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Dear House Committee on Natural Resources Leaders, Chairman and Congressman Rob Bishop and Congressman Raul Grijalva; Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke; and Members of the Federal Lands Subcommittee:

The Wildlife Society (TWS) is a professional organization founded in 1937 whose mission is “to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife population and habitats through science-based management and conservation”. TWS is an international organization committed to addressing national and international issues that affect the current and future status of wildlife in North America and throughout the world. The Central Mountains and Plains Section is one of the regional networks of TWS. Our geographical boundary includes the states of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

On 12 January 2017, Representative Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and Representative Patrick Meehan (R-PA) introduced H.R. 502, which would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). As President, I represent the members of the Central Mountains and Plains Section of TWS, and we offer the following supportive comments related to this legislation.

Representative Grijalva introduced an identical bill last Congress with support of 211 bipartisan co-sponsors, but it stalled in Committee and did not go to the House floor. Permanent reauthorization of LWCF was part of the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2016, which passed the Senate last Congress. Hopefully, permanent reauthorization will be supported by both parties and pass through Congress. Also, Congress is authorized to appropriate LWCF funds at a maximum of \$900 million annually from offshore oil and gas extraction revenue, but recently has been authorizing an average of \$340 million annually. We strongly support authorization at the \$900 million level.

Since 1964, the LWCF has provided funding for federal, state, and local government agencies to acquire and manage public lands for conservation and outdoor recreational use. Wildlife professionals from across the country utilize the LWCF to manage lands and waterways to sustain wildlife resources and to protect and enhance the habitats of State and Federal Threatened and Endangered Species and State Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

The Central Mountains and Plains Section of TWS strongly supports H.R. 502 and permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We would very much appreciate your support, as well.

Sincerely,

Andrea Orabona
President, Central Mountains and Plains Section
The Wildlife Society