



October 20, 2022

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

RE: Support for grant application 22-2117: Capitol Forest Education and Enforcement

Dear evaluation committee members,

The Mountaineers write to express our support for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) proposal to fund an education and enforcement program in the Capitol State Forest. These efforts are essential to keep trails open and safe for the recreating public.

The Mountaineers, based in Seattle, Washington and founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is "to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond." 1,200 skilled volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education trips and courses annually for 15,000 members. Our youth programs provide over 10,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside. We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors, and protects the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

The Capitol State Forest is a very important area to our members, especially those in our Olympia Branch. The close proximity of the Forest makes it a popular location for training and physical conditioning for mountaineering, alpine scrambling, hiking, and backpacking. Many of our Mountaineers youth programs visit the Forest to build outdoor skills, learn about nature, and foster a lifelong love of the outdoors. These programs help create future stewards and conservationists. Members of our Olympia Branch are also active stewards in the Capitol Forest and help maintain trails, lead work parties, and communicate trail conditions to DNR staff.

Mountaineers members and the general public alike rely on DNR non-motorized trail and facilities maintenance to ensure high quality and sustainable recreation in the Forest. These efforts also enable Mountaineers to continue to perform volunteer trail maintenance, which supports and amplifies DNR's efforts. Thank you for considering this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Betsy Robblee
Conservation & Advocacy Director
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