



February 28, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray
 United States Senate
 154 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: Fiscal Year 2019 Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative Appropriation

Dear Senator Murray,

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Forest Service's Legacy Roads and Trails program. This unique job-producing bi-partisan program has led to definitive improvements in our watersheds that support clean and safe drinking water, wildlife and fish habitat and recreation opportunities. Over the last decade, on national forest lands in Washington State, Legacy Roads and Trails funding produced measurable results:

- **Maintained and/or storm-proofed 2,279 miles of needed roads**, helping Washingtonians get where they wish to go on Forest Service lands;
- **Reclaimed 299 miles of unneeded roads**, preventing sediment from entering streams, many of which supply drinking water to rural and urban towns and cities;
- **Restored fish passage at 48 stream crossings**, boosting opportunity for Washington's \$1.1B sportfishing industry and advancing salmon restoration goals; and
- **Improved 105 miles of trails**, keeping the \$535M National Forest recreation industry going strong.

Moreover, Legacy Roads and Trails also created or maintained **330-528 jobs annually** across the nation, bringing dollars and jobs into rural communities, and **saved America's taxpayers \$3 million per year** in road maintenance costs.

That said, we still have a long, long way to go. With road maintenance budgets at just **16%** of what they were in 1990, and the President's Budget proposing even more cuts for FY19, the Forest Service is continually beset by infrastructure problems. Every year, storms damage more roads and compound the problem and the costs. Over the last 10 years, the limited funding has addressed less than 1% of the need. **Which is why we are writing to express our strong support for continued funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill at \$50M for Legacy Roads and Trails.**

In Washington alone, the Forest Service maintains **21,561 miles** of roads – which is enough to drive from Seattle to D.C. eight times! Only 67% of these are technically “open” for public access, and many of those “open” roads are actually inaccessible due to lack of maintenance, landslides, sinkholes, potholes, large gullies, broken culverts and bridges and storm damage.

The Forest Service also maintains **9,167 miles of trails** in Washington – which is enough to hike from Seattle to D.C. more than three times! Many of these trails are also falling apart, risking public safety. And there are still over **990 barriers to fish passage** (i.e. undersized or broken culverts) on national forest lands.

The Legacy Roads and Trails program aims to adapt the road system to a more manageable size over time, reducing fiscal and environmental burdens and enabling the Forest Service to ensure better and more reliable access. It's a simple solution to a formidable problem. But it needs funding to succeed. We ask for your continued support of the program by including **\$50M in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill**. Continued funding for Legacy Roads and Trails will go a long way toward allowing people to access and experience the opportunities of our public lands.

FY2019 Funding Request

- **FUNDING PROGRAM:** U.S. Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program (internal Forest Service funding code: "CMLG")
- **SUBCOMMITTEE JURISDICTION:** Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
- **FY19 REQUEST:** \$50 million
- **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** Since its authorization in FY 2008, the Legacy Roads and Trails program has significantly enhanced the Forest Service's ability to address key problems associated with its aging and poorly maintained road system. This includes repairing roads and trails needed for public access, replacing failed or undersized culverts to improve aquatic passage and retire unneeded roads to prevent sediment pollution from entering waterways important for salmon, trout, and other aquatic species. The program delivers funds to address road problems in real time, which enables the Forest Service to efficiently plan, design, and implement restoration treatments. It is a critical tool for leveraging non-federal funds resulting in stronger projects and enhanced community engagement. And because funds primarily go to actual work on the ground, Legacy Roads and Trails creates high wage jobs for contractors, including those who specialize in stream restoration, environmental design, and heavy equipment operation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Marlies Wierenga
Pacific Northwest Conservation Manager
WildEarth Guardians

Tom Uniack
Executive Director
Washington Wild

Andrea Imler
Advocacy Director
Washington Trails Association

Tom Hammond
President
North Cascades Conservation Council

Katherine Hollis
Conservation and Advocacy Director
The Mountaineers

Mike Petersen
Executive Director
The Lands Council

Nina Bell, J.D.
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Advocates

Mike Anderson
Senior Policy Analyst
The Wilderness Society

Susan Jane M. Brown
Staff Attorney
Western Environmental Law Center

Mark Riskedahl
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Defense Center

Rebecca Wolfe
Member, National Forest Committee
Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club

Dave Wertz
Science and Conservation Director
Conservation Northwest

Pam Borso
President
North Cascades Audubon

Peter Bahls
Executive Director
Northwest Watershed Institute

Yvonne Kraus
Executive Director
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Karl Forsgaard
President
Alpine Lakes Protection Society

Jon Hoekstra
Executive Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Andrea Matzke
President
Wild Washington Rivers

Allen Gibbs
Conservation Chair
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Joseph Bogaard
Executive Director
Save Our Wild Salmon

Gus Bekker
President
El Sendero Backcountry Ski & Snowboarding Club

Greg Haller
Conservation Director
Pacific Rivers

Ann Darlington
BOD President
The Friends of Heybrook Ridge

Wendy McDermott
Director, Rivers of Puget Sound & Columbia Basin
American Rivers

Donna Osseward
President
Olympic Park Associates

Mark Boyar
President
MidFORC Coalition

Maggie Coon
Board Chair
Methow Valley Citizens Council

Chuck Chesire
President
Vancouver Wildlife League

Mike Davis
President
Mt. Baker Club

Rich Simms
Founder/Board Member
Wild Steelhead Coalition

Timothy Manns
Conservation Chair
Skagit Audubon Society

Eric Brown
Trail Director
Whatcom Mountain Bike Alliance

Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

Tierra Curry
Senior Scientist
Center for Biological Diversity

John McGlenn
President
Washington Wildlife Federation

Connie Gallant
President
Olympic Forest Coalition

Anna Kramer
Policy Coordinator and Grants Manager
American Alpine Club

Nicole Budine
Policy and Campaign Manager
Cascade Forest Conservancy

Mark Sherwood
Executive Director
Native Fish Society

Josh Laughlin
Executive Director
Cascadia Wildlands