The Honorable Lisa Murkowski

Chairman

Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on the 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 Betty McCollum

Chairman

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable David Joyce

Ranking Member

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

November 4, 2019

Dear Committee Chairwomen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the tens of thousands of diverse trail users our 220 collective organizations represent, we thank the Senate and House Appropriations Committees for adhering to our previous request for trail inclusive funding in H.R. 3052/S.2580, *Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020.*[[1]](#footnote-1) As discussions begin to reconcile the legislation that has passed the House and advanced out of the Senate Appropriations Committee we ask that Congress ensure the legislation include the following funding levels and report language currently included in either the House or Senate versions of the legislation.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Forest Service (USFS)**

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.” Yet this trail system is increasingly stressed and 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.

1. **Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails** as **individual funding line** item.

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 108)
  + “The Committee directs the Forest Service to continue to provide specific trail operation, maintenance, and construction funding and accomplishment data for the national scenic and historic trails in future budget justifications”

1. **Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails** budget at least at **$65.262M**

We encourage the committee to adopt the highest funding level for the Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails at the House passed level of $65.262M, an $8M increase from FY18. Given cost-share restructuring and the new Forest Operations account we understand this to be the higher amount between the two proposals.

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 110)
  + Trails Maintenance and Construction.--The Committee recommends $65,262,000 for Trail Maintenance and Construction which is a programmatic increase of $8,000,000 above the enacted level and $2,783,000 above the budget request."

1. **Capital Improvement & Maintenance (CMTL) Trails** funds for the **National Trails Systems**

* Report Language for National Trails Systems (House Committee Report pg.110)
  + “National Scenic and Historic Trails.--The Committee directs the Forest Service to continue to provide specific trail operation, maintenance, and construction funding and accomplishment data for the national scenic and historic trails in future budget justifications. The Committee notes that the fiscal year 2020 justification does not propose acquisition funding and directs the Forest Service to provide the Committees an updated estimate of trails and land acquisition not later than 60 days after the enactment of this Act.”

1. **Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness** **funding at $194.468 million**

We encourage the committee to adopt the highest funding level for the Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness funding, which we understand to be the House passed level of $194.468M. We encourage the committee to include the report language from the House passed and the Senate introduced legislation.

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 107)
  + “The Committee recommends $194,468,000 for Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness, which is a programmatic increase of $15,000,000 above the enacted level and $13,898,000 above the budget request. Funding is increased to improve the recreational experience on National Forest System lands."
* Report Language (Senate Committee Report pg. 105)
  + “Within the funds provided, $1,500,000 is made available to support infrastructure and trails development and to build the capacity of local user groups and partnership organizations for all National Recreation Areas administered by the Service established after 1997.”

**National Park Service (NPS)**

National Parks and the world-class experiences their 18,844 miles of trails provide are one of the most unifying forces in America. Well-maintained trails improve the quality of visitor experiences and enhance visitor safety. Yet the agency’s deferred maintenance has grown significantly under several Administrations and the associated reductions in adequate appropriations.

1. **Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA)** program funding at **$13.478M**

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 35)
  + “The Committee recommends $13,478,000 for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation program, $3,445,000 above the enacted level and $4,420,000 above the budget request. The recommendation includes a program increase of $3,500,000 to provide technical assistance and work with partners, including local leaders and nonprofit organizations, to enhance on-water education and recreation programming for youth.”

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

The BLM manages 13,468 miles of trails over 245 million surface acres in the United States—more 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 and superlative recreational opportunities.

BLM recreation resources and visitor services support strong local economies. More than 120 urban centers and thousands of rural towns are located within 25 miles of BLM lands.

1. Fund **National Conservation Lands** at **$84M**

* Report Funding Level of $45.112M (House Committee Report pg. 13)
  + While we continue to encourage funding at the $84M level, we urge funding at least at the $45.112M level included in the House passed legislation.
  + Justification: National Conservation Lands funds enhance recreational access, conserve the Nation’s heritage and manage these nationally recognized resources.

