



THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA
POSITION PAPER

The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulation of responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results.

GCA SUPPORTS NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS

America believes that public lands are held in trust for American citizens under a mandate of conservation stewardship, with the goal of preserving them for future generations. More than twenty percent of the land in the United States is under federal supervision.¹ Agencies charged with caring for these lands must set an example by using the best management practices available.

There is ever-increasing pressure for multiple uses of federal lands. The Garden Club of America urges the responsible agencies to make resource protection and preservation their first priority when establishing public land policy. The future sustainability of these public lands should be carefully considered prior to any natural resource development. Federal lands are a water source for more than 90 million US citizens.² Preservation of our vital water resources must be a priority of public land agencies.

Therefore, The Garden Club of America supports strengthening public policy to:

- Connect public lands and conservancies to create wildlife corridors for migration of plants and animals threatened by climate change.
- Provide adequate financial support for botanists to inventory, assess, and participate in the management of public lands.
- Place a priority on conservation and preservation, fostering bio-diversity and the protection of native plant communities and endangered species.
- Prevent, control and eradicate invasive species.
- Encourage collaborative efforts between government managers and private landowners to provide incentives for landowners to follow good conservation practices.
- Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965 and use the federal portion of the fund for its intended purpose: the purchase and restoration of public lands.
- Require federal agencies to uphold the same environmental laws which apply to private landowners.
- Adequately fund the National Landscape Conservation System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, the National Marine Sanctuary System, the National Park Service and the National Arboretum.
- Include the right of citizens to comment in a timely fashion in an open forum on public lands issues.
- Base the evaluation of public lands management on the condition of the land.

¹ The two major agencies responsible for public lands are the Department of the Interior (National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management) and the Department of Agriculture (Forest Service).

² <http://www.DOI.gov/facts.html> (Website of the Department of the Interior)

The purpose of The Garden Club of America is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence and publications, and to restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.