

Outdoor Alliance Washington

Access Fund • American Alpine Club • American Whitewater • Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance • The Mountaineers • Washington Climbers Coalition • Washington Trails Association

The Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition and Washington Trails Association - all human-powered recreation organizations in Washington State - come together as a coalition on issues relating to recreation, access and conservation. As the group Outdoor Alliance Washington, we represent more than 34,000 members who recreate on public lands.

We thank all the members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Recreation and Conservation Office for engaging the public, compiling recommendations, and completing the draft report. This is no easy task to take on in such a short timeline. We would like to further acknowledge our support for the following Task Force recommendations:

- Establishing an office to serve as the state's cross-agency leader on outdoor recreation
- Establishing a single multi-entity pass to recreate on state and federal lands in Washington
- Addressing the issue of permitting for commercial users and nonprofit organizations – we enthusiastically support the recommendations on Forest Service permitting for commercial and nonprofit organizations
- Outlining of alternative revenue sources for outdoor recreation programs
- Continuing to fund and protect current outdoor recreation grant programs

We recognize that the report can only summarize the diverse range of recommendations. However, we would like to see further information or greater acknowledgement of the following topics:

- **Seek greater opportunities for partnerships with nonprofit organizations to leverage outdoor recreation resources:** We recommend that the Task Force highlight the importance of strengthening partnerships with outdoor recreation organizations. Outdoor Alliance Washington's organizations provide substantial support to state land agencies that manage recreational opportunities. The possibility exists to strengthen these partnerships. For example, the broad priority near-term actions under "Inspire an Outdoor Recreation Culture," (pg 11) "Sustainable Our Outdoor Recreation Assets" (pg 7) could include recommendations to work with nonprofit organizations who are already providing outdoor recreation content (such as online hiking, biking, climbing and kayaking information) and programs (such as trail maintenance and youth engagement in the outdoors) that get people and kids outside. The section on "Government Planning" (pg 13) should also include nonprofit organizations as a critical partner for state planning efforts. Collectively, our organizations bring significant outreach support to Washington's growing human-powered recreational base. Partnering with nonprofit organizations can leverage limited resources and minimize duplicative efforts statewide.
- **Land Closures** (pg 13): While this section acknowledges closures on some public lands, the recommendations only address private lands. Incentives, such as public-private partnerships on state lands to support stewardship and access, can be a viable solution on public lands as well. This topic is addressed in part on federal lands regarding road closures, but similar road closures that hinder recreational access also exist on state lands. Regarding incentives for private

landowners, while some nominal fees for allowing access on private lands may be appropriate, the state's recreational use statute is designed to encourage free public access on private land. Providing the same level of liability protection for landowners that charge fees may undermine this purpose and we suggest that the state exercise caution before considering any changes to the recreational use statute.

- **Forest Road Closures:** Our organizations have been key partners with the US Forest Service to maintain road access to critical recreational resources and trailheads through the Sustainable Roads Analysis and various road projects. We agree with the point expressed in the draft report, however, we recognize that some roads that are not critical for recreational access may have a greater community benefit if closed or converted in a roads-to-trails conversion. We recommend that the Task Force acknowledge these alternatives while still expressing significant support to keep important recreational access roads on federal land open.

Thank you for considering our second round of input and we sincerely appreciate your leadership in transforming Washington's outdoor recreational assets and state programs.

Best regards,

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