

Maintenance of Non-Motorized Trails on National Forests in Idaho: Funding Background and Opportunities for State Assistance

by

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ABSTRACT

National forests in Idaho, managed by the USDA Forest Service (USFS) contain about 10,000 miles of non-motorized trails. Data are not readily available on the amount of trail maintenance conducted annually on only non-motorized trails; therefore, all trail maintenance—both motorized and non-motorized—is reported. Although Idaho's national forests saw increasing amounts of trail maintenance over the last decade due in part to increased funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (i.e., the stimulus bill), the proportion of Idaho's national forest trails that met National Quality Standards was steady over the last decade, averaging 30%.

Funding for national forest trail maintenance comes from a variety of sources, including federal appropriations, donated services from volunteers and partnering organizations, and state funding. Federal appropriations for the USFS Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) in Idaho's national forests were \$4.6 million in FY 2007, \$5.9 million in FY 2011, and \$4.8 million in FY 2015 (inflation-adjusted 2015 dollars). In FY 2016, almost 66,000 hours of trail maintenance valued at over \$1.5 million dollars were contributed by volunteers and cooperators on Idaho's national forests.

Sources of state funding available to support non-motorized trail maintenance in Idaho include the Recreational Trails Program, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's (IDPR) Non-Motorized Trails Program, three motor vehicle specialty license plates, and IDPR's winter recreational parking permit. Although it is a federally-funded program, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is included as a source of state funding because the state decides which trail projects to fund. In Idaho, IDPR is responsible for administering RTP and its funding. Federal RTP funding for Idaho averaged about \$1.5 million per year over the last decade. We estimated that between FY 2009 and FY 2017, IDPR awarded an average of \$405,653 annually (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars) directly to national forests in Idaho for trail maintenance activities on both motorized and non-motorized trails. Another \$372,890 was awarded annually to other organizations that could have contributed to trail maintenance on national forests in Idaho.

Without additional funding for maintenance through existing or new dedicated sources, non-motorized trail opportunities on Idaho's national forests are likely to decline. Funding mechanisms used by other states to fund general outdoor recreation programs included user fees, motor fuel tax allocation, excise or sales taxes on equipment, lottery proceeds, income tax form checkoffs, and real estate transfer taxes. In many of these cases state funding can only be used on state lands and is not directly transferable to assistance on federal lands. However, elements of these state systems have potential for adoption to assist with non-motorized trail maintenance on Idaho's national forests.

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Issue Briefs are timely summaries of research relevant to current natural resource topics.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of Idaho has a statutory commitment to non-motorized trails in Idaho, regardless of whether those trails are on federal, state, or private lands (Idaho Code § 67-4232 et seq.). In March 2016, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) approached the Policy Analysis Group (PAG) about the department's concern with the amount of deferred maintenance for non-motorized trails on national forest lands in Idaho. IDPR proposed that the PAG gather and analyze information about funding levels over time, deferred maintenance backlog, and alternative funding mechanisms available to states to address trail maintenance concerns on national forest lands.

National forests in Idaho, managed by the USDA Forest Service (USFS) contain about 10,000 miles of non-motorized trails. Data are not readily available on the amount of trail maintenance conducted annually on only non-motorized trails; therefore, all trail maintenance—both motorized and non-motorized—is reported. Idaho's national forests saw increasing amounts of trail maintenance and improvement over the last decade due in part to increased funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (i.e., the stimulus bill). Total miles of trail *maintained* to standard annually increased from 2,897 miles in FY 2006 to 8,608 miles in FY 2016. Total miles of trail *improved* to standard annually increased from a low point of 62 miles in FY 2009 to 312 in FY 2016. Although the annual amount of trail maintenance and improvement increased, the proportion of Idaho's national forest trails that met National Quality Standards was steady over the last decade, averaging 30%. This is due in part to the results of trail maintenance being short-lived; for example, cleared vegetation grows back within a few years.

Funding for national forest trail maintenance comes from a variety of sources, including federal appropriations, donated services from volunteers and partnering organizations, and in some cases, state funding. The largest funding source is the Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) appropriation to the USFS. Total appropriations for CMTL in Idaho's national forests were \$4.6 million in FY 2007, \$5.9 million in FY 2011, and \$4.8 million in FY 2015 (inflation-adjusted 2015 dollars). In FY 2016, almost 66,000 hours of trail maintenance and improvement valued at over \$1.5 million dollars were contributed by volunteers and cooperators on Idaho's national forests.

Sources of state funding available to support non-motorized trail maintenance in Idaho include the Recreational Trails Program, IDPR's Non-Motorized Trails Program, three motor vehicle specialty license plates (mountain biking, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness), and IDPR's winter recreational parking permit. Although it is a federally-funded program, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is included as a source of state funding because the state decides which trail projects to fund. In Idaho, IDPR is responsible for administering RTP and its funding. Federal RTP funding for Idaho has averaged about \$1.5 million (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars) per year over the last decade. We estimated that between FY 2009 and FY 2017, IDPR awarded an average of \$405,653 (27%) annually directly to national forests in Idaho for trail maintenance activities on both motorized and non-motorized trails. Another \$372,890 (24%) was awarded annually to other organizations that could have contributed to trail maintenance on national forests in Idaho.

Idaho's Non-Motorized Trails Program consists of the Idaho Recreation Trails Coordinator within IDPR who advises the Parks and Recreation Board and other state agencies about Idaho's non-motorized trails system. The program is funded by the state's General Fund at about \$50,000 annually. IDPR administers both the Idaho Mountain Bike License Plate Fund and the Sawtooth License Plate Fund that receive about \$22,000 and \$40,000 annually, respectively, from motor vehicle license plate fees. The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation receives about \$16,000 annually from Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness license plate fees. The winter recreational parking permit required at 17 Park N' Ski locations around the state produces about \$80,000 of revenue annually and is used to maintain trails for cross country skiers and snowshoers.

Without additional funding for maintenance through existing or new dedicated sources, non-motorized trail opportunities on Idaho's national forests are likely to decline. Opportunities to increase state support for non-motorized trail maintenance on national forests under existing programs include, increasing the proportion of RTP funding used for maintenance, increasing General Fund support for the Non-Motorized Trails Program, and encouraging the purchase of specialty license plates and winter recreational parking permits. Numerous states use, or have proposed using, a variety of funding mechanisms for providing general outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly recreation related to wildlife. Funding mechanisms used by other states include user fees, motor fuel tax allocation, excise or sales taxes on equipment, lottery proceeds, income tax form checkoffs, and real estate transfer taxes. In many of these cases state funding can only be used on state lands and not directly transferable to assistance on federal lands. However, elements of these state systems have potential for adoption to assist with non-motorized trail maintenance on Idaho's national forests.

INTRODUCTION

The state of Idaho has a statutory commitment to non-motorized trails in Idaho, regardless of whether those trails are on federal, state, or private lands (Idaho § 67-4232 et seq.). Idaho's Non-Motorized Trails Program was established in 1974. Statute authorizes a Trails Coordinator within Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) to advise the Park and Recreation Board and other state agencies on matters relating to the non-motorized trail system in Idaho. IDPR also administers the Recreational Trails Program that funds a portion of trail maintenance on national forests in Idaho.

In March 2016, IDPR approached the Policy Analysis Group (PAG) about the department's concern with the amount of deferred maintenance for non-motorized trails on national forest lands in Idaho. Deferred maintenance can result in loss of recreational opportunities and access, as well as erosion, noxious weeds, and other resource problems. IDPR proposed that the PAG gather and analyze information about funding levels over time, deferred maintenance backlog, and alternative funding mechanisms available to neighboring states that could address trail maintenance on national forest lands. Additionally, there was concern about the accuracy of existing trail data and the lack of systematic information to guide decisions about funding and maintenance priorities.

This report provides background on the national forest trail system and the role of state cooperation and financial assistance. This report also examines enhancements under Idaho's current system of support and examines options currently used in other states with an eye towards their applicability in Idaho. Observations are provided on the state of maintenance backlog, funding trends, and database functionality.

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE NATIONAL FOREST TRAIL SYSTEM IN IDAHO?

National Forest Trail Basics

The USDA Forest Service (USFS) categorizes trails by type, class, and managed use (Forest Service Handbook FSH 2309.18).¹ Trail type reflects the predominant trail surface: *Standard Terra* trails have a surface consisting predominantly of earth; *Snow* trails have a surface consisting predominantly of snow or ice; and *Water* trails have a surface consisting predominantly of water. Most national forest trails are Terra trails, and in some cases, a trail may be classified as a Terra trail in summer and a Snow trail in winter.

Trail class reflects the prescribed scale of development for a trail ranging from minimally developed to fully developed (see **Appendix A, Table A-1** for details). National forest trails also are assigned at least one managed use that reflects the mode(s) of travel appropriate on a trail (see **Appendix A, Table A-2** for details). Trail management objectives documenting each trail's intended purpose and how it is to be managed are applied based on type, class, use, and related design parameters. National forest trails are to be maintained to National Quality Standards that describe conditions trail users can expect to encounter (see **Appendix A, Table A-3** for details).

National forest trails can be further categorized by their managed uses into *motorized* and *non-motorized* (see **Appendix A, Table A-2**). Motorized managed uses of Standard Terra trails include motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, and 4-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle. Motorized managed use of Snow trails includes snowmobiles, and motorized managed use of Water trails includes motorized watercraft. Non-motorized managed uses for Standard Terra trails include hiker/pedestrian, bicycle, and pack and saddle. Non-motorized managed uses of Snow trails include cross-country ski and snowshoe, and non-motorized managed use of Water trails includes non-motorized watercraft.

The location of a trail either inside a federally designated Wilderness or outside Wilderness also affects its potential managed uses. Motorized uses are prohibited inside designated Wilderness areas by the federal Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S. Code § 1131-1136), and mechanical transport, including bicycles, is prohibited inside Wilderness areas by regulation (36 C.F.R. § 293.6).

¹ All USFS directives are available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>.

Trail Mileage

National forests in Idaho contain about 10,000 miles of non-motorized trails (**Figure 1**). Of those, about one-third are in Wilderness and two-thirds are in General Forest Areas outside Wilderness (USFS; see **Appendix B**).

