



The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chairman
 Senate Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
 and Related Agencies

The Honorable Betty McCollum
 Chair
 House Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
 Related Agencies

The Honorable Tom Udall
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and
 Related Agencies

The Honorable David Joyce
 Ranking Member
 House Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
 Related Agencies

November 13, 2020

Dear Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the millions of diverse trail users our collective organizations represent, we thank the Senate and House Appropriations Committees for adhering to our previous request for trail inclusive funding. As discussions begin to reconcile the legislation that has passed the House of Representatives and introduced by the Senate Appropriations Committee we ask that Congress ensure the enacted legislation include the following funding levels and report language currently included in either the House or Senate versions of the legislation.¹

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

U.S. Forest Service

1. Capital Improvements and Maintenance, Trails

National Forest trails benefit everyone and receive increasing public use each year. Collectively, the National Forests provide 157,000 miles of trails for activities ranging from hiking, biking, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle usage, groomed winter trails for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling, and access points for “river trails.” Even with passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, this trail system is

¹ These recommendations are specific to the requests made in the joint testimony sent on [March 23, 2020 \(Senate\)](#) and [February 5, 2020 \(House\)](#) to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees. These recommendations should not be interpreted to replace additional recommendations made by individual signatories of the letter.

increasingly stressed and annual maintenance cannot keep pace with the growing demand due to inadequate funding. The lack of maintenance threatens public access to National Forests and could endanger the public safety if funding does not keep pace with public visitation.

Recommended Funding Level: \$84.808M (House Recommended Level) (House Committee Report pg. 121)

We encourage the highest funding level for the Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails at the House passed level of \$84.808M. Given cost-share restructuring in the new Forest Operations account proposal in the Senate legislation we understand the House level to be the higher amount between the two proposals.

Recommended Report Language:²

House Committee Report (pg. 119): The Committee recommends \$84,808,000 for Trail Maintenance and Construction, \$3,808,000 above the enacted level and \$6,000,000 above the budget request.

2. Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness

Recommended Funding Level: \$269.41M (House Recommended Level) (House Committee Report pg. 118)

Recommended Report Language: (House Committee Report (pg 118.): Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness.—The Committee recommends \$269,410,000 for Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness, \$7,410,000 above the enacted level and \$5,781,000 above the budget request. Funding is increased to improve the recreational experience on National Forest System lands.

Bureau of Land Management

1. Recreation Management

The BLM manages 13,468 miles of trails over 245 million acres —more land than any other federal land management agency. Most of the country’s BLM-managed public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska, and contains a diversity of landscapes that often provide the public less structured but nonetheless diverse recreational opportunities. BLM recreation resources and visitor services support strong local economies. More than 120 urban centers and thousands of rural towns (comprising 64 million people) are located within 25 miles of BLM lands.

Recommended Funding Level: \$78.539M (incl. \$1M increase for National Scenic and Historic Trails) (House Committee Report pg. 13)

² Report Language recommendations are excerpts of relevant trail provisions only and do not indicate support or opposition to the other report language within the same section.

Recommended Report Language: (House Committee Report pg. 13): The Committee recommends \$78,539,000 for Recreation Management, \$2,810,000 above the enacted level and \$2,863,000 above the budget request. Changes to the request include an increase of \$1,863,000 in wilderness management to restore the proposed reduction; and an increase of \$1,000,000 in recreation resources management for the national scenic and historic trails program. The Committee endorses the requested increase of \$799,000 for recreational access.

National Park Service

1. Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA)

The RTCA program brings the expertise of over a century of land management to the greater recreation community. When a community asks for assistance with a project, National Park Service staff provide free critical tools for success, on-location facilitation, and planning expertise, which draw from project experiences across the country and adapt best practices to a community's specific needs. Funding at \$13.478M will ensure these trail planning services are made available to communities in all regions of the nation, including recreation programs for youth.

