



LWCFCoalition.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 20, 2018

CONTACT: Justin Bartolomeo

(202) 789-4365

[jbartolomeo@hdmk.org](mailto:jbartolomeo@hdmk.org)

## Bipartisan Conservation Leaders Pledge to Save America's Most Important Conservation Program LWCF Expires in 100 Days; Members Vow to #SaveLWCF

**Washington, D.C.** – Land and Water Conservation Fund champions in the House and Senate rallied on the steps of the U.S. Capitol with conservation leaders and outdoor recreation advocates today and vowed to save America's most important conservation and recreation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), before it expires in 100 days.

The Members of Congress hailed the launch of the 100-day campaign to [#SaveLWCF](#), an effort that will highlight national parks, public lands and conservation success stories in states across the country. LWCF will expire on September 30 unless Congress acts. The bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives vowed to save America's most important conservation and recreation program and make it permanent.

"For over half a century, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF, has protected lands and waters in every county in every state in this country," said **Mark Tercek, President and CEO of The Nature Conservancy**. "But despite having broad, bipartisan support, this tremendously successful program has just 100 days of life left in it unless Congress acts. The LWCF helps conserve natural ecosystems that people, wildlife and local economies need to survive. It is too important to continue leaving its future in doubt. Now is the time to get LWCF the permanent authorization and full funding it deserves."

"In a little over 100 days, one of the most successful conservation programs in our nation's history will expire. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has protected our public parks, lands, sports fields and waters for more than five decades," said **Senator Richard Burr (R-NC)**. "At no extra cost to taxpayers, North Carolina landmarks like the Great Smoky Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Cape Lookout National Seashore have been preserved and maintained so the American people can enjoy their natural beauty. I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together to renew this important program so that our grandchildren can someday enjoy the same outdoors that we have today."

“The LWCF is the key tool that we use to help communities, to help the state, to help our nation preserve those recreation opportunities and to make the most cost effective use of the land,” **Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA)** said during the event. “In the foothills of the Cascades, in the shadows of Mount Rainier, it has helped us continued to preserve great resources and great assets.”

“Now we are faced with a deadline in just 100 days of this key tool that allows us to keep public open space so we can continue to recreate and hunt and fish and hike,” **Senator Cantwell** said. “I hope we can do everything to work together in this bipartisan fashion to get this reauthorized.”

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund has always been one of our best conservation tools,” **Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ)** said. “The sooner we reauthorize it, the sooner we’ll see new parks, more hiking trails and better recreation opportunities for Americans across the country. This is a truly bipartisan program that deserves all the support we can give it, and I’m proud to stand with my colleagues to make sure it continues stronger than ever.”

“Since I first came to Congress, I have been committed to permanently reauthorizing the LWCF,” said **Senator Steve Daines (R-MT)**. “The LWCF is critical to Montana jobs and protecting our outdoor way of life. Our children and grandchildren are counting on us to preserve America’s outdoor heritage -- we cannot let funding for this important bipartisan program expire.”

"The folks who hike, hunt, fish and play in our public places need less talk and more action from elected leaders to make sure all these dollars are invested in our public lands, parks and waterways," **Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)** said. "Reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund is important, but fully funding it and making sure it isn't spent somewhere else is critical to our outdoor way of life."

“Colorado’s beautiful public lands rely on the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Congress needs to ensure it remains in place for years to come,” said **Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO)**. “I’ll continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we do what is right and permanently reauthorize this vital outdoors conservation program.”

“Overs the past five decades, LWCF’s support has led to the protection of Colorado treasures like the Great Sand Dunes National Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Ophir Valley, among numerous others. At the local level, LWCF has brought together communities at local parks and provided opportunities for kids to learn outside. We need to harness the broad bipartisan support for this program to reauthorize and fully fund LWCF for future generations,” said **Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO)**.”

“In my district alone, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided funding for over 65 parks, supporting public access, fishing, hunting, recreation and protecting our environment without taking a dime of taxpayer money,” said **Congressman Lee Zeldin (R-NY)**. “On Long Island, our coastal economy is a vital component of our overall economy, and clean water, land and air are essential priorities all protected by the LWCF. I’ve been proud to lead the fight to permanently reauthorize this important fund in the House, and I will continue to do so on behalf of my district and communities across our country.”

“As a lifelong outdoorsman, protecting and preserving our public lands is vital to my work in Congress and I am proud to champion the Land and Water Conservation Fund,” **Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA)** said. “The work they do ensures generations to come can enjoy our nation’s beauty and creates tens of thousands of jobs across our country, at projects like Trione-Annadel State Park in my district, which was created with LWCF funds and is enjoyed by 120,000 visitors each year. So today I am calling on my fellow members of Congress to join our fight to ensure this important program doesn’t expire and that we continue to conserve our forests, parks, and recreational land for all to enjoy.”

### **About the Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America’s most important conservation and recreation program, responsible for protecting parks, trails, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For over 52 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, access to recreation including hunting and fishing, 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 \$887 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 7.6 million jobs.

### **About the LWCF Coalition**

The LWCF Coalition is comprised of more than 1,000 state and regional conservation and recreation organizations of all sizes, land owners, small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, the outdoor recreation industry and conservationists working together to protect America’s public lands and safeguard our shared outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Coalition is united in its advocacy for the permanent 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, working lands and state and local parks. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that LWCF funds have protected, visit [www.lwcfcoalition.org](http://www.lwcfcoalition.org).