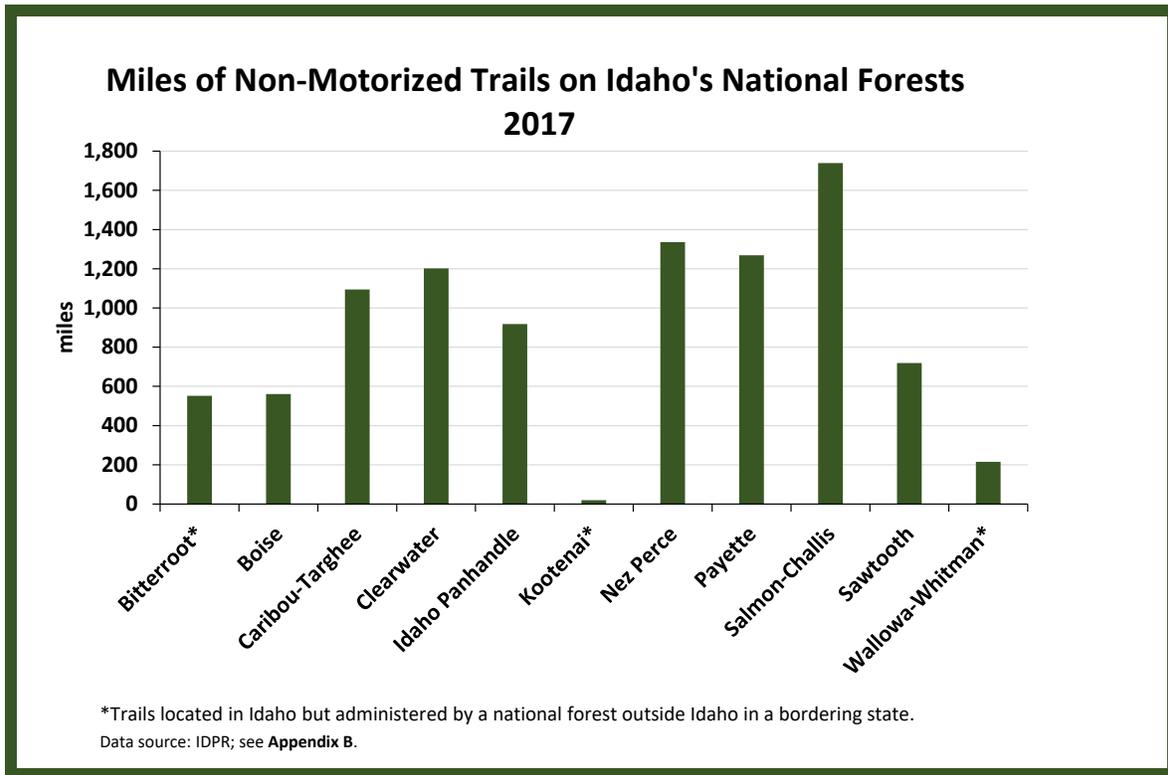


Figure 1. Miles of Non-Motorized Trails on Idaho's National Forests, 2017.

HOW WELL ARE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAILS MAINTAINED IN IDAHO?

Maintenance Accomplishments

Trails programs on national forests are delivered through two activities: “maintenance” and “improvement.”²

- **Maintenance** activities include the actions necessary to preserve or restore a trail to its originally intended condition to provide acceptable service and achieve the expected trail lifespan. Work includes clearing encroaching vegetation and fallen trees and the repair, preventive maintenance, and replacement of trail signs, tread and surfacing, water drainage, trail bridges, and other trail structures. Trail maintenance also provides trail accessibility and promotes ecosystem health by protecting soil, vegetation, and water quality.
- **Improvement** activities provide for the planning and design, new construction, alteration and expansion of system trails, trail bridges, and trail structures, such as barriers, culverts, fencing, and wildlife viewing platforms.

Trail *maintenance* activities are reported annually as “miles of trails maintained to standard.” Trail *improvement* activities are reported as “miles of trails improved to standard.” Overall trail conditions are reported as “percentage of trails meeting National Quality Standards.” These metrics are only available from the USFS for *all* trail maintenance and improvement, i.e., it is not possible to identify maintenance and improvement of only non-motorized trails.

Idaho's national forests saw increasing amounts of trail maintenance and improvement over the last decade (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**). Total miles of trail maintained to standard annually increased from 2,897 miles in FY 2006 to 8,608 miles in FY 2016. Total miles of trail improved to standard annually increased from a low point of 62 miles in FY 2009 to 312 in FY 2016. Much of the increase in FY 2011-2013 was due to increased funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5; i.e., the stimulus bill).

² As defined by Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board Accounting Standards No. 6. (GPO # 041-001-00642-9), <http://www.fasab.gov/pdffiles/sffas-6.pdf>.

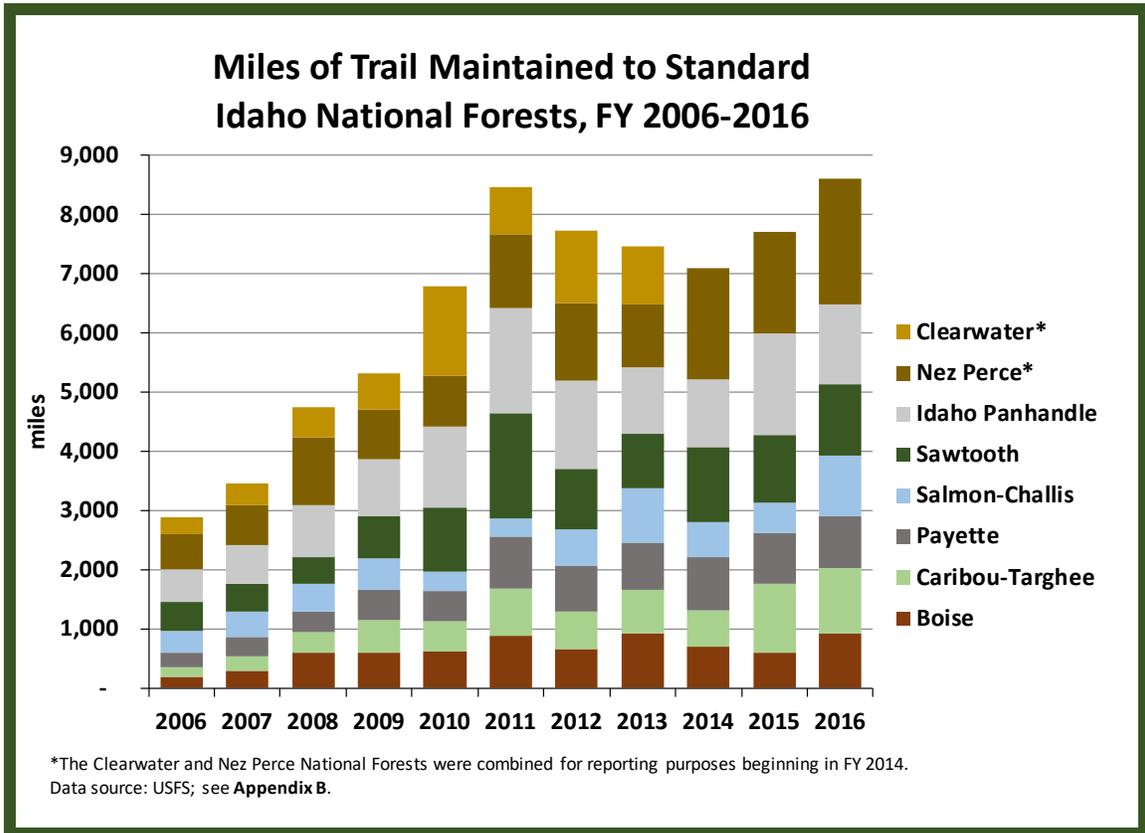


Figure 2. Miles of Trail Maintained to Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2006-2016.

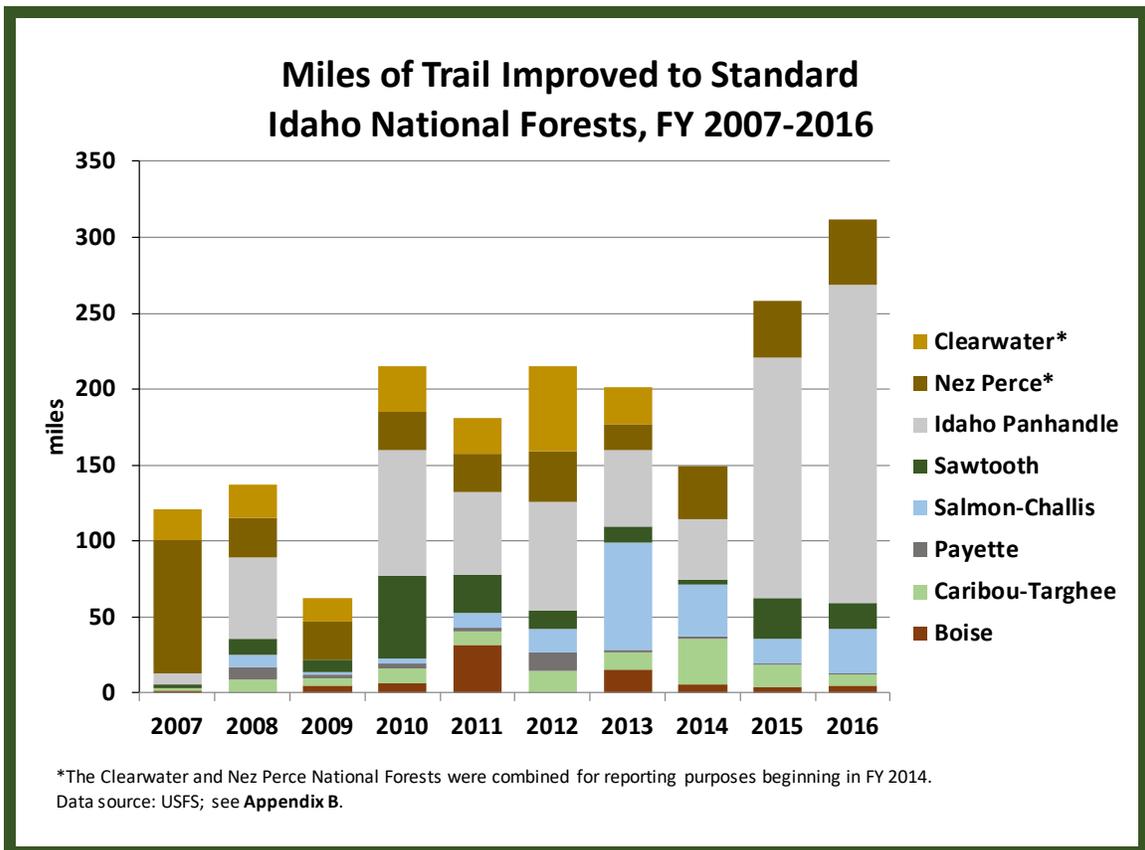


Figure 3. Miles of Trail Improved to Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2007-2016.

