



Partnership for the National Trails System

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STATEMENT TO THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT & RELATED AGENCIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

The Partnership for the National Trails System appreciates your support over the past 20 years, through operations funding and dedicated Challenge Cost Share funds, for the national scenic and historic trails administered by the National Park Service. We also appreciate your increased allocation of funds to support the trails administered and managed by the Forest Service and for the trails in the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System.

2018 will be the 50th year since Congress established the **National Trails System** as a bold experiment in public/private collaboration for public benefit. While most of the trail making is done by tens of thousands of citizen stewards increased funding is needed to close gaps in these trails. To continue the progress that you have fostered and **to begin the next 50 years with an increased investment in the National Trails System**, the Partnership requests that you provide annual operations funding for each of the 30 national scenic and historic trails for Fiscal Year 2018 through these appropriations:

- **National Park Service: \$16.233 million** for administration of **23 trails** and for coordination of the long-distance trails program by the Washington office. **Construction: \$357,200** for the **Ice Age Trail** and **\$250,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**.
- **USDA Forest Service: \$85 million** for trails construction and maintenance (CMTL) with **\$7.796 million** of it to administer **6 trails** and **\$1.3 million** to manage parts of **16 trails** administered by the NPS or BLM. **\$600,000** for **Iditarod Trail** construction and maintenance.
- **Bureau of Land Management: \$2.812 million** to administer **three trails** and for coordination of the National Trails program and **\$7.14 million** to manage portions of **13 trails** administered by the Park Service or the Forest Service and for operating five National Historic Trail interpretive centers. **Construction: \$300,000** for the **Iditarod Trail**. **Maintenance: \$300,000** for the **Iditarod Trail** and **\$250,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**,
- We ask you to create a **\$1.5 million National Trails System Challenge Cost Share Program** for the **National Park Service**.
- We ask you to restore the **Bureau of Land Management's Challenge Cost Share Program** with **\$3 million** and allocate **\$500,000** of it for the national scenic and historic trails.

We ask you to appropriate **\$900,000,000** from the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** and allocate **\$54,832,000** of it to these agencies to purchase **72 tracts** along five national scenic and seven national historic trails described in the **National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning** proposal:

- **Bureau of Land Management: \$2,895,000**
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$12,719,000**
- **US Forest Service: \$18,331,000**
- **National Park Service: \$20,887,000.**

National Park Service

The **\$16.233 million** we request for **Park Service operations** includes increases for some of the trails to continue the progress and new initiatives made possible by the additional funding Congress provided several years ago. An **increase of \$570,000** for the **Old Spanish Trail** will enable the Park Service to begin implementing the Trail's new Comprehensive Administrative Strategy working with the Old Spanish Trail Association to increase volunteer participation in signing, interpreting, and educating the public about the trail. The Park Service will be better able to collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management in administering the trail and to consult with other agencies to protect the cultural and natural resources along it from destruction by energy projects.

We request an **increase of \$660,000** to expand Park Service efforts to protect cultural landscapes at more than 200 sites along the **Santa Fe Trail**, to develop GIS mapping, and to fund public educational and community outreach programs of the Santa Fe Trail Association. **Increases of \$313,224** for the **Oregon Trail** and **\$255,192** for the **California Trail** will enable the Park Service to work with the Oregon-California Trails Association to develop digital and social media to connect with youth in the cities along these trails providing information about their many layers of history and to better protect the historical and cultural heritage sites and landscapes along them from destruction by energy development in the West. We request an **increase of \$300,000 to \$833,000** for the **Ala Kahakai Trail** to enable the Park Service to work with E Mau Na Ala Hele, the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, and other community organizations to care for resources on the land and with the University of Hawaii to conduct archaeological and cultural landscape studies along this trail.

The **\$1,020,000** we request for the **4,200 mile North Country Trail** will enable the Park Service to provide greater support for the regional GIS mapping, trail building, trail management, and training of volunteers led by the North Country Trail Association. The **\$1,278,000** we request for the **Ice Age Trail** includes a **\$443,000 increase** to build partner and citizen capacity for building new and maintaining existing trail, protecting the natural and cultural resources on the lands purchased for the trail, and to provide the Park Service with a planner to accelerate planning of the land protection corridor for the trail.

