

## **2015 – 03 LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

IN 1965 Congress unanimously passed into law the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). That legislation authorized collecting 900 million dollars of royalty fees from offshore oil and gas drilling receipts annually. These fees were to be used to create and protect national parks, protect important riparian areas along lakes and rivers, acquire lands for national forests, protect national wildlife refuges from development and encroachment, and, provide matching grants for state and local parks and recreation projects.

Congress has seldom appropriated the full 900 million dollars authorized. In fact, Congress has rarely come anywhere near the 1965 authorization. Instead Congress has diverted 19 billion dollars from these funds for purposes other than those intended under the law. Meanwhile Congress has provided the gas and oil industry 470 billion dollars in never expiring tax breaks.

This legislation (LWCF) is revenue neutral legislation, since no taxpayer funding is being used. And, these funds when appropriated as authorized in 1965, benefit the economy. A variety of outdoor recreation activities (hunting, fishing, camping, hiking etc.) contribute an estimated 646 billion dollars and over 6 million jobs annually. (source: LWCF Coalition Economic Fact Sheet)

Oil and gas royalties in 2013 were 9 billion, and only 305 million was appropriated to be used as provided in the LWCF legislation.

For the first time in many years, President Obama has asked Congress to appropriate the full 900 million dollars.

EXPIRATION: LWCF expires in 2015.

BE IT RESOLVED that the MN Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in Convention on April 26th, 2015 urges Congress to re-authorize the LWCF.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the MN Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in Convention on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, urges Congress to appropriate annually the 900 million dollars authorized in 1965, and, amend the LWCF to include an appropriate adjustment for inflation in the years ahead. The purpose of the inflation rider is to first adjust for the lost value of the dollar value of 900 million in 1965, and, in the years succeeding 2015.

*Submitted by the W. J. McCabe Chapter*