

**Submission of: Tyler Ray, Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy, American Hiking Society**

**American Hiking Society • American Trails • American Motorcyclist Association • Back Country Horsemen of America • Equine Land Conservation Resource • International Mountain Bicycling Association • National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance • Partnership for the National Trails System • Rails-to-Trails Conservancy ± the 230 Organizations and Entities Below**

Chair Simpson, Ranking Member Pingree, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of American Hiking Society and the millions of trail users our collective 240 organizations and entities represent who spend their time, money, and energy to get out on trails for recreation, health and wellness, and to volunteer, we thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of adequately funding our nation's trails and public lands to ensure access for all. We ask the Committee to adopt the following funding requests so the federal government can continue to leverage private contributions and benefit from volunteer labor as well as provide inexpensive, healthy outdoor recreation options for your constituents and all Americans. Appropriations for federal land management agencies requested herein, coupled with the significant resources provided by non-profit partners, serve to accelerate collective stewardship of our nation's public lands and waters, and enhance climate adaptability.

**Summary of Requests**

**Forest Service:**

- *Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CMTL), Trails at \$30M, including \$15M for National Scenic and Historic Trails, and funding for the National Forest System Trail Stewardship Trail Partner Funding. In order to support adequate funding for all Forest Service trails and to avoid a reduction in the existing budget for non-National Scenic and Historic Trails managed by the Forest Service, increases for non-National Scenic and Historic Trails should occur in parity with the rate of increases for National Scenic and Historic Trails;*
- *At, minimum \$70M to fund Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness;*
- *At least \$10M to fund Legacy Roads & Trails, with support for Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) coalition request of \$100M;*

**Bureau of Land Management:**

- *Funding at \$15M for National Trails System Line Item;*
- *National Conservation Lands at \$78.145M, but a minimum level funding of FY24 Senate proposed at \$65M;*

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:**

- *Refuge Visitor Services at least \$86.114M;*
- *Support Infrastructure-National Partnership funding;*

**National Park Service:**

- *Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program at \$15M;*
- *Park Service Operations for the National Trails System at a minimum of \$20.964M;*
- *Volunteers in Parks programs at a minimum of FY23 levels, including dedicated funding to the National Trails System;*
- *Visitor Services sub-activity, Youth Partnership Programs at a minimum of \$10.95M, including an acknowledgment of the benefits for trails;*
- *Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program, at a min \$125M;*

**US Geological Survey:**

- *\$1.5M to fully fund the National Digital Trail Project (NDTP)*

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**Forest Service Recommendation:**

National Forest trails benefit everyone and receive increasing public use each year. Collectively, the National Forests provide 159,000 miles of trails for activities ranging from hiking, biking, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle usage, groomed winter trails for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling, and access points for "river trails." Roughly 120,000 of the 159,000 miles of trails are in need of some form of maintenance or repair.

**Program:** Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$30M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$20M (House bill was \$25M)  
**Department:** USDA            **Agency/Account:** Forest Service, Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Trails  
**Report Language requested:**

- In order to support adequate funding for all Forest Service trails and to avoid a reduction in the existing budget for non-National Scenic and Historic Trails managed by the Forest Service, increases for non-National Scenic and Historic Trails should occur in parity with the rate of increases for National Scenic and Historic Trails
- The committee supports continued funding for the National Forest System Trail Stewardship Trail Partner Funding Program. Much of the Forest Service's trail work is accomplished today by volunteer groups and non-profit partners. The Forest Service has a successful Trail Stewardship Partner Funding challenge cost share program that leverages federal funding by 3 to 5:1.

**Program:** Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness  
**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** At, minimum \$70M            **FY24 Proposed Level (House):** \$60M  
**Department:** USDA                      **Agency/Account:** Forest Service, Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness

**Program:** Legacy Roads & Trails  
**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$10M minimum            **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$6M (House bill was \$10M)  
**Department:** USDA                      **Agency/Account:** Forest Service, Legacy Roads & Trails

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**BLM Recommendation:**

The BLM manages 13,468 miles of trails over 245 million acres —more land than any other federal land management agency and contains a diversity of landscapes that often provide the public less structured but nonetheless diverse recreational opportunities. BLM recreation resources and visitor services support strong local economies. More than 120 urban centers and thousands of rural towns (comprising 64 million people) are located within 25 miles of BLM lands.

