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LWCF Coalition Hails Passage of First Bill to Fully Fund Land and Water Conservation Fund

Stakeholders Pledge to Work With Incoming Administration

WASHINGTON – The LWCF Coalition today hailed the passage of the first appropriations bill to execute full mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) since the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was signed into law this summer. Yesterday’s action by Congress again affirms the consistently strong, bipartisan commitment in Congress to LWCF and the on-the-ground results envisioned under GAOA. It also thoroughly rejects the funding proposal submitted by the Trump Administration -- which would have violated the law on how LWCF operates – and correctly asserts Congress’s primacy in determining the final annual spending plan for America’s most important conservation and recreation program.

“The final FY21 Appropriations bill lives up to the promises made in the Great American Outdoors Act and will ensure that communities across the country receive funding for critical conservation and recreation projects,” said Drew McConville, Senior Managing Director of Government Relations at The Wilderness Society and a spokesperson for the LWCF Coalition. “It rejects the current administration’s attempt to circumvent the law, and instead ushers in a new era of balanced and robust funding in keeping with the spirit and letter of GAOA and other recent legislation. In the context of that huge bipartisan congressional commitment, we were disappointed to see that rescission of previous-year LWCF funds that otherwise might have helped to address the tremendous backlog of unmet LWCF need was included in the final bill. That said, the bill is a major conservation achievement, and we applaud Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee leaders – including Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Tom Udall, and Reps. Betty McCollum and David Joyce – for putting LWCF on solid footing for the year to come and beyond.”

This crucial legislation comes at a time when the Department of the Interior, through Secretarial Order #3388, seeks to rewrite the rules for LWCF and erode some of the very processes Congress has affirmed to ensure the program’s success. The LWCF Coalition urges quick confirmation by Congress of newly-announced Interior Secretary nominee Rep. Deb Haaland, who as a champion of LWCF can reverse these damaging new policies and uphold the vital conservation vision of the Great American Outdoors Act. Appreciating the broad conservation opportunity created by the legislation released today, we look forward to working with the incoming Biden-Harris Administration and our many bipartisan Congressional champions to realize the bill’s ground-breaking potential.

About the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America's most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For 55 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, recreational construction and activities and the continued historic preservation of our nation's iconic landmarks from coast-to-coast. LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments. Outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation activities contribute more than \$778 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 5.2 million jobs.

About the LWCF Coalition

The LWCF Coalition is the umbrella group of more than 1,000 state and local land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, outdoor recreationists and conservation organizations working to protect America's public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations. The Coalition is united in its advocacy for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which will ensure the continued conservation of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, civil war battlefields, as well as state and local parks. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.