



Partnership for the National Trails System

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STATEMENT TO THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT & RELATED AGENCIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

The Partnership for the National Trails System appreciates your support over the past 20 years, through operations funding and dedicated Challenge Cost Share funds, for the national scenic and historic trails administered by the National Park Service. We also appreciate your increased allocation of funds to support the trails administered and managed by the Forest Service and for the trails in the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. To continue the progress that you have fostered, the Partnership requests that you provide **annual operations funding for each of the 30 national scenic and historic trails** for Fiscal Year 2015 through these appropriations:

- **National Park Service: \$16.21 million** for **administration** of **23 trails** and for coordination of the long-distance trails program by the Washington office. **Construction: \$380,000** for the **Ice Age Trail**, **\$240,000** for the **Appalachian Trail**, and **\$200,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**.
- **USDA Forest Service: \$7.896 million** to **administer 6 trails** and **\$1.2 million** to manage parts of **16 trails** administered by the NPS or BLM. **\$1 million** for **Iditarod Trail** construction.
- **Bureau of Land Management: \$1.53 million** to **administer three trails** and for coordination of the National Trails program and **\$7.14 million** to portions of **13 trails** administered by the Park Service or the Forest Service and for operating five National Historic Trail interpretive centers. **Construction: \$300,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**.
- We ask that you **appropriate \$4.5 million** for the **National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program** and continue to **direct one-third (\$1,500,000)** for **national scenic and historic trails** or **create a separate \$1.5 million National Trails System Challenge Cost Share Program**.
- We ask that you add **\$500,000** to the **Bureau of Land Management's Challenge Cost Share Program** and **allocate it for the national scenic and historic trails it administers or manages**.

We ask that you appropriate **\$57,695,000** from the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** for the acquisition of **53 tracts** along **seven national scenic** and **eight national historic trails** described in the **National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning** proposal and allocate this funding to the:

- **Bureau of Land Management: \$15,246,000 million**
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$7,829,000 million**
- **US Forest Service: \$15,271,000 million**
- **National Park Service: \$25,002,600 million.**

National Park Service

The **\$16.21 million** we request for **Park Service operations** includes increases for some of the trails to continue the progress and new initiatives made possible by the additional funding Congress provided several years ago. Funding for the new **Star Spangled Banner** and **Washington-Rochambeau Trails** and **\$400,000** for the Park Service to implement planning for the **New England Trail** is included.

We request an **increase of \$626,000** to expand Park Service efforts to protect cultural landscapes at more than 200 sites along the **Santa Fe Trail**, to develop GIS mapping, and to fund public educational outreach programs of the Santa Fe Trail Association. An **increase of \$780,000** for the **Trail of Tears** will enable the Park Service to work with the Trail of Tears Association to develop a GIS to map the Trail's historical and cultural heritage sites to protect them and to develop interpretation of them for visitors. We request an **increase of \$346,000 to \$866,000** for the **Ala Kahakai Trail** to enable the Park Service to work with E Mau Na Ala Hele, the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, and other community organizations to care for resources on the land and with the University of Hawaii to conduct archaeological and cultural landscape studies along this trail.

We request an **increase of \$193,000 to \$1,708,000** for the **Appalachian Trail** to expand the highly successful "Trail to Every Classroom" program of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The **\$1,483,000** we request for the **4,200 mile North Country Trail** will enable the Park Service to provide greater support for the regional GIS mapping, trail building, trail management, and training of volunteers led by the North Country Trail Association. The **\$1,389,000** we request for the **Ice Age Trail** includes a **\$535,000 increase** to build partner and citizen capacity for protecting the natural and cultural resources on the Trail and Ice Age Trail lands and to provide NPS with a property manager for NPS-owned lands.

Construction: We request that you appropriate **\$380,000** for the **Ice Age Trail**, **\$240,000** for the **Appalachian Trail**, and **\$200,000** for the **Pacific Crest Trail** for trail construction projects.

