

E.

Annual Meeting Report to the Membership,
October 5th, 2021

President Linda Lanterman and Executive Director Doug Eiken

President
Linda Lanterman
Kansas

Vice President
Eric Feldbaum
New Hampshire

Secretary
Doug Beck
Maine

Past President
Lauren Imgrund
Pennsylvania

Executive Director
Doug Eiken
Missouri

Board of Directors

Randy Kittle
South Dakota

Erika Rivers
Minnesota

Christie Bayus
Michigan

Mick Rogers
Arizona

Sedrick Mitchell
California

Dana Lagarde
Texas

Antoinette Norfleet
Georgia

Gerald Parish
Tennessee

Janice Keillor
Nevada

Robert Ehemann
Delaware

105H, ABNR BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
COLUMBIA, MO 65211-7230
573-353-2702

The last 12 months since our last Report to the NASORLO Membership has been a very busy time for all of us. The first challenge was the new LWCF Manual and drastic change to the use of the State Assistance Program by the outgoing Secretary of Interior after we had been so excited about full, permanent and dedicated LWCF funding with a 40% target for state outdoor recreation grants. It took many meetings, support from the NPS staff and the Coalition that passed the Great American Outdoors Act to get the new Administration to rescind the Manual changes and replace it with a new revised version and have the original intent of GAOA fulfilled by restoring the 40% for state outdoor recreation grants, including ORLP.

There was much confusion during those 2-3 months and convinced NASORLO that we needed to have a better understanding of how policies and decisions by both Congress and the Administration are made and to see if we can find a way to have the state's and territories involvement prior to implementation of changes. The Officers and Board of NASORLO, along with input from our state partners, determined we needed to seek out assistance to accomplish those objectives.

In March of this year, the Board entered into a contract with the Signal Group, a firm with strong ties to LWCF, local parks and trails on a 4 month trial basis. We realized the initial benefits of this contract when we were able to change a proposal to limit the GOMESA funds available to the State LWCF before it was introduced, rather than to find out about it after introduction, which would make changes much more difficult and complicated. On the basis of this experience and other similar benefits we decided to extend that contract to the end of 2021.


It is our assessment the next 18 months are critical to obtain stability in the funding levels of LWCF and seek a successful resolution to most of the priorities listed within this report. Therefore, we are seeking Membership input to continue the contract through 2022. Of course, we also knew to do this, we needed to find a way to generate more revenue to support the contract through the end of 2022. We adopted a revenue plan and are pleased to report we have successfully received commitments to reach our revenue goals necessary to maintain the contract.

We now meet regularly with DOI and Congressional Staff on Zoom meeting where we go over our priorities and the reasons why these priorities are so important to our state, urban and local citizens in the administration of the LWCF. In addition, we are much more timely with our formal communication with key officials and Committees. NASORLO is now engaged more directly in decision making related to LWCF, the State Assistance Program and ORLP.


We have also formed partnerships with Playcore and NASPD to improve our training, outreach and advocacy for the state program. In addition, we have successfully sought out sponsors for our annual meeting which also assisted us financially, so that we would not need to dip too deeply into our reserve account to maintain our advocacy and outreach.


It has been a very active year and with the help of our partners we have been able to make significant progress towards implementing our work plan. As has been the history of our organization, our strength has always been the passion and commitment of our members and their willingness to serve the organization through special projects, being Board Members, Officers and providing advocacy and support at the state and local level.

As the only organization whose sole purpose and being is support for, advocacy on behalf of and effective management of the State Assistance Program of the LWCF, we set the following as our 2021 Priorities and these are followed by an update as of the date of our 2021 Annual Meeting.

