



Arizona Parks & Recreation Association, Inc.

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The Honorable Jan Brewer
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Brewer,

Arizona Parks and Recreation Association would like to share with you the recently released report of the Outdoor Resources Review Group (ORRG) and urge your support for those recommendations that will have a positive impact on the citizens of our state.

We believe that the citizens of our state would benefit tremendously by implementation of the recommendations of the ORRG report and we therefore urge your support. This month a number of members of Congress will introduce an energy bill that would provide full, dedicated funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the maximum level authorized by Congress. This action would provide hundreds of millions of dollars to the states in LWCF state assistance funding, and which would, if enacted, significantly benefit our state. This financial support is needed to protect natural, historical, ecological, cultural, and recreational resources around the country.

Specifically, we would like to request that you contact our Members of Congress to indicate your support for implementation of the recommendations of the ORRG report that would benefit our state and to give your support for full, dedicated funding for LWCF in the soon-to-be-introduced Energy bill. Additionally, we ask that you assist in garnering support among your colleagues in the National Governor's Association for full funding for LWCF.

The ORRG is a national advisory group convened by honorary co-chairs, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) focusing on the future needs of our nation for outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources. In early 2008, Senator Alexander and Senator Bingaman addressed a group of 17 leaders and stakeholders in conservation, recreation, and state and local government. As a privately funded effort, they collectively embarked on a series of bipartisan meetings and workshops to assess the priorities and challenges for our nation in protecting and enhancing our national outdoor recreation resources. Such a serious look at national needs had not been undertaken for the past twenty years when the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors conducted such a review in the mid-1980's.

The impetus for this review by these national leaders was clear: The Land and Water Conservation Fund, the primary vehicle for federal and state acquisition of park and recreation lands and funding source for outdoor recreation, has never been adequately funded since its authorization by Congress in the 1960's. The ORRG looked at challenges and at long-term solutions for stable, sustainable funding to support the national needs for public hunting and fishing, public lands, urban parks, close-to-home recreation, and conservation finance. Their final report contains a concise summary of the major issues and challenges facing our nation with regards to conservation and needs for outdoor recreation resources, as well as a set of 10 major recommendations on how to address these challenges. The report identifies appropriate roles for government, the private-sector, and non-profit organizations in meeting the challenges.

A one-page outline of the recommendations is attached. The entire report can be viewed at <http://www.orrgroup.org>

As the Administration and Congress consider how to implement the recommendations of this influential advisory group, we think it very important that our state affirms our interest in and support for these far-reaching recommendations. We ask that you support the recommendations of the ORRG report and that you urge our federal representatives to support full, dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in upcoming energy legislation. Such dedicated funding will provide measurable benefits to our citizens in protecting our natural resources and providing healthful opportunities for outdoor recreation for all our citizens. We thank you for your anticipated support and your leadership on this important issue.

Very truly yours,

Carol Gary
APRA Executive Director

R.J. Cardin
APRA Legislative Chair

cc: Michael Anable, Policy Advisor, Natural Resources
Senator John McCain
Senator Jon Kyle

Key Recommendations of the Outdoor Resources Review Group (ORRG)

ORRG's research has shown that there are multiple opportunities to bring about lasting change and the group offers the following eight recommendations:

1. Congress should permanently dedicate funding for the LWCF at the highest historical authorized level (\$900 million a year) adjusted for inflation—that is, no less than \$3.2 billion annually—with a share guaranteed to the states and, in turn, to urban areas. The ultimate target should be \$5 billion a year by no later than 2015, the 50th anniversary of the Fund, reflecting continued inflation and future population growth. This financial support is needed to protect natural, historical, ecological, cultural, and recreational resources around the country.
2. To overcome fragmentation among multiple programs at multiple levels, geospatial planning tools should be fully utilized to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency with which the LWCF and other public and private funds are spent.
3. Public and private organizations should aggressively promote recreation and nature education for America's youth so as to engage them early in realizing the lifelong health and other benefits from participating in outdoor activities. The National Park Service, for example, should extend the finding of its pilot program to encourage physical activities in the parks. This program should serve as a model for state and local park systems to promote outdoor activities in close-to-home settings. Youth conservation corps and similar federal and state programs merit expansion.
4. Federal, state, and local agencies should continue to promote and support private sector stewardship through public-private partnerships, joint funding, extended tax benefits for conservation easements, and other incentives.
5. Federal and other public agencies, as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are doing, should elevate the priority for regional- or landscape level conservation in their own initiatives and through partnerships across levels of government, and with land trusts, other nonprofit groups, and private landowners to conserve America's treasured landscapes.
6. A new nationwide network of Blueways and water trails along rivers and coastal waterways should be established through public-private partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofits and private landowners.
7. Any national program to reduce greenhouse gases should include funding to adapt resource lands and waters to the ecological impacts of climate change. As climate change increases the pressure on the public lands to develop renewable and conventional energy resources and transmission capacity, funding also will be needed to reconcile growing conflicts over resource use and mitigate impacts where they cannot be avoided in project design.
8. Current structures and funding for outdoor resources are insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population. Other equally important objectives are also compromised by the lack of sufficient, dedicated funding: ensuring that states and communities receive a fair share of support; improving planning, cooperation, and coordination within the Department of the Interior and across the federal government; and enabling the country to meet new challenges through public-private partnerships.