



October 18, 2024

Recreation and Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

RE: 24-2518: EDU - MVRD Wilderness & Backcountry Rangers 2026-2027
24-2558: EDU - MVRD Backcountry & Winter Education & Safety Rangers
24-2555: MNT - MVRD Developed Rec. Campground Maintenance 2026-27
24-2513: MNT - MVRD Trail Maintenance 2026-2027
24-2514: MNT - MVRD Mixed Use Deferred Trail Maintenance 2026-27
24-2253: DEV - Cub Creek Trailhead Development

Dear evaluation committee members,

Please accept our letter of support for the Methow Valley Ranger District (MVRD)'s proposals for 24-2518: EDU - MVRD Wilderness & Backcountry Rangers 2026-2027; 24-2558: EDU - MVRD Backcountry & Winter Education & Safety Rangers; 24-2555: MNT - MVRD Developed Rec. Campground Maintenance 2026-27; 24-2513 MNT - MVRD Trail Maintenance 2026-2027; 24-2514: MNT - MVRD Mixed Use Deferred Trail Maintenance 2026-27; and 24-2253 DEV - Cub Creek Trailhead Development. These proposals promote education of Washington's recreation community, improve the recreational experience, and help protect the environment for future generations. We strongly support these projects and the value that they will bring to recreationalists in the Methow Valley.

The Mountaineers, based in Seattle, Washington and founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is "to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond." 1,200 skilled volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education trips and courses annually for over 16,000 members. Our youth programs provide over 15,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside.

The MVRD encompasses many recreation destinations of local, regional and international significance; a few of which are the Washington Pass Spires such as Liberty Bell, the Wine Spires of Silver Star Peak, Goat Wall, and dozens of crags and bouldering areas in the Mazama area, the North Cascades Scenic Corridor, and the Chewuch River Valley. These areas are beloved by The Mountaineers community and are considered an optimal teaching space for outdoor education by our volunteer leaders.



We are supportive of the MVRD Wilderness and Backcountry Rangers proposal that will continue to fund critical wilderness and backcountry ranger positions to perform in-field visitor contacts to promote leave-no-trace techniques and enforce regulations in high-use recreation areas along the North Cascades Scenic Corridor, Hart's Pass, Pasayten Wilderness and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness areas. As demand for outdoor recreation continues to rise in Washington and nationally, it's imperative these high-use recreation areas are properly staffed. Additionally, we fully support the MVRD Backcountry & Winter Education & Safety Rangers proposal to fund safety education, environmental education, and search and rescue aid. This proposal will directly benefit recreationists engaged in a variety of trail activities in both winter and summer across the Methow Valley Ranger District, including popular areas such as the Sawtooth Backcountry, Washington Pass, and Lost River.

In addition to the above, The Mountaineers community frequently use the extensive network of trails and campgrounds outlined in the MVRD Trail Maintenance, Developed Rec Campground Maintenance, and Cub Creek Trailhead Development proposals. Use numbers at trailheads, campsites, and other facilities in the Methow Valley have grown exponentially in recent years. It is more important than ever to support land managers in the maintenance of these high-use trails and facilities to minimize damage from human waste, litter, camping in environmentally fragile areas, and other unintended impacts.

The Mountaineers community is conscientious of access and environmental issues in the areas that they recreate. We are excited about the potential of these programs to preserve the quality of outdoor experiences for all future users of the MVRD. We believe that the money granted for these programs would be very well spent preserving and improving the nature of our public lands and the experience one can get from it.

We look forward to supporting MVRD with volunteer, outreach, and educational support and we sincerely thank the MVRD for their collaboration and commitment to maintaining and improving the recreational experience in the Methow Valley.

Sincerely,

Betsy Robblee
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