

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) STATE AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NRPA POLICY POSITION

- Support the reauthorization of the LWCF, including full and permanent funding.
- Protect the interests of states and local communities by providing fair and equitable treatment for the **State Assistance Program** of no less than 40% guaranteed funding for formula grants to the states for active outdoor recreation. This is the same amount required by law to be allocated to the LWCF federal land acquisition program.
- In absence of authorizing legislation, exercise discretionary appropriations authority to allocate at least 40 percent of the total LWCF funding in FY16 to the **State Assistance Program**, with a dedicated amount being provided to the “Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program” competitive grant initiative.

BACKGROUND

In 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was enacted to help preserve, develop and ensure access to outdoor recreation facilities for the purpose of strengthening the health of U.S. citizens.

Congress created LWCF to meet the nation’s growing need for access to close-to-home outdoor recreation. The money for the fund comes not from taxes, but primarily from oil and gas lease revenues derived from federal lands. This helps balance the environmental impacts associated with resource extraction by ensuring that new parks and open spaces are accessible to all Americans.

Lasting Impact on Local Economies and Quality of Life

The **LWCF State Assistance Program** requires states and local communities to match the federal investment dollar-for-dollar. Since 1965, the **LWCF State Assistance Program** has:

- Provided over \$4 billion to states, territories and local communities. Combined with the local match, **LWCF State Assistance** funds have yielded a total investment of more than \$8 billion.
- Funded more than 42,000 local and state projects in every county in America.

That Continued Impact is At-Risk

- LWCF funding to states and local communities has steadily declined from \$376 million in 1979 to \$45 million in FY14.
- From 1965–1976, 60 percent of LWCF appropriations went to the **State Assistance Program**.
- Since 1988, only 13 percent of LWCF appropriations have gone to the **State Assistance Program**.

WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ACT

Creating Jobs and Stimulating the Economy

The outdoor recreation industry is one of the nation’s most important economic drivers.

- The **LWCF State Assistance Program** stimulates active outdoor recreation, which contributes \$646 billion annually to the economy, supporting 6.1 million jobs, as well as generating nearly \$40 billion in federal tax revenue.¹
- More American jobs depend on trail sports (768,000) than there are lawyers (728,000) in the U.S.¹
- Americans spend more annually on bicycling gear and trips (\$81 billion) than they do on airplane tickets and fees (\$51 billion).¹
- Americans spend nearly as much on snow sports (\$53 billion) as they do on Internet access (\$54 billion).¹
- 20 new jobs are created for every \$1 million invested in park and recreation conservation projects such as those funded through **LWCF State Assistance**.²
- The 725 million annual visits to America’s state park system — a recipient of **LWCF State Assistance** funding — contribute \$20 billion to local and state economies.³

Every State and Territory Annually Receives Funding

States do not have to compete against other states for funding. Each year, a set percentage of **LWCF State Assistance** funding is equally distributed to the states and territories. Remaining funds are then allocated based on population.



Available To and Used By Every American

While not every community has a national park, every community has local outdoor recreational resources. These parks are used by people of all ethnic groups, all income levels and all ages on a daily basis throughout the year. **LWCF State Assistance** funding ensures close-to-home public recreation resources with parks and projects located in every county in America.

Wise Use of Federal Funds With No Deficit Impact

- LWCF is budget neutral, having been authorized with a dedicated funding source of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore oil and gas leasing revenues for nearly five decades.
NOTE: OCS revenues for 2013 alone totaled \$9 BILLION
- States and localities are required to match federal funds dollar-for-dollar. This doubles the investment in state and local park and recreation projects, thereby creating more jobs.
- Land used for **LWCF State Assistance** projects must remain in recreational use in perpetuity. This ensures that the federal, state and local investments remain available for future generations of Americans.

“Protecting America’s parks, waters and trails isn’t just about the land. It’s about protecting the economy, the communities and the people whose lives depend on having the ability to play outside.”

-Outdoor Industry Association

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL LWCF*	LWCF State Assistance	Percentage of Total LWCF	Amount State Assistance Would Have Received with a 40% Allocation
FY11	\$300,761,000	\$40,000,000	13.3%	\$120,304,400
FY12	\$322,517,000	\$45,000,000**	13.9%	\$129,006,800
FY13	\$305,479,000	\$39,934,400	13.1%	\$122,192,000
FY14	\$305,043,000	\$45,000,000***	14.7%	\$122,417,000

¹ Source: Outdoor Industry Association 2012

² Political Economy Research Institute University of MA

³ National Association of State Park Directors

*Source: Dept. of Interior LWCF funding history
(www.doi.gov/budget/upload/LWCFRECEIPTS.xls)

** In FY12, the final conference appropriations bill provided \$45 million for the LWCF State Assistance program. However, an across the board government funding cut resulted in that number being reduced to \$42,138,000 which is the amount apportioned to states.

*** In FY14 LWCF State Assistance funding totaled \$45m, which included \$42m in formula grants to the states and \$3m in “competitive” grants.

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