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NEWS RELEASE

New Biden Admin Report Highlights Importance of Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

WASHINGTON – A new report from the Biden Administration highlights the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to combat climate change, increase outdoor recreational access for all, protect wildlife habitat, and support the economy through the long-term conservation of America’s lands and waters. The “America the Beautiful Initiative,” co-authored by the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and the Interior as well as the White House Council on Environmental Quality, is a first step in implementing the Administration’s January executive order addressing climate and environmental justice challenges and calling for the protection of **30 percent** of America’s lands and oceans **by 2030** (30 X 30) both to address climate change and to build resilience in both natural and human communities.

The report identifies the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which provided full funding for LWCF, as a key tool to increase outdoor recreational access for all and advance environmental justice, calling for the strengthening of the LWCF-funded Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program and ways in which LWCF can better serve the needs of Tribal governments and Indigenous-led conservation efforts. Full funding will increase opportunities for communities across the country to access LWCF dollars now and into the future.

To carry this out, the Department of Interior announced the upcoming release of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the ORLP program to support park acquisition and development in underserved communities that lack access to nature and quality outdoor recreation experiences. Full funding of LWCF has made the \$150 million grant announcement possible, providing a significant investment to increase outdoor access for all.

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of many tools available to communities working with landowners to meet their conservation and outdoor recreation needs,” said Lesley Kane Szynal, Chair of the LWCF Coalition. “We applaud the Administration for bringing together a coalition of stakeholders including local community voices, Tribes, businesses, conservation and recreation groups, environmental justice advocates, and many others for this critically important conservation effort.”

GAOA ensures that LWCF receives \$900 million each year to support conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the country. LWCF is the most important source of federal funding for locally driven

conservation and recreation projects, providing communities and private landowners with the flexibility to meet local needs that will together advance the goals of the America the Beautiful initiative

For more than five decades, LWCF has safeguarded watersheds and water supplies, working forests and wetlands that capture and store carbon, natural infrastructure to buffer against extreme weather events, and urban parks that reduce environmental inequities and heat-islands effects.

“While LWCF has touched nearly every community in America, the pandemic has demonstrated in stark terms how much we value and need places outdoors that are close-to-home. What we know is that there is so much more to do to achieve that goal as well as to address the impacts of climate change, keep forests as forests, protect water, wildlife, and our way of life. We look forward to working with the Biden Administration in their efforts to meet the promise of its conservation initiative,” said Kane Synzal.

About the Land and Water Conservation Fund

LWCF is America’s most important conservation program, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For over half a century, 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 \$778 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 5.2 million jobs.

About the LWCF Coalition

The LWCF Coalition is the umbrella group of more than 1,000 state and local landowners, 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. For more information on LWCF and the places in each state that have been protected using LWCF funds, visit www.lwcfcoalition.org.