



April 1, 2021

The Honorable Senator Patty Murray
 U.S. Senate
 154 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations: U.S. Forest Service - Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative

Dear Senator Murray:

The undersigned 101 conservation, recreation and wildlife organizations, elected officials and local businesses representing Washington State residents are deeply concerned by the elimination of the U.S. Forest Service’s (USFS) Legacy Roads and Trails program and the virtual stop in watershed restoration projects in Washington State. We ask that the program be reinstated in the FY 2022 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill at \$100M as a separate program within the Capital Improvement and Maintenance budget dedicated to improving water quality and fish habitat.

The Legacy Roads and Trails program is a national program that has benefitted visitors to national forests and improved waterways across the U.S. for a decade. From 2008-2018, thanks in large part to the support of Washington's Congressional delegation, this unique, job-producing bi-partisan program invested over \$32M in Washington State leading to the following results:

- **Ensured access to Forest Service lands** by maintaining and/or storm-proofing 2,298 miles of needed roads;
- **Protected rivers and streams** by reclaiming 313 miles of unneeded roads, preventing sediment from entering waterways, many of which supply drinking water to rural and urban communities;
- **Restored fish passage** by fixing culverts at 55 road/stream crossings, boosting Washington's \$1.1B sportfishing industry and advancing salmon restoration goals; and
- **Improved trails** by repairing 105 miles, keeping the \$535M national forest recreation industry going strong.

Moreover, Legacy Roads and Trails created or maintained **330-528 jobs annually** across the nation, bringing dollars and jobs into rural communities, and **saving America's taxpayers \$3 million per year** in road maintenance costs.

That said, we are very concerned by what we've seen in recent years, since LRT was subsumed under general road maintenance. Without dedicated funding, critical restoration work has been left on shelves and not completed. Last year, fish passage barriers were removed in only one of Washington's six national forests and only with timber sale revenues. Without dedicated funding, the Forest Service is unable to provide matching funds to partner contributions – essentially leaving money on the table. Without a distinct budgetary line item, we are now unable to track accomplishments. And without direction from Congress, the proposed LRT *trails* projects cannot be funded from the general *road* maintenance budget. We appreciate the support Congress provided to the Forest Service through the Great American Outdoors Act but the restoration work that leads to more abundant fisheries and cleaner water was not addressed.

This comes at an especially challenging time for Washington. While the state invests millions to improve salmon migration, upstream barriers on federal lands are neglected, although there are over 1,000 full barriers to fish and an additional 145 partial barriers on USFS managed streams. While the state looks to save critically endangered orcas, key Chinook salmon (prey species) spawning grounds in national forest headwaters are ignored. As private forest landowners complete their road-related obligations, spending over \$315M, the federal forest negligence puts these investments at risk. And as Washingtonians #GoOutside supporting the \$21B recreation industry, they are losing access where storms take out unstable roads and trails.

In Washington D.C. we've seen an increased urgency related to climate change and rebuilding America's infrastructure. During these conversations we ask that you encourage your colleagues to consider the proven track record of success from the Legacy Roads and Trails program as a model. The program helps adapt the road system to a more manageable size over time, reducing fiscal and environmental burdens and enabling the Forest Service to ensure better and more reliable access. It focuses on the key areas where projects improve salmon and trout habitat, improve water quality and ensure road/trail resilience in a changing climate. It's a clear solution to a formidable problem. But it needs funding to succeed.

FY2022 Funding Request

- **AGENCY:** U.S. Forest Service
- **SUBCOMMITTEE JURISDICTION:** Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
- **FUNDING PROGRAM:** U.S. Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program (internal Forest Service funding code: "CMLG")
- **FY22 REQUEST:** \$100 million
- **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** Since inception in FY 2008, the Legacy Roads and Trails program has significantly enhanced the Forest Service's ability to address key problems associated with its aging and poorly maintained road system. This includes repairing roads and trails needed for public access, replacing failed or undersized culverts to improve fish passage, and retire unneeded roads to prevent harmful water pollution. As climate change impacts become more pronounced, the program could again serve as a model of how to deliver funds to address road problems in real time, enabling the Forest Service to efficiently plan, design, and implement restoration treatments. It is a critical tool for leveraging non-federal funds resulting in stronger projects and enhanced community engagement. And because funds primarily go to actual work on the ground, Legacy Roads and Trails creates high wage jobs for contractors, including those who specialize in stream restoration, environmental design, and heavy equipment operation.

