

THE  
TRUST  
*for*  
PUBLIC  
LAND

August 31, 2011

Dear TPL Partner:



Will Rogers  
President

National Office  
101 Montgomery St.  
Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA  
94104  
P: (415) 495-4014  
F: (415) 495-4103  
will.rogers@tpl.org  
www.tpl.org

I'm writing to seek your assistance at this critical moment in the future of federal support for conservation. In response to proposed reductions in funding for a host of conservation programs, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has been playing a key role in an historic undertaking that we hope will reverse the current trend away from conservation partnerships on the part of the federal government.

Earlier this year, TPL board chair Page Knudsen Cowles and I joined a diverse coalition of leaders representing conservation, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation organizations who are working in Washington DC to explore ways to work jointly to achieve shared goals. The meeting resulted in the creation of the America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation Coalition. The Coalition comprises a broad, diverse and influential cross-section of organizations that have united behind a common vision for ensuring the future of America's conservation, preservation and recreation programs.

On July 6, 2011 the Coalition transmitted a letter to congressional leadership outlining our priorities. The letter, which was signed by more than 600 organizations, made clear how investments in natural resource conservation and historic preservation provide a return on investment that far exceeds the cost to the taxpayer. The letter also acknowledged the tremendous fiscal challenges America faces as the result of unsustainable deficits and offered to assist Congress in identifying savings and making difficult decisions on budget priorities.

The feedback we received following circulation of the letter made clear that, not only are we more united than coalitions in other issue areas, we are more advanced in the process of working with Congress and the Administration to help inform the difficult budget prioritization decisions they are currently facing. This brings us to a critical juncture.

Final enactment of the debt ceiling legislation (the Budget Control Act of 2011) has presented an opportunity to protect funding for preservation, recreation and conservation programs. For this to occur, it will be vital to speak in a common voice, to communicate our shared belief that these programs represent sound investments in the economy and the wellbeing of current and future generations of Americans.

Your willingness to join us in delivering this message to Congress will be critical in the coming weeks. Therefore, I am writing to request that you contact your Congressional representatives to make clear that, while we acknowledge the need to get America's fiscal house in order, the federal budget should not be balanced disproportionately on the backs of conservation, preservation and recreation programs. It is essential that we launch this effort immediately to ensure that we have



momentum when Congress reconvenes this fall. To assist you in this endeavor, we have drafted and attached proposed talking points.

We have already garnered the attention of key members of Congress during a pivotal and historic time and our shared actions in the coming days have the potential to help shape conservation, preservation and outdoor recreation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Page and I particularly appreciate your ongoing work to protect parks and open space and your partnership with TPL as we work to secure full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). We hope you will join us at this historic moment to direct our shared voices to our Members of the U.S. Congress. Please let them know that by supporting a federal commitment to conservation and recreation they provide a critical complement to the myriad state, local and private efforts we all continue to undertake across our local communities. Thank you very much for your participation and leadership in this critical undertaking.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Rogers", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Will Rogers, President