



NEWS RELEASE

LWCFCoalition.org

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COALITION APPLAUDS PRESIDENT'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION FUND *Budget Investment in Lands Creates Jobs and Benefits Communities Across the U.S.*

Washington, DC—The Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition (LWCF Coalition) today praised President Obama's continued commitment to robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The fund is the nation's primary tool to conserve parks, wildlife refuges, forests, rivers, trails, historic and cultural sites, urban parks and playgrounds and other important federal, state and local public lands.

Over the years, LWCF has helped to protect land in every state, and in 98% of U.S. counties. In his FY 2013 budget released this morning, President Obama has requested \$450 million for LWCF, a 30 percent increase over FY 12 funding levels that keeps LWCF on an upward trajectory.

"We are pleased that the President's request indicates a continuing strong commitment to protecting lands for all Americans to enjoy, from the smallest urban playground to the largest national park," said Bill Meadows, President of The Wilderness Society. "Protecting public lands for future generations is a conservation commitment that has been embraced by Republican and Democratic presidents alike. The Obama Administration remains committed to LWCF as one of its highest conservation priorities, and we look forward to working with them to support full funding of LWCF through the budget and other legislative opportunities."

The fund uses no taxpayer dollars. Instead, funds for LWCF come from a small portion of offshore oil and gas leasing revenues that are set aside each year to support conservation and recreation projects. Although the fund is authorized to receive up to \$900 million per year, Congress has routinely diverted LWCF funds for other uses.

"The President's budget request is a call to action for Congress to do the right thing and appropriate LWCF funds as they were intended. President Obama understands that many special places could be lost without LWCF investment," said Will Rogers, President of the Trust for Public Land. "In these tough economic times, LWCF is an investment that pays significant dividends in jobs, state and local tax revenues, and income to outdoor recreation-dependent businesses."

Conservation, recreation, and historic preservation together generate more than \$1 *trillion* in total economic activity across the U.S., and support 9.4 million jobs, according to a recent study conducted for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation by Southwick Associates, Inc., of Fernandina Beach, FL. "Too often the argument is made that conservation comes at the cost of jobs, when that is simply not true," said Rob Southwick, President of the research firm. "Whether it's the jobs associated with

restoring natural habitat, or the jobs supporting anglers, hunters, hikers and other recreationists, healthy lands provide reliable, well-paying jobs, difficult to export, for many Americans.”

Public lands also provide recreational access to hundreds of thousands of hunters and anglers. “Sportsmen need access,” says Derek Fong, California State Chairman of the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation. “Every year I work with kids who want to learn hunting skills. The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps assure that there are places where they will be able to put those skills to use.”

[Recent polling](#) shows that Americans across the political, racial, and geographic spectrum support LWCF. An overwhelming 85% of Americans support full funding for LWCF. By similar margins, a vast majority of Americans want Congress to honor its commitment to dedicate LWCF funds to these purposes rather than diverting them for unrelated uses.

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The LWCF Coalition comprises conservation, recreation, business, and sportsmen’s groups working together to support the LWCF program in order to meet America’s conservation and recreation needs in the 21st century. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.