

News from the State Park Directors

The National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) is a professional organization formed by the directors of the 50 State Park Systems in 1962 to foster the following goals:

- Provide a common forum for the exchange of information about state park programs;
- Take collective positions on issues affecting state parks;
- Encourage the development of professional leadership in the administration of state park programs;
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with other agencies involved in park and recreation programs; and
- Enhance the ability of the individual state park directors to perform their responsibilities for administering state park programs of the highest quality for the benefit of the state park resources and the public.

The NASPD does not fulfill any directive function over state parks, nor was it ever intended to. It is a professional association, chartered as a 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation to fulfill the goals stated above.

This article is intended to reflect a sampling, based upon my casual contacts with our membership, of the directions or trends affecting some, or even many, but by no means all of the individual states at the present time. Any description of the state of state parks is of necessity a snapshot in time. As such, the material presented here was current as of May 2000; by the time you read this, some of the items mentioned here may well have

changed.

Legislation at the Federal Level

The NASPD has supported two legislative initiatives that are pending in Congress as of this writing. The first is the "Land Legacy Program" of the Clinton administration. In the federal Fiscal Year 2000, this program provided approximately \$40 million for a re-energized state-side Land and Water Conservation Fund

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(LWCF) appropriation. That funding has recently been allocated to the states, according to the standing LWCF formula, less a \$2 million hold-back for administration-selected state projects.

In the federal FY2001 appropriations bill there is a Land Legacy Program request by the administration for \$150 million for state-side LWCF. This program would provide \$72.5 million earmarked for grants to the states, \$72.5 million earmarked as a hold-back for administration-selected projects, and \$5 million for program administration. This program is part of the federal annual appropriations bill which is waiting to be passed by Congress by 1 October 2000, when it would take effect. The National Park Service administers the state-side LWCF grants to the 50 states for outdoor recreation land purchases and facilities development. The NASPD opposes the hold-back of \$72.5 million by the administration, and instead supports the entire amount going directly to the states.

The second legislative initiative is the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act," H.R. 701, which has passed in the House of Representatives. This bill had broad-based support in the House, with over 316 co-sponsors. A companion bill, S. 2123, containing generally the same provisions, has been introduced in the Senate. Its passage is more problematical in the time remaining in this session of the Congress. H.R. 701 contains the

following provisions as of this writing:

- Revenue sharing with coastal states to mitigate the impacts of offshore oil and gas drilling (\$1 billion);
- LWCF revitalization: \$900 million to be equally divided between the states and local governments and the federal government;
- State-level wildlife conservation and restoration and revitalization funds, with state and local parkland eligibility (\$350 million);
- Urban Park and Recovery Program (\$125 million);
- Historic Preservation Fund (\$100 million);
- Federal and Indian lands restoration (\$200 million);
- Conservation easements and species recovery (\$200 million); and
- Payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) for federal lands and species recovery (\$200 million).

Foundations

If there is any trend just becoming visible among the various state park systems, it is that of forming foundations to assist in supporting the parks. Similar foundations are also being formed to assist a combination of state parks and allied state conservation agencies, such as those managing wildlife or forests. The term "foundation" can cover a very broad range