



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: Subcommittee on Federal Lands Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on Federal Lands Staff: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov),
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Date: Monday, March 23, 2026
Subject: Legislative Hearing on 4 Bills

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a legislative hearing on four bills: H.R. 6778 (Rep. Beyer), “*Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act*”; H.R. 7618 (Rep. Kiggans), “*American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026*”; H.R. 7951 (Rep. Valadao), “*Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act*”; and H.R. 7979 (Rep. Crank), “*Public Lands Access Restoration Act*”.

The hearing will take place on **Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**, in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.

Member offices are requested to notify Will Rodriguez (Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Representative Kiggans’s “American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026” reauthorizes and strengthens the American Battlefield Protection Program in celebration of America’s 250th birthday, ensuring that our nation’s most hallowed sites are conserved for generations to come.
- Congressman Valadao’s “Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act” strengthens and enhances Good Neighbor Authority, an important, collaborative tool that allows non-federal partners to actively manage fire-prone forests and build new outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Representative Crank’s “Public Lands Access Restoration Act” restores a commonsense “open unless posted closed” approach to roads and trails managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, improving public access, transparency, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

II. WITNESSES

Panel I (Members of Congress):

- *To Be Announced*

Panel II (Administration Witnesses):

- **Ms. Ellen Shultzabarger**, Associate Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, D.C. [*H.R. 7951; H.R. 7979*]
- **Mr. Charles Cuvelier**, Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. [*All Bills*]

Panel III (Outside Experts):

- **Mr. David Duncan**, President and CEO, American Battlefield Trust, Fairfax, VA [*H.R. 7618*]
- **Mr. Shawn Thomas**, Forestry and Trust Land Division Administrator, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Helena, MT [*H.R. 7951*]
- **Mr. Chad Hixon**, Executive Director, Trails Preservation Alliance, Colorado Springs, CO [*H.R. 7979*]
- **The Honorable Jeffrey C. McKay**, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Fairfax, VA [*H.R. 6778*] [*Minority Witness*]

III. BACKGROUND

[H.R. 6778 \(Rep. Beyer\), “Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act”](#)

Across the country, National Park Service (NPS) roads and parkways were intentionally designed as scenic routes to enhance visitors’ experiences through “auto-touring.”¹ Today, more than 5,000 miles of paved roads traverse the National Park System.² Many of these parkways, particularly those near metropolitan areas, however, now function primarily as commuter routes.³ Such heavy daily traffic reflects commuter use that was not anticipated when many park roads were designed.⁴ In fact, NPS sites collectively support more than 171 million non-recreation visits annually, accounting for roughly 34 percent of all visits.⁵ These roadways experience additional strain from this high-volume use, accelerating wear on aging infrastructure and straining NPS’s stretched budget and deferred maintenance backlog. As a result, for infrastructure within NPS’s Federal Lands Transportation Program network, approximately 47 percent of roads are in poor to fair condition, 90 percent of parking areas require repair, and 50 bridges are classified as structurally deficient.⁶ This is particularly true in the Washington, D.C.,

¹ “Roads, Routes and Parkways,” National Park Service, 2026, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/transportation/roads.htm>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ “Federal Lands Transportation Program Accomplishments, Fiscal Year 2024,” National Park Service, April 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/transportation/upload/2024-NPS-FLTP-Annual-Accomplishments.pdf>.

⁶ *Id.*

metropolitan area, where the George Washington Memorial Parkway has an estimated deferred maintenance backlog of \$726 million.⁷

Speed safety cameras (SSC) are automated traffic enforcement systems that capture images of vehicles exceeding posted speed limits and issue citations without requiring an on-site traffic stop.⁸ First deployed in 1987, these systems are now used in 14 states across 137 jurisdictions.⁹ Automated speed enforcement has a proven record of improving road safety conditions, reducing injury-causing crashes in certain areas of the DMV region by 59 percent.¹⁰ These systems are particularly effective in high-traffic corridors, such as NPS parkways, where traditional enforcement may be difficult due to lane design and jurisdictional constraints.¹¹ H.R. 6778, the “Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act,” authorizes the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to use SSCs on NPS highways and retain citation revenues for maintaining such parkways and associated parking infrastructure. The legislation also authorizes the Secretary to enter into agreements for installing and operating these cameras and requires compliance with applicable state law. In doing so, this legislation creates a new revenue stream for NPS, improves the self-sufficiency of metropolitan parkways, forms pathways to reduce deferred maintenance backlogs, and ensures better motorist safety.

