



February 28, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray  
 United States Senate  
 154 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

***Subject: Fiscal Year 2019 Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative Appropriation***

Dear Senator Murray,

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Forest Service's Legacy Roads and Trails program. This unique job-producing bi-partisan program has led to definitive improvements in our watersheds that support clean and safe drinking water, wildlife and fish habitat and recreation opportunities. Over the last decade, on national forest lands in Washington State, Legacy Roads and Trails funding produced measurable results:

- **Maintained and/or storm-proofed 2,279 miles of needed roads**, helping Washingtonians get where they wish to go on Forest Service lands;
- **Reclaimed 299 miles of unneeded roads**, preventing sediment from entering streams, many of which supply drinking water to rural and urban towns and cities;
- **Restored fish passage at 48 stream crossings**, boosting opportunity for Washington's \$1.1B sportfishing industry and advancing salmon restoration goals; and
- **Improved 105 miles of trails**, keeping the \$535M National Forest recreation industry going strong.

Moreover, Legacy Roads and Trails also created or maintained **330-528 jobs annually** across the nation, bringing dollars and jobs into rural communities, and **saved America's taxpayers \$3 million per year** in road maintenance costs.

That said, we still have a long, long way to go. With road maintenance budgets at just **16%** of what they were in 1990, and the President's Budget proposing even more cuts for FY19, the Forest Service is continually beset by infrastructure problems. Every year, storms damage more roads and compound the problem and the costs. Over the last 10 years, the limited funding has addressed less than 1% of the need. **Which is why we are writing to express our strong support for continued funding in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill at \$50M for Legacy Roads and Trails.**

In Washington alone, the Forest Service maintains **21,561 miles** of roads – which is enough to drive from Seattle to D.C. eight times! Only 67% of these are technically “open” for public access, and many of those “open” roads are actually inaccessible due to lack of maintenance, landslides, sinkholes, potholes, large gullies, broken culverts and bridges and storm damage.

The Forest Service also maintains **9,167 miles of trails** in Washington – which is enough to hike from Seattle to D.C. more than three times! Many of these trails are also falling apart, risking public safety. And there are still over **990 barriers to fish passage** (i.e. undersized or broken culverts) on national forest lands.

The Legacy Roads and Trails program aims to adapt the road system to a more manageable size over time, reducing fiscal and environmental burdens and enabling the Forest Service to ensure better and more reliable access. It's a simple solution to a formidable problem. But it needs funding to succeed. We ask for your continued support of the program by including **\$50M in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill**. Continued funding for Legacy Roads and Trails will go a long way toward allowing people to access and experience the opportunities of our public lands.

#### **FY2019 Funding Request**

- **FUNDING PROGRAM:** U.S. Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program (internal Forest Service funding code: "CMLG")
- **SUBCOMMITTEE JURISDICTION:** Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
- **FY19 REQUEST:** \$50 million
- **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** Since its authorization in FY 2008, the Legacy Roads and Trails program has significantly enhanced the Forest Service's ability to address key problems associated with its aging and poorly maintained road system. This includes repairing roads and trails needed for public access, replacing failed or undersized culverts to improve aquatic passage and retire unneeded roads to prevent sediment pollution from entering waterways important for salmon, trout, and other aquatic species. The program delivers funds to address road problems in real time, which enables the Forest Service to efficiently plan, design, and implement restoration treatments. It is a critical tool for leveraging non-federal funds resulting in stronger projects and enhanced community engagement. And because funds primarily go to actual work on the ground, Legacy Roads and Trails creates high wage jobs for contractors, including those who specialize in stream restoration, environmental design, and heavy equipment operation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Marlies Wierenga  
Pacific Northwest Conservation Manager  
WildEarth Guardians

Tom Uniack  
Executive Director  
Washington Wild

Andrea Imler  
Advocacy Director  
Washington Trails Association

Tom Hammond  
President  
North Cascades Conservation Council

Katherine Hollis  
Conservation and Advocacy Director  
The Mountaineers

Mike Petersen  
Executive Director  
The Lands Council

Nina Bell, J.D.  
Executive Director  
Northwest Environmental Advocates

Mike Anderson  
Senior Policy Analyst  
The Wilderness Society

Susan Jane M. Brown  
Staff Attorney  
Western Environmental Law Center

Mark Riskedahl  
Executive Director  
Northwest Environmental Defense Center

Rebecca Wolfe  
Member, National Forest Committee  
Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club

Dave Wertz  
Science and Conservation Director  
Conservation Northwest

Pam Borso  
President  
North Cascades Audubon

Peter Bahls  
Executive Director  
Northwest Watershed Institute

Yvonne Kraus  
Executive Director  
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Karl Forsgaard  
President  
Alpine Lakes Protection Society

Jon Hoekstra  
Executive Director  
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Andrea Matzke  
President  
Wild Washington Rivers

Allen Gibbs  
Conservation Chair  
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Joseph Bogaard  
Executive Director  
Save Our Wild Salmon

Gus Bekker  
President  
El Sendero Backcountry Ski & Snowboarding Club

Greg Haller  
Conservation Director  
Pacific Rivers

Ann Darlington  
BOD President  
The Friends of Heybrook Ridge

Wendy McDermott  
Director, Rivers of Puget Sound & Columbia Basin  
American Rivers

Donna Osseward  
President  
Olympic Park Associates

Mark Boyar  
President  
MidFORC Coalition

Maggie Coon  
Board Chair  
Methow Valley Citizens Council

Chuck Chesire  
President  
Vancouver Wildlife League

Mike Davis  
President  
Mt. Baker Club

Rich Simms  
Founder/Board Member  
Wild Steelhead Coalition

Timothy Manns  
Conservation Chair  
Skagit Audubon Society

Eric Brown  
Trail Director  
Whatcom Mountain Bike Alliance

Thomas O'Keefe  
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director  
American Whitewater

Tierra Curry  
Senior Scientist  
Center for Biological Diversity

John McGlenn  
President  
Washington Wildlife Federation

Connie Gallant  
President  
Olympic Forest Coalition

Anna Kramer  
Policy Coordinator and Grants Manager  
American Alpine Club

Nicole Budine  
Policy and Campaign Manager  
Cascade Forest Conservancy

Mark Sherwood  
Executive Director  
Native Fish Society

Josh Laughlin  
Executive Director  
Cascadia Wildlands