



News

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For Immediate Release

North Idaho Forest Lands To Be Protected

Funding protects timber economy, wildlife habitat at McArthur Lake

Congress yesterday approved funding for a Forest Legacy project that will fund conservation agreements that protect private working forests and wildlife habitat at McArthur Lake, located between Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry.

The funding will be used to purchase 3700 acres of permanent conservation agreements with the landowner, Forest Capital Partners, ensuring that the land will remain forest and provide public access, timber supply and jobs for the local economy.

“We are committed to management practices that sustain both environmental and economic contributions from our forestlands,” said Kevin Boling, Western Director of Land Transactions for Forest Capital Partners. “The McArthur Lake project is another example of how a sustainably managed working forest can provide important wildlife habitat and support local communities with jobs and revenues at the same time.”

MacArthur Lake is one of the most important wildlife migration routes in North Idaho, used by moose, elk, deer and other wildlife to move from the Selkirk to the Cabinet-Yaak mountains.

The funding is provided by the Forest Legacy Program, a competitive federal grant program that promotes both conservation and working forests across the nation. McArthur Lake was selected as the nation’s third best project overall for FY10 funding.

“The McArthur Lake project is our best and last hope to protect this important big game habitat,” says Robyn Miller, The Nature Conservancy’s North Idaho conservation manager. “We thank Forest Capital Partners for their shared vision for this land, and our entire Idaho Congressional delegation for their support of the rural economy and wildlife in North Idaho.”

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The Nature Conservancy helped negotiate the agreements with Forest Capital Partners. Miller says the McArthur Lake project typifies The Nature Conservancy's approach of keeping working lands working and partnering closely with local communities on conservation that benefits both people and nature.

"This is important to our community as the owners of these lands have chosen to keep them as working forests. The effects of these choices maintain local jobs and adds to the stability of products for our natural resource industry," says Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner. "I was extremely pleased that Forest Capital Partners has chosen to allow the public non-motorized access to the MacArthur Lake lands. They should be commended for this decision. Boundary County supported these proposals and I am glad to see them come to fruition."

The Forest Legacy Program is a competitive federal grant program that promotes both conservation and working forests across the nation. McArthur Lake was selected as the nation's third best project overall for FY10 funding. In Idaho, the program is administered by the Idaho Department of Lands.

Idaho's Congressional delegation voiced their approval of the project and were instrumental in ensuring that the project received funding.

"McArthur Lake is a unique area of Idaho that deserves protection," said Idaho Senator Mike Crapo, co-chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus. "This funding will secure public access and multiple use, while preserving its unique character."

"This is an excellent example of collaboration where different entities come together, develop common goals and work to achieve them. The question wasn't about either protecting good-paying jobs or preserving wildlife habitat—these groups sought to do both. They were successful and we can all appreciate the outcome," said U.S. Senator Jim Risch.

"The fact that the McArthur Lake project is one of our nation's top conservation priorities is a testament to the important dual role that this area plays as both critical wildlife habitat and a vital part of the communities in North Idaho," Simpson said. "I have long supported the Forest Legacy program because it enables us to preserve Idaho's magnificent wild spaces while ensuring that communities that live and work on the land continue to be able to do so. I am so pleased with the collaboration between conservation groups, land owners, and the communities in the McArthur Lake area who are working together to preserve this beautiful place."

Representative Simpson played a special in shaping the bill, as the highest ranking Republican on the subcommittee that determines Forest Service funding.

"Although I have not been a Congressman long, I have spent most of my lifetime enjoying Idaho's beautiful lakes and mountains," Congressman Walt Minnick said. "I also spent two decades running a company in Idaho's forest products industry, so I understand the many ways our public lands must be protected and nurtured for future generations. I commend and thank

Congressman Simpson, The Nature Conservancy and many others for their hard work, collaboration and leadership in helping do just that for McArthur Lake.”

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The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Visit us on the Web at nature.org.

Weekly news, notes and stories from The Nature Conservancy of Idaho at www.IdahoNatureNotes.blogspot.com

Forest Capital Partners is a private landowner, financial manager, and steward of large-scale working forests across North America. Forest Capital actively manages more than 2.1 million acres of forests under sustainable forest management guidelines set forth by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® and is a leading grower of environmentally certified timber products and active participant in non-timber forest markets.

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