H.R. 7618 (Rep. Kiggans), “American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026”

America’s battlefields are hallowed sites, showcasing the sacrifices, struggles, defeats, and triumphs that shaped our country’s history. From the American Revolution to the Civil War, battlefield sites serve as outdoor classrooms that teach each generation about the conflicts that forged our great nation. Unfortunately, despite their rich histories, many of these hallowed grounds have been lost or destroyed over the centuries. Estimates suggest that “60 percent of the 243 significant battles of the Revolution and War of 1812 retain no ‘significant lands from the period of battle’” and “more than 20 percent of important Civil War battles are similarly destroyed forever.”¹² To prevent further loss of sacred battlefield sites, Congress created the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) in 1996.¹³ The ABPP provides grants in four categories (battlefield land acquisition, battlefield interpretation, battlefield restoration, and preservation planning) to protect sites related to the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Civil War. Since its inception, the ABPP has helped protect more than 100 battlefields in 42 states and protect battlefield lands at 110 battlefield sites in 19 states.

⁷ “Infrastructure Fact Sheet George Washington Memorial Parkway,” National Park Service, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/infrastructure/upload/George-Washington-Memorial-Parkway-Deferred-Maintenance-and-Repairs-Factsheet.pdf>.

⁸ Bevan Kirley, et al., “Counter Measures that Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices,” National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, November 1, 2023, <https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/72947>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ “Speed cameras reduce injury crashes in Maryland county, IIHS study shows,” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, October 1, 2015, <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/speed-cameras-reduce-injury-crashes-in-maryland-county-iihs-study-shows>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² “FAQs: Battlefield Preservation,” American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/about/faqs-battlefield-preservation#lost>.

¹³ “American Battlefield Protection Program: What We Do,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/2287/whatwedo.htm>.

In honor of America’s 250th birthday, Representative Jen Kiggans (R-VA-02) introduced H.R. 7618, the “American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026,” to reauthorize and improve the ABPP. First, the legislation extends the ABPP’s authorization from 2028 to 2036. Second, the bill consolidates separate authorizations for the Restoration and Interpretation Modernization Grant Programs into a single, unified authorization. This would provide greater flexibility to allocate resources based on need and project demand. Finally, the bill directs NPS to study sites and structures related to the French and Indian War and the Mexican-American War, two central conflicts from American history that are not currently included in the ABPP. This legislation will allow the ABPP to continue keeping American battlefields intact for generations to come, while positioning these landscapes to tell a more complete story of the nation’s military past—during and beyond the country’s Semiquincentennial year. By honoring our nation’s military history and protecting hallowed battlefields, this legislation directly advances the goals of President Trump’s Executive Order on “Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday.”¹⁴

H.R. 7951 (Rep. Valadao), “Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act”



The Jackknife Project in the Flathead National Forest, Montana, utilizes GNA.
Source: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, 2025.

Roughly 47 percent of Western lands are managed by the federal government, with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) operating as the primary managers.¹⁵ Western states, Tribes, and counties all have a significant stake in how federal lands are managed to improve forest health and prevent wildfires, which continue to threaten Western

communities. Originally started as a pilot project in Colorado, Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) was created by Congress in 2014 to allow non-federal partners to assist in active forest management and promote collaborative restoration work across multiple jurisdictions.¹⁶ Under GNA, states, Tribes, and counties can enter into agreements with USFS or BLM, known as Good Neighbor Agreements, to carry out hazardous fuels reduction treatments, improve wildlife habitat, and conduct certain road restoration activities.¹⁷ In 2025, the EXPLORE Act made several improvements to GNA and expanded it to encompass outdoor recreation projects.¹⁸

¹⁴ “Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday,” The White House, January 29, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/celebrating-americas-250th-birthday/>.