Although miles of trails maintained and improved annually have increased, the proportion of Idaho’s national forest trails that meet National Quality Standards has remained steady over the last decade, averaging 30% (6,693 miles), with a low of 25% in FY 2015 and a high of 36% in FY 2010 (**Figure 4**). The Boise, Payette, Sawtooth, and Clearwater-Nez Perce National Forests have had the highest proportions of trails meeting National Quality Standards, while the Caribou-Targhee, Salmon-Challis, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests have had the lowest (see **Appendix B** for data).

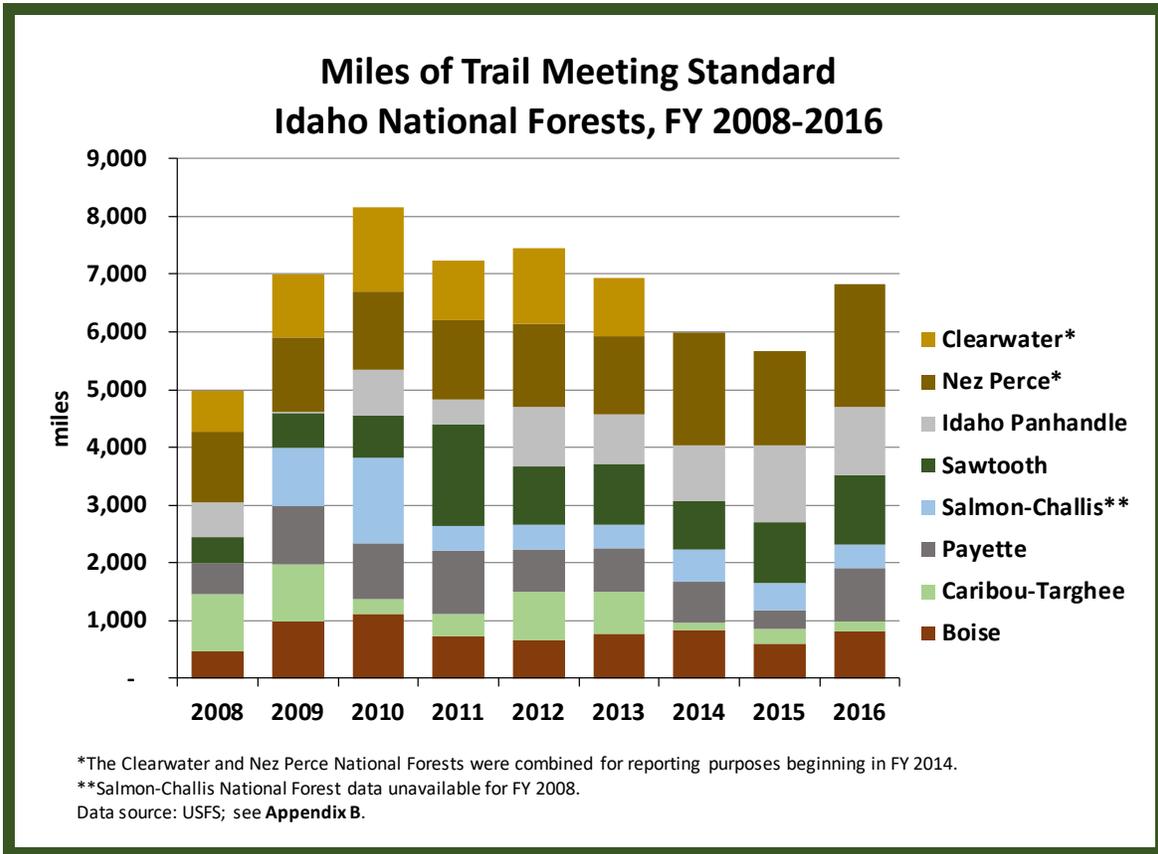


Figure 4. Miles of Trail Meeting Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2008-2016.

The moderate percentage of trails that meet standard each year is a function of several factors. In part, trail maintenance is a short term proposition by design. Trails in less developed trail classes, which make up most of Idaho’s non-motorized trails, are natural in character and likely to require frequent maintenance. For example, overgrown vegetation that is trimmed from a trail right-of-way one year is likely to grow back within a few years. In addition, many trails in Idaho have been affected by wildfires that kill trees that then fall onto trails creating maintenance needs. Workforce funding is also a factor as seasonal crews are no longer employed in the numbers they were in the past.³

Deferred Maintenance Costs

The PAG was unable to obtain estimates for deferred maintenance costs isolated to trails only on Idaho’s national forests. Estimates of deferred maintenance for all national forest trails nationwide are reported in USFS annual budget justification documents.⁴ Between FY 2007 and FY 2015, annual deferred maintenance, adjusted for inflation, varied from a low of \$267 million in FY 2007 to a high of \$337 million in FY 2009, before declining to \$289 million in FY 2015 (**Figure 5**). However, a U.S. Government Accountability Office report (GAO 2013) cautioned that these estimates may understate the scale of the USFS maintenance needs because they were based on trail condition surveys conducted on a random sample of approximately one percent of the agency’s trail miles each year.

³ Personal communication, Andy Brunelle, USFS, review comments, 21 July 2017.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/budget-performance>.

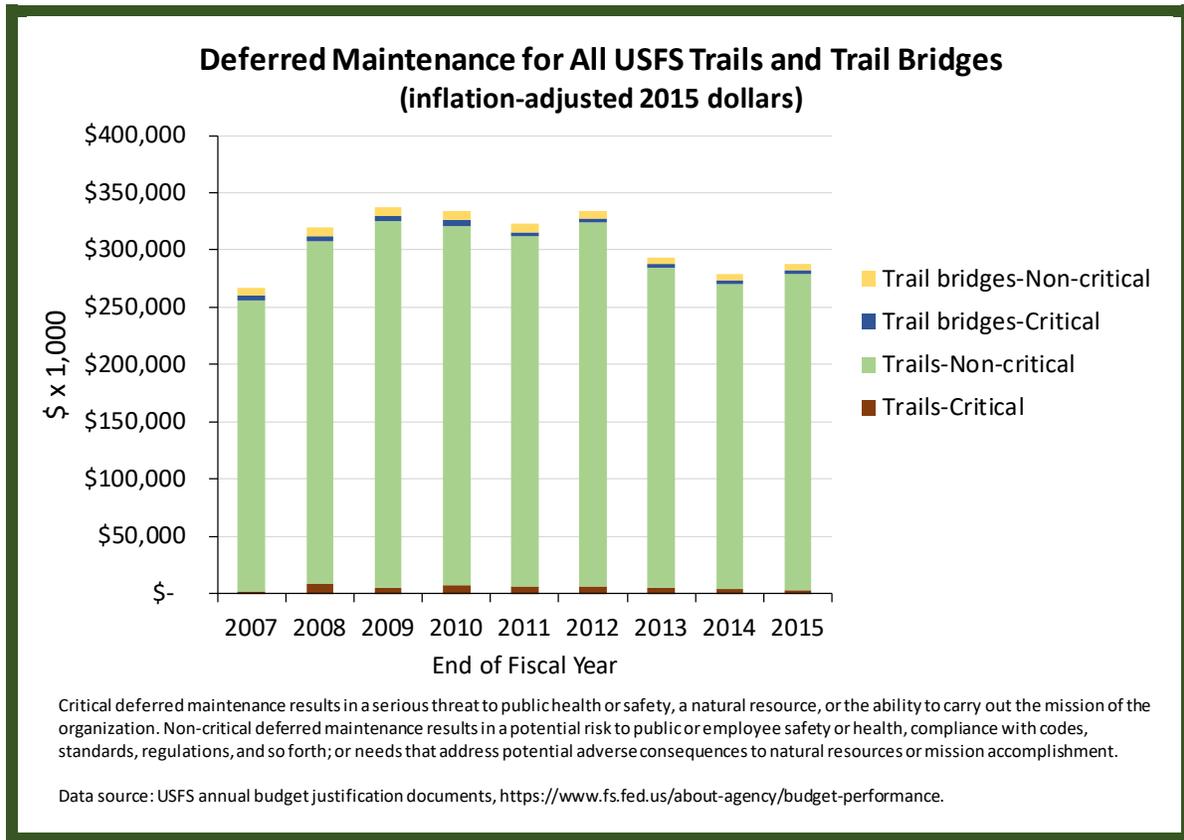


Figure 5. Deferred Maintenance for USFS Trails and Bridges Nationwide, FY 2007-2015.

Effects of Lack of Maintenance

Lack of trail maintenance can have a range of negative effects, including inhibiting trail use, posing potential safety hazards, harming natural resources, and adding to agency costs (GAO 2013). This report does not attempt to quantify these effects, though data were examined on the effect of trail maintenance on visitor use. The USFS National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program collects and reports information on visitation and visitor experiences on national forests.⁵ Visitor surveys are conducted on each national forest every five years. Each national forest in Idaho has been surveyed and results reported twice between FY 2005 and FY 2014. NVUM cumulatively reports results for all national forests in Idaho for FY 2010 through FY 2014.

Several NVUM measures may reflect how trail maintenance, or changes in the percentage of trails maintained, affects visitor experiences. First, the number of visits to Wilderness and to General Forest Areas may be an indicator of quality of trail maintenance; i.e., less maintained trails may decrease visitation. Between FY 2010 and FY 2014 NVUM estimated visits to Wilderness on all national forests in Idaho decreased from about 178,000 to 152,000 (-14%) while visits to General Forest Areas on all national forests in Idaho decreased from 4.7 million to 3.6 million (-24%). However, numerous factors may have contributed to decreases in visitation, including general economic conditions, wildfires, weather, and sampling and measurement errors. Over the same time period, average satisfaction with trail conditions went up from 4.3 to 4.4 for Wilderness visitors and 4.4 to 4.5 for General Forest Area visitors (1=very dissatisfied to 5=very satisfied). Participation in some non-motorized trail activities went up (hiking, bicycling, backpacking) while others went down (cross country skiing, horseback riding, other non-motorized activities). Total visitation decreased, but satisfaction increased. No clear picture of whether trail maintenance issues are affecting visitation or visitor experiences on national forests in Idaho emerges from analysis of the NVUM data.