1. Fund **National Conservation Lands- National Scenic Historic Trails, subactivity Recreation Resources Management** at **$9.9M**

* Report Funding Level at $81.455M overall (Recreation Management) and $1million increase for the scenic trails program (House Report pg. 11)

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)**

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 2,100 miles of trails. More than 37,000 jobs are reliant on refuges.

1. **Refuge Visitor Services** at **$80.855M**

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 21):
  + “The recommendation includes $80,855,000, an increase of $7,536,000 above the enacted level, and equal to the budget request. The recommendation restores the reduction proposed in the budget request for Youth and Careers in Nature, which includes tribal youth, provides an additional $1,000,000 over the budget request for the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, and provides $5,106,000 of the requested program increase for refuge visitor services. Engaging Americans of all ages with nature must be a priority.”

**Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)- Across All Agencies**

Congress recently showed overwhelming bipartisan support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) when it permanently reauthorized the program in S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. Building upon this support, the committee must ensure that full funding of the program is provided at the $900 million level.

1. Fund **LWCF** at the **$900M**

* We are encouraged by the increases in both the House and Senate for LWCF funding, but continue to ask the conference committee provide full funding at $900M, at a minimum funding should be at the higher House passed level.
* Justification: The LWCF has funded nearly 1,000 trail projects across the country and countless other recreation and conservation projects in thousands of communities in every state. It’s time for Congress to fulfill its promise to provide full funding to the LWCF.

1. Include within this appropriation **$33.4M** for **National Scenic and Historic Trails** projects
   * While both the House and Senate recommend identical funding for four National Scenic and Historic Trail Projects, additional funding is needed to acquire lands that will help protect other trails and close existing gaps between sections of these Congressionally-designated trails. Once land is acquired, volunteers and private funding stand ready to build/maintain the trails. Full funding at $33.4M will protect 41 tracts along six national scenic and six national historic trails.

**21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC)- DOI, USDA (USFS), and Commerce (NOAA)**

With the establishment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) as part of the Natural Resources Management Act of 2019, Congress recognized the need to address modern conservation, recreation, forestry, and infrastructure projects through cost-effective partnerships with Corps. We encourage you to continue this focus and make the additional investments necessary to carry its intent forward and put more young adults and recent veterans to work on the thousands of unmet needs on our public lands.

1. **Conservation Corps Report Language**

* Report Language (House Committee pg. 149): "Provided, That notwithstanding Federal Government procurement and contracting laws the Secretaries may award contracts, grants or cooperative agreements to local non-profit entities, Youth Conservation Corps or related partnerships with State, local or non-profit youth groups, or small or micro-business or disadvantaged business: Provided further, That the contract, grant, or cooperative agreement is for forest hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, road decommissioning, trail maintenance or improvement, or habitat restoration or management."
  + Recommended change of “Youth Conservation Corps” to “Qualified Youth or Conservation Corps” as defined in 16 USC Chapter 37, Subchapter II: Public Land Corps Section 1722

* Report Language (House Committee Report pg. 4)
  + “21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS The Committee encourages the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to continue facilitating the approval of 21st Century Conservation Service Corps organizations and work in partnership to engage young adults and veterans in conservation, recreation, infrastructure, wildfire and disaster response, and community development service projects on public lands and in rural and urban communities, as authorized by the Public Lands Corps Act (16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.).

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

Tyler Ray, **American Hiking Society**, [tray@americanhiking.org](mailto:tray@americanhiking.org);

Steve Salisbury, **American Motorcyclist Association**, [SSalisbury@ama-cycle.org](mailto:SSalisbury@ama-cycle.org);

Mike Passo, **American Trails**, [mikepasso@americantrails.org](mailto:mikepasso@americantrails.org);

Randy Rasmussen, **Back Country Horsemen of America**, [WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org](mailto:WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org);

Spencer Gilbert, **Blue Ribbon Coalition/Sharetrails**, [brspencer@sharetrails.org](mailto:brspencer@sharetrails.org);

Josh Tuohy, **The Corps Network**, [jtuohy@corpsnetwork.org](mailto:jtuohy@corpsnetwork.org);