**Program:** Bureau of Land Management National Trails System Line-Item Funding  
**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$15M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$11M (House bill was \$15M)  
**Department:** Bureau of Land Management            **Agency/Account:** Trails

**Program:** National Conservation Lands  
**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$78.145M, but a minimum \$63.599M  
**FY24 Enacted Level:** \$59.135M (Senate proposed FY24 level was \$63.599M)  
**Department:** Bureau of Land Management            **Agency/Account:** National Conservation Lands

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**FWS Recommendation:**

Refuge Visitor Services provides funding for trail maintenance across FWS-managed land. Located in every U.S. state and territory, and within an hour's drive of nearly every major U.S. city, National Wildlife Refuges provide incredible opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, hunting, fishing, birding, boating, and nature photography across 2,500 miles of trails. More than 37,000 jobs are reliant on refugees. Funding at a level of \$93M will provide for trail maintenance across the land and water trails, refuges, wetlands, and hatcheries, including eleven National Scenic and Historic Trails and forty-four National Recreation Trails.

**Program:** Visitor Services  
**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$86.114M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$76M (Senate bill was \$80.839M)  
**Department:** Department of Interior            **Agency/Account:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Visitor Services

**Program:** Infrastructure  
**Department:** Department of Interior            **Agency/Account:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Infrastructure  
**Report Language requested:** National Partnerships are an important component to maintain trail infrastructure across Fish and Wildlife Service sites. The Department shall continue support for National Partnerships and prioritize funding to leverage these partnerships.

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**NPS Recommendation:**

National Parks, and the world-class experiences their 18,844 miles of trails provide, are one of the most unifying forces in America. Well-maintained trails improve the quality of visitor experiences and enhance visitor safety.

**Program:** Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA)

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$15M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$13M

**Department:** Interior            **Agency/Account:** National Park Service, National Recreation and Preservation

**Report Language requested:** Within, National Recreation and Preservation, \$13.845M for the Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance program.

**Program:** National Trails System

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$20.964M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$18.856M

**Department:** Interior                      **Agency/Account:** National Park Service, Park Service Operations

**Report Language requested:**

- Within, Park Service Operations, \$20.964M for administration of the National Trails System.
- National Trails System-The Committees understand the importance of providing adequate funding for the development and maintenance of the National Trails System for future generations to enjoy. The Committees urge the Service to continue its efforts to develop National Scenic and Historic Trails, not limited to supporting construction and maintenance projects and volunteer coordination efforts, and to recognize equal "unit" status of National Scenic Trails.

**Program: Volunteers in Parks**

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** Maintain FY23 increase, at minimum                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** Level

**Department:** Interior            **Agency/Account:** National Park Service, Park Partnership Support Functions

**Report Language Requested:** The committee recommends funding through Volunteers in Parks be provided for volunteer support of the National Trails System, National Rivers, and National Park Service trails.

**Program: Youth Partnership Programs**

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** Maintain FY23 increase, at minimum                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** Level

**Department:** Interior                      **Agency/Account:** National Park Service, Visitor Services

**Report Language Requested:** The committee recommends funding through the Youth Partnership Programs be provided for support of the National Trails System, National Rivers, and National Park Service trails.

**Program:** Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** At least \$125M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$125M

**Department:** Interior                      **Agency/Account:** National Park Service, State Conservation Grants

**Report Language Requested:** The committee recommends funding through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program be provided for support of trails, including the National Trails System.

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**U.S. Geological Survey Recommendation:**

**Program:** National Digital Trail Project

**FY25 Funding Level Requested:** \$1.5M                      **FY24 Enacted Level:** \$1.35M

**Department:** U.S. Geological Survey                      **Agency/Account:** Core Science Systems

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**(Across Agencies) Restore Staffing for Federal Land Managers Recommendation:**

Federal land agency field staff continue to suffer from previous job reductions, and the resulting lack of oversight is now a roadblock to proper collaborative management between federal land agencies and volunteer-based partners. Crucial projects are stalled waiting for plan review or other necessary agency expertise, such as environmental studies, design, and other work that is above the ability and purview of trail groups. Delays have lasted years, contributing to the maintenance backlog and, ultimately, increasing the cost to taxpayers for this necessary work as trails continue to deteriorate at an even greater rate.

We must improve agency staffing levels to meet the need. Agency front-line managers provide crucial and unparalleled expertise and oversight to nonprofit trail partners. This guidance is key to the success of nonprofits as they take on more of the management responsibility for our trails and recruit, train, and marshal thousands of volunteers in public service. Increasing agency staffing levels is essential to completing the complex work of managing and maintaining trails and public lands.

Beyond increases in land management agency staffing, we ask the committee to include report language to audit the centralized agency hiring practices, which have been identified as a roadblock to filling thousands of crucial vacancies. Centralizing hiring prevents land managers from quickly filling vacancies from local talent pools. The cumbersome process slows hiring so much that vacancies often go unfilled. In many cases, by the time a job is offered, the candidate has already moved on. More hiring flexibility would help local land managers fill vacancies quickly.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A' Tuscan Estate Bed &amp; Breakfast</li> <li>Access for All, LLC</li> <li>Ala Kahakai Trail Association</li> <li>Alaska Trails</li> <li>American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.</li> <li>American Discovery Trail Society</li> <li>American River Parkway Foundation</li> <li>American Rivers</li> <li>American Society of Landscape Architects</li> <li>Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort</li> <li>Anza Trail Foundation</li> <li>Appalachian Mountain Club</li> <li>Appalachian Trail Conservancy</li> <li>Arizona Peace Trail, Inc.</li> <li>Arizona Trail Association</li> <li>Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation</li> <li>Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico</li> <li>Back Country Horsemen of Oregon</li> <li>Back Country Horsemen of Texas</li> <li>Back Country Horsemen of Utah - Southwest Chapter</li> <li>Front Range Back Country Horsemen</li> <li>Gila Chapter Back Country Horsemen</li> <li>Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen</li> <li>Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen</li> <li>Bay Area Ridge Trail Council</li> <li>Beaver Island Archipelago Trail Association</li> <li>Bike Walk RVA</li> <li>Bitter Root Cultural Heritage Trust / qa' ánin 'iskit [respect the trail]</li> <li>Black Canyon National Recreation Trail</li> <li>Blue Ridge Horseman's Association</li> <li>Bonneville Shoreline Trail Committee</li> <li>Buffalo Bayou Trail Coalition</li> <li>California Mountain Biking Coalition</li> <li>CalWild</li> <li>Capital Trails Coalition</li> <li>Cascade Volunteers</li> <li>Central Oregon Trail Alliance (COTA)</li> <li>Chamber of Commerce of Smyth County Inc</li> <li>Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth</li> <li>Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance</li> <li>City of Clarksville Parks and Recreation</li> <li>City of Fitchburg</li> <li>City of Glendale, Trails &amp; Open Space Program</li> <li>City of Hot Springs- Parks &amp; Trails Clear Trails</li> <li>Colfax Greenway Committee</li> <li>Colorado Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>Community Land Shepherds</li> <li>Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association</li> <li>Conservation Lands Foundation</li> <li>Conservation Minnesota</li> <li>Continental Divide Trail Coalition</li> <li>The Corps Network</li> <li>County Line Riders of Catalina, Inc</li> <li>Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail</li> <li>Cycle Yamhill County</li> <li>Cyclotour Guide Books</li> <li>DJG Studios</li> <li>Delaware River Greenway Partnership</li> <li>Desperados Trail Scouts</li> <li>Dickinson County Trails Board</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dirt Dojo LLC</li> <li>Eagle Rock Shredders</li> <li>Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance</li> <li>East Coast Greenway Alliance</li> <li>Elkins Creek Horse Camp &amp; Tack Shop LLC</li> <li>Elkins Creek Horse Club</li> <li>Enchanted Circle Trails Association</li> <li>Endangered Species Coalition</li> <li>Evansville-Area Trails Coalition, Inc.</li> <li>Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance</li> <li>Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition</li> <li>Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, IL</li> <li>ForeverGreen Trails</li> <li>Fort Wayne Trails Inc.</li> <li>Friends of Chessie Trail</li> <li>Friends of Constitution Park Ossipee</li> <li>Friends of Douglas-fir National Monument</li> <li>Jason Grodman</li> <li>Jodie Adams</li> <li>Friends of the Columbia Gorge</li> <li>Friends of the North Pikes Creek Wetlands</li> <li>Gilmer County Economic Development Association</li> <li>Greater Hells Canyon Council - Blue Mountains Trail</li> <li>Groundwork NRG</li> <li>Headwaters Trails Alliance</li> <li>Health by Design</li> <li>Higher Ground USA, Inc.</li> <li>Ice Age Trail Alliance</li> <li>Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs</li> <li>IMBA Team Dirt Chapter</li> <li>Intentional Hiking</li> <li>Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority</li> <li>Klickitat Trail Conservancy</li> <li>Kline Consulting LLC</li> <li>The Landing LLC</li> <li>Legacy Trails LLC</li> <li>Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation</li> <li>Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc.</li> <li>Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Love in Motion</li> <li>Lowlifes Respectable Citizens' Club</li> <li>Mac Market</li> <li>Maine Trail Riders Association, Inc. (Equine)</li> <li>Maine Trails Coalition</li> <li>Marin County Bicycle Coalition</li> <li>Mayes County HOPE</li> <li>Mayes County Trails Alliance</li> <li>Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts</li> <li>Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District</li> <li>Milwaukee Riverkeeper</li> <li>Monterey Off Road Cycling Association</li> <li>The Mountaineers</li> <li>Mountain Surf Creative</li> <li>Multidisciplinary Education for the Environment</li> <li>Nantahala Area SORBA</li> <li>National Coast Trail Association</li> <li>National Washington Rochambeau</li> <li>Revolutionary Route Association</li> <li>Nature Trails</li> <li>The Naples Trail Collective</li> <li>Nevada Outdoor School</li> <li>New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Mexico Sportsmen</li> <li>New York Bicycling Coalition</li> <li>New York-New Jersey Trail Conference</li> <li>Newell Improvement Coalition, Inc. 501 C3</li> <li>Newport Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Newtown Parks and Recreation</li> <li>Northwest Trail Alliance</li> <li>Northwest Trail Riders Association</li> <li>Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association, Inc.</li> <li>Northwoods Stewardship Center</li> <li>Oakridge Trails Alliance</li> <li>Ohio Mountain Bike Alliance</li> <li>Ohio Trails Partnership</li> <li>Oregon Equestrian Trails</li> <li>Oregon Horse Council</li> <li>Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council</li> <li>Oregon State Snowmobile Association</li> <li>Oregon Trails Coalition</li> <li>Oregon-California Trails Association</li> <li>Orogenesis Collective</li> <li>OuterSpatial</li> <li>Over The Bars Mountain Bike Club</li> <li>Overmountain Victory Trail Association</li> <li>Ozark Trail Association</li> <li>Pacific Crest Trail Association</li> <li>Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association</li> <li>Pelican Path Committee</li> <li>Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society</li> <li>PeopleForBikes</li> <li>Pike County Fiscal Court</li> <li>Pima Trails Association</li> <li>Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trails Association</li> <li>Prime Desert Woodland Preserve</li> <li>Princeton Open Space Committee</li> <li>Quad Cities Bicycle Club</li> <li>Red Line Parkway Initiative</li> <li>REI Co-op</li> <li>Reserve Concepts</li> <li>Resilient Headwaters</li> <li>Rio Grande Indivisible, New Mexico</li> <li>Rocky Mountain Field Institute</li> <li>Sage Trail Alliance</li> <li>San Diego Mountain Biking Association</li> <li>San Francisco Public works</li> <li>San Jose Conservation Corps</li> <li>San Luis Valley Great Outdoors</li> <li>Schaumburg &amp; Polk, Inc.</li> <li>Seeds of Stewardship</li> <li>Seeley Trails Organization</li> <li>Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition</li> <li>The Sierra Club</li> <li>Siskiyou Upland Trails Association</li> <li>Sitka Trail Works</li> <li>Smith River Alliance</li> <li>Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists</li> <li>South Coast Tours LLC</li> <li>Southern Kettles Off Road Riders (SKORR)</li> <li>Southern Nevada Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association</li> <li>Southwest Montana Bike Association</li> <li>Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>Stark County Bicycle Club</li> <li>The Street Trust</li> <li>SWMMBA</li> <li>Tahoe Rim Trail Association</li> <li>Teaneck Creek Conservancy</li> <li>Terra-Strata, LLC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thrive Allen County</li> <li>Thrive Kansas</li> <li>TORC</li> <li>Town of Awendaw, SC</li> <li>Town of Breckenridge Open Space &amp; Trails</li> <li>Trail Access Project</li> <li>Trail Keepers of Oregon</li> <li>Trail Riders of Today</li> <li>Trailkeepers of Oregon</li> <li>Trails Inspire, LLC</li> <li>Travel Lane County</li> <li>Traverse Area Recreation &amp; Transportation (TART) Trails</li> <li>Tri Town Trail</li> <li>Trinity Coalition</li> <li>Truckee Meadows Trails supported by the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation</li> <li>Trust for Public Land</li> <li>Tuleyme</li> <li>Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department</li> <li>Upper Gila Watershed Alliance</li> <li>Urbana Park District</li> <li>Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance</li> <li>Ventana Wilderness Alliance</li> <li>The Vermont Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>Virginia 4 Wheel Drive Association</li> <li>Virginia Bicycling Federation</li> <li>Visit McMinnville</li> <li>Walk, Bike &amp; Hike Committee, Canton, MA</li> <li>Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association</li> <li>Washington Area Bicyclist Association</li> <li>Washington Trails Association</li> <li>West Virginia Land Trust</li> <li>Western Riding Club</li> <li>WI Horse Council District 1</li> <li>Wild Alakea - Alicia Fields</li> <li>The Wilderness Need Association</li> <li>The Wilderness Society</li> <li>Willamette Valley Visitors Association</li> <li>Wilson Creek Trail Coalition</li> <li>Wisconsin Non-motorized Recreation &amp; Transportation Trails Council</li> </ul> |
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