⁵ See <https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>.

HOW IS NATIONAL FOREST TRAIL MAINTENANCE FUNDED?

A variety of funding sources are used for national forest trail maintenance activities, including federal funding, donated services from volunteers and partnering organizations, and in some cases, state funding (see **Sidebar 1**).

Sidebar 1. FY 2016 Sources of Trail Maintenance Funding on Idaho’s National Forests.

A variety of funding sources are used to accomplish trail maintenance on Idaho’s national forests. Over 8,600 miles of trail maintenance work occurred on Idaho’s national forests in FY 2016. Fifteen different sources of funding accounted for the work. About 51% of the miles maintained were charged to the USFS Capital Improvements and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) budget line item. Funds from partner organizations outside the USFS paid for 13.5% of the miles maintained. In addition, the USFS reimbursed partner organizations for the costs of about 9% of the trail miles maintained through its External Reimbursement (CMXN) line item. Federal Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act funding paid for 3.8% of trail miles maintained, and 5.5% of trail miles were maintained with no funding involved. Other sources of funding were each less than 5% of the total.

USFS trail crews accounted for 41.5% of miles maintained. Partner organizations accomplished 45.5%, volunteers 6.9%, and contractors 6.1%.

(Source: Andy Brunelle, USFS)

Federal Funding Sources

The USFS has several federal budget lines that can be used to pay for trail maintenance on Idaho’s national forests (see **Sidebar 2**). The largest funding source is the *Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL)* appropriation. Total appropriations for CMTL in Idaho’s national forests were \$4.6 million in FY 2007, \$5.9 million in FY 2011, and \$4.8 million in FY 2015 (inflation-adjusted 2015 dollars; **Figure 6**).

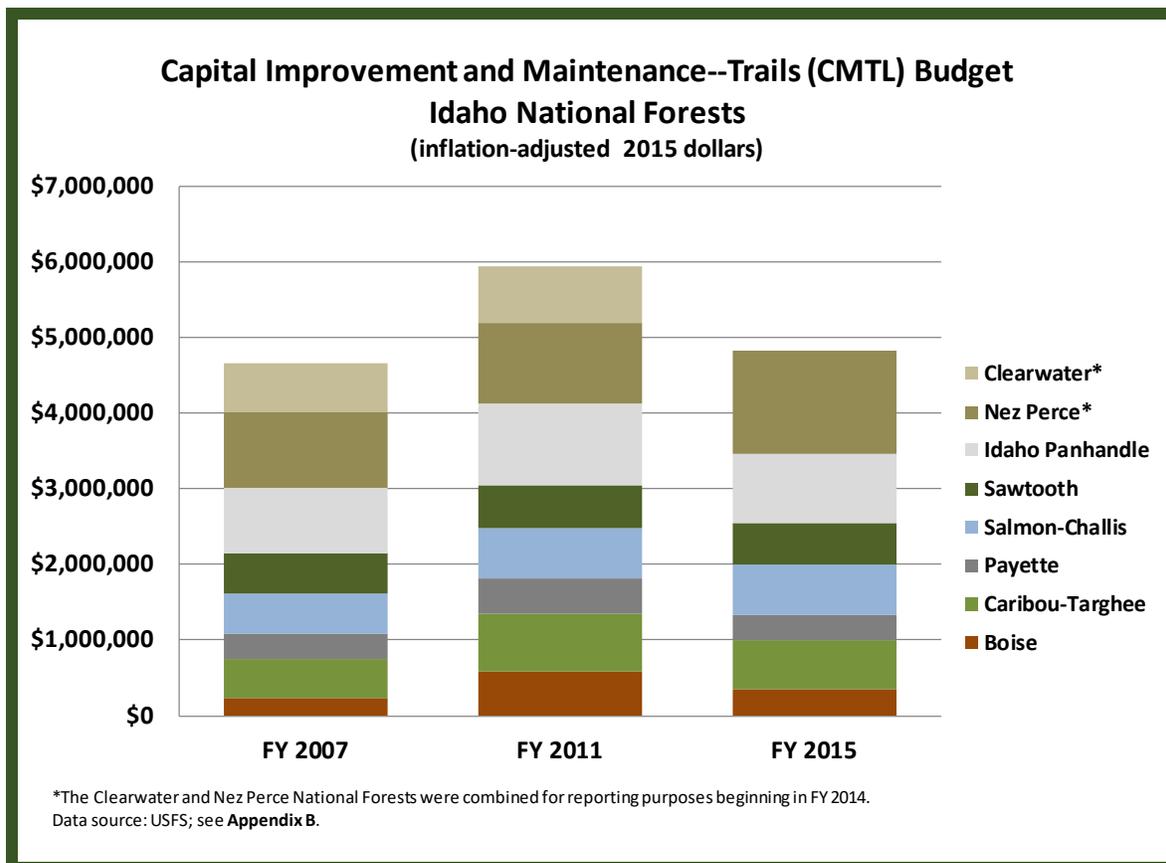


Figure 6. Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) Budget for Idaho’s National Forests, FY 2007, FY 2011, FY 2015 (inflation-adjusted 2015 dollars).

Sidebar 2. Sources of Federal Funding for Trail Maintenance on National Forests.

A portion of trails in Idaho are in designated Wilderness, and wilderness programs are funded under the *Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness—Manage Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers* line item. Some expenses for trail maintenance (e.g., wilderness rangers) can be paid through this budget item (GAO 2013).

The *Legacy Roads and Trails* program was created by Congress in 2007 to direct resources toward road decommissioning, road and trail repair and maintenance, and removal of fish passage barriers in areas where USFS roads are contributing to water quality problems in water bodies that support threatened, endangered or sensitive species (P.L. 110-161). Recreational trail maintenance is not an emphasis of this program unless a trail is contributing to water quality problems, hence it has the potential to fund non-motorized trail maintenance activities.

In FY 2012, Congress created the *Integrated Resource Restoration* (IRR) pilot program for USFS Regions 1 and 4, where Idaho's national forests are located, to combine budgeted program items in support of integrated, landscape-scale restoration (P.L. 112-74). The Legacy Roads and Trails program for USFS Regions 1 and 4 was redirected to the IRR program. IRR funding potentially can be used for non-motorized trail maintenance activities.

Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure Improvement (CMII) appropriated funds may be used to pay for trail maintenance (FSH 6509.11). National forests also may use *Burned Area Emergency Response* (BAER) allocations to address some trail maintenance needs on forests and rangelands affected by wildfires (GAO 2013).

The extent to which the Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness, Legacy Roads and Trails, IRR, BAER, and other funds provide trail maintenance in Idaho is unknown. The USFS reported to GAO (2013) that it was unable to track how these programs support trail maintenance.

In addition to the annual appropriations line items listed above, the USFS received about \$100 million under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (stimulus bill) for trail maintenance and decommissioning activities (GAO 2013). National forests in Idaho received \$9.2 million for seven projects (GAO 2013).

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-393) Title II funds also were used to fund trail maintenance on national forests. Numerous trail maintenance projects under this authority were accomplished in Idaho.⁶ Authorization of Secure Rural Schools funding expired after FY 2015.

In statute, the USFS also has available a *Roads and Trails for States* fund that is made up of 10% of all moneys received (receipts) from national forests to be used for construction and maintenance of roads and trails within national forests (16 USC § 501). However, since FY 2007 Congress has not authorized the USFS to obligate any receipts to this fund.

The USFS also receives funding for trail maintenance through the federally-funded *Recreational Trails Program* (RTP). Because RTP is administered by the states and an important source of funding, it is addressed fully in its own section of this report.

The USFS is allowed to charge user fees for recreation under some circumstances (16 U.S. Code §§ 6801-6814), and those funds can be used for trail maintenance (FSH 2309.13). In addition, special use permit fees—charged for activities or facilities such as outfitting and guiding, commercial filming, ski areas, and organized camps—can be used to pay for trail maintenance. Estimates for how much fee funding contributes to trail maintenance either at the national, regional, or state level were unavailable.

⁶See, for example: <http://www.idahorac.org/2014/08/field-report-rac-supported-trail-work-in-the-frank-church-river-of-no-return-wilderness-area/> and <http://www.idahorac.org/2011/10/into-the-wilderness-title-ii-funds-and-wilderness-trails/>.

Volunteers and Partnerships

Many national forests receive external support for trail maintenance via volunteers and partnerships with private and nonprofit entities (GAO 2013). The Cooperative Funds Act (16 U.S. Code § 498 as amended by P.L. 104-127) authorizes the USFS to accept money received as contributions toward cooperative work on national forests, including trail maintenance, which means the agency may receive grants. USFS annual budget justification documents (see footnote 4) indicate that 20%, 25%, and 40% of CMTL program accomplishments in FY 2012, FY 2013 and FY 2014, respectively, were achieved through partnerships.

The Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972 (Pub. L. No. 92-300, 16 U.S. Code § 558a) authorizes the USFS to recruit, train, and accept the services of volunteers for a variety of activities related to national forests, including trail maintenance. The National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543, 16 U.S. Code §§ 1241-1251) also authorizes federal agencies, including the USFS, to encourage volunteer and volunteer organization involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management of trails, where appropriate (GAO 2013). The USFS can use CMTL funds to finance partnership expenses with volunteers and youth organizations for trail maintenance. Trail crews are one of the primary means for the agency to employ young adults and partner with local communities and interest groups (FSH 6509.11), and projects that leverage the most non-federal dollars and have potential to create the most jobs for youth and others in rural areas receive higher priority (FY 2017 USFS budget justification; see footnote 4).

The USFS only began collecting data on volunteer hours for trail maintenance activities in FY 2011; previously they were lumped with all volunteer labor for Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness programs (GAO 2013). The GAO (2013) reported 1.2 million volunteer hours of trail maintenance nationally in FY 2012. USFS annual budget justification documents reported 1.2 million hours in FY 2013, 1.3 million hours in FY 2014, and 1.2 million hours in FY 2015 (see footnote 4). The contributions of volunteers to trail maintenance may be higher than these figures indicate because volunteer hours may be underreported due to informal volunteer efforts not tracked under volunteer or challenge cost-share agreements and USFS staff limitations (GAO 2013).