Aaron Clark, **International Mountain Bicycling Association**, [aaron.clark@imba.com](mailto:aaron.clark@imba.com);

Scott Schloegel, **Motorcycle Industry Council**, [sschloegel@mic.org](mailto:sschloegel@mic.org);

Gary Werner, **Partnership for the National Trails System**, [gary@pnts.org](mailto:gary@pnts.org);

Don Amador, **Post Wildfire OHV Recovery Alliance**, [damador@cwo.com](mailto:damador@cwo.com)

Sincerely,

Accessible Trails Foundation

AccessWorks, Inc

Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

Action Coalition for Equestrians

Adirondack Rail Trail Advocates

Ala Kahakai Trail Association

Alaska State Parks

Alaska Trails

Almanor Recreation and Park District

American Conservation Experience

American Discovery Trail Society

American Endurance Ride Conference

American Hiking Society

American Motorcyclist Association

American Trails

Americans for Responsible Recreational Access

Anza Area Trail Town

Arizona Trail Association

Arizona Wilderness Coalition

Back Country Horsemen of America

Back Country Horsemen of America- 3 Rivers Chapter, MT

Back Country Horsemen of America- Green River, KY

Back Country Horsemen of Michigan-Pigeon River and Beyond

Back Country Horsemen of America- First Coast, FL

Back Country Horsemen of America- Fort Harrod, KY

Back Country Horsemen of America- Golden Horseshoe Chapter, VA

Back Country Horsemen of America- Kentucky

Back Country Horsemen of America- Minnesota

Back Country Horsemen of America- Northern Colorado

Back Country Horsemen of America- Northwest Montana

Back Country Horsemen of America- Trout Creek, MT

Back Country Horsemen of America-Utah

Back Country Horsemen of Arizona

Back Country Horsemen of Colorado

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

Back Country Horsemen of North Georgia

Back Country Horsemen of Oregon

Back Country Horsemen of the Virginia Highlands

Back Country Horsemen of Utah- San Rafeal

Back Country Horsemen of Washington

East Slope Back Country Horsemen-MT

Front Range Back Country Horsemen-CO

Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen- MT

Hoosier Back Country Horsemen of America- IN

Mesa Verde Back Country Horsemen-CO

Rocky Mt Back Country Horsemen-CO

San Juan Back Country Horsemen- CO

Sarasota Back Country Horsemen- FL

Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen- MT

Wyoming Back Country Horsemen of America

Zumbro Bottoms Back Country Horsemen of Minnesota

Bay Area Barns and Trails

Bent's Fort Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association

Bike Walk Montana

Bike-Walk Alliance of NH

Blue Ribbon Coalition/Sharetrails

Borough of Gibbsboro

C&O Canal Association

Cache County

Canalway Partners

Cape Horn Conservancy

Cedar Valley Cyclists

Central Oregon Trail Alliance

Champlain Area Trails

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

Chesapeake Conservancy

Choose Outdoors

City of Westminster

Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Assoc, Inc. (COPMOBA)

Community Training Works, Inc.

Concerned Coastal Planners

Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association

Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Conservation Works LLC

Conserving Carolina

Continental Divide Trail Coalition

County Line Riders of Catalina

The Corps Network

Crow Wing County Snowmobile Trails Association

Dan River Basin Association

Delaware Valley Trail Riders

E mau Na Ala hele

East Coast Enduro Association, Inc.

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association

Enchanted Circle Trails Associaiton

Evansville Trails Coalition

Fitchburg Trails Vision Committee

Forest Fire Lookout Association - NC Chapter

ForeverGreen Trails

Friend of the Tonto National Forest

Friends of Chimney Rock State Park

Friends of Sholan Farms

Friends of the Hennepin Canal

Friends of the Keystone Arches, Inc.

