

February 26, 2026

RE: Protect Recreation Lands Maintenance Funding

Dear Representatives Ormsby, Gregerson, Marci and Couture:

In recent years, the legislature has made critical investments in our state parks and recreation lands. Those investments have improved the condition of our state lands and allowed Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Parks to better address the tens of millions of dollars of maintenance needs which are currently backlogged on our recreation lands.

Our 12 undersigned organizations request that you incorporate the House's proposed funding approach and language relating to "Recreation Land Maintenance" for State Parks, WDFW and DNR. We have witnessed the impact of this funding in reducing the maintenance backlog by repairing trails and parking lots, fixing shelters and roofs on visitor facilities, improving campground facilities and keeping state lands open and safe for visitors. The House's version preserves more long-term funding for our state public lands as opposed to the Senate version which includes larger ongoing cuts.

As you know, Washington is a great place to live, work and play. Our state parks and recreation lands provide some of the best opportunities in the nation to access the outdoors.

- Recreation lands are tremendously important to our quality of life and to our state's economy. Outdoor recreation supports 5.4 percent of the state's employment (237,000 jobs).
- 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.

The Senate's proposed supplemental budget reduces the base funding level for maintenance and operations on our state recreation lands to \$3M per agency per year. That funding level is 40% lower than the level in the 2023-2025 budget. An ongoing cut at this level proposed would force state recreation lands to reduce staffing, forgo important stewardship projects and potentially close areas to public recreation. While the House proposal also includes reduced funding for all three agencies, it is a one-time reduction that allows these agencies to return to more adequate funding levels for recreation land maintenance in future years. We ask that you protect State Parks, WDFW and DNR lands and support Washingtonians' ability to access outdoor recreation by adopting the House approach in the final budget.

Thank you for your continued support for maintaining outdoor recreation on state recreation lands.

Sincerely,

Kindra Ramos
Chief Program Officer
Washington Trails Association

Jeff Chapman
Legislative Chair
Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Eddie Espinosa
Executive Director
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Renee Tkach
Conservation Director
Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Jon Hoekstra
Executive Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Marc Toenyan
Executive Director
Northwest Motorcycle Association

Jeff Parker
President and CEO
Northwest Youth Corps

Jeff Kish
Executive Director
Pacific Northwest Trail Association

Peter Steelquist
Washington Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Betsy Robblee
Conservation & Advocacy Director
The Mountaineers

Jacqueline Reyes
Washington Conservation Manager
The Wilderness Society

Yvonne Kraus
Executive Director
Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition