



Vulnerable Federal Public Lands Policies

The Land and Water Conservation Fund – Enacted in 1965, the fund diverts revenue from offshore oil drilling to a variety of outdoor projects, from baseball fields to park maintenance to disaster relief. The fund was allowed to expire by the GOP Congress in 2014, was reauthorized for a year (with help from Congressman Scott Peters), and is currently in limbo. Last October, Congressman Rob Bishop of Utah, the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, dismissed it as a “slush fund” and blocked a vote on reauthorization (legislative).

The Roadless Rule – Approved by President Clinton in his final days in office in 2001, the Roadless Rule was the subject of a three-year study which ended new road building by the U.S. Forest Service in what are called inventoried roadless areas. The current Roadless Area Conservation Rule conserves 58.5 million acres of National Forests from most logging and road construction. This lives or dies at the discretion of the president. President Bush put it on hold when he assumed office in 2001, and President Obama renewed authorization upon taking office in 2009 (executive).

The Wilderness Act – Signed into law by President Johnson in 1964, the Wilderness Act created the National Wilderness Preservation System, and protects wild areas where the "community of life are untrammelled by man, and where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." A wilderness designation applies the highest level of conservation to public land, and is the gold standard by which conservation is measured. Machines are not permitted in Wilderness areas, as the legislation is intended to preserve entire ecosystems and wild character and habitat, and it remains the most successful act of conservation in history (legislative).

The Antiquities Act – Signed into law by Republican Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act provides presidents with a mechanism to quickly secure and protect threatened areas as National Monuments if Congress is dragging its feet or taking too long to craft National Park legislation. Since 1906 the Antiquities Act has preserved areas like Joshua Tree, Death Valley and the Pinnacles in Monterey County, all of which have since become National Parks in California, along with icons like Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona and Olympic National Park in Washington. House Republicans despise this bill, and cry foul every time a president has utilized it – because it leaves less public land for them to steal, sell and exploit (legislative).