

Statement of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition  
Concerning HR 3534,  
The Consolidated Land, Energy and Aquatic Resources (CLEAR) Act  
of 2009  
The Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
September 30, 2009

Chairman Rahall, Ranking Member Hastings, and distinguished members of the Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HR 3534, the Consolidated Land, Energy and Aquatic Resources (CLEAR) Act of 2009. As conservation and recreation organizations from across the country concerned with conserving America's natural, recreational, and cultural resources and heritage, we wish to express our strong support for the provision included in Title IV of HR 3534 to provide full and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

As you know, the LWCF is America's most important tool for acquiring lands within our national parks, forests, refuges, BLM and other federal lands and for supporting acquisition, expansion and development of state and local parks. From the New River Gorge National River (WV) to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, from Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (MI) to Channel Islands National Park (CA), from Cape May National Wildlife Refuge (NJ) to the Fredricksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (VA), LWCF funding has helped acquire and protect some of our nation's most cherished and iconic public landscapes.

The LWCF state assistance grants helps states and local communities protect parks, trails, recreation fields and other park facilities. Running the gamut from wilderness to neighborhood playgrounds, the LWCF has supported projects in almost every county in America providing matching funding to over 41,000 projects. From Brooklyn's Coney Island Board Walk, to Griffith Park in Los Angeles, from Myrtle Beach State Park (SC) to Rangeley Lake State Park (ME), from the Patuxent River Greenway (MD) to Tualatin Hills Nature Park (OR), and thousands of places in between, LWCF projects provide partnerships with communities to ensure that families have everyday access to parks and open space, hiking and riding trails, and neighborhood recreation facilities.

The LWCF is a visionary and bipartisan program. It was created by Congress in 1965 and is authorized to receive \$900 million annually in federal revenues from

oil and gas leasing of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). It made good economic and environmental sense in 1965, and it remains good sense today, to reinvest a small fraction of federal leasing revenues in permanent natural resource protection

Despite this decades-old promise, the LWCF program has been chronically underfunded. It has received full funding only once in its history and in recent years has steadily declined to a low in appropriated funding of \$155 million in 2008. Full and dedicated funding is needed for the LWCF to fulfill its congressionally mandated purpose. If enacted, this provision will provide the necessary level of federal investment in parks, trails, refuges, forests, spaces, and historical and cultural resources across the nation. We are delighted that Chairman Rahall has provided the leadership to include this Title IV provision in HR3534.

Parks and other public lands enhance the economic vitality and quality of life of our communities, making them places where people want to live, as well as vacation destinations. Our communities enjoy innumerable benefits from proximity to protected forests, parks, trails, refuges, and other areas for hiking, picnicking, hunting, fishing, mountain biking, camping, wildlife viewing, paddling, and mountain climbing. A renewed investment in the LWCF and public land protection is crucial to ensure this legacy.

Increasingly, it is recognized that a healthy environment and abundant recreational opportunity not only promote human health and quality of life, but also are good for the economy. The Outdoor Industry Association reports that active outdoor recreation activities generate \$730 billion in revenues annually to our nation's economy and support 6.5 million (1 in 20) jobs. Further, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that over 87.5 million people engage in wildlife-related recreation each year and that hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching combined generates over \$122 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

Conserving forests, watersheds, and wetlands has other significant social and economic benefits, among them ensuring clean, adequate, and affordable drinking water supplies for our communities. In addition, it is becoming increasingly clear that conserving our forests, which currently store upwards of half the carbon emitted each year, is critical in the fight against climate change. Strategic land conservation also provides an important tool to manage wildfires and reduce the costs of fire fighting surrounding our communities. And, whether it is a visit to a local playground or an outing to a national park, getting outdoors connects families, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and builds community.

As the Committee considers HR 3534, we urge you to retain in any final legislation this important Title IV provision to secure full, permanent and dedicated funding of the LWCF. Mr. Chairman, we applaud your leadership in including this provision in the bill and appreciate your support and that of other Committee members to protect America's most treasured landscapes, strengthen our local economies, and ensure the future of our natural, cultural, and recreation heritage. We pledge the full support of the LWCF Coalition and our many partners across America towards the enactment of this provision. We look forward to working with the Chairman and Committee to bring the vision of LWCF to reality, at long last.

Thank you,

### **National and Regional Partner Organizations:**

The Access Fund	The Nature Conservancy
American Canoe Association	North Country Trail Association
American Hiking Society	Northern Forest Alliance
American Forests	Northern Forest Center
American Whitewater	Outdoor Alliance
Appalachian Mountain Club	Outdoor Industry Association
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Outdoors America
Center for Biological Diversity	Pacific Crest Trail Association
Choose Outdoors	Pacific Forest Trust
The Conservation Fund	Partnership for the National Trails System
City Parks Alliance	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Civil War Preservation Trust	Sierra Business Council
Eastern Forest Partnership	Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
The Forest Guild	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Highlands Coalition	Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association
International Mountain Bicycling Association	The Trust for Public Land
National Park Trust	The Wilderness Society
National Parks Conservation Association	Western Resource Advocates
National Recreation and Park Association	World Wildlife Fund
National Wildlife Refuge Association	

