

LWCF

The congressional Land & Water Conservation Fund was enacted in 1965 and provides funding for the acquisition of private inholdings within National Parks and Forests. The money comes from government royalties on offshore gas and oil leases. Each year a percentage of the revenue generated from this source goes directly into the LWCF program to be used for this specifically dedicated purpose.

Because the public is generally unaware that such a fund exists, congress usually appropriates only a very small portion. As a result, an enormous IOU has been accumulated over the years. However, land trusts that focus on improving public lands can often persuade conscientious representatives to tap into the fund for especially worthy projects. Yaeger Mesa was recognized to be such a project for the Santa Ana Mountains.

Save the Saints Project

The effort to save missing pieces in the three National Forests that encircle the Southern California metropolis is known as the “Save the Saints” conservation campaign. Spanish names for saints have long been given to the peaks and mountain ranges surrounding the greater Los Angeles basin. San Gabriel Mountains, San Bernardino Mountains and Santa Ana Mountains are examples.

The three National Forests that these mountain ranges comprise are the most heavily-used public lands in the country, serving the largest single-state population center. Two-thirds of all Californians live within a two-hour drive of these popular public lands and one-twelfth of the entire U.S. population.

It is fitting that the special conservation fund that was designed to patch up all our national public lands should be aptly applied to the most heavily-used of these lands. Southern California is a place where the most diverse of all populations find access to the benefits of our National Parks and Forests.



Yaeger Mesa on far hill (center of picture)