



Partnership for the National Trails System

222 S. Hamilton #13 Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 249-7870

www.nationaltrailspartnership.org

Fax: (608) 257-3513

GARY WERNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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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 2016 through these appropriations:

- **National Park Service: \$16.073 million for administration of 23 trails** and for coordination of the long-distance trails program by the Washington office. **Construction: \$673,000 for the Ice Age Trail and \$200,000 for the Pacific Crest Trail.**
- **USDA Forest Service: \$7.996 million to administer 6 trails and \$1.3 million to manage parts of 16 trails** administered by the NPS or BLM. **\$700,000 for Iditarod Trail construction.**
- **Bureau of Land Management: \$1.83 million to administer three trails** and for coordination of the National Trails program and **\$7.14 million to manage 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, \$300,000 for the Iditarod Trail, and \$50,000 for the Nez Perce 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 **\$66,038,500 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund** for the acquisition of **48 tracts along six 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: \$13,916,500 million**
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$12,060,000 million**
- **US Forest Service: \$8,382,000 million**
- **National Park Service: \$31,680,000 million.**

National Park Service

The **\$16.073 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. Increases of **\$172,000** for the Park Service to implement the **New England Trail's Trail Management Blueprint** and **\$369,000** for the **Washington-Rochambeau Trail** are included.

We request an **increase of \$660,000** 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 \$879,000** 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 **\$1,020,000** 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 **\$554,000 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 **\$673,000** for the **Ice Age 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 FY16 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 **\$7.996 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 **\$1.3 million** specifically for these trails.

The Partnership's request of **\$7.996 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 **\$7.996 million** request also includes **\$2.1 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 **\$700,000** of **additional funding** for construction and **\$100,000** for maintenance of sections of the **Iditarod Trail**.

Bureau of Land Management

Although considerably more money is needed to fully administer the **National Conservation Lands System** and protect its resources, we request that you appropriate **\$69.809 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, \$1,000,000 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.** To maintain these trails we request: **Pacific Crest Trail - \$300,000, Iditarod Trail - \$300,000, Nez Perce Trail - \$50,000.** We also 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 FY15 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 FY16. 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 \$400 million from discretionary sources and \$500 million in mandatory funds for the component programs funded under LWCF. Within this amount we request that you appropriate **\$66,038,500** for the **National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning** proposal to acquire 48 parcels along 14 national scenic and historic trails detailed here:

Bureau of Land Management: \$13,916,500 million | 17 parcels | 16,779 acres

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (NM): \$2,300,000 to close the largest critical trail gap in New Mexico

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (MT): \$6,000,000 for trail, landscape, habitat and recreation protection along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (ID): \$3,100,000 for trail and resource conservation at one of the last remaining working ranches at Henry's Lake

Oregon National Historic Trail (ID): \$144,000 to acquire land for trail development along historic trail route

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (OR, CA): \$1,872,500 for trail and resource protection within the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon and in the Mojave Desert in Southern California

US Fish and Wildlife Service: \$12,060,000 million | 3 parcels | 3,763 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (PA): \$4,000,000 to connect conservation habitats along the Kittatinny Ridge

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

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (VA): \$5,560,000 to protect the Bower's Parcel that includes migratory wildlife habitat, priority wetlands, forest and uplands and a historical site

US Forest Service: \$8,382,000 million | 8 parcels | 3,024 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (NC): \$1,100,000 to complete the acquisition of the Grassy Ridge ecosystem

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

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (CA, WA): \$7,027,000 to provide critical scenic protection to the hiker experience, improve trail location and protect wildlife habitats, including Donner Summit in California

National Park Service: \$31,680,000 million | 20 parcels | 7,565 acres

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (HI): \$4,750,000 to protect endangered species, preserve 26 cultural sites and ensure undisturbed view sheds, soundscapes, and wilderness for users of the trail in an area with prehistoric lava flows

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (NY, MA): \$2,940,000 to extinguish the threat of imminent development, ensure connectivity of forested habitats and improve route away from threatened species

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

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CO, NM): \$5,608,000 to remove motorized use of the trail and restore habitat, to acquire the last unprotected portion of the trail in NM and to protect significant cultural sites

Ice Age National Scenic Trail (WI): \$3,930,000 to provide urban access to the trail in the city of St. Croix, protect critical view sheds, provide interpretative opportunities of unique geological-cultural features and close gaps in the trail

New England National Scenic Trail (CT, MA): \$1,875,000 to protect ecosystem, historic and cultural resources, in addition to, enhancing users recreational experience

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (OR): \$355,000 to provide a better interpretative site and visitor proximity to Clearwater Battlefield

North Country National Scenic Trail (MI, PA): \$2,892,000 to connect Moraine and McConnell's Mill State Parks in Pennsylvania and protect riparian habitats in Southern Michigan

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (TN): \$330,000 to protect the historically significant Shelving Rock Encampment site

Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (NY): \$3,000,000 to protect the Revolutionary War's single largest cemetery from destruction

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 2014 the trail organizations fostered 1,053,896 hours** of documented volunteer labor valued at **\$23,765,355** to help sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The organizations also raised **private sector contributions of \$11,228,029** for the trails.