Friends of the Mississippi Blufflands Trail

Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park

Friends of Weiser River Trail Inc

Gallup Adventure & Beyond

Georgia Trails Alliance

Grand Mesa Jeep Club

Green Hills Trail Association

Green Marble Enduro Riders

Greenway Action Advisory Committee

Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc

Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Wildlife

The Hickstead Hillbillies

Highlands Plateau Greenway

Hilltop Community Resources

Hoosier Hikers Council

Hut2hut.info

Ice Age Trail Alliance, Inc

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance

International Mountain Bicycling Association

Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance, Boulder County CO

Central Ohio Mountain Bike Organization

Cincinnati Off Road Alliance, Cincinnati, OH

Enchanted Circle Trails Association - Taos County, Rio Arriba County, Colfax County, NM

Miami Valley Mountain Bike Association, Dayton, OH

Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association – Roaring Fork Valley, CO

Trails 2000, Durango CO

Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority

Judith Basin Back Country Horsemen

Lake Champlain Committee

Leominster Trail Stewards

Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc.

Lewis County Recreation, Forestry and Parks

Linn County Conservation Board

Lobos Motorcycle Club

Mahoosuc Land Trust

Mahoosuc Pathways, Inc.

Maine Recreation and Parks Association

Maine Trail Riders Association, Inc.

Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation

Marin Municipal Water District

Meramec Valley Trail Association

Michiana Watershed

Middlesex County Conservation Corps

Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Monmouth County Park System

Monogahela Outdoor Volunteers

Montana Trails Coalition

Mormon Trails Association

Motorcycle Industry Council

MTB Missoula

National Coast Trails Association

National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association

National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance

Nature Legacies

Nevada All State Trail Riders

Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

New Jersey Recreation and Park Association

New Jersey Youth Corps of Phillipsburg

New Mexico Horse Council

New Mexico Sportsmen

New River Alliance of Climbers

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

Newtown Parks and Recreation

Nickel Plate Trail Inc

North Country Trail Association

North County Land Trust

Oahu Na Ala Hele

Ocean County Competition Riders

Oregon Equestrian Trails

Oregon Horse Council

Oregon Natural Desert Association

Oregon-California Trails Association

Overmountain Victory Trail Association

Ozark Trail Association

Pacific Crest Trail Association

Pacific Northwest Trail Association

Park County Pedalers

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

Partnership for the National Trails System

Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society

Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance

Pine Barrens Adventure Camp LLC

Pioneer Bridges

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

Post Wildfire OHV Recovery Alliance

Prickly Pear Land Trust

Public Lands Alliance

Rail-Trail Council of NEPA, Inc

Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA)

Red Rock Motorsports Club, Inc.

Rock County Multi Use Trail Group

Rock River Trail

Rocky Mountain Field Institute

San Luis Valley Great Outdoors

Santa Fe Trail Association

Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition

South Jersey Enduro Riders, Inc.

South Penn Enduro Riders Inc.

Southbridge Trails Committee

Southeast Minnesota Back Country Horsemen

Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association

Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA)

Steffey Trail Connections

Sugar Land Parks and Recreation Dept.

Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy

Superior Hiking Trail Association

Tahoe Rim Trail Association

Tahoe-Pyramid Trail

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Torrington Trail Network

Trail Boss USA

Trail Facts

Trail of Tears Association

Trails and Open Space Coalition

Trails Inspire, LLC

Trails Utah

Tri County Sportsmen

Upper Valley Trails Alliance

Urbana Park District

Valley Center Trails Association

Velo Amis

Vermont Woodlands Association

Virginia Trail Alliance

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado

Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

Washington Trails Association

The Wilderness Society

Wildlands Restoration Volunteers

Winter Wildlands Alliance

Wisconsin Horse Council - Trails

Wyoming Pathways

Yellowstone River Parks Association

1. FY20 Trail Funding Coalition Letter (April 4, 2019), <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/fy19-trail-funding-coalition-letter/> (Senate); FY20 Trail Funding Coalition Letter (March 29, 2019), <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/211-organizations-call-on-congress-to-provide-robust-fy20-funding-for-trails-house/> (House). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These funding and report language recommendations are specific to the requests made in the joint letters sent on April 4, 2019 and March 29, 2019, respectively, to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. These recommendations should not be interpreted to replace additional recommendations made by individual signatories of the letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)