



LWCFCoalition.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 22, 2020

CONTACT: Justin Bartolomeo

(202) 400-0480

jbartolomeo@hdmk.org

Congress Passes Historic Great American Outdoors Act

WASHINGTON – The United States House of Representatives made history today by passing the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Act passed with bipartisan support and will be sent to the President’s desk, where it is expected to be signed into law. The following statement can be attributed to Tom Cors, director of government relations for lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesperson for the LWCF Coalition:

“This is a historic victory over 50 years in the making for communities across the country that benefit from the economic, cultural and recreational value of America’s public lands and close-to-home recreation. Despite years of uneven funding, LWCF has conserved iconic landscapes in every state; protected our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, monuments and battlefields; and supported community investments in parks and outdoor recreation opportunities. Now, LWCF will be a promise fully kept, as a permanent commitment to conservation, recreation and community needs that for too long have fallen through the cracks. And, it will do all this while driving job creation and economic recovery efforts our country needs right now.

“The LWCF Coalition applauds bipartisan champions like Reps. Joe Cunningham (D-S.C.), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), and Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), as well as House Natural Resources Committee Chair Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), House leadership and a host of longstanding supporters on both sides of the aisle. Their work has ensured that funds set aside for conservation and recreation access projects across the country will no longer be redirected for other purposes. With this legislation, the original vision of LWCF will at last be realized, and countless missing puzzle pieces within our national parks, forests and wildlife refuges will be secured and not lost through private sale. Local communities will now have more resources to meet their recreation needs and the confidence to make long-term investments to protect their water supplies, adapt to a changing climate and strike a needed balance between development and protection. Historical sites will be preserved to educate future generations. And sportsmen and women will no longer be frustrated by obstacles to public hunting and fishing access.

“Joining with LWCF’s congressional heroes in today’s once-in-a-generation conservation victory are thousands of dedicated partners from across our coalition. The LWCF Coalition is incredibly grateful for the work of nonprofits, businesses, local elected officials, recreationists and other stakeholders who have driven a bipartisan, grassroots campaign for decades to this ultimate success. This marks a new era for conservation and recreation in this country.”

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 \$887 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 7.6 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.com.