Idaho's national forests provided estimates of volunteer and partnership contributions for trail maintenance and improvement in Idaho in FY 2016 (**Table 1**). In FY 2016, almost 66,000 hours of trail maintenance and improvement valued at over \$1.5 million dollars were contributed by volunteers and cooperators on Idaho's national forests.

The importance of volunteers and external partners was recognized with passage of the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (P.L. 114-245; 16 U.S. Code § 583k) in November 2016. The act's goal was to increase the role of volunteers and partners in maintaining national forest trails (**Sidebar 3**).

One of the act's provisions calls for the USFS to identify 9 to 15 national forest areas across the nation where priority trail maintenance programs will be implemented. Following extensive conversations with multiple interest groups across the state, IDPR proposed that much of central Idaho, including the Frank Church-River of No Return, Selway-Bitterroot, and Gospel Hump Wilderness areas, be included as a priority area in the program (**Appendix C**). Both the Northern and Intermountain regions of the USFS included this proposal as the top (Intermountain) or second (Northern) priority from the region. As of this writing, the USFS has not announced the locations of the priority areas.

Among the act's provision is creation of a national strategy that includes identifying barriers to increasing volunteerism. For example, several partnering organizations that perform trail maintenance on national forests are concerned that a 2016 revision of the USFS directive for required training to operate power and crosscut saws will adversely affect participation of volunteers in trail maintenance (**Sidebar 4**).

Table 1. Volunteer and Partnership Contributions to Trail Maintenance on Idaho’s National Forests, FY 2016 (hours).

	Nez Perce- Clearwater	Idaho Panhandle	Sawtooth	Salmon- Challis	Payette	Caribou- Targhee	Boise	TOTAL
Volunteers*								
Non-wilderness trails	320	5,185	2,248	0	1,268	1,763	1,182	11,966
Snowmobile trail grooming	540							540
Wilderness trails			3,482		534	210		4,226
Cooperating partners**								
Non-wilderness trails	5,478	9,889	8,960	3,163	620	480	5,154	33,744
Snowmobile trail grooming	414	1,087						1,501
Wilderness trails	6,632	360			2,400			9,392
Youth Conservation Corps								
Non-wilderness trails			70			200	3,291	3,561
Wilderness trails						781		781
Job Corps								
Non-wilderness trails							200	200
TOTAL (hours)	13,384	16,521	14,760	3,163	4,822	3,434	9,827	65,911
FY 2016 Value***	\$315,327	\$389,235	\$347,746	\$74,520	\$113,606	\$80,905	\$231,524	\$1,552,863
*Volunteers, either individual or group, under a USFS volunteer agreement.								
**Almost all partners use their volunteers under a partnership agreement.								
***Value based on Independent Sector (2016) national value of volunteer time, 2015.								
Note: Blank cells indicate data not provided by USFS.								
Data source: USFS.								

Sidebar 3. National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act.

The National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (P.L. 114-245; H.R. 845) was signed into law on November 28, 2016. The Act contains five significant provisions: (1) development of a national strategy for trail maintenance by the USFS, (2) development of a priority trail maintenance program, (3) expanded liability coverage for volunteers of organizations who partner with the USFS, (4) specific authorization of cooperative agreements for trail maintenance, and (5) development of a pilot program of stewardship credits for outfitters and guides.

National Strategy. By November 28, 2018, the USFS will develop a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in trail maintenance. The strategy will address:

- augmenting the capabilities of federal employees to carry out trail maintenance;
- providing meaningful opportunities for volunteers and partners to carry out trail maintenance in each region of the USFS;
- reducing barriers to increased volunteerism and partnerships;
- prioritizing increased volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance in those regions with the most severe needs; and
- aiming to increase trail maintenance by volunteers and partners by 100% from 2016 levels by November 28, 2021.

In addition, the strategy will assess opportunities to increase trail maintenance by using firefighting crews for trail maintenance activities when they are not needed in their firefighting capacity. The trail maintenance strategy also must include regulations that address liability for volunteers and partners to ensure that the financial risk from claims or liability associated with volunteers undertaking trail maintenance is shared by all administrative units.

The trail maintenance strategy is to be developed in consultation with volunteer and partner trail maintenance organizations, a broad array of outdoor recreation stakeholders, and other relevant stakeholders. Each administrative unit of the USFS is to develop an implementation plan for the strategy.

Priority Program. The Act calls for establishing a priority trail maintenance program to focus on areas where lack of trail maintenance has reduced access to public lands, increased harm to resources, jeopardized public safety, resulted in impassable trails, or increased future deferred maintenance costs. By May 28, 2017, the USFS is to have identified between 9 and 15 priority areas, with at least one in each region, to participate in the program (see **Appendix C** for Idaho's proposal). By November 28, 2017, the USFS is to have developed an approach to substantially increase trail maintenance in each priority area and begin to implement that approach.

Liability Coverage for Volunteers. The Act expands the definition of "volunteers" from the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972 (16 U.S. Code § 558c) to include volunteers of organizations that formally partner with the USFS. Such volunteers are considered federal employees for purposes of liability for tort claims, worker injury compensation claims, and compensation for damage or loss of personal property. Prior to the Act's change, only people who volunteered directly with the USFS were covered by these provisions. The expanded definition and protections for volunteers are expected to increase volunteerism.

Cooperative Agreements. The Act specifically authorizes the USFS to enter into cooperative agreements with states, tribes, local governments, or private entities to improve trail maintenance in priority areas, implement the trail maintenance strategy, or advance trail maintenance in other ways.

Stewardship Credits for Outfitters and Guides. Outfitters and guides must obtain a special use permit from the USFS and pay a portion of their revenues to the USFS as a land use fee. The Act calls for the USFS to establish a pilot program by November 28, 2017 on at least 20 administrative units whereby the USFS offsets all or part of the use fee for an outfitting and guiding permit by the cost of the work performed by the permit holder to construct, improve, or maintain trails, trailheads, or developed sites on national forests.

Sidebar 4. 2016 Revision to USFS Saw Policy.

Trail maintenance activities can involve the use of saws to remove trees that block a trail or be hazardous to a trail's users. Since the 1970s USFS policy has required volunteers who use power and crosscut saws for trail maintenance to be trained and certified in their safe operation. However, until adoption of the National Saw Program policy in July 2016 (81 *Federal Register* 46890; *Forest Service Manual* 2358), the specifics of training and certification were largely left to national forest regions. The National Saw Program standardized training and certification requirements nationwide.

In response to the National Saw Program proposal in June 2015 (80 *Federal Register* 34610), most trail maintenance partner organizations that rely on volunteers responded positively to many of the proposed changes.⁷ However, there was concern from organizations in regions that would see increased training requirements that such requirements would lead to lower levels of participation by volunteers. Other concerns about the national program included: compatible requirements and cross-certification with other federal agencies; reduced staffing and accessibility to sawyer training programs for volunteers; and timeliness of volunteer information entries into a national database of certified sawyers.

The USFS attempted to address many partner organization concerns in the final National Saw Program policy. The policy is in its early phases of implementation, and it remains to be seen what effects the policy will have on volunteer participation in trail maintenance on national forests.

State Assistance

Sources of state funding that can support non-motorized trail maintenance in Idaho include the Recreational Trails Program, IDPR's Non-Motorized Trails Program, three specialty motor vehicle license plates, and IDPR's winter recreational parking permit.

Recreational Trails Program

Although it is a federally-funded program, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is included here as a source of state funding because the state decides which trail projects to fund. RTP was originally authorized as part of the federal government's major transportation funding bill in 1998 (P.L. 105-178) and has been modified and reauthorized by subsequent legislation through FY 2020 (P.L. 109-59, P.L. 119-44). RTP is a federal-aid assistance program that helps states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized uses (FHWA 2017). Each state develops its own procedures to solicit projects from sponsors and selects projects for funding in response to recreational trail needs within the state.

In the state of Idaho, IDPR is responsible for administering RTP and its funding. RTP funds may be used for maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails, purchase and lease of recreational trail construction equipment, construction of new recreational trails, acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors, and the operation of education programs to promote safety and environmental protection as they relate to the use of recreational trails.

Federal RTP funding for Idaho has averaged about \$1.5 million (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars) per year over the last decade (FHWA 2013, 2016). A 10-member state RTP Advisory Committee—representing hiking, cross-country skiing, off-highway motorcycling, snowmobiling, equestrian, all-terrain vehicle, bicycling, four-wheel drive, water trail, and people with disabilities interests—evaluates proposed projects and advises IDPR about which to fund (IDPR 2017a). Federal RTP funds must be split 30% for motorized recreation projects, 30% for non-motorized recreation projects, and 40% to projects that facilitate diverse recreational trail uses including both motorized and non-motorized uses. Eligible recipients of RTP funding include federal, state, and local government agencies, Indian Tribes, and nonprofit organizations.

⁷ See Comments documents for Proposed Directive for National Saw Program Policy, Docket ID: FS-2015-0001, at: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FS-2015-0001>.

The amount of RTP funding spent specifically for non-motorized trail maintenance on Idaho’s national forests is difficult to track. IDPR provides information about RTP grant awards within Idaho, but some details are missing and assumptions about how and where spending occurs are necessary.⁸ Information about RTP grant awards for Idaho’s FY 2009 to FY 2017 was analyzed. Two types of projects related to trail maintenance on national forests were identified: (1) those where funding was awarded directly to a national forest in Idaho for trail maintenance activities or equipment, and (2) those where funding was awarded to an organization that could potentially perform trail maintenance on national forests in Idaho. Maintenance projects included those whose activities were described as maintenance, reconstruction, or rehabilitation, but not new construction. Maintenance on non-motorized versus motorized trails could not be distinguished so totals include both.

Between FY 2009 and FY 2017, an average of \$405,653 (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars) of RTP funding was awarded annually directly to national forests in Idaho for trail maintenance activities (**Table 2**), or 27% of total RTP funding over that time period. An additional \$372,890 (24%) was awarded annually to other organizations that could possibly have contributed to trail maintenance on national forests. RTP funds not awarded for trail maintenance were used for other RTP-eligible trail activities, such as new construction, or on other jurisdictions, such as city or county-owned trail projects within Idaho. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests received the greatest proportion (34%) among Idaho’s national forests of the direct RTP funding over the FY 2009-2017 time period (**Figure 7**).

