

PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S RESOURCES

The Department of the Interior ~~proposes an~~ initiative called "The Partnership for America's Resources (PAR)" that will be dedicated to acquiring, restoring, and passing on the future generations recreational and scenic lands, wildlife habitats, improved waterways, and cultural resources. As part of the initiative, Interior proposes legislation that is described below.

BACKGROUND

The PAR will use both existing authorities and undertake new conservation and recreation initiatives.

Existing Dedicated Resources

- There are already funds for Land and Water Conservation, Historic Preservation, and Abandoned Mine Reclamation Funds which are unappropriated in the amount of \$16 billion.
- For instance, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was passed in 1965 to protect our natural resources in perpetuity by using \$900 million per year from royalties generated by drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).
- At current appropriations levels, the unappropriated balances of these dedicated conservation funds will reach \$24 billion in the next decade. As we enter the 21st century, it is time to rededicate, improve upon, and use fully these existing authorities to improve the protection and enjoyment of America's recreational, wildlife, scenic, and historic legacy.
- The last historic preservation needs review, done over a decade ago by the National Park Service, estimated a general national preservation requirement for protection and restoration of historic and archaeological properties listed on the National Register and in poor or threatened condition at about \$20 billion.

New Conservation and Recreation Initiatives

- Environmental restoration work for public lands
- Enlisting states in programs to protect non-game fish and wildlife and their habitats
- To use the Conservation Reserve Program at the Department of Agriculture to protect wildlife habitats

1. all
Unspent
\$5
- why
2. Carve
against
surplus?

- Helping cities restore their urban parks

are these increases?

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The Department of the Interior's proposed legislation encompasses authorities and financing for seven special funds to protect and restore America's wildlife habitat, scenic, recreational, natural, and historic resources.

FUND	1999	2000	Where	Purpose
Land and Water Conservation Fund	270	900	OCS Receipt	To acquire lands for recreation, habitat protection, scenic beauty, and biological diversity.
Habitat and Coastal Restoration Fund	194	800	OCS Receipt	New fund to (a) address the unmet backlog of habitat restoration needs; (b) address similar restoration needs on coastal areas and private lands; and © provide grant assistance to states
Historic Preservation Fund	170	300	OCS Receipt	To address backlog of projects and unmet needs for preservation and restoration of historic buildings, sites, and artifacts
Farmland Wildlife Protection Fund	0	100	OCS Receipt	New program and fund to acquire development rights to conserve farmlands with high biological values or key habitat-related environmental features
Urban Park and Recreation Fund	2	150	OCS Receipt	To assist cities in restoring urban parks, especially in low income areas

why low
why low

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program	183	277	Coal Mine Fees; Fund Interest	To accelerate restoration of high priority abandoned mines
Federal Lands Good Neighbors Fund	169	428	Surplus Mineral Lease Receipt; Refuge Reven.; OCS Oil and Gas	New fund to accelerate transfers of selected lands in Alaska to the State and Native corporations and sharing offshore oil and gas revenues with states and local governments
TOTAL	988	2,955		

Partnership for America's Resources (PAR)

Our Legacy for the 21st Century

Assessing National Priorities

On August 5, President Clinton stated that his domestic agenda is: Saving Social Security First; A Patient's Bill of Rights; Education and Safe Schools; and Protecting the Environment. Environmental issues consistently generate positive public reaction. Americans support environmental initiatives, and the President has provided tremendous leadership on a national scale.

Earlier this year the President and the Congress made a firm commitment to our nation's transportation infrastructure with the passage of TEA-21. While that massive legislation provides minor environmental mitigation measures, the ultimate result is more roads and less green space. PAR places the environment on par with other national priorities and demonstrates the Administration's equal commitment to the environment.

