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**New Report Highlights Economic Impact of the Land and Water Conservation Fund**

*Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Senior White House Official, Mayors of Denver, Fort Worth, Salt Lake City and Hartford address new City Parks Alliance report on importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Today, the City Parks Alliance released a new report, "[A Smart Investment for America's Economy: The Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)," which highlights the success stories of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in cities across America. The report details how cities are using LWCF grants to create measurable environmental, economic, and public health returns on urban park investments. Eighty-percent of America's population now lives in cities, placing a renewed focus on the value of city parks. The report showcases LWCF park projects in nine metropolitan areas in the United States that have generated local, public and private investment, leading to the creation of new green spaces, more efficient storm drainage, improved public health and neighborhood revitalization.

"Over its 50 years of existence, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has unmistakably contributed to the vibrancy of American cities," said **City Parks Alliance Executive Director Catherine Nagel**. "The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a smart investment because it leverages state and local funding sources, which increases the positive impact that federal dollars can have in urban and metropolitan areas."

"This report highlights the extraordinary success of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the past half century, investing revenue generated from offshore energy development into our communities and public lands for the benefit of all Americans. Projects in urban areas, all with matching funds, have been especially valuable in providing breathing space, natural play areas for children, and an environment that supports vibrant communities," said **Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell**. "It underscores the need for Congress to not only reauthorize the Fund, but also to permanently provide full funding at \$900 million annually that was intended when the law was passed."

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is set to expire this September, eliminating an important source of funding for cities. In addition to reauthorizing the program, advocates are calling on Congress to support robust LWCF funding so that it continues to benefit local communities. Since 1965 the LWCF has provided matching grants to fund the creation of more than 42,000 state and local parks,

playgrounds, urban wildlife refuges, greenways, trails and open spaces. The fund is paid for by offshore oil and gas royalties not tax payer dollars. LWCF requires a one-to-one match from state and local governments. In addition, LWCF grants have spurred billions of additional public and private investments in public parks.

“A key to building a strong, vibrant and sustainable city is to have a parks system that’s convenient, accessible and naturally supports fit and active lifestyles,” said **Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price**, Co-Chair of the Mayors for Parks Coalition. “While the growth continues in Fort Worth, we remain committed to expanding our parks system and connecting our diverse neighborhoods with an expansive trail network. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is extremely important to this vision.”

“In Denver, improving our parks, trails and open spaces is integral to strengthening the local economy and, ultimately, providing our residents a quality of life that is second to none,” said **Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock**, Co-Chair of the Mayors for Parks Coalition. “The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a necessary tool for urban areas to wisely manage our treasured natural assets and responsibly protect our resources for future generations.”

This morning, **Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell**, **White House Council of Environmental Quality Acting Chair Mike Boots**, **Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price**, **Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock**, **Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker** and **Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra** joined **City Parks Alliance Executive Director Catherine Nagel** at the University Club to discuss the positive economic impact of LWCF funding for cities. For photos from the event, please contact [gabe@westendstrategy.com](mailto:gabe@westendstrategy.com).

"Our experience in Salt Lake City with the Sugar House Park project and so many others underscores what a tremendous asset the Land and Water Conservation Fund is not only for recreation but for economic and neighborhood development, as well," added **Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker**. "We need to keep LWCF around for the benefit of all of our cities!"

“City parks are critical public spaces that provide more than recreation for residents, which is why we have invested over \$10 million in restoring to our Capital Parks System with assistance from the LWCF,” said **Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra**. “These investments improve the quality of life in our city, encourage community activity and can promote tourism and long-term growth, as is evidenced by the recent approval of Coltsville as a Historic National Park.”

Mayors Price and Hancock co-chair City Parks Alliance’s [Mayors for Parks](#), a bipartisan coalition of nearly 40 mayors from across the country working for the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Mayor Becker and Mayor Segarra are members of the coalition, and Mayor Becker also serves as the President of the National League of Cities.

## Report Key Findings

- The \$646 billion outdoor industry employs 6.1 million Americans. To put that in perspective, the finance and insurance industry employs 5.8 million people and the oil and gas industry employs 2.1 million people.
- LWCF stateside grants have spurred billions of dollars in private investments in and around LWCF parks.
- In Denver, for every \$1 of federal LWCF grants for the South Platte River, the community leveraged \$2,083 in local public and private funding.
- After LWCF's initial \$725,000 grant enabled Fort Worth to purchase 325 acres to create Gateway Park, an additional \$4.8 million has been committed by state and local sources to double the size of the park. Gateway Park hosts 15 to 18 tournaments annually involving out-of-town sports teams, with an economic benefit of \$5.5 million per year to Fort Worth.
- Philadelphia's 10,334-acre park system, developed in part with \$12 million in LWCF funding, saves the city \$6 million per year in storm water management costs. Over the next 25 years, Philadelphia will be investing \$2 billion in parks and green infrastructure, replacing \$16 billion that would have otherwise been spent on underground pipes and tunnels. LWCF grants can match these water utility investments to ensure that storm water management investments simultaneously create outdoor recreation spaces.
- Sugar House Park in Salt Lake City has used numerous LWCF grants to complete renovations and build trail connections to other nearby parks and a business district. These connections of increased biking and pedestrian access to the business district have contributed to over \$200 million in new housing, retail and commercial development.
- A \$13 million public investment in Reedy River Falls Park in Greenville, SC galvanized about \$100 million in private investments. The park has inspired a wave of prosperity in Greenville's West End.
- Riverfront Park in Nashville, TN, funded in part by LWCF, has been a focal point of Nashville's downtown waterfront. As each phase of the park has been completed, recreational visits to the downtown area have increased. In the last decade, Nashville has experienced a 50 percent increase in the number of 25 to 34 year olds with college degrees moving into the urban core.
- Visitors to Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio spend \$54.6 million in the local economy each year.

- Eight LWCF grants over the past 40 years have enabled the creation of the Indian Bend Wash, 11 miles of parks traversing the heart of Scottsdale, AZ. The greenbelt has successfully protected the city, including a 65 square mile drainage area, from flood damage during record-setting rainfalls.
- Sterling Forest State Park in New York and New Jersey provides clean drinking water to 2 million people. Sterling Forest was created in 1996 with \$17.5 million in LWCF funding and a \$20 million match from the states of New York and New Jersey, as well as an additional \$17.5 from private sources.

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*[City Parks Alliance](#) is the only independent, nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks and is serving as the [Mayors for Parks](#) day-to-day coordinator. Their mission is to engage, educate and nurture a broad based constituency to support the creation, revitalization and sustainability of parks and green spaces that contribute to dynamic cities. City Parks Alliance unites and serves a growing network of hundreds of civic and community leaders, government agencies, parks and recreation authorities, funders, and others.*