¹⁵ Quoctrung Bui & Margo Sanger-Katz, “Why the Government Owns So Much Land in the West”, The New York Times, January 5, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/06/upshot/why-the-government-owns-so-much-land-in-the-west.html#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20government%20owns,owned%20by%20the%20federal%20government.>

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Anne Riddle, “The Good Neighbor Authority on Federal Lands,” Congressional Research Service, January 11, 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11658>.

¹⁸ P.L. 118-234.

GNA has been an incredibly successful program; as of 2025, there are 540 active agreements across 39 states.¹⁹ Last year, nine Western state forestry agencies conducted “341 timber sales across 120,382 acres” of land under GNA agreements.²⁰ These sales produced 844,028 million board feet of timber, valued at approximately \$88 million.²¹

Behind these numbers are meaningful GNA projects that demonstrably improved forest health and reduced wildfire risks. In Montana, the Jackknife Project in the Flathead National Forest covered more than 2,000 acres and, using GNA, removed hazardous fuels to create firebreaks near vulnerable communities.²² In Arizona, the Poco Pino Fuels Reduction project on the Tonto National Forest significantly reduced hazardous fuels using GNA through a timber sale.²³ When the West Fire burned through this area in 2024, the fuels reduction work from that project helped moderate fire behavior and provided “more options” for firefighters to successfully suppress it.²⁴

Currently, BLM and USFS can enter into GNA agreements for up to 10 years.²⁵ H.R. 7951, the “Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act,” sponsored by Representative David Valadao (R-CA-22), would build on GNA’s successful track record by authorizing agreements of up to 20 years for both forest management and outdoor recreation projects. Extending the duration of these agreements will provide greater certainty for long-term forest management and restoration projects. Long-term agreements also encourage substantial investments in the infrastructure needed to truly accelerate the pace and scale of forest management. The extension follows the precedent of similar authorities, such as Stewardship Contracting, which allow for 20-year agreements.²⁶ This improvement to GNA will produce lasting progress on forest health, support job creation and economic growth in rural communities, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

H.R. 7979 (Rep. Crank), “Public Lands Access Restoration Act”

In 2024, the outdoor recreation economy generated \$1.3 trillion in economic impact and supported 5.2 million jobs across the country.²⁷ One of the largest contributors to that economy is motorized recreation, including motorcycling and ATVing, which generated approximately \$19 billion in gross economic output in 2024.²⁸ As public lands often provide the most affordable and accessible motorized outdoor recreation opportunities, improving access for

¹⁹ Information provided by U.S. Forest Service.

²⁰ “Western State Forestry Agencies, Good Neighbor Authority Activities and Accomplishments,” Council of Western State Foresters, October 2025, https://www.idl.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/11/2025_CWSF-GNA-Acomplishment-Report.pdf.

²¹ *Id.*

²² “Good Neighbor Authority,” Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, <https://dnrc.mt.gov/Forestry/Forest-Management/good-neighbor-authority>.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ “Good Neighbor & Stewardship Agreements,” U.S. Forest Service, March 3, 2026, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/working-with-us/partnerships/good-neighbor-stewardship-agreements>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ “Outdoor Recreation Drives The American Economy,” Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, <https://recreationroundtable.org/resources/national-recreation-data/>.

²⁸ “Outdoor Recreation Economic Statistics, U.S. and States, 2024,” Bureau of Economic Analysis, March 5, 2026, <https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2026-03/ores0326.pdf>.

motorized recreation users is critical to sustaining this vital sector of the outdoor recreation economy.