In the Spirit of Teddy Roosevelt

PAR creates a fitting legacy for the President, the Congress and the American people to pass on to the children of the 21st Century. Though not widely known, the President has forged an impressive environmental record, documented in a CEQ report: restoration of 23 million acres of fragile crop land; 9.3 million new acres of parks, monuments, and wilderness; new conservation protection on 3.5 million acres of forests, refuges and public lands; 5.4 million new acres under habitat conservation plans; 11 million new acres in regional ecosystem initiatives; 330 new miles of wild & scenic rivers; 2.3 million new acres of marine sanctuaries & reserves; 11 new national heritage areas; and 500,000 new acres of private lands under conservation partnerships.

PAR adds to that impressive legacy and will ensure President Clinton's place as one of the outstanding environmental figures of the 20th Century, by creating a permanent structure for:

- Acquiring and restoring for future generations recreational and scenic lands, wildlife habitats, rivers and streams, wetlands, and historical resources.
- Providing *permanent* funding for resource protection, *using existing, long-term revenue sources*.
- Amending legislation for existing programs and creating new programs, to reflect the President's priorities.

Keeping Promises to Past, Present and Future Generations

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was passed in 1965 to protect our natural resources in perpetuity by using \$900 million per year from royalties generated by drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The principle of replacing a depleting resource with a permanent investment is as sound today as it was in 1965. Through the years, this OCS funding consistently has not been used for its intended purpose. Rather, it has been a source for other national priorities, such as deficit reduction in recent years. As we enter an era of projected budget surpluses, it is time to reestablish this trust approach and dedicate OCS revenue to its original purpose: protecting our nation's irreplaceable resources.

Time to Act

Huge acquisition and restoration backlogs continue to threaten our resources: \$10-12 billion land acquisition backlog; \$600 million in annual requests from states for grants under the Land and Water Conservation Fund that has zero funding; billions of dollars in rehabilitation needs for national register properties, historically black colleges, and tribal buildings; a \$1.7 billion rehabilitation backlog for endangered national historical landmarks; a \$2.6 billion backlog for abandoned coal mine restoration; and millions of acres of degraded habitats in need of restoration.

Pressures are mounting for expenditure of OCS revenues. Seemingly every environmental interest group and many members of Congress, including Representatives Don Young and John Dingell and Senators Robert Torricelli and Mary Landrieu, have plans for natural resource conservation, to be funded with OCS revenues. The Administration must act now with its own plan, to ensure that the President's conservation priorities are addressed.

A Comprehensive Plan to Protect America's Natural, Cultural and Historic Legacy

PAR considers all national interests, including those of mayors, governors, coastal and western States, historic preservation and wildlife conservation advocates. It includes:

- Full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund: \$900 million per year, to include a robust stateside program, phased in over five years to an equal \$450 million share.
- A new \$800 million Habitat and Coastal Restoration Fund to restore habitat on federal, state, and privately owned lands, and protect non-game wildlife.
- A new Farmland Wildlife Protection Fund that adds to the Conservation Reserve Program that *permanently* protects green belts, flood-prone land, wetlands and significant wildlife habitats.
- Full funding for the Historic Preservation Fund at \$150 million per year, and a \$150 million companion program for preservation of federal historic structures.
- Funding Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) at \$150 million per year.
- Fully funding the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to clean watersheds with acid drainage.
- A new Federal Lands Good Neighbor Fund, which fully funds payments to states and counties in lieu of taxes for federal lands, accelerates Alaska Land Conveyances and initiates a \$100 million OCS Coastal States Impact Assistance Program..

Realistic Goals, Historic Outcomes

The PAR plan provides a reasonable blueprint for the conservation and restoration of America's public lands. Subject to willing sellers, PAR will result in:

- Acquisition by the year 2010 of all inholdings in National Parks outside Alaska.
- Reclamation by 2010 of all top priority abandoned mines.
- Acquisition by 2015 of half the total land backlog of federal resource agencies.
- Acquisition by 2020 of all lands targeted for refuge and wilderness use.
- Restoration by 2020 of millions of acres of habitat, thousands of miles of streams, tens of thousands of acres of coastal habitat, hundreds of national landmarks, and all of the National Park Service backlog of historic structures.
- Substantial contributions of new wetlands toward the Administration's goal of 100,000 acres net increase in wetlands annually.