

February 1, 2022

Senator Christine Rolfes, Chair
Senator Lynda Wilson, Ranking Member
Ways & Means Committee

Representative Timm Ormsby, Chair
Representative Drew Stokesbary, Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee

Dear Senator Rolfes and Representative Ormsby,

We are writing to express our strong support for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supplemental operating budget request of \$3.3 million to fund essential enforcement, education, and maintenance positions to better manage the impacts from increased public recreation on DNR lands.

Washingtonians and visitors alike enjoy an amazing array of outdoor activities on 3.3 million acres of DNR state trust lands. There's something for everyone: hiking, fishing, mountain biking, kayaking, boating, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, paragliding, rock climbing, and off-road vehicle riding.

To accommodate these outdoor activities, the DNR maintains 1,300 miles of trails, 80 campgrounds, 55 trailheads, and 40 picnic areas across the state of Washington. Other outdoor recreation amenities include mooring buoys and boat launches.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, many DNR outdoor recreation areas have seen a significant increase in use by a public seeking Covid-safe activities and ways to connect with loved ones.

DNR lands also include important Tribal cultural resources. The requested funding would help DNR make the necessary investments to prevent abuse and misuse of cultural resources on public lands.

The DNR request was included in the Governor's proposed supplemental operating budget submitted to the Legislature for the 2022 legislative session.

These supplemental resources are needed to allow DNR to keep current recreation staffing levels and maintain recreation sites currently open to the public. Last year's 2021-23 biennial budget did not fully fund DNR's recreation request, yet public safety issues have been amplified with increased outdoor recreation.

We urge members of the Legislature support this appropriation request and include the \$3.3 million in the final operating budget.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned



Washington

Justin Allegro

Director, State Government Relations



THE MOUNTAINEERS

Betsy Robblee

Conservation & Advocacy Director



Andrea Imler
Advocacy Director



Amy Brockhaus
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Yvonne Kraus
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President



Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director

CHELAN~DOUGLAS



LAND TRUST
Our Land, Our Water, Our Future
Curt Soper
Executive Director

CC:

Sen. June Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue, Ways & Means

Rep. Steve Bergquist, Vice Chair, Appropriations

Rep. Nicole Macri, Vice Chair, Appropriations