Construction: We request that you provide **\$357,200** for the **Ice Age Trail** to build 30 miles of new trail and several trailhead parking lots and **\$250,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail** for trail construction projects.

Challenge Cost Share programs are one of the most effective and efficient ways for Federal agencies to accomplish a wide array of projects for public benefit while also sustaining partnerships involving countless private citizens in doing public service work. We request that you **restore the Bureau of Land Management Challenge Cost Share program**, appropriate **\$3 million** to fund it, and allocate **\$500,000** of that to fund projects along the **national scenic and historic trails**. We ask you to create a **National Park Service National Trails System Challenge Cost Share program** with **\$1.5 million** funding to continue the steady progress toward making these trails fully available for public enjoyment as a wise investment of public money that will generate public benefits many times greater than its sum.

USDA - Forest Service

We ask you to appropriate **\$85 million for trails construction and maintenance (CMTL)** to begin to address the considerable maintenance backlog on the trails in the National Forest System. Within this appropriation we request that you provide **\$7.796 million as a separate budgetary item specifically for the Arizona, Continental Divide, Florida, Pacific Crest, and Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trails and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail** within the over-all appropriation for **Capital Improvements and Maintenance for Trails**. Recognizing the on-the-ground management responsibility the **Forest Service** has for **1024 miles** of the Appalachian Trail, more than **650 miles** of the North Country Trail, and sections of the Ice Age, Anza, Caminos Real de Tierra Adentro and de Tejas, Lewis & Clark, California, Iditarod, Mormon Pioneer, Old Spanish, Oregon, Overmountain Victory, Pony Express,

Trail of Tears and Santa Fe Trails, we ask you to appropriate **\$1.3 million** specifically for these trails.

The Partnership's request of **\$7.796 million** includes **\$1.5 million** to enable the Forest Service and Florida Trail Association to continue trail maintenance, to control invasive species, do ecosystem restoration, and otherwise manage **4,625 acres** of new **Florida Trail** land. The **\$7.996 million** request also includes **\$2.1 million** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**, **\$2 million** for the **Continental Divide Trail**, **\$1 million** for the **Pacific Northwest Trail**, **\$826,000** for the **Nez Perce Trail**, and **\$570,000** for the **Arizona Trail**. Some of the additional funds requested will enable the Forest Service to develop Comprehensive Management Plans for the latter three trails. We also request **\$600,000** of **additional funding** for construction and for maintenance of sections of the **Iditarod Trail**.

Bureau of Land Management

Although considerably more money is needed to fully administer the **National Conservation Lands System** and protect its resources, we request that you appropriate **\$84 million** in **base funding** for the System. We ask that you appropriate as **new permanent base funding** **\$250,000** for **National Trails System Program Coordination**, **\$1,000,000** for the **Iditarod Trail**, **\$230,000** for **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail**, **\$1,332,000** for the **Old Spanish Trail**, and **\$4,000,000** for the Bureau to manage **4,645 miles** of thirteen other national scenic and historic trails. We request **\$300,000** to construct new sections of the **Iditarod Trail** and to maintain these trails: **Iditarod Trail - \$300,000** and **Pacific Crest Trail - \$250,000**. We also request **\$3,140,000** to operate **five historic trails interpretive centers**.

To promote greater management transparency and accountability for the National Trails and the whole **National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)**, we urge you to request expenditure and accomplishment reports for each of the NLCS Units for FY17 and FY 18 and to direct the Bureau to include unit-level allocations within **major sub-activities** for each of the scenic and historic trails, and wild and scenic rivers -- as the Bureau has done for the national monuments, wilderness, and conservation areas -- within a **new activity account** for the National Landscape Conservation System in FY19. The Bureau's lack of a unified budget account for National Trails prevents the agency from efficiently planning, implementing, reporting, and taking advantage of cost-saving and leveraging partnerships and volunteer contributions for every activity related to these national resources.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Partnership strongly supports full funding of the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** at the authorized **\$900 million** for the component federal and state programs funded under LWCF. Within this amount we request that you appropriate **\$54,832,000** for the **National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning** proposal to acquire 72 parcels along these 12 national scenic and historic trails:

Bureau of Land Management: \$2,895,000 | 12 parcels | 1,845 acres

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (ID) **\$2,295,000** to protect riparian ecosystems and migratory corridors with habitat for sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and elk, and historic and cultural resources.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (OR) **\$600,000** for trail and resource protection within the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon.

