



LWCFCoalition.org

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Congress Rejects Trump Proposal to Slash Conservation Funding But Cuts to LWCF Leave Communities Hanging in the Balance

Washington, DC – *The following statement may be attributed to Tom Cors, Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesman for the LWCF Coalition.*

“The bill released today by the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee ignores the Trump Administration’s harmful proposal to starve the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). We concur with the Subcommittee’s conclusion that the President’s proposal is a non-starter in the House of Representatives. At the same time, we are disappointed in the overall LWCF level—which is a disproportionate cut of 32 percent—and urge Congress to do much more to provide the LWCF funding America’s communities urgently need. Doing so would also better reflect the overwhelming bipartisan public support for America’s most important conservation program.

“President Trump’s irresponsible budget request for Fiscal Year 2018 proposed to decimate the LWCF funding we all rely on for ‘now-or-never’ protection of our national parks, forests, and other public lands, and to completely wipe out crucial grants for conservation and recreation at the state and local level. By ignoring that recommendation, the House bill recognizes that outdoor recreation and conservation projects in communities across the nation are important investments that support community needs.

“LWCF funds have recently protected or provided additional access to Grand Teton and Rocky Mountain National Parks, Gettysburg National Military Park, and other iconic American landmarks, as well as state and local parks and working forests. Critical ‘now-or-never’ conservation projects are in the queue across the country, including key sites along the Appalachian Trail, Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii, and Montana’s Lolo National Forest.

“Unfortunately, the House bill still falls far short of meeting many immediate and vital needs across the country, proposing a 32 percent cut to LWCF’s current-year funding. Rolling back critical investments in America’s parks, lands and historic sites further jeopardizes irreplaceable natural and historic landmarks and landscapes while eroding outdoor recreational opportunities, access, and an \$887 billion national outdoor recreation economy, which supports 7.6 million jobs.

“The conservation of our nation’s shared outdoor heritage has always been an area of bipartisan agreement, as America’s public lands are a defining aspect of our values and national character. Recently, 205 House members signed a letter urging continued LWCF funding without these

harmful reductions. The LWCF Coalition looks forward to working with these and other conservation champions in the House, and with their Senate counterparts, to protect America's most important conservation program from cuts that do real and lasting harm to our nation's communities, and to the iconic places cherished by all Americans.”

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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 50 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 a trillion dollars annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 9.4 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 the reauthorization and 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