

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE WASHINGTON

July 17, 2023

Rachel Dawson
Program Director, National Programs
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Dawson,

It is our understanding that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is applying for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), America the Beautiful Challenge grant (#80808) entitled “Partnering with Tribes to Protect Tribal Treaty Rights and Tribal Lifeways through Responsibly Managing Recreation on Washington State Public Lands.” Outdoor Alliance Washington supports this proposal.

Outdoor Alliance Washington is a network of member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community in Washington and the thousands of Washingtonians who climb, paddle, mountain bike, hike, and enjoy coastal recreation on our state’s public lands and waters. Our members include Access Fund, the American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Surfrider Foundation, and Washington Trails Association.

Outdoor Alliance Washington is a nonprofit partner supporting this effort, although we will not be officially engaged in the project at this time. However, we stand ready to inform the technical work and look forward to partnering in future phases of the collaboration. We believe that the outcomes of this work will substantially support our network’s mission, Washington’s environment, and outdoor recreation across the state. Further, this effort supports Outdoor Alliance Washington’s policy priority of ensuring a sustainable and equitable outdoor future through comprehensive sustainable recreation planning.

We believe in the importance of outdoor recreation for human health and well-being, as well as for Washington’s economy. We also believe in respecting tribal treaty rights and tribal lifeways and ensuring that natural and cultural resources are protected. Uniting these two ideals is challenging, but not impossible. And it must be done.



Over the last several years, Washington tribes have voiced concerns about increasing volumes of recreation on state-managed public lands and its environmental and cultural impacts on the lands and resources tribes depend on. Recreation pressures on public lands heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic, and population growth trends suggest that recreation use pressures will continue to grow. These are issues that must be addressed at a landscape level, requiring deep collaboration and cooperation between land managers and tribes.

We hope you will fund this proposal by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks to collaborate with 31 federally recognized tribes to address the challenges of providing for public use and recreation on state lands in a way that is ecologically sustainable and consistent with obligations to tribes and treaty rights.

This grant will support convening a Tribal-State recreation forum and the development of an adaptive framework, including assessing potential management tools. The framework will inform future recreation management to be more ecologically sustainable and protect these lands' long-term health and conservation. By providing capacity for tribes as leaders and partners, State agencies will be better able to integrate tribal priorities and Traditional Ecological Knowledge with other technical expertise informing the management of state public lands.

We believe the proposed project meets the criteria for funding eligibility established by NFWF and would improve the management of Washington's state public lands. We look forward to continuing our support of the applicant agencies' staff on this crucial project.

Thank you for your consideration,



Betsy Robblee
Washington Policy Manager
Outdoor Alliance

Cc:

Jason Keith, Senior Policy Advisor, Access Fund
Eddie Espinosa, Director, Community Programs, American Alpine Club
Thomas O'Keefe, Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater
Yvonne Kraus, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Pete Steelquist, Washington Policy Manager, Surfrider Foundation
Betsy Robblee, Conservation and Advocacy Director, The Mountaineers
Michael DeCramer, Policy and Planning Manager, Washington Trails Association

