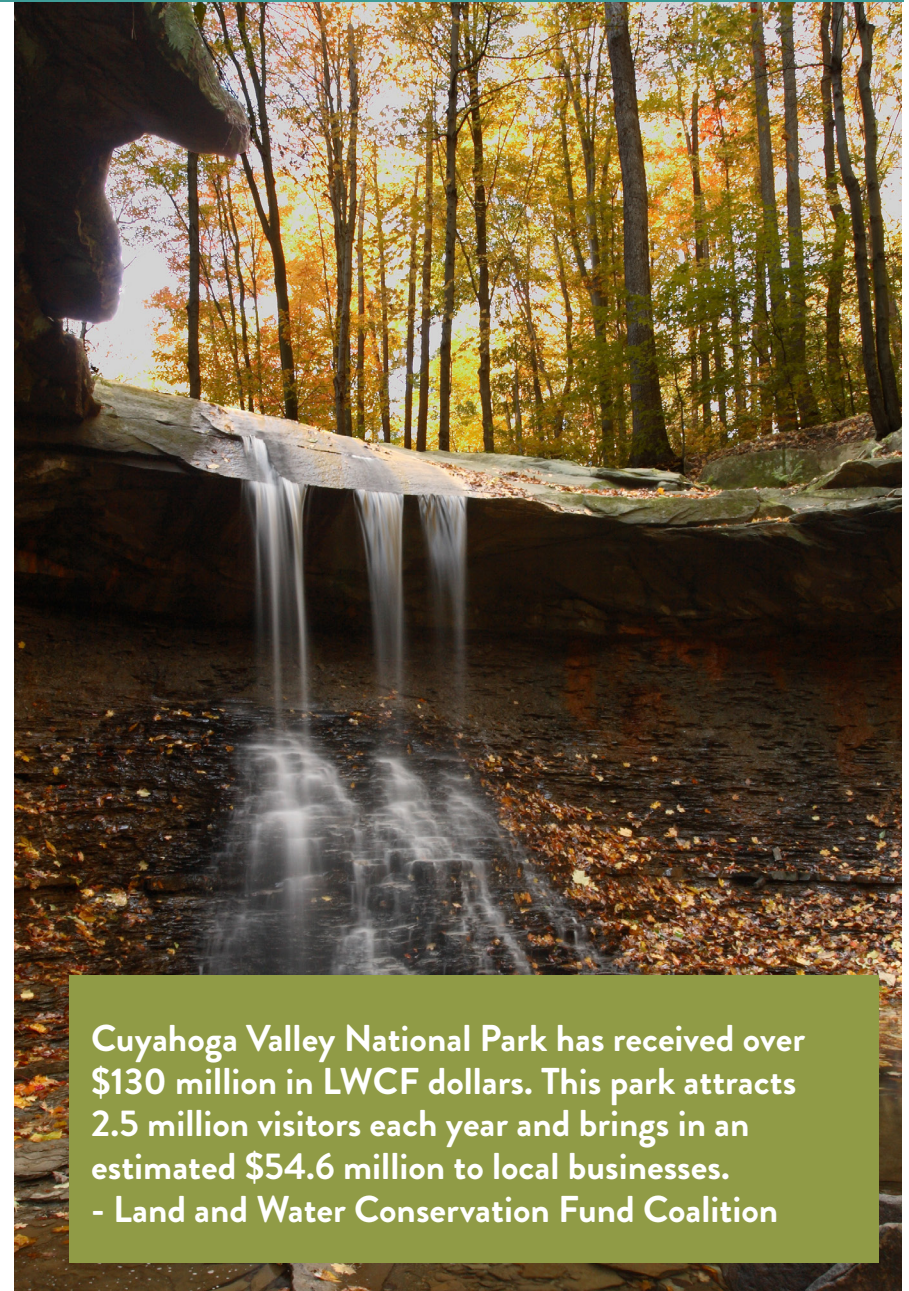
PLA advocates for existing and proposed legislation to fund infrastructure and operational needs on public lands. In addition, PLA advocates for the important role public land nonprofit partners play in the ability to leverage federal dollars and private support.

- The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) allows federal land management agencies to require fees from public lands users and reinvest dollars to enhance the visitor experience on public lands. FLREA authority, and the almost \$400 million of annual funds tied to this law, is scheduled to expire in September 2017.

PLA advocates for the reauthorization of FLREA as well as for increased transparency in the expenditure of fees, strengthened connections between fee projects and the visitor experience and inclusion of the US Army Corps of Engineers in the scope of its authority.

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1965 to safeguard natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. LWCF uses revenues from the depletion of offshore oil and gas to support the conservation of land and water – including the acquisition of in-holdings and other threatened lands.

PLA advocates for the permanent authorization of LWCF and its focus on protecting critical habitat and scenic vistas, providing public access for recreation and preserving notable historic and cultural resources.



Cuyahoga Valley National Park has received over \$130 million in LWCF dollars. This park attracts 2.5 million visitors each year and brings in an estimated \$54.6 million to local businesses.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE ON PUBLIC LANDS

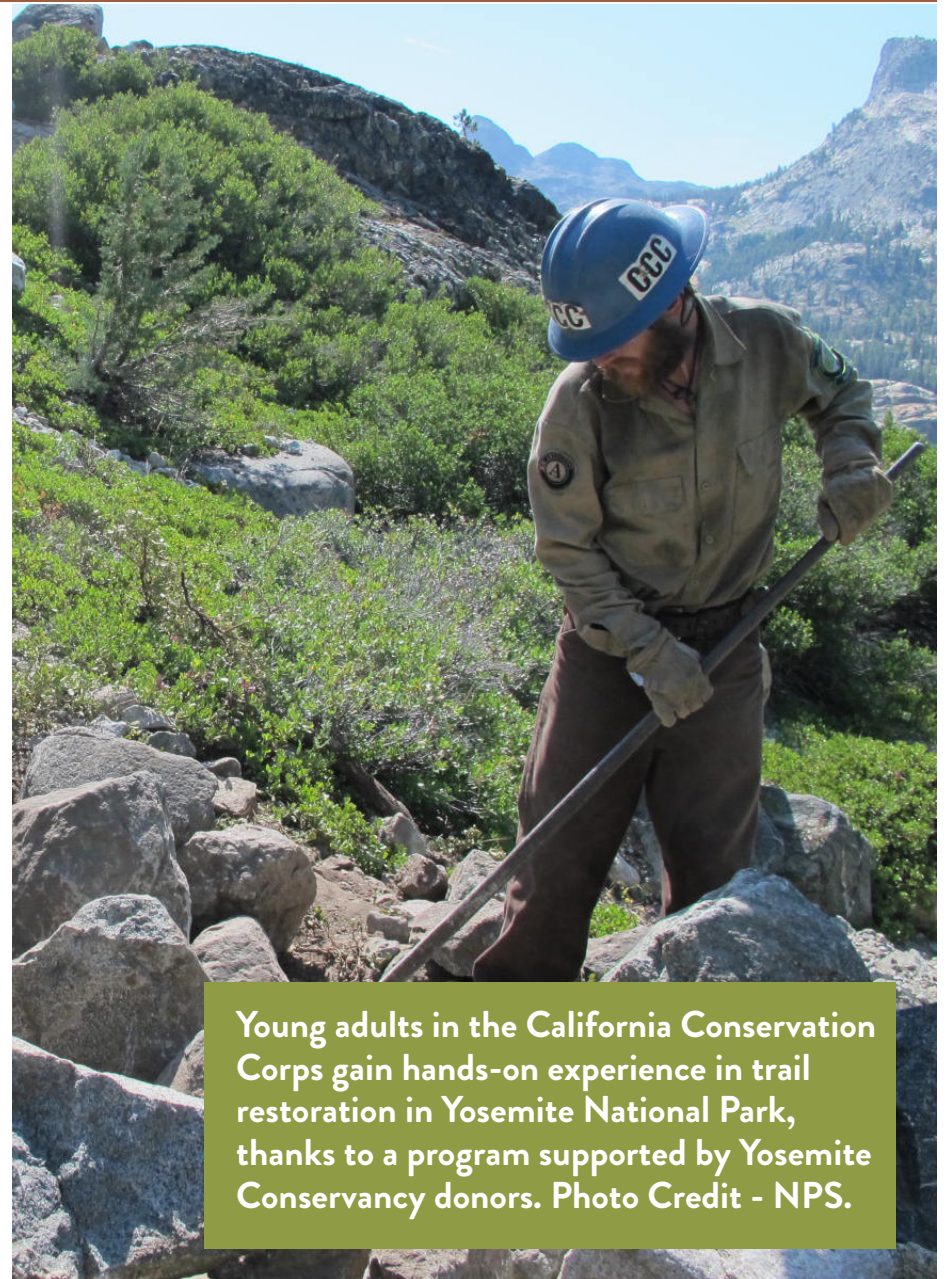
PLA members implement and fund programs that empower youth on public lands through education opportunities, employment and volunteerism. PLA supports policies and legislation that authorize and fund these efforts and that encourage new generations of public lands stewards.

- The goal of the 21st Century Conservation Corps (21CSC) is to place youth and veterans in the United States in national service positions to protect, restore and enhance the great outdoors.

PLA endorses the long-term authorization of 21CSC to tackle public lands infrastructure issues, increase stewardship opportunities for young people and veterans and demonstrate the value of private-public partnerships to accomplishing goals.

- The Every Kid in a Park program provides opportunities for 4th graders and their families to visit all of America's federally managed public lands by providing fee-free access. Hundreds of thousands of young people have visited public lands through this program, often thanks to transportation or educational support from nonprofit public lands partners.

PLA supports the continuation of Every Kid in a Park, or a similar program, that empowers young people and their families to visit all of America's public lands without entrance fees and leverages the continued support of nonprofit public lands partners.



Young adults in the California Conservation Corps gain hands-on experience in trail restoration in Yosemite National Park, thanks to a program supported by Yosemite Conservancy donors. Photo Credit - NPS.



Be a voice for our public lands.
For more information, visit publiclandsalliance.org.

2401 Blueridge Avenue, Suite 303 | Silver Spring, MD 20902 | 301.946.9475 | info@publiclandsalliance.org