Historically, USFS and BLM managed roads and trails under an “open unless posted closed” policy, which “provided widespread access to roads and trails for . . . motorized use for access to hunting, angling and general recreation.”²⁹ In 2005, however, the USFS issued its Travel Management Rule, which reversed this policy and stated that “all roads were considered closed unless they were posted as being open.”³⁰ BLM has also transitioned to a similar framework through its resource management plan (RMP) and travel management plan (TMP) processes, which designate routes as open to motorized travel only on a unit-by-unit basis and only by affirmatively designating them.³¹ If an RMP or TMP inadvertently fails to identify a route, that route is presumed closed, allowing public access to be shut off due to simple clerical errors.³²

As a result of these policies, “there has been a significant decline in the number of roads and trails available” for motorized recreation since 2005.³³ Both agencies have closed popular trails and roads, with USFS alone decommissioning an average of 2,000 miles of road per year.³⁴ In Colorado, only 8 percent of the state’s 28,351 miles of trails



Off-highway vehicles in the San Rafael Swell in Utah, where BLM has closed 665 miles of trails to motorized recreation. **Source:** UTV Guide, 2024.

are currently open to motorcyclists, and nearly half of its public lands are restricted from motorized use.³⁵ Similarly, an estimated 1,500 miles of trails were closed in just a two-year period in Utah, “pushing a growing number of users onto an ever-shrinking number of trails.”³⁶ Responding to such developments, Congress passed a Congressional Review Act resolution in 2025 that reversed Biden-era restrictions on off-highway vehicles in Utah’s Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.³⁷

²⁹ “‘Open Unless Posted Closed’ Policy for Road and Trails on Public Lands,” Trails Preservation Alliance, https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_memo_open_unless_posted_closed_1.30.26.pdf.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Mark K. DeSantis, “Motorized Recreation on Federal Lands,” Congressional Research Service, May 29, 2024, <https://crs.gov/Reports/R48076>.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Healthy Forests Health Communities, “Forest roads and American infrastructure”, March 1, 2019, <https://healthyforests.org/2019/03/forest-roads-and-american-infrastructure/>.

³⁵ “‘Open Unless Posted Closed’ Policy for Road and Trails on Public Lands,” Trails Preservation Alliance, https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_memo_open_unless_posted_closed_1.30.26.pdf.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ P.L. 119-13.

The EXPLORE Act directed BLM and USFS to create additional opportunities for motorized recreation on public lands.³⁸ Building on this directive, H.R. 7979, the “Public Lands Access Restoration Act,” sponsored by Representative Jeff Crank (R-CO-05), establishes that roads and trails on federal land are presumed to be open to motorized use unless explicitly restricted by BLM or USFS. The legislation also requires closures to be justified by “clear and convincing evidence,” to be clearly marked and reflected on official maps, and to be periodically reviewed to prevent outdated or unnecessary restrictions from remaining in place indefinitely. These changes align with measures outlined in Secretary Doug Burgum’s Secretarial Order 3447, which establishes that “public and federally managed lands should be open to hunting and fishing unless a specific, documented, and legally supported exception applies.”³⁹ This “open unless posted closed” policy represents a commonsense approach for restoring and enhancing public access to federal lands, creating transparency and accountability among federal land managers, and supporting the growing outdoor recreation economy.

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & SECTION-BY-SECTION

H.R. 6778 (Rep. Beyer), “Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act”

Section 2. Speed Safety Cameras in the National Park System.

- Authorizes the Secretary to issue a citation, and potentially a civil penalty, if a vehicle is recorded breaking a traffic regulation on a highway within the National Park System.
- Allows the Secretary to collect and expend revenues obtained through traffic citations for the construction and maintenance of NPS highways and parking facilities, as well as for the installation, repair, and maintenance of SSCs.
- Authorizes the Secretary to enter into agreements for the installation, repair, maintenance, and replacement of SSCs.
- Clarifies that the Secretary must use SSCs in accordance with state law.