 **Obtain recommended 40% allocation for the State Assistance Program in the FY 22 Budget.** *Update.. Success! But the House Appropriations recommendation reduced it to a 34% share, which we are currently working on to restore the President's recommendation of a 40% share in the Senate budget markup.*

Seek the authority to allow ARA stimulus funding to match LWCF for state and local grants. *We had many meetings and submitted several letters to address this issue. Nothing has been done at this point, but if opportunities arise, key Committees indicated they may include language to accomplish this objective.*


 **Stateside Administrative Funding - allow up to 10% annual apportionment to be used in supporting direct and indirect costs of state side program management.** *We have also met with key Committee staff to address this issue. They are interested in finding a way to allow for an administrative set aside for state and territorial agencies. In addition, the NPS program is forwarding our proposal for up to a 10% administrative fee, up through the DOI and Budget Office. We are hopeful some solution will be available within the next year.*


 **Training for our Members is a high priority. As was provided at last years Annual Meeting we added training elements addressing the needs expressed by the Members from Surveys and Comments obtained from surveys and at the 2020 Annual Meeting.** *Update: We have aggressive Training goals and have already developed a plan for implementation. We feel especially responsible for Member training due to the fact that NPS has not been able to offer their typical range of training opportunities and the fact there are many new LWCF grant administrators at the state level. Therefore, one complete day of this years Annual Meeting will be on 6 key Training topics. These topics will be recorded, updated in the future and offer them in Virtual training sessions on these key, and other timely, topics on at least a quarterly basis. Our partnership agreement with Playcore will provide the technology and expertise to offer this training on a regular basis over a three year period, or until NPS has the staff and capability to again offer regular training.*


 **Conversions / Stewardship** *These are issues being championed by our LWCF Modernization Committee*


- **Establish a 6(f)(3) boundary advisory committee to assist NPS in resolving issues surrounding indistinct, incomplete or absent boundaries on existing LWCF assisted projects.** *Update: Still a priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*
- **Delegate authority to states to resolve small conversions and temporary non-conforming use.**
- *Update: Still a priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*
- **Establish a 180-day time limit for NPS action on submitted conversions. If no action taken within that period, states will have full authority to resolve conversions and report outcomes to NPS.** *Update: Still a priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*


- **Liberalize rules related to the use of the SRA accounts** *Update: Still a priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*
- **Extend SCORP from 5 - 10 years.** *Update: Still a priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*

 **Reduce match requirement to 20% over the next five years to promote greater access to funds and further promote economic recovery.** *Update: We have submitted letters and met with key Congressional Staff, but any change will likely be for all federal funding match requirements. There is no movement on this issue that we are aware of at this time.*

 **Assure notice of apportionment and facilitate project approvals in a timely fashion and extend the obligation limit of funds from three(3) years to five (5) years to further enable access to and allocation of all available funds.** *Update: We have submitted letters and met with key Congressional Staff, but any change will likely be for all federal funding match requirements. There is no movement on this issue that we are aware of at this time.*

 **Establish a working group comprised of states and NPS leadership to review and make determinations on how to improve program efficiency and effectiveness. The working group should be empowered to work through a LEAN process (or similar program) to identify program in-efficiencies and make permanent structural program changes.** *We have met with Congressional staff on this issue and they suggested we support the establishment of an official LWCF Advisory Committee where all of our issues can be presented and formal recommendations acted upon from decisions reached by this Committee. There seems to be support with DOI and in Congress for this Committee, but nothing has been drafted at this time. In addition, we have met with NPS and DOI Leadership to express our concern and support for these changes and to address the backlog of LWCF project approvals and conversion delays. These would be key topics for any Advisory Committee in the future.*

 **Work with partners to develop and complete a retrievable digital data base that identifies all LWCF projects in the nation.** *Update: NASORLO worked with the State of Delaware, the Trust for Public Land and the LWCF Coalition to create a publically accessible Park Locator data base this summer. We intend to work with them to make the data base more accurate and to add projects as they are completed. This project primarily fulfills our objective to have such a resource.*

 **Continue to work with NPS to facilitate better cooperation and collaboration on LWCF State Assistance grants administration.** *Update: We have had some success with finding ways to improve cooperation and collaboration, but none of us feel we are where we need to be. This is still a high priority, but this has been delayed due to our lack of success in rescheduling the planned facilitated retreat with NPS staff.*