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Secretary Jewell Announces $43 Million to States for Parks, Outdoor Recreation through Land Water Conservation Fund

Joins with Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price to Underscore Importance of Urban Parks; Calls on Congress to Approve Full, Permanent Funding of Program

FORT WORTH, TX – Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today joined Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, co-chair of the bipartisan coalition of Mayors for Parks, to announce that $43.38 million will be distributed from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to all 50 States, the Territories, and the District of Columbia for state-identified outdoor recreation and conservation projects. A state-by-state breakdown of the funding is available here.

The Secretary's visit to Fort Worth's Gateway Park is part of a weeklong series of eventsacross the country by Administration officials to highlight the fund's successes on its 50th anniversary. President Obama has called for full, permanent funding in his proposed budget, recognizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund as one of the nation's most effective tools for creating and protecting urban parks and open spaces for kids to play and learn.

"Over its 50 year history, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped fund over 40,000 local conservation and outdoor recreation projects by re-investing a small portion of revenue from offshore oil and gas development in waters owned by the American people," Jewell said. "These local projects – parks, ball fields, open spaces – play an important role in improving the health and vitality of urban areas, and protecting natural areas for future generations of Americans to enjoy. Congress needs to fulfill the promise made to the American people by enacting full and permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund."

Jewell cited Gateway Park in Fort Worth as a prime example of how the Land and Water Conservation Fund can improve the quality of life for local residents. The State of Texas has leveraged funding through the program to make Gateway Park a prime destination for recreation, with equestrian, hiking and biking trails; soccer fields; a canoe and kayak launch; and a fishing pier. The projects are part of $179 million in state and local assistance grants made to Texas since 1964.

"Our nation's investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund is an essential tool for Fort Worth and other cities to create new and revitalized parks, green spaces and recreation

opportunities," said Mayor Price. "It makes our communities economically, environmentally and culturally vibrant. Most importantly, it helps us build a livable city for everyone to enjoy."

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established by Congress in 1964 to ensure access to outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations, and to provide money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. The primary source of revenue for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf.

The funds enable state and local governments to establish everything from baseball fields to community green spaces; to provide public access to rivers, lakes and other water resources; to expand the interpretation of historic and cultural sites; and to conserve natural landscapes for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment.

Only once in the past 50 years has Congress appropriated Land and Water Conservation Fund funding at the full authorized level of $900 million and the program is set to expire without action from Congress. President Obama's budget request includes a legislative proposal to establish dedicated mandatory funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund programs, with full funding at $900 million beginning in 2015.

Jewell emphasized that Land and Water Conservation Fund grants boost local economies and support jobs in the outdoor recreation and tourism industries. A recent analysis of the Land and Water Conservation Fund found that every $1 invested in land acquisition generated a $4 return on the investment for communities.

"Investments in our shared outdoor heritage make sense not only for our land, water and wildlife, but they make sense for our economy," added Jewell.

Since the inception of the Fund, over $4 billion has been made available to state and local governments and over 40,000 projects have been funded in every state throughout the nation. For more information, please visit www.nps.gov/lwcf.

The allocation for the State and Local Assistance Grant (State-side) program is determined based on a formula set in the LWCF Act and the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. States and territories then determine how to leverage the grants to support the priorities of local communities.

State-by-state and county-by-county listing of the Fiscal Year 2014 apportionment, which includes $1.38 million in supplemental apportionment pursuant to the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, is available here.