



January 8, 2025

Recreation and Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917
RE: Mount Rainier National Park projects

To whom it may concern:

The Mountaineers is pleased to submit this letter offering our strong support for the following trail development and maintenance grants on Mount Rainier National Park lands:

- **24-2684 M Repair Damaged Tread on the Wonderland Trail**
- **24-2711 D Reconnect West Boundary Trail to Mowich Lake**
- **24-2715 D Re-route of the Wonderland Trail**
- **24-2735 M Maintain Mowich Lake Area Trails**

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.”

The Mountaineers Books publishing division expands the mission internationally through award-winning publications including instructional guides, adventure narratives, and conservation photography. 1,200 skilled volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education trips and courses annually for 16,000+ members. Our youth programs provide over 15,000 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.

For over 100 years, Mountaineers members have cherished the natural beauty and challenges offered by the Mt. Rainer landscape. The Mountaineers considers the park one of the most significant gems of the Pacific Northwest and greatly values its world-class opportunities for backcountry recreation. Our members visit the park often, through both Mountaineers youth and adult programming and personal trips, and for activities such as day hiking, backpacking, scrambling, snowshoeing, climbing, mountaineering, and backcountry skiing.

With these grants, Mount Rainier is seeking to 1) maintain and make much needed repairs to the Wonderland Trail between Box Canyon and Panhandle Gap, 2) build two short re-routes to reconnect the historic West Boundary Trail to Mowich Lake via the Grindstone Trail (a connection that was lost when the Mowich Road was built over two sections of the trail), 3) sustainably re-route a section of the Wonderland Trail that was washed out in a flood event and is continually compromised on an annual basis and 4) perform much needed maintenance activities on heavily used trails in the Mowich Lake area.



The Wonderland Trail is one of 21 designated National Historic Trails in the United States and is part of the Mount Rainier National Historic Landmark District. Being able to perform maintenance to sections of the trail that are remote and difficult to access as well as re-route a short section to a more sustainable location will allow the next generations of trail enthusiasts to continue to enjoy this spectacular trail. The West Boundary Trail was constructed by the CCC between 1933-1935 and intersected the Grindstone Trail (which is the oldest constructed trail in the park dating back to the early 1880s). Two ¼-mile portions of the trail were covered over when the road to Mowich Lake was completed in the 1950s. Restoring those connections will provide additional recreational opportunities as well as reconnect park visitors to history. Closest to the greater Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area, the Mowich Entrance of Mount Rainier is rapidly becoming more and more popular. With that increased popularity comes an increase in maintenance issues. Funding to cover the maintenance costs of protecting and stewarding the Mowich Lake Area will be especially critical as visitor use continues to increase.

We are excited about the potential of these programs to preserve the quality of outdoor experiences for all future recreationists in Mt. Rainier National Park. We believe that the money granted for these programs would be very well spent preserving and improving the nature of our public lands and the experience one can get from it.

Sincerely,

Betsy Robblee
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