H.R. 7618 (Rep. Kiggans), “American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026”

Section 2. American Battlefield Protection Program Grant Programs.

- Reauthorizes the Battlefield Acquisition Grant Program through 2036.
- Raises the maximum federal cost-share of a project funded under the Battlefield Interpretation Modernization and Battlefield Restoration Grant Programs from 50 percent to 75 percent.
- Strikes a requirement that restoration work follow certain historic preservation regulations.
- Reauthorizes the Battlefield Restoration Grant Program at \$2 million annually through 2036.

Section 3. French and Indian War and Mexican-American War Sites Studies.

³⁸ “‘Open Unless Posted Closed’ Policy for Road and Trails on Public Lands,” Trails Preservation Alliance, https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_memo_open_unless_posted_closed_1.30.26.pdf.

³⁹ *Id.*

- Directs the Secretary to conduct studies of sites and structures that are thematically tied to nationally significant events that occurred during the French and Indian War from 1754-1763 and the Mexican-American War from 1846-1848.
- Requires these studies to identify significant sites throughout the U.S., determine their relative significance, assess short- and long-term threats to the integrity of the sites, and provide alternatives for the protection and interpretation of such sites.
- Allows the Secretary to include relevant information from previous reports or studies.
- Requires the Secretary to consult with States, Tribes, local governments, the American Battlefield Trust, other historic preservation organizations, and other interested entities.
- Requires the Secretary to submit a report to Congress detailing the results of the studies two years after funding is made available to conduct the studies.

H.R. 7951 (Rep. Valadao), “Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act”

Section 2. Good Neighbor Authority.

- Amends the Agricultural Act of 2014 to authorize the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior (Secretaries) to enter into a GNA agreement with a state, Tribe, or county for up to 20 years for forest management projects.⁴⁰
- Makes technical and conforming changes throughout the Agricultural Act of 2014.
- Amends the EXPLORE Act to authorize the Secretaries to enter into a GNA agreement with a state, Tribe, or county for up to 20 years for outdoor recreation projects.⁴¹

H.R. 7979 (Rep. Crank), “Public Lands Access Restoration Act”

Section 2. Restoration of Historic Access Policy.

- Mandates that, within 180 days of the bill’s enactment, the policy for BLM and USFS shall be that roads and trails are presumed to be open to motorized use unless BLM or USFS determines restrictions are necessary.
- Requires BLM and USFS to update and revise regulations to reflect this policy.
- Specifies that USFS and BLM may close a road or trail only when:
 - a need for restriction is identified based on clear and convincing evidence for resource protection or public safety; and
 - the restriction is clearly indicated with signage, depicted on official maps, subject to public notice in the Federal Register and a 30-day public comment period, reviewed by BLM or USFS at least once every 5 years, and applied to the smallest area practicable for the shortest amount of time.

Section 3. Public Nomination of Trails.

- Directs BLM and USFS to accept and consider public proposals for additions to designated motorized road and trail networks.
- Allows the proposals to suggest the designation of new roads or trails, the repurposing or conversion of existing roads or trails, or the inclusion of roads and trails not previously identified in agency travel plans.

⁴⁰ 16 U.S.C. 2113a(a).

⁴¹ 16 U.S.C. 8571(b)(1).

- Requires BLM and USFS to prioritize proposals that improve connectivity within existing networks; protect natural resources; enhance access for fuels reduction, wildfire response, or other land management activities; or provide additional or enhanced opportunities for motorized recreation.
- Requires expeditious review of proposals within 90 days after the date of submission.

Section 4. Rule of Construction.

- Clarifies that nothing in the legislation shall be construed to restrict or otherwise limit public access or other uses.

V. COST

A formal cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is not yet available for any of the bills.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION

The Trump administration's position on these bills is unknown at this time.

VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW

[H.R. 7618](#)

[H.R. 7951](#)