

The U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Members of the Committee:

The undersigned recreation groups and businesses strongly urge you to include the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the *Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act* (H.R. 1225).

Outdoor recreation accounts for 2.2 percent of United States Gross Domestic Product, supports 4.5 million American jobs, and contributes \$734 billion in economic output, surpassing other sectors such as agriculture, petroleum, coal, and computer and electronic products.

While the National Park Service accounts for the largest share of the approximately \$19 billion maintenance backlog on the nation's federally managed lands and waters, the USFS holds the next largest share – approximately \$5.2 billion – and continues to face mounting deferred maintenance needs. As you know, deferred maintenance compounds with cyclical maintenance, negatively impacting outdoor recreational pursuits and the associated economic benefits such activities bring to rural communities. In the wake of the worst extended fire season in U.S. history, it's imperative that Congress addresses the agency's \$5.2 billion maintenance backlog to ensure that the USFS is able to meet both current demand and to keep up with the increasing desire of Americans to pursue outdoor recreation opportunities on USFS lands.

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 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.

The longer Congress allows the deferred maintenance needs of the U.S. Forest Service to mount, the longer and more expensive it will ultimately be to address them. Our nation's forests, grasslands, and the communities that rely on them need Congress' help so they can maximize recreational and conservation opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration and swift passage of this bill through committee. We look forward to working with you to achieving a historic and important step forward for places all Americans cherish.

Sincerely,

Access Fund
Alaska State Parks
America Outdoors Association
American Endurance Ride Conference
American Hiking Society
American Horse Council
American Motorcyclist Association
American Sportfishing Association
American Trails
American Whitewater
Angler's Covey, Inc.
Anza Area Trail Town
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Archery Trade Association
Arizona Natural History Association
Arizona Trail Association
Association of Marina Industries
Back Country Horsemen of America
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Bike Walk Montana
Boat Owners Association of the United States
Canyonlands Natural History Association
Cape Horn Conservancy
CHM Government Services
Corazón Latino
Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association
Dan River Basin Association
Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association
Enchanted Circle Trails Association
Four Corners Back Country Horsemen
Friends of Mount Rogers
Ice Age Trail Alliance
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Mahoosuc Pathways
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Monmouth County Park System
Motorcycle Industry Council
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
National Association for Interpretation
National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds
National Forest Recreation Association

National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wildlife Federation
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
North Country Trail Association
Oregon Equestrian Trails
Outdoor Alliance
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Partnership for the National Trails System
Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society
Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Public Lands Alliance
Public Lands Interpretive Association
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
Rocky Mountain Field Institute
RV Dealers Association
RV Industry Association
San Juan Back Country Horsemen
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition
Southern California Mountains Foundation
Specialty Equipment Market Association
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association
Tahoe Rim Trail Association
Tahoe-Pyramid Trail
The Biggest Little Trail Stewardship, Inc.
The Corps Network
The Mountaineers
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trails and Open Space Coalition
Tread Lightly!
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
Washington Trails Association
Wild Arizona
Wyoming Pathways