US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$12,719,000 | 7 parcels | 6,462 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (PA) **\$1,800,000** for protection of a keystone habitat for bog turtles, black bear, Indiana bats, northern flying squirrels, and bald eagles along the Kittatinny Ridge.

California National Historic Trail (ID): **\$1,570,000** to protect the largest breeding concentration of Sandhill Cranes and a haven for other waterfowl near Grays Lake NWR from agricultural development;

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (VA) **\$8,500,000** to preserve and provide access to the site of a historic encounter between John Smith and indigenous peoples and protect a major eagle and migratory bird stopover habitat at Fones Cliff in the Rappahannock NWR;

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (WA) \$849,000 to preserve a wealth of unique ecosystems and enhance ecosystem connectivity between State-protected lands and the Steigerwald NWR.

US Forest Service: \$18,331,000 | 41 parcels | 8,704 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (NC, TN, VA, VT) \$7,626,000 to protect the largest remaining inholding of the Green Mountain NF, relocate trail segments, preserve trail viewsheds, and provide ecological connectivity and watershed protection near or adjacent to the Pisgah NF State-protected lands;

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (MT, CO) \$1,065,000 to protect alpine headwaters of the Rio Grande River and high-altitude habitat for Elk, deer, and Canada Lynx within the Helena National Forest;

Florida National Scenic Trail (FL) \$90,000 to fill trail gaps and provide connectivity between protected areas along the Withlacoochee River and adjacent to Suwannee River State Park;

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (CA, WA) \$9,550,000 to protect inholdings of the Shasta-Trinity NF, maintain public access to at-risk trail segments along riparian corridors, and preserve iconic views at Pine Mountain.

National Park Service: \$20,887,000 | 12 parcels | 7,466 acres

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (HI): \$6,000,000 to protect 444 archaeological sites at an ancient coastal indigenous gathering area that hosts a wealth of native plants and wildlife both above and below ground in lava tubes;

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (MA, NY, ME) \$5,657,000 to protect the remaining 8 miles of shoreline and enable public access for Bald Mountain Pond, to enable multiple trail re-routings, to preserve delicate habitats for threatened and endangered species, to support connectivity of riparian and forest habitats, and to preserve iconic scenic viewsheds;

North Country National Scenic Trail (MI, WI) \$5,900,000 to fill over nine miles of trail gaps, protect over 2,500 acres along the Sturgeon River downstream from the Ottawa National Forest, and to preserve public access to a 3,000-ft pristine shoreline of Lake Superior that provides critical habitat for endangered and migratory species;

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (TN) \$330,000 to protect the historically significant Shelving Rock Encampment Site, preserve original trail roadbed, and facilitate interpretation;

Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (NY) \$3,000,000 for preservation of a Revolutionary War-era supply depot site and cemetery.

Private Sector Support for the National Trails System

Public-spirited partnerships between private citizens and public agencies have been a hallmark of the National Trails System since its inception. These partnerships create the enduring strength of the Trails System and the trail communities that sustain it by combining the local, grass-roots energy and responsiveness of volunteers with the responsible continuity of public agencies. **They also provide private financial support for public projects, often resulting in a greater than equal match of funds.**

The private trail organizations' commitment to the success of these trail-sustaining partnerships grows even as Congress' support for the trails has grown. In **2016 the trail organizations fostered 1,029,569 hours** of documented volunteer labor valued at **\$24,256,645** to help sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The organizations also raised **private sector contributions of \$13,184,886** for the trails.