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**For Immediate Release**

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**For More Information:**

Mike Carlson, Gathering Waters  
608.251.9131 ext. 13

Todd Holschbach, The Nature Conservancy  
608.577.3071

## **Overwhelming Bipartisan Majorities of Wisconsin Voters Support Congressional Reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund**

*LWCF will expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>*

MADISON — The overwhelming majority of Wisconsin voters want Congress to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), with 86% of the state's electorate in support of continued funding.

A recent statewide survey of Wisconsin voters conducted by the bipartisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and FM3 Research (D) demonstrates overwhelming public support for Congress to reauthorize and continue to fund LWCF. Support for reauthorization of LWCF extends across party lines, across the state, and with all key demographic sub-groups.

"The people of Wisconsin overwhelmingly support continued investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund," said Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts. "These results show that it doesn't matter if you're from an urban or rural area, a man or a woman, conservative or liberal – virtually everyone agrees that this is one of the best programs Congress has ever come up with and it should be continued."

The desire to have continued federal investments in LWCF is evident across all major segments of the electorate, including:

- ✓ *91% of Democrats, 88% of independents, and 79% of Republicans;*
- ✓ *92% of moderates, 77% of conservatives, and 95% of liberals;*
- ✓ *88% of men and 85% of women;*
- ✓ *88% of voters of color, and 87% of whites;*
- ✓ *87% of urban voter, 90% of suburban voters, 89% of small town residents, and 82% of rural residents; and*
- ✓ *83% of voters in the Green Bay/Appleton media markets, 87% of voters in the Milwaukee media market, 91% of those in the Madison area, and 86% of those in the northern portions of the state.*

"There is virtually no other federal conservation program in America that has this level of bipartisan support," said Mary Jean Huston, Director of The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin. "We strongly urge Senators Johnson and Baldwin, Speaker Ryan, and the rest of the Wisconsin delegation to make permanent reauthorization and funding of LWCF a priority before the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline."

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided funding to help protect some of Wisconsin's most treasured places and ensures recreational access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. It has also been a vital program for keeping large tracts of forestland intact and producing timber for local forestry economies.

Wisconsin has received approximately \$218 million in LWCF funding over the past five decades, protecting places such as the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and North Country National Scenic Trail, the St. Croix National Scenic River and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

LWCF is America's most important conservation and recreation program, responsible for protecting parks, trails, wildlife refuges and recreation areas at the federal, state and local level. For over 52 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, access to recreation, and the continued historic preservation of our nation's iconic landmarks. LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments.

A copy of the polling memo from the bipartisan research team of FM3 Research and Public Opinion Strategies is attached.



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY



PUBLIC OPINION  
STRATEGIES

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Lori Weigel, Public Opinion Strategies  
Dave Metz, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

RE: Wisconsin Voters Back Reauthorization of LWCF

DATE: June 30, 2018

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A recent statewide survey of Wisconsin voters<sup>1</sup> conducted by the bipartisan research team of FM3 Research (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) demonstrates overwhelming support for Congress to reauthorize and continue to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Support for reauthorization of LWCF extends across party lines, across the state, and with all key demographic subgroups. Specifically, the survey found that:

- **The overwhelming majority of Wisconsin voters want Congress to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.** Fully 86 percent of the state's electorate would prefer that the nation continue to fund LWCF. Only eight percent of the electorate would prefer to have those funds available for different purposes. Respondents were read a neutral explanation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund as follows in order to have the same level of information about the Fund:

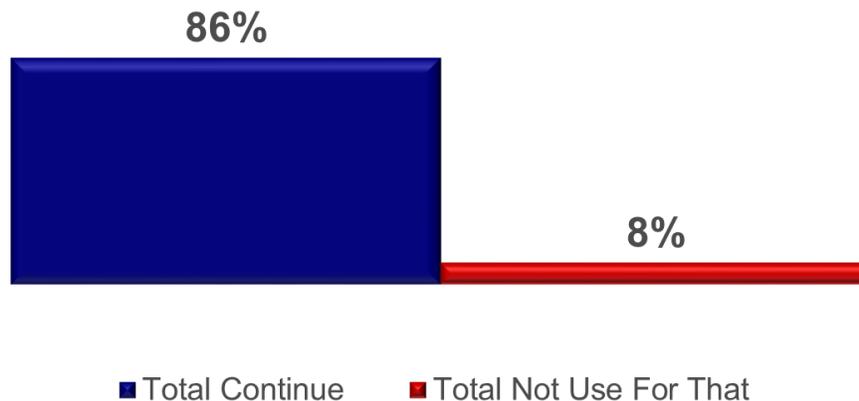
*"The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a national program that was established in 1965 to help conserve, develop and ensure access to outdoor recreation resources for the benefit of all Americans. This fund supports our parks, recreation and open spaces, and protects forests and wildlife areas. The program is funded by fees paid by oil and gas companies drilling offshore. It has funded conservation of natural areas throughout Wisconsin, such as the Ice Age Trail and the Apostle Islands National Seashore. The program is set to expire this September unless Congress acts to re-authorize the program."*

Respondents were then asked whether they "think that Congress should reauthorize this program to provide on-going, long-term funding for the Land and Water Conservation Foundation" or whether they think they should use those funds for other purposes. As the following graph illustrates, by a ratio of more than ten-to-one, Wisconsin voters want to continue to have these funds dedicated to LWCF.

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<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From June 6-11, 2018, FM3 and POS completed 500 telephone interviews with registered voters throughout the state of Wisconsin. Interviews were conducted on landlines and cell phones. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/-4.4 percent; margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. Some percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

### Reauthorize and Continue Land and Water Conservation Fund or Use Funds for Something other than Conservation



The desire to have continued federal investments in the Land and Water Conservation Fund is evident across all major segments of the electorate, including:

- ✓ 91% of Democrats, 88% of independents, and 79% of Republicans;
- ✓ 92% of moderates, 77% of conservatives, and 95% of liberals;
- ✓ 88% of men and 85% of women;
- ✓ 88% of voters of color, and 87% of whites;
- ✓ 87% of urban voter, 90% of suburban voters, 89% of small town residents, and 82% of rural residents; and
- ✓ 83% of voters in the Green Bay/Appleton media markets, 87% of voters in the Milwaukee media market, 91% of those in the Madison area, and 86% of those in the northern portions of the state.

- **Support for LWCF may be grounded in the view that conservation is important to Wisconsin's economy.** Fully 95 percent agree that "protecting water quality and land in Wisconsin is critical to keeping the state's economy strong." An overwhelming majority (78 percent) strongly agrees with this view. This view is also widely shared across party lines, as 95 percent of Republicans, 90 percent of independents indicate agreement, along with virtually all - 99 percent - of Democrats.

Similarly, there is nearly complete agreement that "keeping our lands and waters healthy both benefits our economy and quality of life here in Wisconsin" (99 percent agree).

**Wisconsin voters overwhelmingly support reauthorization of LWCF, with broad support across every demographic sub-group and throughout the state. It also holds strong support across party lines, perhaps in part due to the sense that investments in conservation are positive for the state economy.**