We ask for your support of the program by **reinstating Legacy Roads and Trails as a separate line item in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill with a \$100M allocation.** This is an increased ask due to the lost ground over the last few years and the growing problem impacting how people access and experience opportunities on our public lands.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Tom Uniack
Executive Director
Washington Wild

Marlies Wierenga
Pacific Northwest Conservation Manager
WildEarth Guardians

Mike Anderson
Senior Policy Analyst
The Wilderness Society

Rick McGuire
President
Alpine Lakes Protection Society

Patricia A. Jones, Ph.D
Executive Director
Olympic Forest Coalition (Quilcene, WA)

Joseph Bogaard
Executive Director
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition

Ann Darlington
President
Friends of Heybrook Ridge (Index, WA)

Brian Stan
Co-Founder
Old Stove Brewing, LLC

Trish Rolfe
Executive Director
Center for Environmental Law & Policy

Amy Brockhaus
Deputy Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Susan Jane M. Brown
Staff Attorney
Western Environmental Law Center

Peter Bahls
Executive Director
Northwest Watershed Institute (Port Townsend, WA)

Jesse Salomon
Senator, 32nd Legislative District
Washington State Senate

Satpal Singh Sidhu
County Executive
Whatcom County

Jeanne Kohl-Wells
Council Member (District 4)
King County Council

Megan Dunn
Councilmember District 2
Snohomish County Council

Mark Boyar
President
MidFORC Coalition

Kathleen S. Gobush, PhD
Director, Northwest Program
Defenders of Wildlife

Allen Gibbs
President (Acting)
Pilchuck Audubon Society (Snohomish, WA)

Mike Nash
Irene Nash
Sky Valley Future (Gold Bar, WA)

Kevin Quinn
Co-Owner
Bale Breaker Brewing Company (Yakima, WA)

Nina Bell, J.D.
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Advocates

Annie Cubberly
Polly Dyer Cascadia
Great Old Broads for Wilderness (Olympia, WA)

Larry Brandt
Conservation Chair
Willapa Hills Audubon (Longview, WA)

Debbie Copple
Director
Sky Valley Chamber of Commerce (Sultan, WA)

J. Michelle Swope
Washington Regional Coordinator
Native Fish Society

Sarah Shaffer
Executive Director
Wenatchee Outdoors (Wenatchee, WA)

Zac Olson
Manager
Dru Bru

Hilary Eisen
Policy Director
Winter Wildlands Alliance

Raymond Kwan
Co-Owner
Lucky Envelope Brewing

Larry Lober
President
Greater Bellingham Running Club (Bellingham, WA)

Brenda Cunningham
Representative
Indivisible Skagit (Mount Vernon, WA)

Rebecca Wolfe
National Forests Committee Representative
Sierra Club – Washington State Chapter

Todd Owsley
Owner
Farmstrong Brewing Co. (Mount Vernon, WA)

Sara Nelson, PhD
Co-Founder/Owner
Fremont Brewing

Nathan Schons and Becca Gray
Owners
Island Hoppin' Brewery

Lara Zahaba
Co-Owner | Marketing & Communications
Stoup Brewing

Brad Throssell
State Chair
Washington Council of Trout Unlimited

Peter Tryon
President
Nooksack Nordic Ski Club (Bellingham, WA)

Donna Osseward
President
Olympic Park Associates

Dave Werntz
Science and Conservation Director
Conservation Northwest

Timothy Manns
Conservation Chair
Skagit Audubon Society (Mount Vernon, WA)

Cecilia Vollert
Brand Manager
Miir

Jack Guinn
Co-owner
Hellbent Brewing Company

Andrea Imler
Advocacy Director
Washington Trails Association

Justin Gerardy
Co-Owner
Standard Brewing/Sovereign Brewing

Haley Keller
Co-Owner, Finance & Retail Operations
Peddler Brewing Company

Arthur Campbell
President
North Central WA Audubon Society (Wenatchee, WA)

