



LWCFCoalition.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 20, 2018

CONTACT: Justin Bartolomeo

(202) 789-4365

jbartolomeo@hdmk.org

Congress Fails to Rescue LWCF

Clock Runs Out on Bipartisan Conservation Program, Leaving its Future Uncertain

WASHINGTON – Last night, the U.S. Senate failed to move forward on a critical package of public lands legislation that included the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), despite overwhelming bipartisan support. LWCF, America’s most important conservation program for protecting parks, forests, watersheds and open spaces as well as expanding access to recreational opportunities, expired at the end of September. The program now remains in limbo, losing \$2.5M per day needed for community-driven projects.

The following is a statement by Tom Cors, Director of Government Relations for Lands at The Nature Conservancy and a national spokesman for the LWCF Coalition:

“It is tremendously frustrating and just plain wrong that America’s most important conservation program remains expired as Congress adjourns for the year. Despite huge bipartisan majorities supporting permanent reauthorization, Congress has dropped the ball on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. By allowing the objections of a single senator to derail this overarching priority for America’s families, communities, and local economies, Senate leadership has left LWCF and the communities that rely on it high and dry. This is a sad day for everyone who cares about our national parks and public lands, wildlife, trails, irreplaceable historic sites, and public access to outdoor recreation.

“Renewal of LWCF was poised to pass by overwhelming margins —if it had just been allowed to receive a vote before the clock ran out. Instead, the bill was allowed to die in spite of the efforts of LWCF’s many committed supporters in Congress.

“Bipartisan champions of the program have repeatedly called on Congressional leaders to take action. The outdoor recreation industry, governors, mayors, sportsmen, small business owners, conservation leaders, landowners, ranchers, farmers, and millions of Americans are united in the push for permanent reauthorization and full, dedicated funding for LWCF because it works.

“Last night, Senate leaders vowed that permanent reauthorization of LWCF would be brought to the floor and passed as soon as Congress returns in January. We will hold them to that promise,

and we look forward -- alongside LWCF's dedicated bipartisan advocates in Congress and all across America -- to winning the fight to save America's most important conservation program early next year. We will not stop until we save LWCF."

###

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 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.