## State and Local Partner Organizations:

Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SC)  
Aiken Land Conservancy (SC)  
Amigos de la Sevilleta (NM)  
Association of Northwest Steelheaders (OR)  
Audubon Society of Portland (OR)  
Audubon New Mexico (NM)  
Androscoggin Land Trust (ME)  
Androscoggin River Watershed Council (ME)  
Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (CA)  
Brandywine Conservancy (PA)  
Boston Harbor Island Alliance (MA)  
California Cultural Resources Preservation Alliance  
California Parks Foundation  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (NC)  
Central Coast Land Conservancy (OR)  
Chattanooga Parks & Recreation (TN)  
Chickasaw-Shiloh RC&D Council, USDA-NRCS (TN)  
Cumberland Trail Conference (TN)  
City of Berlin (NH)  
City of San Jose (CA)  
Crystal Cove Alliance (CA)  
Center for Native Ecosystems (CO)  
Colorado Council of Land Trusts (CO)  
Colorado Environmental Coalition (CO)  
Parks and Recreation  
City of Barnwell (SC)  
Parks and Leisure Services  
City of Hartsville (SC)  
Cultural and Leisure Service Department  
City of Myrtle Beach (SC)  
Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (SC)  
Coastal Conservation League (SC)  
Connecticut Audubon Society (CT)  
Chateaugay – No Town Conservation Project (VT)  
Clinch Coalition (VA)  
The Chewonki Foundation (ME)  
The Cohos Trail Association (NH)  
Chattanooga Parks & Recreation (TN)  
Damariscotta River Association (ME)  
Delaware River Greenway Partnership (PA)  
Deschutes Land Trust (OR)  
Easton Conservation Commission (NH)  
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association (NM)  
Edisto Island Open Land Trust (SC)  
Elk River Land Trust (OR)  
The Forest Guild (ME)  
Friends of Acadia (ME)  
Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (ME)  
Friends of Unity Wetlands (ME)  
Friends of Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge (NM)  
Friends of Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)  
Forest Trust (NM)  
Friends of Congaree Swamp (SC)  
Friends of Santee National Wildlife Refuge (SC)  
Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (MA)  
Friends of Pondicherry & Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuges (NH)  
Friends of Potomac River Refuges (VA)

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park (VI)  
Fayette County Rod & Gun Club (TN)  
The Freshwater Trust (OR)  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge (OR)  
Friends of the Cumberland Trail State Park (TN)  
Friends of the New River Gorge National River (WV)  
Friends of Radnor Lake (TN)  
Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge (TN)  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness (CO)  
Georges River Land Trust (ME)  
Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust (ME)  
Greater Lovell Land Trust (ME)  
Greater Worcester Land Trust (MA)  
Recreation and Community Services Georgetown County (SC)  
Goose Creek Parks and Recreation (SC)  
Greenbelt Land Trust (OR)  
Greenville County Recreation District (SC)  
Greensboro Land Trust (VT)  
High Country Citizens' Alliance (CO)  
Houston Parks Board (TX)  
Harris Center (NH)  
Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission Columbia, SC  
Kent Land Trust (CT)  
Kittery Land Trust (ME)  
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey  
Lancaster County Parks and Recreation (SC)  
Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission (SC)  
Litchfield Garden Club (CT)  
Los Angeles Parks Foundation (CA)  
McKenzie River Trust (OR)  
Monadnock Conservancy (NH)  
Mahoosuc Land Trust (ME/NH)

Maine Audubon  
Maine Coast Heritage Trust  
Maine Recreation and Park Association  
Mass Audubon  
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition  
Montgomery County Lands Trust (PA)  
Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center (TN)  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NH)  
New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association (NH)  
New Hampshire Preservation Alliance (NH)  
New Jersey Highlands Coalition  
New Mexico Audubon  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation  
New River Alliance of Climbers (WV)  
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NY)  
Nonotuck Land Fund, Inc (MA)  
Northeast Wilderness Trust (MA)  
NorthWoods Stewardship Center (VT)  
Oregon Council Trout Unlimited  
Oregon Habitat Joint Venture  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Oregon Recreation & Park Association  
Park Pride Atlanta (GA)  
Peninsula Open Space Trust (CA)  
Placer Land Trust (CA)  
Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation (ME)  
Portland Trails (ME)  
Portland Parks Foundation (OR)  
Richland County Recreation Commission (SC)  
Randolph Town Forest Commission (NH)  
Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust (NM)  
San Diego River Coalition (CA)  
Save Crows Nest (VA)  
Sempervirens Fund (CA)  
SEWEE Association (SC)  
Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association (ME)

Skylands Sierra Club (NJ)  
Sierra Club, Maine Chapter  
Society for the Protection of New  
Hampshire Forests (NH)  
South Carolina Recreation and Parks  
Association  
Southern Environmental Law Center (VA)  
Southwest Environmental Center (NM)  
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy  
Southern West Virginia Convention and  
Visitors Bureau  
Stowe Land Trust (VT)  
Sumter County Recreation and Parks (SC)  
Tennessee Ornithological Society (TN)  
Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation  
(TN)  
Tri-County Community Action Programs  
(NH)  
Upstate Forever (SC)

Vermont Land Trust  
Vermont Natural Resources Council  
Vermont Woodland Owners Association  
Virginia Forest Watch  
Virginia Wilderness Committee  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (CO)  
Wallowa Land Trust, Inc.(OR)  
Western Rivers Conservancy (OR)  
Western Foothills Land Trust (ME)  
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (PA)  
White Mountains Conservation League  
(AZ)  
West Virginia Mountain Bike Association  
West Virginia Professional River Outfitters  
West Virginia Park and Recreation  
Association  
WildEarth Guardians (NM)