

January 31, 2025

Dear Senators Robinson, Stanford, Gildon, and Torres:

In recent years, the legislature has made critical investments in our state parks and recreation lands by providing \$30m per biennium ongoing (\$10m per agency) for Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State Parks to help address their recreation lands maintenance backlog. The 14 undersigned organizations are writing to respectfully request that you **maintain \$30 million per biennium ongoing (\$10m per agency)** for these three agencies so they can keep our public recreation lands better maintained and safe to access for the people of Washington.

Washington is a great place to work, live and play, and our state parks and recreation lands provide some of the best opportunities in the nation to access the outdoors. More than 90% of Washingtonians recreate outside, and with the state's population projected to grow to approximately 9.9 million by 2050 (a 28% increase), we must be prepared to meet current and future needs.

During the past few years, estimated visits have increased on some state lands by more than 100%. With more people getting outside and demand expected to grow, we need to maintain our investment in public lands. Starting in 2022, the legislature began to address this challenge and directed \$10m/biennium per agency to support the maintenance and operation of our state recreation lands. **Governor Inslee's proposed budget included cuts to DNR and WDFW's maintenance funding.** Our organizations are asking to ensure our public lands are well managed and safe to enjoy by maintaining funding at the existing level of \$10m per biennium for each of the three land management agencies.

The investment of the legislature in recreation lands maintenance has enabled agencies to undertake high priority projects as well as plan, manage and monitor recreation lands. **The \$10m per agency provided to address the maintenance backlog is a high percentage of each agency's total maintenance spending: 20% for State Parks, 40% for DNR and nearly 50% for WDFW.** Cuts to the current funding level would significantly impact their ability to maintain recreation lands.

We deeply appreciate the investment made by the legislature in state lands. We request your continued support of this important funding as it has already provided critical improvements to recreation lands across the state and with your support, will continue to do so into the future.

Sincerely,

Michael DeCramer
Policy and Planning Manager
Washington Trails Association

Jeff Chapman
Legislative Chair
Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Angela Morris
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