Table 2. RTP Grant Funding for Trail Maintenance Projects on Idaho’s National Forests, Idaho FY 2009-2017 (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars).

FY	All RTP awards in Idaho	National forest was recipient*		Other organization was recipient with potential for work on national forests**	
	\$***	\$***	%	\$***	%
2009	\$1,223,710	\$481,315	39%	\$342,136	28%
2010	\$1,826,914	\$238,023	13%	\$359,232	20%
2011	\$1,191,787	\$208,869	18%	\$278,659	23%
2012	\$1,590,220	\$667,786	42%	\$371,806	23%
2013	\$1,463,547	\$340,018	23%	\$357,140	24%
2014	\$1,329,297	\$421,633	32%	\$246,502	19%
2015	\$2,176,552	\$535,438	25%	\$812,905	37%
2016	\$1,497,178	\$402,100	27%	\$357,754	24%
2017	\$1,407,997	\$355,694	25%	\$229,878	16%
Total	\$13,707,202	\$3,650,875	27%	\$3,356,012	24%
Avg.	\$1,523,022	\$405,653	27%	\$372,890	24%

NOTES: Trail maintenance projects included those described as maintenance, reconstruction, and rehabilitation, but not new construction. Motorized versus non-motorized trail maintenance could not be distinguished so both are included.
*Includes projects where a national forest was the direct recipient of RTP funding.
**Includes projects that funded other organizations that may have performed trail maintenance on national forests.
***Adjusted for inflation to 2017 dollars using Consumer Price Index.
Data Source: IDPR, County Recreational Grant Awards (by Fiscal Year), <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/grants-and-funding>.

⁸IDPR, County Recreational Grant Awards (by Fiscal Year), <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/grants-and-funding>.

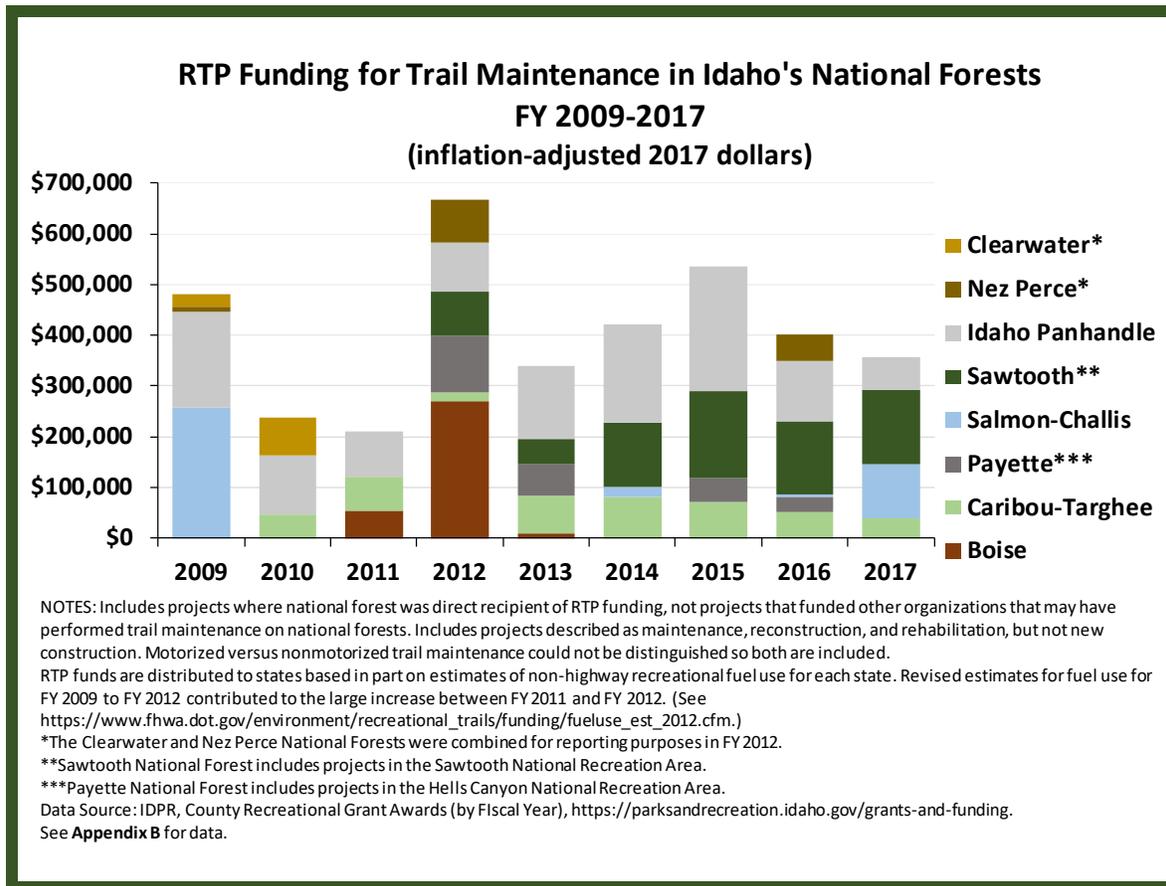


Figure 7. RTP Funding for Trail Maintenance in Idaho's National Forests, FY 2009-2017 (inflation-adjusted 2017 dollars).

Idaho's Non-Motorized Trails Program

Idaho's Non-Motorized Trails Program consists of the Idaho Recreation Trails Coordinator within IDPR who advises the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board and other agencies and entities about the non-motorized trail system in Idaho (Idaho Code § 67-4233 and § 67-4234). The coordinator helps manage the state's maintenance efforts for non-motorized trails. The coordinator's position is paid through the state's General Fund (IDPR 2016a). The annual appropriation for the Non-Motorized Trails Program is about \$50,000.

Motor Vehicle Specialty License Plates

Idaho has three motor vehicle specialty license plates that potentially fund non-motorized trail maintenance on Idaho's national forests. In 2010, the Idaho Legislature approved a mountain biking specialty license plate (Idaho Code § 49-419E). Twenty-two dollars (\$22.00) of each initial fee and \$12.00 of each renewal fee goes into an IDPR dedicated fund used exclusively for the preservation, maintenance and expansion of recreational trails within the state of Idaho on which mountain biking is permitted, including national forest trails. Between FY 2013 and FY 2017, Mountain Bike License Plate Fund revenue averaged about \$22,000 annually (IDPR 2017b). The Boise National Forest is the only national forest to directly receive trail maintenance funding from the Mountain Bike Program Fund (\$9,920 in FY 2017), but the Central Idaho Mountain Bike Association received funding (\$962 in FY 2013) for trail maintenance tools to use in Valley County and may include work on national forests.⁹

In 2010, the Idaho Legislature also approved the Idaho Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness specialty license plate (Idaho Code § 49-420J). Twenty-two dollars (\$22.00) of each initial fee and \$ 12.00 of each renewal fee is transferred to the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation for stewardship of Idaho's Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and surrounding

⁹ Ibid.

wildlands of north central Idaho, potentially including non-motorized trail maintenance in that area. The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation received about \$16,000 from license plate revenues in 2016.¹⁰

In 1999, the Idaho Legislature created the Idaho Sawtooth National Recreation Area license plate (Idaho Code § 49-419A). Currently, \$25.00 of each initial fee and \$15.00 of each renewal fee is deposited into the state’s Park and Recreation Fund where 15% is retained by IDPR for administrative costs and 85% is transferred to the Sawtooth Society for grants supporting work within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Between FY 2013 and FY 2016, revenue into the fund averaged about \$39,500 (IDPR 2017b). The Sawtooth Society has funded numerous non-motorized trail maintenance projects (Sawtooth Society 2017).

New sales, renewals and transfers of the mountain biking license plate have grown about 8% annually since its introduction in 2011 (Figure 8). Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness plate sales, renewals, and transfers have grown about 20% annually since it first became available in 2011. Sawtooth National Recreation Area plate sales have declined slightly since 2010, but remain the most of the three specialty plates at about 2,400 plates sold in 2016.

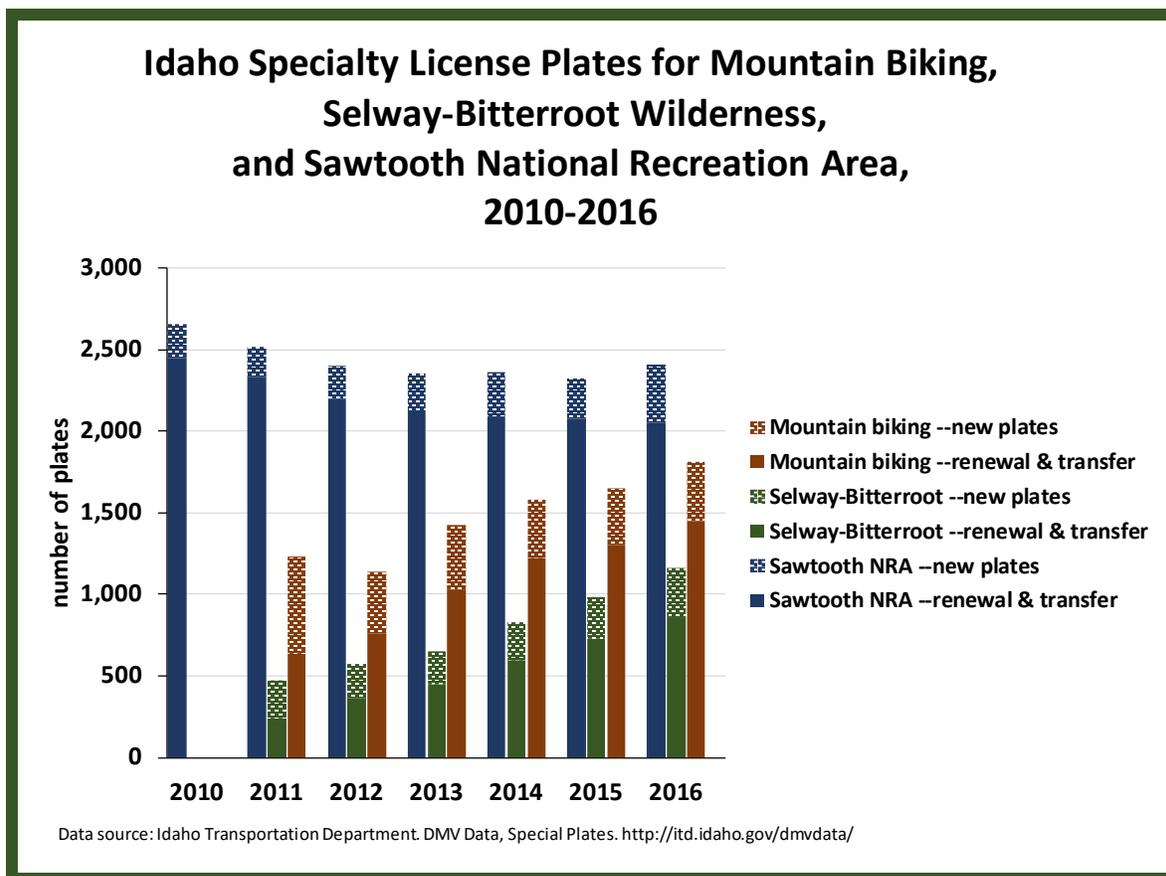


Figure 8. Idaho Specialty License Plates for Mountain Biking, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and Sawtooth National Recreation Area, 2010-2016.

