

Committee of Jurisdiction: EELU

Title of Resolution: Improve efficiencies of the LWCF program

Issue: The National Park Service administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF). Input from state, regional, county and local LWCF funding recipients to refine interpretation of LWCF will improve cost-effectiveness, efficiency, land stewardship and outdoor recreation.

Proposed Policy: NACo encourage the National Park Service to work with state, regional, county and local LWCF providers to define reasonable access, recreational development timeframe requirements, and small acreage conversion requirements.

Background: The Land and Water Conservation ACT (LWCF) provides significant funding to state, county and local park agencies for acquisition and development of outdoor recreation lands and facilities. The National Park Service (NPS) administers the program and is responsible for interpreting the requirements of the law. At least three areas of interpretation would benefit from direct input and discussion with outdoor recreation providers at the state, county and local levels:

- 1) **Access requirements:** NPS recreational public access requirements for new acquisitions should be reasonable and appropriate to the intended use and sensitivity of the land and should take into account adjacent park land access.
- 2) **Recreational development timeframe:** NPS requires that recreational development occur within three years of acquisition. This can be inefficient. Greenways/trails often take more than three years to complete acquisition of a contiguous corridor with logical start and end points. Building trail segments one parcel at a time is inefficient and provides very little recreational value.
- 3) **Small acreage conversion requirements:** NPS Currently requires conversion acreage to be met through adding equal or greater valued property and defines property as land regardless of the amount of land being converted. Often less than two acres of LWCF protected lands are needed to improve road intersection safety or widen ROW. NPS rules for land acquisition significantly increases the difficulty to acquire replacement land and can easily double the cost of the replacement land. In small acreage cases where no impacts on outdoor recreation are identified, the NPS should consider property to include outdoor recreation improvements of equal or greater value than the land needed for conversion. This approach is more cost effective and will increase outdoor recreation opportunities.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Encourages greater flexibility for rural and urban counties who participate in LWCF funding programs.

Sponsor:

Jonathan Vlaming

EELU member

NACPRO Liaison to NACo

National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials

Jonathan.vlaming@threeriversparks.org

612-490-5220