SENATOR DAINES SUPPORTS LWCF WITH HIS VOICE, NOT HIS VOTE

HELENA, Mt. (June 20, 2018) – On Wednesday, the United States Senate narrowly rejected a procedural motion to vote on a Trump administration proposal which would shrink several conservation programs, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). While HR 3 failed to pass this procedural vote, Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) voted in favor of the measure, despite openly championing the Land and Water Conservation Fund just hours earlier at a bipartisan conference.

“The LWCF is critical to Montana jobs and protecting our outdoor way of life. Our children and grandchildren are counting on us to preserve America’s outdoor heritage -- we cannot let funding for this important bipartisan program expire,” said Senator Daines at the event, which marked the last 100 days in which Congress can save LWCF before it expires at the end of September.

HR 3 would cut many federal programs the GOP now deems unnecessary. For LWCF and other conservation projects, that means a $16 million cut. Last week, HR 3 passed the House of Representatives, with Montana Congressman Greg Gianforte voting yes despite his previous support of LWCF.

“While we appreciate Senator Daines’ support for LWCF, that support means nothing if he refuses to stand behind it with his votes,” said Teresa Martinez, Executive Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition. “We are disappointed to say the least. Daines misled us. Montanans need a leader with consistent stances, who will help protect the iconic landscapes we rely on for recreation, business, natural resources, and the future of a successful Montana.”

The Alamocita Creek property, the purchase of which will enable 52 miles of the CDT to be relocated away from the road, was bought using LWCF funds.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America’s most important conservation and recreation program, responsible for protecting trails, community parks, and wildlands at the federal, state and local level. For over 52 years, it has provided critical funding for land and water conservation projects, access to recreation including hunting and fishing, and the continued historic preservation of our nation’s iconic landmarks. In Montana, LWCF has protected some of the state’s most awe-inspiring places, including Glacier National Park, Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park, and Custer Gallatin National Forest. LWCF does not use any taxpayer dollars – it is funded using a small portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments.

“There are just 100 days left before LWCF is gone forever,” said Martinez. “Words of support are simply not enough. The only way that Senator Daines can help save LWCF is with his vote.”

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.