Winter Recreational Parking Permit

Although many trail maintenance issues are focused on bare earth (Terra) trails, snow trails for non-motorized users (e.g., cross-country skiers, snowshoers) also require maintenance. Idaho requires a winter recreational parking permit at 17 Park N’ Ski locations around the state that provide non-motorized Nordic skiing and snowshoeing opportunities. Current fees are \$25 for an annual pass and \$7.50 for a three-day pass, but statute allows fees up to \$30 annually and \$10 for temporary permits (Idaho Code § 67-7115). After deducting \$1.00 per permit for vendor commission, funds from

¹⁰ Personal communication, Ed Krumpe, Chair, Board of Directors, Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, e-mail 18 August 2017.

permits are placed in the state Cross-Country Skiing Recreation Account (Idaho Code § 67-7117). After deductions for IDPR administration (15%) and reimbursement for snow removal from parking locations, remaining funds are appropriated for grants to public or nonprofit entities for activities including maintenance of “sanitation facilities, trail marking, and other facilities designed to promote the health and safety” of cross-country skiers (Idaho Code § 67-7118). Between FY 2013 and FY 2016, revenue into the Cross-Country Skiing Recreation Account averaged almost \$80,000 annually (IDPR 2017b).

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IDAHO TO INCREASE ITS SUPPORT FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL MAINTENANCE ON NATIONAL FORESTS?

Opportunities Within Existing Programs

Some opportunities exist for Idaho to increase its support of non-motorized trail maintenance on national forests using existing state programs (**Table 3**). For example, the state could devote a larger share of its RTP program funding to trail maintenance projects on national forests. The state also could promote sales of specialty motor vehicle license plates or encourage more recreationists to use Park N’ Ski areas that would increase purchases of winter recreational parking permits.

The state also could allocate more resources to the Non-Motorized Trails Program within IDPR so that the department could pursue opportunities that increase volunteers and partners involved in trail maintenance. Programs that increase business support and sponsorship are being encouraged for the state parks system (IDPR 2016b); similar efforts, such as an adopt-a-trail program, could be encouraged for non-motorized trail maintenance. Increased General Fund support of the Non-Motorized Trails Program may be necessary to implement these increased efforts. The impact on existing motorized opportunities and other programs was not analyzed in relation to these actions.

New Opportunities

Numerous states use, or have proposed using, a variety of funding mechanisms for providing outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly recreation related to wildlife (see, e.g., McKinney et al. 2005, HB 2402 Joint Interim Task Force 2016). Some of the funding mechanisms potentially could be applied to non-motorized trail maintenance (**Table 3**). Lessons from other states’ experiences could be instructive to Idaho.

User Fees

User fees are based on the idea that those who use a resource directly pay some of the cost of providing that resource. User fees are collected through a variety of mechanisms, including permits, registrations, and licenses. For example, several states use funds collected from off highway vehicle (OHV) registrations to provide grants to local entities, including national forests, to maintain and improve trails for *motorized* users (GAO 2013). Idaho’s registration program for OHVs is described in **Sidebar 5**.

No state uses OHV fees to fund *non-motorized* trail maintenance. A registration system, similar to that for OHVs, based on equipment used for non-motorized trail recreation might be challenging to implement, in part because of the variety of equipment recreationists use on non-motorized trails. Registering a pair of hiking boots, cross-country skis, or a horse is likely impractical.

According to IDPR (2016a), attempts were made in Idaho several times to create user fee funding mechanisms for non-motorized trail maintenance. In 1995 and 1996, a \$10 mountain bike user fee was proposed; both efforts failed. In 1998, 1999, and 2010, proposals to create a horse trailer fee failed.

Collecting a user fee for a specific trail or general area with trails is a more common approach. The challenge for the USFS is that it must meet specific requirements in order to assess and collect fees for a specific area. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S. Code § 6801 et. seq.) requires that a site be developed (e.g., permanent toilet and trash receptacle, picnic table, interpretive sign) before a standard amenity recreation fee can be charged. Most non-motorized trails or trailheads do not meet the requirements for the USFS to charge a fee.

Table 3. Opportunities for Increasing State Assistance for Non-Motorized Trail Maintenance on National Forests.

Mechanism	Implementation considerations
Increase proportion of RTP funds for non-motorized trail maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source and grant program currently exist. • Less funding for other trail opportunities.
Increase General Fund support for the Non-Motorized Trail program in IDPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source and program currently exist. • Less funding for other state programs.
Promotion of sales of specialty motor vehicle license plates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source and program currently exist. • Purchase of specialty plate is optional for vehicle owners.
Promotion of increase sales and increased enforcement of winter recreational parking permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source and program currently exist. • Use of Park N’ Ski areas is optional. • Increased revenue may not outweigh increased enforcement costs.
User fees—registration based on equipment type (e.g., similar to OHV registration program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close linkage between those who pay and those who benefit. • Numerous types of equipment used on non-motorized trails could increase registration program complexity and decrease practicality.
User fees—permit for specific trail or general area use (e.g., Idaho State Parks Passport, Montana state parks vehicle registration fee, Washington Discover Pass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close linkage between those who pay and those who benefit. • Potential revenues need to be weighed against administrative costs. • Existing state programs only fund state-owned areas, not federal lands.
Fuel tax allocation (e.g., Washington’s NOVA program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel tax system currently exists. • Less funding for existing motorized trail recipients. • Complexity of determining allocation amount.
Equipment taxes—excise tax (e.g., federal Pittman-Robertson program for hunting and Dingell-Johnson program for fishing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage between beneficiaries and taxpayers depends on types of equipment taxed. • Complexity of collecting from small and out-of-state manufacturers may decrease practicality.
Equipment taxes—sales tax (e.g., Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Virginia, Minnesota)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage between beneficiaries and taxpayers depends on types of equipment taxed. • Taxes on specific types of equipment are more difficult to administer than fixed percentage of general sales tax.
Lottery proceeds (e.g., Arizona, Maine, Colorado, Minnesota)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential funding source currently exists. • Less funding for current recipients of proceeds.
Income tax checkoff (used in 30 states for wildlife preservation and 6 states for state parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checkoff system with other beneficiaries currently exists. • Funding dependent on voluntary contributions from taxpayers.
Real estate transfer taxes (e.g., Florida, Maryland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted at those adding additional pressure to recreation system • Linkage between beneficiaries and taxpayers depends on how revenues are distributed.
Income tax surcharge (under consideration in Oregon for wildlife-related recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage between beneficiaries and taxpayers depends on how revenues are distributed.
Wholesale beverage surcharge (under consideration in Oregon for wildlife-related recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage between beneficiaries and taxpayers depends on how revenues are distributed.

Sidebar 5. Idaho's OHV Registration Program.

Idaho's OHV registration program requires motorbikes (dirtbikes), ATVs, UTVs, and specialty OHVs to purchase a "certificate" (registration sticker) for \$12 annually (Idaho Code 67-7122). After allocations for vendor handling fees (\$1.50 per certificate), certificate production and administration (up to 15%), county sheriffs through the Off Highway Vehicle Law Enforcement Fund (\$1.00 per certificate), and the Idaho Department of Lands to manage OHV opportunities (\$1 per certificate), the remaining funds are credited to the Motorbike Recreation Account (Idaho Code § 67-7126).

The Motorbike Recreation Account can be used for maintenance of trails for OHV use on state or federal lands (Idaho Code § 67-7127). Between FY 2013 and FY 2016, revenue into the account averaged \$981,000 annually (IDPR 2017b). Funds from this account have been used by IDPR for trail maintenance on OHV trails by the IDPR Trail Ranger program and the IDPR Trail Cat & Mini-Excavator program.¹¹

Collecting a user fee through a general access fee is common practice for state parks and other types of state recreation areas. For example, Idaho's state parks can be accessed by paying a daily entrance fee or purchasing an annual Idaho State Parks Passport. The Idaho State Parks Passport can be purchased at park areas, or it can be purchased through any Idaho county's department of motor vehicles at the time of vehicle registration by opting into the program. The Idaho State Parks Passport costs \$10 per vehicle per year and generated about \$1.9 million in FY 2017 (IDPR 2017c). Over 60% of passport purchases take place during vehicle registration at county departments of motor vehicles (IDPR 2017c). The Montana state parks system has a similar annual pass program that provides day-use access and is included as part of motor vehicle registration fees for \$6 per vehicle per year (Montana Code Annotated 23-1-105 and 61-3-321). Montana's program is an opt-out system where the fee is automatically included with vehicle registration unless the vehicle owner opts out of the program. Montana's program produces almost \$4 million annually (Montana Department of Justice 2017) and has a participation rate of 77% (Montana State Parks and Recreation Board 2014). The opt-out approach likely increases program participation and thus revenue.

