

July 3, 2020

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCollum, Ranking Member Joyce, Chairman Murkowski, and Ranking Member Udall:

The undersigned organizations represent local, regional, Indigenous, statewide, and national organizations involved in on-the-ground collaborative landscape conservation across the United States for the benefit of people and nature. We are writing to respectfully request that you maintain Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 appropriations for landscape conservation and the Science Applications program relative to FY 2020 appropriations. These appropriations are allocated through two line items in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) budget: Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Adaptive Science.

Healthy connected landscapes have proven essential for human health, vibrant communities, rural economies, and sustaining fish and wildlife populations. Accessible and functioning landscapes, and the amenities they provide, will help our nation move through current health, social, and economic challenges we face.

Landscape conservation partnerships play an essential role in bringing together federal, state, tribal, local, and private sector conservation efforts. These diverse and inclusive partnerships foster effective natural resource conservation and good governance by helping assure that public and private investments in conservation science, planning, and implementation are well coordinated across sectors and political boundaries.

Over the past few years, USFWS shifted emphasis of the Science Applications Program from a central focus on landscape conservation partnerships and science, to a broader set of agency priorities. While we are concerned with this shift in emphasis, we urge Congress to continue funding landscape conservation, either through the Science Applications Program or other means. If the program is retained, we ask that you urge USFWS to re-emphasize funding landscape conservation partnerships and related science priorities. We urge you to direct the USFWS to provide leadership and resources to re-establish a durable, collaborative, and transparent framework for landscape conservation. In doing so, we ask that you direct the USFWS to seek engagement from states, federal agencies, tribes, NGOs, landowners, businesses, and others via existing landscape partnerships where they are present and pursue this approach in areas where they are not. Finally, in anticipation of enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act, we believe vibrant landscape conservation partnerships are well positioned to support planning and prioritization to ensure these funds are well spent.

We are grateful for your subcommittees' continued support for the work of collaborative landscape conservation and the Science Applications Program, despite the Program's recent shift from landscape conservation priorities. The final FY 2020 appropriated funding levels of \$12.5 million for Cooperative Landscape Conservation and \$10.517 million for Adaptive Science represent a solid funding base to support the operations of the program including funding on-the-ground landscape collaboratives.

Continued funding is needed to help sustain coordination of landscape collaboration and science projects with states, tribes, and other partners.

Our organizations represent land stewards, natural resource managers, non-profit professionals, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, and citizens dedicated to the development and success of conservation at the landscape scale. We believe that thinking and acting across boundaries leads to more effective natural resource conservation while also sustaining working lands and human communities. As experts in the theory and practice of landscape-scale conservation, we recognize the tremendous value of these collaboratives in the world of natural resource management and conservation.

We respectfully ask that you consider our perspectives in your deliberations on landscape conservation funding and the future of the Science Applications Program within the FY 2021 Interior and Environment appropriations bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Adirondack Council	Maryland Forestry Foundation
Akiak Native Community	Milkweed Matters
Alaska Conservation Foundation	National Wildlife Federation
Aleut International Association	Naturaland Trust
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Nature Link Institute
Association of Village Council Presidents	NatureServe
Audubon Pennsylvania	New England Forestry Foundation
Bear Yuba Land Trust	New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
Bristol Bay Native Association	North American Grouse Partnership
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper	North Florida Land Trust
Ca. Landscape Stewardship Network	Northeast Wilderness Trust
Cascabel Conservation Association	Northwest Boreal Partnership
Center for Collaborative Conservation	Okanogan Land Trust
Center for Large Landscape Conservation	Opacum Land Trust
Chesapeake Conservancy	Open Space Institute
Chugach Regional Resources Commission	Pepperwood Foundation
Cienega Watershed Partnership	Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska
Community Building Institute	Quileute Tribe
Congaree Land Trust	Rensselaer Land Trust
Connecticut Farmland Trust	Resource Management Service
Conservation Biology Institute	Restaino Design Landscape Architecture
Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast	Rocky Mountain Wild
Continental Divide Trail Coalition	Roeslein Alternative Energy
Craighead Institute	Salamatof Tribe
Current Consulting LLC	Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe
Delaware Highlands Conservancy	Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council
ECO Resource Group	Southern Conservation Partners, Inc.
EcoCamp Coyote	Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
ECO-resolutions	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Forterra	The Conservation Fund

Future West
George Mason University
Golden Eagle Audubon Society
Good News Wood Salvation
Grasslands Charitable Foundation
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Heart of the Rockies Initiative
High Divide Collaborative
Holistic Management International
Houston Wilderness
Hudson Highlands Land Trust
KS Wild
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Leigh Goldberg Consulting, LLC
Lynn Canal Conservation, Inc.
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

The Forest Stewards Guild
The Nature Conservancy
The Oak Granary
The Vital Ground Foundation
The WILD Foundation
TOGETHER Bay Area
Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership
University of Alberta
Weaver Ranch
Western Klamath Restoration Partnership
Wildlands Network
Winyah Rivers Alliance
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
Yukon University