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House Proposes Increased Investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund

WASHINGTON – *The following statement can be attributed to Tom Cors, Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a spokesman for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition:*

“On the heels of a massive, historic vote to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund earlier this spring, we applaud the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee for recognizing the vital importance LWCF plays in protecting public lands and meeting community needs across the country. The increase the Subcommittee included for the program in its FY20 bill reflects the broad bipartisan support for and commitment to America’s most important conservation program. The \$524 million in LWCF funding included in the bill would represent the highest funding level for the program since 2003, and would completely reverse the Administration’s egregious and ill-considered proposal to cut the program by 105 percent.

After years of more constrained and stagnant funding for LWCF, we are grateful to Chairwoman McCollum and the Subcommittee for their leadership in this historic turnaround. At the same time, we recognize that chronic underfunding of the program has produced a huge backlog of unmet conservation and recreational access needs across America. By voting overwhelmingly to reauthorize LWCF at \$900 million annually earlier this year, Congress made a strong statement to uphold the promise to invest in conservation and recreation so that the diversity of community needs addressed by all ten LWCF accounts are met. This appropriations bill represents a welcome and sizeable step in the right direction. We look forward to continuing our work with both the House and Senate toward the full, dedicated funding that LWCF and the communities that depend on it need.”

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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, trails, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For more than 50 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 more than \$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 full, dedicated 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.