



July 27, 2020

Recreation and Conservation Office  
 P.O. Box 40917  
 Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

RE: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Grant Application #20-1433

Dear evaluation committee members,

Please accept our joint letter of support from 18 undersigned climbing organizations, guide companies, gear shops, climbing gyms, and outdoor industry partners for Washington State Parks' acquisition of the Mt. Washington Trail property, an inholding in the Olallie State Park in the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area. The property includes exceptional rock climbing opportunities that have been cherished by Washington climbers since the early 1990s.

Olallie State Park is in the heart of the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area. Each season, thousands of hikers and rock climbers unknowingly traverse this private property on their way to Mt. Washington's stunning summit or en route to one of its many prized climbing destinations. This 150-acre inholding contains about one mile of the Mt. Washington Trail, whose summit offers views of Mt. Rainier and the Cedar River Watershed. In attracting hikers to this property, the trail relieves pressure on nearby popular hiking trails and provides a hiking-only route to the peak of Mt. Washington, reducing conflicts with mountain bikers on the adjacent Olallie Trail. Of great significance to our members and community, it provides access to the Mt. Washington Climbing Area, one the most popular rock climbing areas in the region, with over 70 sport climbing routes. While the landowner currently allows public access, there is no formal agreement in place to ensure continued public access, nor is an alternative access point possible due to the area's topography. Given that the property is expected to change hands in coming years, it is important to act now to ensure the protection of this public resource into perpetuity.

Access Fund and our local climbing organization and outdoor industry partners are pleased to support this keystone conservation project. Access Fund, the national advocacy organization that keeps climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment, has monitored past threats to the property's

scenic, recreational, public access, and natural resources for decades, and we now have a unique opportunity to protect this parcel as public land forever with leading WWRP support. In addition, our entities have gathered **1,311** letters of support from individual climbers, conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts. Furthermore, **Access Fund, Ascent Outdoors, The Mountaineers, Mountain Madness, Stone Gardens, and Washington Climbers Coalition** are providing additional letters of commitment to provide matching funds towards WWRP funding.

With this grant, Washington State Parks, along with The Trust for Public Land and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, will at long last secure permanent public access for the Mt. Washington Trail and the Mt. Washington Climbing Area for all Olallie State Park users. The project will ensure that this iconic landscape of forest, waterfalls and wildlife habitat is protected. This project is truly unique within the Mountains to Sound Greenway, and will benefit hikers, rock climbers, and other visitors throughout the region.

Together, the undersigned organizations are pleased to support Washington State Parks' acquisition of the Olallie Thompson inholding. If you have any questions or need additional information, contact Joe Sambataro at (425) 218-8234 or [joe@accessfund.org](mailto:joe@accessfund.org). Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Mt. Washington Property. Photo by Scott Rinckenberger



Mt. Washington Property. Photo by Jeremy Allyn