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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 3, 2021

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NEWS RELEASE

Biden Administration Highlights Commitment to Land and Water Conservation

Reinforces Importance of the Great American Outdoors Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Biden Administration today reinforced the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in a joint announcement with the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the outsized impact of the program on conservation.

Today's announcement follows the release of the president's first budget proposal, which provided full funding for LWCF and includes more than 100 locally driven, fully vetted, community supported conservation and recreation access projects across the country. This is the first administration budget proposal since the enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act, which fully funded LWCF at \$900 million a year annually.

"The LWCF Coalition appreciates the historic investments President Biden is proposing for LWCF, protecting special places from Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to neighborhood parks in cities like Cleveland, to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and the High Peaks of Maine," said **Tom Cors, director of government relations for lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesperson for the LWCF Coalition.** "We look forward to working with the administration to maximize LWCF's role in helping meet the president's ambitious conservation and recreation goals, addressing the climate and nature crisis and creating more equitable access to the outdoors."

Key projects and grants proposed for funding include:

- The 1 million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), located in the northern third of Superior National Forest, is an outdoor recreation paradise featuring more than 1,200 miles of canoe routes, 11 hiking trails and approximately 2,000

designated campsites. Embedded throughout the BWCAW are approximately 82,400 acres of Minnesota School Trust lands. Over the past several years, LWCF has been appropriated to the Superior National Forest to purchase 50,000 acres of trust lands in order to expand recreational opportunities and improve management. The proposed FY 22 investment of LWCF is the final funding needed to complete this project, which will resolve a decades-old land conflict by eliminating inholdings within the BWCAW and also allowing the state to acquire working forestlands outside of the national forest that will generate revenue for Minnesota's schools and contribute to the local timber economy. LWCF funding will protect valuable BWCAW lakefront lands and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, canoeing, camping, and fishing.

- The 13,557-acre Quill Hill to Perham Stream Forest Legacy project will protect 2 properties in the High Peaks of Western Maine that contribute to international, national, and state conservation priorities. The project lies among Maine's High Peaks, a region which contains 10 of Maine's 14 tallest peaks. Protection of these parcels will expand an assemblage of connected, conserved lands to nearly 100,000 acres including lands adjacent to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The project will provide direct benefits to Maine's forest products and outdoor recreation economies and enhance public access to unique recreational amenities. It will protect significant habitat, including for Atlantic Salmon, Canada Lynx, and Bicknell's Thrush and build on Forest Legacy investments that protected 18,000 nearby acres and support the goals of the Forest Legacy Program, National Park Service, and the State of Maine.
- Grand Teton National Park is one of America's iconic natural wonders and one of the "crown jewels" of the national park system - consistently among the most-visited national parks and recently ranked in the top five for economic output supporting the local economy. Grand Teton is renowned for its majestic mountain views along the Snake River and its abundance of wildlife. Since the late 1960s, over \$82 million of investments from LWCF have been used by the National Park Service to purchase private inholdings scattered throughout the park in order to preserve the spectacular views and wildlife corridors within park boundaries. In recent years, LWCF funds have been critical to the protection of some of the last remaining large inholdings in the park, including Snake River Ranch. LWCF investments in FY22 will protect land near the Park's south boundary on the west side of the Snake River near the Granite Canyon entrance station, preserving the iconic landscape of the Teton Range, preventing residential development and protecting important habitat for a variety of wildlife.
- The president's budget requests \$232.4 million in LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants, creating access to nature and recreational facilities from boat ramps and playgrounds to local trail networks and state forests, plus \$125 million targeted toward urban underserved communities via the LWCF-funded Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program. One example of a pending project which has applied for ORLP funds:

- Clark Avenue Park on Cleveland's west side will become a community anchor, nestled between two of the most vibrant, diverse neighborhoods in Cleveland and adjacent to the local elementary school and recreation center. The new park site in a currently under-resourced area where few residents have access to quality open space will draw generations of families together, providing a civic space for local residents to gather, engage and advocate on issues impacting their community. As an ethnically diverse community, the new park site will be grounds for summer produce markets, festivals and cultural events, concerts and other performing arts. This project is in one of the five neighborhoods [identified](#) by the Trust for Public Land's Park Equity tool as having the highest potential to serve new people with parks.
- Supplemental project lists enumerate additional land and water conservation priorities across the country, representing a deep well of unmet needs that extends beyond \$900 million in funding.

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. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.