Recommended Funding Level: Funding for the Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program at \$13.478M or Maintained at FY20 level, whichever is higher

Recommended Report Language: (Senate Committee Report pg. 45): ...Funding is maintained at the enacted level for the Chesapeake Gateways and Trails program and Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance.

2. Park Service Operations for the National Trails System

The NPS has administrative responsibility for 23 National Scenic and Historic Trails established by Congress. Adequate funding is essential for keeping these popular trails accessible. The request will help the work of trail organization partners of the Park Service to build, maintain, and interpret these trails.

Recommended Funding Level: Programmatic increase of \$0.8M. (House Committee Report pg. 32)

Recommended Report Language: (House Committee Report pg. 32): ...The recommendation includes a program increase of \$800,000 for the National Trails System.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1. Visitor Services

Refuge Visitor Services provides funding for trail maintenance across FWS-managed land. Located in every U.S. state and territory, and within an hour's drive of nearly every major U.S. city, National Wildlife

Refuges provide incredible opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, hunting, fishing, birding, boating and nature photography across 2,500 miles of trails. More than 37,000 jobs are reliant on refuges. Funding at a level of \$76.304M will provide for trail maintenance across the land and water trails, refuges, wetlands, and hatcheries, including eleven National Scenic and Historic Trails and forty-four National Recreation Trails.

Recommended Funding Level: \$76.304M (House Recommended Level) (House Committee Report pg. 22)

Recommended Report Language: (House Committee Report pg. 22):...The recommendation does not support the reduction for Urban Wildlife Conservation and provides an additional \$1,000,000 above the enacted level. With a national wildlife refuge located within a one-hour drive of nearly every major metropolitan area, this increase for urban refuges enables the Service to improve access and engage new audiences in outdoor recreation and conservation. The Service is encouraged to work with partners to support year-round environmental education for youth and adults of all ages living in urban settings.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Recommended Funding Level: \$900M Dedicated Funding and no rescission of unobligated funds.

We thank the committees for moving forward LWCF allocations and project lists in accordance with the Great American Outdoors Act and the Dingell Act. As the Senate and House appropriations committees prepare to determine final LWCF allocations, we support the inclusion of previous year LWCF funds remaining in the program to help address the tremendous backlog of unmet LWCF needs. Additionally, in order to address needs across federally managed public lands in the same required threshold for state and local LWCF funding, we encourage the inclusion of GOMESA contributions in the LWCF state funding calculation, as required under the Dingell Act.

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Commerce

1. **Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA)**

Recommended Funding Level: 1.5M (House and Senate Recommended Level)

Recommended Report Language:

(House Committee Report pg. 18): Within the amounts provided, \$1,500,000 is for the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA). The Committee directs the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) in consultation with the Department of Labor to conduct a workforce needs study building upon the information provided by ORSA. The study should focus on identifying current and projected workforce

demographics, geographic distribution of jobs, compensation trends, unfilled job types and quantities, and recommended training needs by sub-sector. BEA is encouraged to coordinate with the agencies of the Federal Recreation Council, outdoor recreation industry, nongovernmental organizations, and institutions of higher education to recommend strategies to both research and develop national-level training standards and solutions to support this fast-changing and growing industry, and assess ways further investment in this area could help with rural and suburban economic development.

(Senate Committee Report pg. 16): ...The Committee directs the Department to continue working with the outdoor recreation industry, nongovernmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders to refine the national-level statistics and to continue developing regional statistics....

We look forward to working with Congress to fulfill these requests to protect, preserve, and maintain trails. For additional information please contact:

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Sincerely,

American Hiking Society
American Council of Snowmobile Associations
American Motorcyclist Association
American Trails
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Applied Trails Research
Back Country Horsemen of America
Equine Land Conservation Resource

International Mountain Bicycling Association
National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Partnership for the National Trails System
Professional Trailbuilders Association
Rails to Trails Conservancy
Tread Lightly!

CC:

Chairman, Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chairwoman, Nita M. Lowey, House Appropriations Committee
Vice Chairman, Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member, Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee

