



*Empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience.*

Representative Abigail Spanberger  
Chair, Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
1239 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Doug LaMalfa  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee  
322 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 25, 2019

**Re: American Hiking Society Statement for the Record: The National Forest System: Restoring our Forest Infrastructure**

Dear Chair Spanberger and Ranking Member LaMalfa:

On behalf of the American Hiking Society, our members, supporters, and the millions-strong hiking community nationwide, we thank the subcommittee for holding a hearing to examine the maintenance backlog affecting the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and urge the Forest Service's in H.R. 1225, the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act*.

The legislation passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee this summer and now has 304 cosponsors. Supporters of the proposal include over 3,000 local, state, and national groups including trail managers, towns and counties, veterans' organizations, contractors, state and regional tourism societies, preservation societies, conservation groups, the recreation industry, unions, and local businesses.

H.R. 1225 is an important step to address the \$21.5 billion maintenance backlog that exists across all federal lands.<sup>1</sup> The bill creates a fund that would provide \$6.5 billion over five years from energy development revenues on federal land and water to address the most pressing deferred maintenance needs, including trails, within the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Education.<sup>2</sup>

However, H.R. 1225 does not currently include the U.S. Forest Service's \$5.2 billion backlog (including \$285 million for trail maintenance) on its 193 million acres of public lands, which encompass 158,000 miles of trails. Eighty-four million people annually enjoy the 158,600 miles of trails managed by the USFS, which generate \$9 billion in annual visitor spending and support 143,000 jobs. Maintenance of these routes is imperative to the outdoor recreation industry because the agency's sustainable, multiple-use management concept supports a variety of activities and programs. Without including the USFS in the

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<sup>1</sup> See *Exploring Innovative Solutions to Reduce the Department of the Interior's Maintenance Backlog Before the H. Comm on Natural Resources*, 115th Cong. (2018) (statement of U.S. Dep't of the Interior), available at <https://www.doi.gov/ocl/doi-maintenance-backlog>; See also U.S. Dep't of Agric., Office of Inspector Gen., *Forest Service Deferred Maintenance 2* (May 2017), available at <https://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/08601-0004-31.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> This funding includes funds from Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenue, which also provides funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

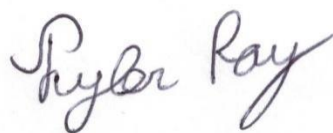
solution, the agency will continue to be limited in its ability to carry out the multiple-use approach that enables prioritization of shared conservation stewardship, American jobs in rural communities, and supporting outdoor recreation, the USFS' top revenue generator.

Agency	Miles of Trails	Trails Deferred Maintenance Amount
Forest Service <sup>3</sup>	158,726 miles and 7,156 trail bridges	\$285.8 million (trails and trail bridges)
National Park Service <sup>4</sup>	18,844 miles	\$462 million (trails)
Fish & Wildlife Service <sup>5</sup>	2,100 miles (13,300 miles (roads, trails, and bridges combined))	\$52.7 million (trails est. based on % of overall DM \$336 million for roads, trails, and bridges).
Bureau of Land Management <sup>6</sup>	13,468 miles (82,000 miles of roads)	\$86.1 million (trails est. based on % of overall DM \$615 million for roads, trails, and bridges). <sup>7</sup>
<b>All Agencies</b>	<b>193,138 miles trail specific</b>	<b>\$886 million (est.)</b>

We urge inclusion of the U.S. Forest Service as part of a comprehensive solution to address deferred maintenance across all federally managed lands.

Please contact Tyler Ray, Director of Policy and Advocacy, [tray@americanhiking.org](mailto:tray@americanhiking.org), 301-565-6704 x705 with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,



Tyler Ray  
Director of Policy and Advocacy

<sup>3</sup> See *Deferred Maintenance Needs and Potential Solutions on Federal Lands Administered by the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service Before the S. Comm on Energy and Natural Resources, 116th Cong. (2019)* (statement of Lenise Lago, Associate Chief, USDA Forest Service), available at <https://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings-and-business-meetings?ID=69C0BD6D-0DAD-4CEC-8FE0-06946A0EA883>. See also Carol Hardy Vincent, Congressional Research Serv., *Deferred Maintenance of Federal Land Management Agencies: FY2007-FY2016 Estimates and Issues 3* (Apr. 25, 2017), available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43997.pdf>. See also U.S. Dep't of Agric., *FY 2019 Budget Justification 75* (Feb. 2018), available at <https://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/usfs-fy19-budget-justification.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Nat'l Park Serv., *Nat'l Park Serv. Asset Inventory Summary FY17*, available at [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/plandesignconstruct/upload/FY17-Asset-Inventory-Summary-AIS-Service-wide\\_Report\\_508-3.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/plandesignconstruct/upload/FY17-Asset-Inventory-Summary-AIS-Service-wide_Report_508-3.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> FWS total includes deferred maintenance not limited to trails as trail specific breakdowns are not publicly available. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv., *Bureau Highlights (2018)*, available at [https://edit.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy2019\\_bib\\_bh059.pdf](https://edit.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy2019_bib_bh059.pdf); U.S. Dep't of the Interior, *Fish and Wildlife Serv., Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2019 NWRS-10* (2018).

<sup>6</sup> BLM total includes deferred maintenance not limited to trails as trail specific breakdowns are not publicly available. Carol Hardy Vincent, Congressional Research Serv., *Deferred Maintenance of Federal Land Management Agencies: FY2007-FY2016 Estimates and Issues 3* (Apr. 25, 2017), available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43997.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Trail specific data not publicly available. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, *ROADS AND TRAILS TERMINOLOGY 7* (2006), available at <https://www.blm.gov/documents/national-office/blm-library/technical-note/roads-and-trails-terminology>.