

California's public lands boost small businesses and local communities

There are about [640 million](#) acres of publicly owned land in the United States.¹ At first glance, the connection between public lands and small businesses' bottom lines may not be obvious, but when we look into the overall impacts that national parks, monuments and forests have on our communities, the relationship is clear. Public lands drive tourism and promote economic growth in local communities, especially at small businesses. This is why efforts to continue protecting these lands need to be made in order to help local economies and small businesses grow and thrive.

Economic impact of public lands on local small businesses

Public lands are essential to local economies in California and are the catalyst to creating new jobs, attracting entrepreneurs and visitors, and boosting consumer spending. In California, outdoor recreation supports \$92 billion in consumer spending and nearly [700,000](#) jobs.² The people who are seeing the benefits of this spending are local business, restaurant and hotel owners.

What small business owners are saying about public lands

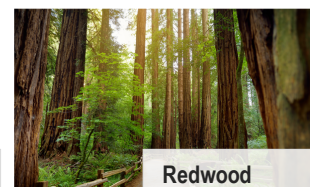
Small business owners believe protecting public lands positively impacts business opportunities, local job growth and state economies. Small Business Majority's scientific opinion polling found nearly two-thirds of small business owners in Western states believe designating new national parks and monuments would enhance local jobs and the economy, and **52% agree it helps their state attract and retain new businesses and entrepreneurs**. Additionally, a vast 90% believe public lands draw tourists that boost business for local restaurants, hotels and shops.

The importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to public lands, local economies

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress more than 50 years ago as a way to secure funding for public land that the American people could enjoy, and is funded by fees from energy companies that conduct offshore drilling for oil and gas. **Over the past decade, California has relied on more than \$2.4 billion worth of funding from the LWCF.**

It should come as no surprise then that previous state polling from Small Business Majority found 93% of small businesses believe Congressional leadership should extend the LWCF and 80% believe that the Fund can create opportunities that support small businesses.

Public lands that have received funding through the LWCF include



¹ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf>

² <https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/s/California-fact-sheet-1919.pdf>