



The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies

Dear Committee Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the thousands of diverse trail users our collective organizations represent, we thank the Senate and House Appropriation Committees for responding to our request for trail inclusive funding in H.R. 6147, *Interior, Environment, Financial Services and General Government, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2019*.¹ As discussions between the House and Senate are underway to reconcile the legislation for final passage, and enactment, we request that final legislation include the funding levels and report language outlined below.

Trails are the gateway to nearly every facet of outdoor recreation, including fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, camping, and more. A failure to maintain and manage our nation's trails stymies economic growth and access to healthy outdoor recreation.

Forest Service

Trail Maintenance and Construction (CMTL)

Funding Request: \$85 million (House passed funding level)

CMTL funding at \$85 million will allow the Forest Service to begin addressing the considerable maintenance backlog on the trails in the National Forest System, including implementing provisions of the 2016 National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (PL114-245).

¹ FY19 Trail Funding Coalition Letter (May 18, 2018), <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/fy19-trail-funding-coalition-letter/>.

Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness

Report Language: “Within the fund provided, \$500,000 is made available to support infrastructure and trails development, and to build the capacity of local user groups and partnership organizations for all National Recreation Areas administered by the Forest Service established after 1997” (*House Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

The National Forests and Grasslands provide a great diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities, connecting the American public with nature in an unmatched variety of settings and activities. Collectively, the National Forests provide about 157,000 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 “river trails.”

Legacy Roads & Trails

Funding Request: \$40 million

Report Language: \$40 million within the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program be provided for trail and road projects through Legacy Roads & Trails to address water quality problems.

Legacy Roads & Trails funding has had a substantial impact, improving over 11,000 miles of trails and 5,000 miles of roads. Dedicated funding is necessary for continuing the success of this program.

National Park Service

Operations of the National Park System

Funding Request: \$2.527810 billion (Senate passed funding level)

Report Language:

*“National Trails System.—*The Committee understands the importance of providing adequate funding to develop and maintain the National Trails System for future generations to enjoy. In preparation for the National Trails System’s 50-year anniversary in 2019, the Committee urges the National Park Service to renew its efforts to support construction and maintenance projects and volunteer coordination efforts, including activities in support of non-unit National Scenic Trails.” (*Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

*“Trail Building.—*The Committee recognizes the great need for trail building and repair, and commends the agency on its work to engage and support volunteers who contribute thousands of hours each year completing this work. The Committee is concerned that the National Scenic Trails lack capacity to coordinate volunteers who would be willing to help address local maintenance backlogs and to buildout new miles of trail, and therefore encourages the Service to support trail design, project planning and volunteer coordination necessary to facilitate use of

volunteer hours on nonunit National Scenic Trails” (*Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Scenic and Historic Trails System, funding under this section is essential to perform maintenance of the National Trails System within NPS sites, and administrative responsibility for 23 National Scenic and Historic Trails.

National Recreation and Preservation, Natural Programs (incl. Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance (RTCA))

Funding Request: \$10.03 million (*Senate passed funding level*)

Report Language: “The Committee recommends 14,170,000 for natural programs equal to the enacted level. All proposed reductions are restored, including funds for the Chesapeake Gateways and Trails program and Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance” (*Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

RTCA’s national network of recreation planning professionals partners with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks in urban and rural areas.

Bureau of Land Management

Recreation Resources Management

Funding Request: \$58.465 million (*Senate passed funding level*)

Outdoor recreation on BLM public lands supports strong local economies. The public continues to demand greater recreational access to public lands. Funding at this level is needed as BLM lands increasingly provide diverse and exceptional recreational opportunities for a broad spectrum of the American public.

National Conservation Lands

Funding Request: \$41.819 million (*Senate passed funding level*)

Funding at \$41.819 million will allow for the continued availability of visitor services, including maintenance and care of trails and trailheads, grounds maintenance, campground access, river and trail access and interpretive resources.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Refuge Visitor Services

Funding Request: \$73.319 million (*Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

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 hunting, fishing, birding, boating and nature photography. Over 37,000 jobs are reliant on refuges.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Accumulative funding across agencies

Funding Request: \$425 million (*Senate passed funding level*)

Funding at the \$425 million level will ensure that this program can continue to provide new access to trails and other outdoor recreation. The program has funded, at no-cost to taxpayers, hundreds of local trail projects and thousands of other projects ranging from National Parks, Forests and Wildlife Refuges to community parks and ball fields in all 50 states.

National Park Service Land Acquisition and State Assistance:

Report Language: "The Committee provides \$3,000,000 for recreational access activity for the Park Service an increase of \$1,000,000 above the enacted level. The Committee is aware of efforts by non-Federal agencies in helping the Federal Government leverage funds in order to maximize funding for the management and acquisition of lands for the Ice Age, North Country, and New England Scenic Trails. The funding provided by the Committee for recreation access may be available to acquire land to close gaps in the National Scenic Trails. The Committee urges the Service to consider geographic distribution to ensure investments for the trail system are reflected in project prioritization." (*Senate Interior Appropriations Committee Report Language*)

Thank you for considering the above requests. For additional information please contact Tyler Ray, American Hiking Society, tray@americanhiking.org, Mike Passo, American Trails, mikepasso@americantrails.org, Randy Rasmussen, Back Country Horsemen of America, WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org, or Gary Werner, Partnership for the National Trails System, gary@pnts.org.

Sincerely,

American Hiking Society
American Trails
Back Country Horsemen of America
Partnership for the National Trails System