SENATOR GARDNER, DON’T FORGET ABOUT LWCF

Golden, Co. (April 16, 2018) – Tomorrow, on April 17, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a full hearing to examine the $12 billion maintenance backlog in the National Park Service. On the table is the proposed National Park Restoration Act. By funding the maintenance at national parks using revenues from increased drilling and mining on America’s public lands and waters, the proposal could create an incentive to open up more and more of our public lands and waters to energy development. It is a distraction from focusing on reauthorization of the highly successful Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has enjoyed bipartisan support as the principal source of federal dollars for everything from America’s national parks and wildlife refuges to community parks, trails, and ball fields for over 50 years.

“Sen. Gardner, while we all agree upgrading our national parks is important, we also need to protect vital LWCF funding needed for our popular National Trails System,” said Teresa Martinez, Executive Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. “Millions of Americans count on this important funding to enjoy the outdoor spaces and historic resources offered by our nation’s incredible network of scenic, historic, and recreational trails. We look forward to you delivering this message in tomorrow’s Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing.”

The choice between keeping our national parks clean, safe and well-maintained and keeping our most treasured public lands and waters from being drilled and mined is a false one. The bill under consideration aims to fund the maintenance backlog in our national parks with surplus energy revenues, an unpredictable and unreliable funding source dependent upon global commodity prices and private industry interests. The last time U.S. energy revenues surpassed the proposed threshold that would trigger this funding was in 2014. This means that, if the current proposal were law, the national parks would have received $0 for their maintenance backlog in the past three years.

We are calling upon Congress to maintain their focus on reauthorizing and fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Over its 50-year history, LWCF has protected land in every state and supported over 41,000 state and local park projects. LWCF enjoys strong bipartisan support, including from Senator Gardner. The people of Colorado need him to continue to be a champion this year to reauthorize the fund before it expires in September 2018. Please call Senator Gardner at (303) 391-5777 and tell him to stand up for LWCF permanent reauthorization during the Committee hearings tomorrow and until it is passed.

About the Continental Divide Trail
The CDT is one of the world’s premiere long-distance trails, stretching 3,100 miles from Mexico to Canada along the Continental Divide. Designated by Congress in 1978, the CDT is the highest, most challenging and most remote of the 11 National Scenic Trails. It provides recreational opportunities ranging from hiking to horseback riding to hunting for thousands of visitors each year. While 95% of the CDT is located on public land, approximately 150 miles are still in need of protection.

About the Continental Divide Trail Coalition
The CDTC was founded in 2012 by volunteers and recreationists hoping to provide a unified voice for the Trail. Working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Forest Service and other federal land management agencies, the CDTC is a
non-profit partner supporting stewardship of the CDT. The mission of the CDTC is to complete, promote and protect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a world-class national resource. For more information, please visit continentaldividetrail.org.

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