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Wood chimes in on proposed cuts

The White House's proposed budget for the 2021 fiscal year proposes massive cuts to the Department of Interior, including cuts to the National Park Service and a 97 percent cut to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, according to nonprofit project The Mountain Pact.

Salida Mayor P.T. Wood and past and current Salida City Council members signed a letter written by The Mountain Pact last summer that asked for full funding for the fund.

In response to the proposed cuts, Wood stated:

“The (Land and Water Conservation Fund) has been instrumental in a number of outdoor projects in Colorado including the Milk Run trail in Salida. As our economy becomes more dependent on outdoor recreation and as more and more people come to use our natural resources, it becomes increasingly important to improve, acquire and facilitate those opportunities.

“The LWCF is \$900 million, a small portion of the revenue generated from offshore oil and gas drilling leases. Although the fund, which was established (in) 1964, has rarely been fully allocated, it is an important tool for maintaining our national and state parks, preserving our open spaces, working ranches, wildlife habitat and access to public lands.

“The other cuts to the Department of Interior will have negative impacts on the more than 80 percent of our county that is public, stressing already over allocated resources and hurting the local economy.

“The cuts to our National Park System are perhaps the most egregious. Cutting funds to our national parks, which are already suffering from massive maintenance backlogs and increasing visitor pressure, is utterly irresponsible.

“The LWCF needs to be fully funded and the Department of Interior should be provided with the resources necessary to ensure that future generations will have the same opportunities to enjoy wildlife, parks and open spaces that you and I enjoy today.”