Jack Lamb
CEO/Owner
Aslan Brewing Company (Bellingham, WA)

Jon Bowne
President
Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club (IEFFC)

Matt Moore
President
Northwest Fly Anglers

Judy Hallisey
President
Kittitas Audubon (Ellensburg, WA)

Chuck Cheshire
President
Vancouver Wildlife League (Vancouver, WA)

Sam Merrill
Chair, Conservation Committee
Black Hills Audubon Society (Olympia, WA)

Steve Jones
President
Washington Council of Fly Fishers International

Kelsey, Ben, Liz & Craig Curran
Owners
Watershed Pub & Kitchen

Beverly Parsons
President
Kitsap Environmental Coalition (Hansville, WA)

Greg Shimek
President
Puget Sound Flyfishers

Jeremy Lucas
Conservation Chair
Eastside Audubon (Kirkland, WA)

Timothy Coleman
Executive Director
Kettle Range Conservation Group (Republic, WA)

Chad S. Roberts
Vice President
Varietal Beer Company

Jennifer Weddle
Co-Executive Director
Okanogan Highlands Alliance (Tonasket, WA)

Levi Wyatt
Social Responsibility Coordinator
Yakima Chief Hops (Yakima, WA)

Wendy D. McDermott
Director, Rivers of Puget Sound-Columbia Basin
American Rivers

Matt Perkins
Founder
Washington Climbers Coalition

Martha Rasmussen
FFPU Coordinator
Friends for Public Use (Darrington, WA)

Gabe Epperson, MPA
Executive Director
Whatcom Land Trust (Bellingham, WA)

Roy Mclaughlin
Head Brewer
Big Time Brewery

Mike Davis
President
Mount Baker Club (Bellingham, WA)

Jason Daugherty
Sales Manager
Holy Mountain Brewing Co.

Tony Ridgeway
Board President
Flying Bike Cooperative Brewery

Paul Satzinger
Operations Manager
NOLS Pacific Northwest

Dan Streiffert
Conservation Chair
Rainier Audubon Society (Auburn, WA)

Gene Bullock
President
Kitsap Audubon Society (Poulsbo, WA)

Deborah Jensen
Executive Director
Audubon Washington

Andree Hurley
Executive Director
Washington Water Trails Association

Janet Strong
President
Grays Harbor Audubon Society (Hoquiam, WA)

Colleen Kuehl
Owner
Wander Brewing (Bellingham, WA)

Kim McDonald
Founder
Fish Not Gold

Dave Green
President, CEO
Skagit Valley Malting (Burlington, WA)

Chris Danforth
VP of Marketing & Sales
Icicle Brewing Company (Leavenworth, WA)

Andrew Pogue
Owner
Fair Isle Brewing

Tierra Curry
Senior Scientist
Center for Biological Diversity

Derek Wyckoff
CEO
192 Brewing Company (Kenmore, WA)

Jasmine Minbashian
Executive Director
Methow Valley Citizens Council (Twisp, WA)

Betsy Robblee
Conservation & Advocacy Director
The Mountaineers

Rev. Mike Denton
Conference Minister, Pacific Northwest Conference,
The United Church of Christ

Bob Brenlin
Owner
Latona Pub

Jason Ridlon
President
Backcountry Horsemen of Washington

Rich Simms
Founder
Wild Steelhead Coalition

Boomer Olivas
Program Manager
2 Towns Ciderhouse

Lindsay Frickl
Executive Director
Issaquah Alps Trails Club (Issaquah, WA)

Skip Swenson
Vice President, Policy and Programming
Forterra

Arthur (R.D.) Grunbaum
President
Friends of Grays Harbor (Westport, WA)

Annie McGrath
Executive Director
Washington Brewers Guild

Tom Schmidlin, PhD
Owner and Head Brewer
Postdoc Brewing

Lucy Brookham
Policy Manager
Cascade Forest Conservancy

John McGlenn
President
Washington Wildlife Federation

Dana C. Ward
Co-Conservation Chair
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (Richland, WA)

Thomas O'Keefe, Ph.D.
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

Jason Paulsen
Executive Director
Methow Conservancy (Winthrop, WA)