



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

**SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING TO REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM
JUNE 25, 2019
COMMENTS OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Manchin, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to share the National Trust for Historic Preservation's perspective on the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)—an extremely popular and effective program for conserving our nation's land, water, historic, and recreation heritage. My name is Tom Cassidy, and I am the Vice President for Government Relations and Policy.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately-funded charitable, educational and nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949 in order to “facilitate public participation in historic preservation” and to further the purposes of federal historic preservation laws.¹ The intent of Congress was for the National Trust “to mobilize and coordinate public interest, participation and resources in the preservation and interpretation of sites and buildings.”² With headquarters in Washington, D.C., nine field offices, 28 historic sites, more than one million members and supporters and a national network of partners in states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust works to save America's historic places and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation applauds your leadership in securing permanent reauthorization of LWCF, and we encourage the Committee to advance the LWCF Permanent Funding Act (S. 1081) to ensure full funding of LWCF activities each year. The National Trust has long advocated for full and dedicated funding for LWCF, including submitting testimony to a hearing on LWCF held by this Committee on April 22, 2015.

For more than 50 years, LWCF has helped enhance our national parks, preserve battlefields, and bring other lands with historic and cultural significance into public stewardship at the federal, state, and local level. Congress voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize LWCF earlier this year, and now Congress should ensure the program reaches its potential by passing full funding legislation.

Despite its success, less than half of the funding set aside for LWCF has been used for its intended purposes since the program was created in 1965. S. 1081 would fix the shortfall going forward by guaranteeing full funding of \$900 million annually for this crucial program.

¹ 54 U.S.C. §§ 312102(a), 320101.

² S. Rep. No. 1110, 81st Cong., 1st Sess. 4 (1949).

Since its creation, LWCF has invested \$18.9 billion³ in conserving outdoor spaces for the American people to experience and enjoy. Along with its well-documented success in providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor recreational activities, LWCF plays a pivotal role preserving our nation's historic places. LWCF has invested more than \$550 million to add specifically to our nation's historic and cultural parks managed by the National Park Service,⁴ and many millions more to add other public lands that tell diverse stories of our nation's history.

Many of our nation's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been protected with investments from LWCF. Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park in Georgia, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in Kansas, and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado have all benefited significantly from LWCF. In Ohio, thanks largely to LWCF, lands once slated for development and were instead conserved as part of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, which is among our nation's newest proposed World Heritage Sites. At Chancellorsville Battlefield in Virginia—which the National Trust named as one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in 1998—LWCF was essential for preservationists, the National Park Service, local leaders, and developers found solutions to successfully protect key portions of the Chancellorsville Battlefield while enhancing economic growth. These success stories exist in every state in the nation.

In Alaska, LWCF has benefitted the Sitka National Historical Park, which includes the site of the 1804 battle between invading Russian traders and indigenous Kiks.ádi Tlingit, historic Haida and Tlingit totem poles, and one of the few surviving examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America. In West Virginia, LWCF has added nearly 2,000 acres to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, allowing visitors to more fully experience its rich, multi-layered history of the area well known for abolitionist John Brown's raid in 1859 and a view Thomas Jefferson once described as, "perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature."

States and local governments also heavily rely on the LWCF to plan, secure lands, and manage parks that allow people to experience history close to home. Furthermore, LWCF-funded American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) acquisition grants have provided more than \$56 million to states, local communities, and nonprofit partners to protect threatened battlefield lands.⁵ These projects not only prevent loss due to incompatible uses, they provide access for people to enjoy and learn from our shared public lands.

The work of preserving historic places and enhancing recreational opportunities is far from finished. Our parks and public lands tell the story of America, and our history is still being written. Thank you again for holding this hearing and for your attention to the important issue of providing reliable full funding for LWCF.

³ "Land and Water Conservation Fund: Overview, Funding History, and Issues." Congressional Research Service RL33531. June 19, 2019.

⁴ According to data provided by the National Park Service for acres acquired through the LWCF in historical and cultural parks from 1965 to August 2016.

⁵ Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Awards, FY 2011 – FY 2017:
<https://www.nps.gov/abpp/grants/CWBLAGgrants.htm>.