Challenge Cost Share programs are one of the most effective and efficient ways for Federal agencies to accomplish a wide array of projects for public benefit while also sustaining partnerships involving countless private citizens in doing public service work. We request that you **robustly fund the Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service Challenge Cost Share programs** and appropriate **\$4.5 million in Challenge Cost Share** funding to the **Park Service** for FY15 as a wise investment of public money that will generate public benefits many times greater than its sum. We ask you to **continue to direct one-third of the \$4.5 million** for the **national scenic and historic trails** to continue the steady progress toward making these trails fully available for public enjoyment. We suggest, as an alternative to this approach, that you create a separate **National Trails System Challenge Cost Share** program with **\$1.5 million** funding.

USDA - Forest Service

We ask you to appropriate **\$7.896 million** as a separate budgetary item specifically for the Arizona, Continental Divide, Florida, Pacific Crest, and Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trails and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail within the over-all appropriation for **Capital Improvements and Maintenance for Trails**. Recognizing the on-the-ground management responsibility the **Forest Service** has for **1024 miles** of the Appalachian Trail, more than **650 miles** of the North Country Trail, and sections of the Ice Age, Anza, Caminos Real de Tierra Adentro and de Tejas, Lewis & Clark, California, Iditarod, Mormon Pioneer, Old Spanish, Oregon, Overmountain Victory, Pony Express, Trail of Tears and Santa Fe Trails, we ask you to appropriate **\$1.2 million** specifically for these trails.

The Partnership's request of **\$7.896 million** includes **\$1.5 million** to enable the Forest Service and Florida Trail Association to continue trail maintenance, to control invasive species, do ecosystem restoration, and otherwise manage **4,625 acres** of new **Florida Trail** land. The **\$7.896 million** request also includes **\$2 million** for the **Pacific Crest Trail**, **\$2 million** for the **Continental Divide Trail**, **\$1 million** for the **Pacific Northwest Trail**, **\$826,000** for the **Nez Perce Trail**, and **\$570,000** for the **Arizona Trail**. Some of the additional funds requested will enable the Forest Service to develop Comprehensive Management Plans for the latter three trails. We also request **\$1 million** of **additional funding** for construction of sections of the **Iditarod Trail**.

Bureau of Land Management

Although considerably more money is needed to fully administer the **National Landscape Conservation System** and protect its resources, we request that you appropriate **\$68.809 million** in **base funding** for the System. We ask that you appropriate as **new permanent base funding \$250,000 for National Trails System Program Coordination, \$700,000 for the Iditarod Trail, \$230,000 for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail, \$350,000 for the Old Spanish Trail, and \$4,000,000 for the Bureau of Land Management to manage 4,645 miles of thirteen other national scenic and historic trails.** For trail maintenance we request **\$300,000 for the Pacific Crest Trail and \$50,000 for the Nez Perce Trail;** and request **\$3,140,000 to operate five historic trails interpretive centers.**

We ask you to provide **\$5 million** for the Bureau's **Challenge Cost Share** program and to direct **\$500,000** for National Trails System projects as you have done with the Park Service's CCS program.

To promote greater management transparency and accountability for the National Trails and the whole **National Landscape Conservation System**, we urge you to request expenditure and accomplishment reports for each of the NLCS Units for FY14 and to direct the Bureau to include unit-level allocations within **major sub-activities** for each of the scenic and historic trails, and wild and scenic rivers -- as the Bureau has done for the national monuments, wilderness, and conservation areas -- within a **new activity account** for the National Landscape Conservation System in FY15. The Bureau's lack of a unified budget account for National Trails prevents the agency from efficiently planning, implementing, reporting, and taking advantage of cost-saving and leveraging partnerships and volunteer contributions for every activity related to these national resources.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Partnership strongly supports the President's Budget proposal to fully fund the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** at the authorized **\$900 million**, with \$350 million from discretionary sources and \$550 million in mandatory funds for the component programs funded under LWCF. Within this amount we request that you appropriate **\$57,695,000** for the **National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning** proposal to acquire 53 tracts along 15 national scenic and historic trails detailed here:

Bureau of Land Management: \$15,246,000 million | 7 tracts | 15,859 acres

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (MT): \$11,704,000 for trail, landscape, habitat and recreation protection along the Upper Missouri River frontage, including key campsites from Lewis and Clark's historic expedition and breathtaking views along Missouri River.

