

August 27, 2020

Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 47001
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Support for DNR Natural Areas Facilities, Sustainable Recreation, Teanaway Community Forest, Trust Land Transfer funding

Dear Commissioner Franz,

Thank you for your commitment to public lands and your leadership as we face unprecedented challenges in Washington State and beyond.

Lands managed by you and the team at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provide millions of acres of forests that cleanse the air and water, recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities, jobs in the public and private sector, economic development for local communities, and essential revenue for local governments.

We understand that you must prioritize funding requests that help ensure climate resiliency and provide jobs and economic benefits for communities, especially given future economic uncertainties.

And as people stay close to home and distant from community, and while livelihoods are being lost and unemployment rises, access to nature and the outdoors is more important than ever. Many DNR lands provide access to nature just outside major population centers, and the DNR regions within the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area are some of the most heavily-used recreation areas in the state. Demand for recreation access is exponentially increasing, while agency staff do not have adequate resources to keep trailheads open, clean bathrooms, manage parking, or clean up trash.

We write today to ask you to prioritize climate resiliency, economic development, and job creation by including funding for Natural Areas Facilities and Sustainable Recreation, the Teanaway Community Forest, and the Trust Land Transfer program in your budget request to Governor Inslee in September.

Natural Areas Facilities: Conservation of key parcels within critical natural areas will help consolidate public ownership, protecting forests and riparian areas while making land management more efficient and trust lands more economically viable.

Sustainable Recreation: Recreation provides jobs. The outdoor recreation industry in Washington State provides more than \$26.5 billion in annual revenue and provides more than 264,000 jobs, making the state's continued investment in outdoor recreation facilities more important than ever.

The Teanaway Community Forest represents a new model of cooperative management by and for local communities, prioritizing watershed health while balancing working forests and recreational demands. To date, state investments in the TCF have leveraged more than \$7 million in projects and work from private and tribal partners. Continued funding builds on prior public investments and fulfills commitments made to

the public. Supporting the development of sustainable recreation and forest infrastructure will be key to the future viability of this cherished landscape.

The Trust Land Transfer program is a powerful tool to maximize the amount of revenue earned from state trust lands while balancing financial need with ecological benefits.

Please include requests for these critical needs in your budget request to Governor Inslee.

We are grateful for our strong partnerships with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and look forward to helping to support conservation and recreation projects across the state in the coming years.

Sincerely,

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