

## **Simpson Bill Introduced in the House as Companion to Senate Compromise on LWCF**

- HR 4151, introduced by Congressman Mike Simpson (R-ID), is a House companion bill to Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) legislation that has passed through the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee twice by a wide bipartisan margin. It was crafted as a bipartisan compromise between Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) to permanently reauthorize LWCF while making modest reforms to the program.
- HR 1814, like the Murkowski-Cantwell agreement, would make the following changes to LWCF:
  - A 40%-40%-20% split of LWCF funding between federal purposes (i.e. federal agency projects through NPS, BLM, USFS and USFWS), state purposes (grants through the NPS State and Local Assistance Program, the Forest Legacy Program, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Program/Section 6, and the American Battlefield Protection Program), and flexible funding, all subject to appropriator discretion. This closely mirrors the distribution of LWCF appropriations in recent years.
  - Agencies must take into account the following factors when choosing projects: management efficiencies, management cost savings, geographic distribution, significance of the acquisition, urgency of the acquisition, threats to the integrity of the land to be acquired, and the recreational value of the land. These are similar to existing agency criteria, and would codify current practice.
  - Codification of the 1.5% sportsmen's access provision that has been included in all proposed LWCF legislation for the last several years, endorsed by the LWCF Coalition.
  - Where feasible and appropriate, agencies should consider the use of conservation easements.
- The agreement also creates a new National Park Maintenance and Revitalization Fund that is over and above LWCF—NOT taking authorized dollars away from LWCF—from Outer Continental Shelf energy revenues. This agreement therefore addresses critical needs for our public lands on two fronts: improving existing facilities and resources, and protecting the integrity of those parks from incompatible development.
- Unlike the proposal from Chairman Bishop of the House Natural Resources Committee, HR 4151 addresses questions about reforming LWCF without causing major damage to the program's core conservation mission or the diversity and flexibility of tools available to communities.
- HR 4151 is a reasonable, viable path forward for LWCF that represents common ground between the two current reauthorization proposals in the House (HR 1814, which has nearly 200 bipartisan cosponsors, and the Bishop proposal). Members are urged to cosponsor (even if they are already cosponsors of HR 1814) and press Leadership for inclusion of this language in the omnibus appropriations package.