

**THE FIRM LINE - IN THIS ISSUE:**

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## Threat of losing a 50-year-old conservation fund creates a rare bipartisan moment in Congress

*By Lindsay Reeves*



*The site of the Battle of New Orleans, in Chalmette, is supported by the Land and Water Conservation Fund*

If you've ever visited the site of the Battle of New Orleans, cast your fishing line in the Pearl River, strolled under an oak tree at Audubon Park, or hit a tennis ball at City Park, you've benefited from the Land and Water Conservation Fund ("LWCF").

The LWCF is a federal fund that has supported public spaces and recreation areas in Louisiana - and all around the U.S. - for more than 50 years. Both political parties support it, as do hunters, anglers and environmentalists.

But Congressman Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the new Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee,

has [called](#) the LCWF "so dumb," and vowed to kill the fund as it exists.

This fall, he nearly succeeded - and in doing so, he antagonized so many people that he created a rare moment of bipartisan cooperation among political leaders across the country.

### What does the LWCF do?

[Congress created the LWCF in 1964](#) to serve a number of purposes, including:

- buying land for public use (including national parks),
- supporting state and local governments in the creation of parks and recreation areas,
- preserving battlefields and historic areas,
- rewarding private landowners who set aside land for conservation or preservation of endangered species habitat.

The program has helped create parks in [all 50 states](#). It helped establish Rocky Mountain National Park and the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. It has preserved historic sites like the Gettysburg Battlefield and the Underground Railroad. It has set aside areas for hunting and fishing as well as fields for sports like baseball and tennis.

And it's done all this without using taxpayer money.

The LWCF is [funded by the fees paid by oil and gas companies](#) for mineral development on the Outer Continental Shelf, which is government-owned. Every day, the fund generates about [\\$2.5 million](#) from offshore leases.

### What does the LWCF mean for Louisiana?

Louisiana has received approximately [\\$215 million](#) in LWCF funding over the past five decades. [Every parish in the state has received LWCF money](#) - including \$6.6 million for Orleans Parish, \$7.5 million for Jefferson Parish, and \$3.7 million for East Baton Rouge Parish.

In 2015, Louisiana received \$688,000 from the fund.

According to the Trust for Public Land (TPL), the LWCF also generates money for states beyond the direct funds it provides them. In 2010, TPL [analyzed](#) the return on investment from LWCF dollars for federal land acquisition and found that every dollar invested by the LWCF returns four dollars in economic value.

In its study, the TPL looked at 16 federal sites that were supported by LWCF money. It found that, between 1998 and 2009, those sites were visited by 11 million tourists annually. It also found that those tourists spent an annual average of \$511 million in the LWCF sites.

### Why is Rep. Bishop trying to kill the LWCF?

Congressman Bishop has never been shy about expressing his opposition to federal ownership of land, which he sometimes describes as a battle between "East" and "West."

[Read More](#)

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## How the Paris climate agreement could affect Louisiana

When scientists discuss places in the world that are impacted by climate change, they often mention Louisiana. When U.S. military experts talk about cities that could be damaged or even destroyed by sea level rise, New Orleans is invariably at the top of their list.

So if there's any community who has an interest in understanding exactly what is in the Paris Agreement that was the result of the recent 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, we are that community.

Below are links to a handful of articles that we think do a good job of explaining the Paris Agreement and its ramifications for Louisiana.

[Paris climate talks could help shape future of Louisiana coast, panelists say](#)

*The Times Picayune, 11/20/15*

[Inside the Paris climate deal](#)

*The New York Times, 12/12/15*

[A reader's guide to the Paris Agreement](#)

*The Atlantic, 12/16/15*

[Businesses back Paris climate agreement](#)

*U.S. News & World Report, 12/14/15*

[What does the Paris Agreement mean for the world's other 8 million species?](#)

*The Guardian, 1/6/16*



Judge John Minor Wisdom in 1977  
*Photo: H.J. Patterson, The Times Picayune*

## Dennis Persica: Judge called Wisdom lived up to his name

*From The Advocate*

Judge John Minor Wisdom (1905-1999) was a son of New Orleans, a lifelong republican, and a champion of civil rights on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He was responsible for the ruling that allowed James Meredith to attend the University of Mississippi, as well as a number of other key rulings that helped desegregate the South.

He was also a stubborn man, and a brave one, refusing to have his phone number unlisted, even after receiving boxes of hate mail - even after his dogs were poisoned and a rattlesnake was thrown in his yard.

The U.S. Court of Appeals building in New Orleans bears Judge Wisdom's name, and it was recently given National Historic Landmark status. In light of that event, Dennis Persica at *The Advocate* recently considered Judge Wisdom's career and character, and the lessons we can learn from him today.

[Click here to read the full article](#)

[Click here](#) to read a 1985 interview with Judge Wisdom from the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*

## Six Jones Swanson attorneys recognized as 2016 Louisiana Super Lawyers

Louisiana Super Lawyers® named six attorneys from Jones, Swanson, Huddell & Garrison, LLC for inclusion in its 2016 Louisiana Super Lawyers list, including [Gladstone N. Jones, III](#) and [Lynn E. Swanson](#) in Environmental Litigation and Business Litigation, [Tad Bartlett](#) and [Katie E. Lasky](#) in Business Litigation, and [Bernard E. Boudreaux](#) in Business/Corporate, Environmental Litigation and Legislative & Governmental Affairs. [Kerry Murphy](#) also made the list as a 2016 Rising Star in the Area of

Business Litigation.

To learn more about Super Lawyers, please [click here](#).



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Jones, Swanson, Huddell & Garrison, LLC, is a boutique litigation law firm based in New Orleans, with a second office in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The firm primarily handles complex commercial and environmental/property disputes. In those litigation arenas, the firm has a strong nationwide presence, continues to represent many of Louisiana's and the Southeast's largest and most active business entrepreneurs and landholders, and retains a sharp focus on the customized representation of smaller businesses and individuals. Jones Swanson has served as lead counsel in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, California, and Texas, as well as in Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Louisiana.

The Firm Line is a newsletter designed to inform our clients and friends about legal issues that may impact their lives and businesses, developments at the firm, and other items of interest. Our intention is to keep the information we provide in this newsletter concise. We welcome further discussion on the topics addressed herein, as well as ideas and suggestions as to topics of interest that we could cover in future issues, and thoughts as to how we can deliver better, more insightful information to our readership. Above all, we hope that The Firm Line proves interesting and noteworthy.

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