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (ID): \$3,000,000 for trail and resource conservation at one of the last remaining working ranches at Henry's Lake.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (OR, CA): \$542,000 for trail and resource protection within the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument.

US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$7,829,000 million | 14 tracts | 4,634 acres

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (VA): \$2,000,000 to protect the trail's historical resources in an area that would encourage public recreation and interpretation.

Iditarod National Historic Trail (AK): \$90,000 for protection of 120 acres within the Innoko Wilderness Area in the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge and 1.6 miles of the Iditarod Trail.

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (WA): \$270,000 to allow 13 listed salmon and steelhead stocks to reverse their downward population trend in the Columbia watershed.

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail (TN): \$2,969,000 for seven tracts along the Mississippi river that will protect migration corridors within the Chickasaw and Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuges.

California National Historic Trail (ID): \$2,500,000 to protect the largest breeding concentration of Sandhill Cranes as well as providing a haven for other waterfowl from a current farming threat.

US Forest Service: \$15,271,000 million | 10 tracts | 7,701 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (NC): \$3,906,500 to protect high priority, high elevation viewshed along the Appalachian Trail that connects with North Carolina land purchased to the south to provide an extensive natural heritage area.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (MT): \$255,000 to achieve uninterrupted trail corridor enabling animal migration and human recreation.

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail (TN): \$585,000 to preserve one of the few remaining segments of Trail of Tears in its original condition along the Unicoi Turnpike.

Old Spanish National Historic Trail (NM): \$2,570,000 to finalize the protection of a five-mile-long segment of the Old Spanish Trail as it enters Carson National Forest.

Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (WA): \$2,800,000 to conserve grizzly bear and Canadian lynx habitat while filling in a 2.5 mile gap of the Pacific Northwest Trail along Big Sheep Creek.

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (MT): \$1,050,000 to complete the consolidation of lands on Bloody Dick and Selway Creeks in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (CA, WA): \$4,104,000 for trail, resource, and watershed protection near the headwaters of the Trinity River and through populous King County to increase public recreation.

National Park Service Budget Request \$25,002,600 million | 22 tracts | 5,349 acres

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (HI): \$3,900,000 for trail and resource conservation in the Great Crack.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (NH): \$4,260,000 to extinguish the threat of imminent development and to create a block of 2,000 acres of conservation land that protects an Appalachian Trail viewshed.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CO): \$308,000 to remove motorized use of 0.5 miles of the Continental Divide Trail and to restore 1 acre of habitat currently occupied by an access road and buildings in the scenic Rocky Mountain National Park.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail (WI): \$3,700,000 to provide an urban access point to the Ice Age Trail in the city of St. Croix, and to enhance the geologic diversity of the trail by completing a continuous four-mile segment through Wisconsin's Driftless Area.

New England National Scenic Trail (MA): \$120,000 to significantly improve hiker safety and scenic viewshed by keeping hikers off 2.5 miles of busy road, and to contribute to the protection of a contiguous open space corridor extending from Erving State Forest to the east and Rattlesnake Mountain and Northfield Mountain and Mount Grace to the west.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (VA): \$6,000,000 to permanently protect and open for public education and archaeological research a nationally significant American Indian site.

North Country National Scenic Trail (MI): \$1,061,300 to protect a corridor along Tyler Creek that connects existing protected land and gets four miles of the North Country Trail off dangerous roads.

Private Sector Support for the National Trails System

Public-spirited partnerships between private citizens and public agencies have been a hallmark of the National Trails System since its inception. These partnerships create the enduring strength of the Trails System and the trail communities that sustain it by combining the local, grass-roots energy and responsiveness of volunteers with the responsible continuity of public agencies. **They also provide private financial support for public projects, often resulting in a greater than equal match of funds.**

The private trail organizations' commitment to the success of these trail-sustaining partnerships grows even as Congress' support for the trails has grown. In **2013 the trail organizations fostered 1,144,407 hours** of documented volunteer labor valued at **\$25,337,171** to help sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The organizations also raised **private sector contributions of \$11,151,247** for the trails.