Washington's Discover Pass program (Revised Code of Washington § 79A.80) is another example of a user fee program that can fund non-motorized trail maintenance, but is not directly tied to a non-motorized activity or specific site. The Discover Pass is a motor vehicle access pass to state-managed recreation lands that must be displayed in parking lots at trailheads. Trail users who do not arrive by motor vehicle are not required to have a pass. The Discover Pass program began in FY 2012, and revenues have grown from \$15.7 million in its first year to \$21.3 million in FY 2016 (Farber et al. 2016). Like all state land access pass programs, Washington's Discover Pass proceeds can only be used on lands managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (RCW § 43.30.395). No examples of state programs were found where state-collected access fees were used on federal lands for trail maintenance.

Fuel Tax Allocation

Idaho currently allocates a portion of its gasoline tax to maintaining OHV trails. Under the current gasoline tax allocation system (Idaho Code § 63-2412), revenues produced from \$0.25 of the total \$0.32 tax per gallon are distributed as follows: after subtracting administrative costs, refund claims, and contributions to the railroad grade crossing safety account (\$250,000), local bridge improvement account (\$100,000), and state highway account (7%), 66% of 1.28% of the remainder is distributed to the Off-Road Motor Vehicle Account, where it can be used to maintain OHV facilities, sites, and areas (Idaho Code § 57-1901).

A portion of the gasoline tax could be reallocated to assist with non-motorized trail maintenance on federal lands. The reasoning is that non-motorized trail users consume fuel while driving on roads maintained by federal agencies to access non-motorized trailheads. The state taxes the fuel consumed on these federally-maintained roads. Idaho's Constitution requires that gasoline taxes used to propel motor vehicles on highways of the state be expended on those highways (Article VII, Section 17). However, in 2014 the Idaho's Attorney General office issued an informal opinion that concluded use of gas tax revenues for trail maintenance was not precluded based on the Idaho Supreme Court decision in *V-1 Oil Company v. Idaho State Tax Commission* (134 Idaho 716 (2000)).¹² That decision affirmed that a petroleum

¹¹ <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/activities/atv-motorbike>.

¹² February 24, 2014 letter from George R. Brown, Deputy Attorney General, to Senator Shawn Keough. On file with authors.

transfer fee imposed on fuel distributors did not violate the state’s constitution because the Idaho Legislature had found that 20% of all fuel sold was used for off-road purposes. The current use of gasoline tax revenue to provide motorized trail maintenance is assumed legal, as is the use of gasoline tax revenue for maintenance of non-motorized trails accessed by federally-maintained roads.

The state of Washington uses a portion of its state motor fuel tax revenue to fund non-motorized trail maintenance, including trails on national forests (**Sidebar 6**). The rationale is similar to that put forth in Idaho. In the early 1970s, the Washington Legislature decided that taxes paid on gasoline consumed for recreational purposes on roads not supported by state funds (“nonhighway roads”), such as USFS or state forest roads, and gasoline consumed for off-road activities could be used to provide facilities and services for these recreational activities (Hebert Research, Inc. 2003). The percentage of fuel attributed to nonhighway road and off-road use and the formula for allocating the resulting funds to state agency recreational programs was based on a study of nonhighway recreational fuel consumption done in 1972-73 and on policy decisions made by subsequent legislatures. The nonhighway recreational fuel study was updated in 2003 (Hebert Research, Inc. 2003). A similar type study of Idaho nonhighway recreational fuel use would provide a more accurate understanding of the usage of federally-maintained roads by motorists pursuing non-motorized recreation activities (**Sidebar 7**).

Sidebar 6. Washington’s Gas Tax Allocation Program.

The state of Washington allocates 1.0% of its motor fuel tax revenues between two accounts, the “ORV and Nonhighway Vehicle Account” and the “Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program Account” (NOVA; RCW 46.09.520). The first account receives 41.5% of the 1.0% of motor fuel vehicle tax revenue, with the Washington Department of Natural Resources administering 36%, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildfire administering 3.5%, and the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission administering 2.0%. Maintenance of non-motorized recreation facilities is included as a purpose of the funds, but the amount going to such use is unknown. It is also unclear if these agencies could assist with non-motorized trail maintenance on federal lands.

The remaining 58.5% of the 1.0% of motor fuel vehicle tax revenue goes to the NOVA program administered by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. Additional NOVA funding comes from ORV registrations and permits (RCW 46.68.045). Seventy percent of NOVA funding is for recreational facilities, and 30% is for education and enforcement. The 70% for recreational facilities is split with 30% to non-trail opportunities (such as campgrounds, toilets, and scenic turnouts), 30% to non-motorized recreation, 30% to motorized recreation, and 10% competitively allocated across all three categories (RCW 46.09.520 and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office 2013).

The NOVA program accomplishes its work through a grant program.¹³ Non-motorized trail maintenance activities are eligible for funding, and federal agencies are eligible to apply for NOVA grants. The NOVA program’s 2013-2018 plan calls for making maintenance funding for existing trails a priority based on stakeholder input (Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office 2013).

Total revenues into the NOVA account averaged about \$4.8 million per year from FY 2006 to FY 2016, and disbursements averaged \$5.1 million over the same time period (**Figure 9**). The 30% of disbursements allocated to non-motorized recreation averaged \$1.5 million per year.

Information about NOVA grant awards for the 2013-2015 and 2015-2017 biennia were examined.¹⁴ In the 2013-2015 biennium, four projects totaling \$278,700 were awarded to the USFS for non-motorized trail maintenance activities. In the 2015-2017 biennium, four projects totaling over \$276,000 were similarly awarded. These projects represent about 20% and 22%, respectively, of total NOVA grant awards for non-motorized projects during those biennia.

¹³ <http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/nova.shtml>

¹⁴ http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/eval_results.shtml, NOVA (Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities). Reports prior to 2013-2015 do not provide information in a format that allows similar analysis.

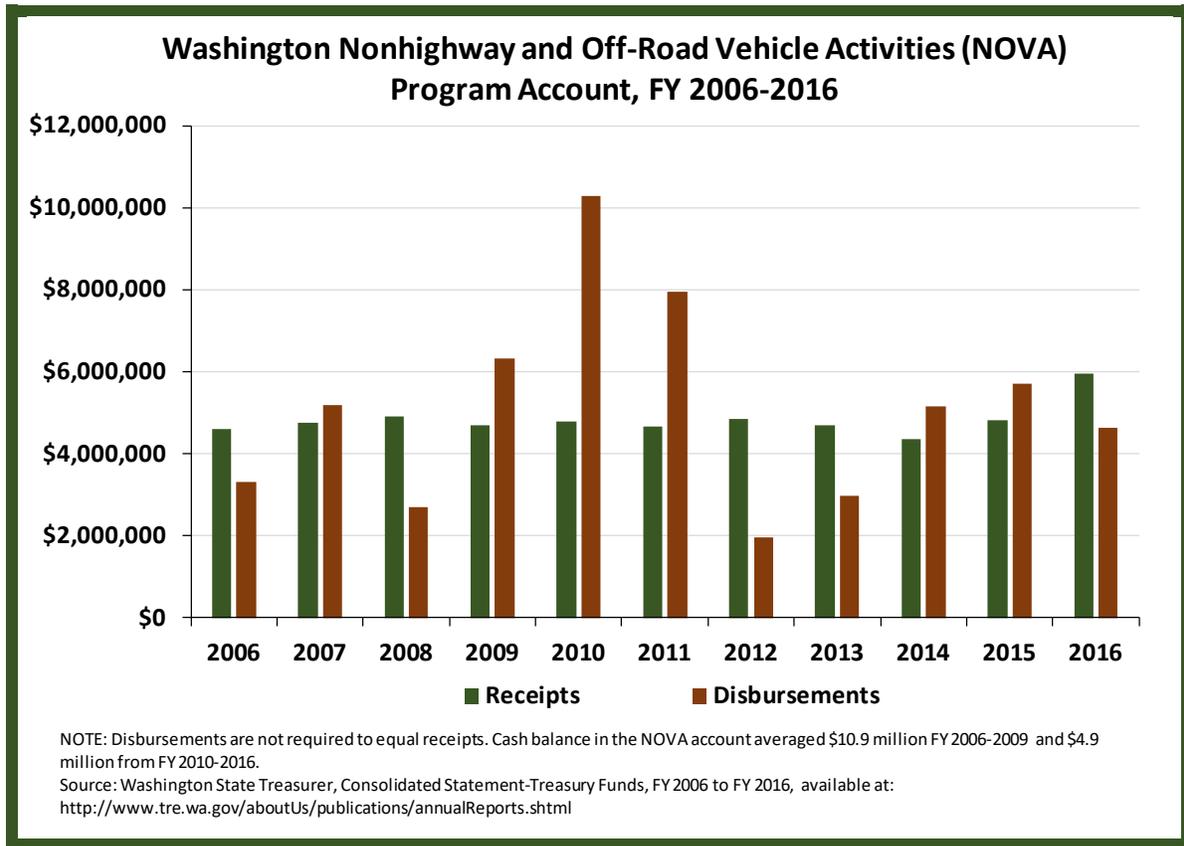


Figure 9. Washington’s NOVA Program Account, FY 2006-2016.

Sidebar 7. Washington’s Non-Highway Recreational Fuel Use Study.

Accurately estimating the amount of motor fuel used by recreationists on federally-maintained roads to access non-motorized trailheads on Idaho’s national forests would require an intensive survey approach. Details of the methodology used in Washington are presented here to illustrate the magnitude of effort. (See Hebert Research, Inc. 2003 for complete methodology.)

The Washington State Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) Fuel Use Survey involved a year-long mail survey process. For the survey sample, about 127,000 owners of motor vehicles were randomly selected from the state’s database of 5.1 million street-licensed and registered off-road vehicles. The sample was stratified both by vehicle type (passenger cars and SUVs, pickup trucks, motorcycles, motor homes, ORVs/ATVs) and relative county population (small, medium, large) to ensure the study was representative of smaller communities and less common segments of the population.

The study used a two-week diary questionnaire format in which participants were asked, for a specific vehicle and two-week period, to provide the number of miles traveled (on highways and streets, back roads, or off road) and, if they used back roads or went off road, the recreational activities in which they participated. They also were asked to estimate the miles per gallon they got when using the vehicle on highways or streets, back roads, or off road.

Over the course of the year, 24 two-week periods were sampled with almost 43,000 surveys mailed. The survey response rate for the year was 25.5% and provided a statistically reliable sample that met the study’s needs.

Equipment Taxes

New taxes on outdoor recreation equipment have been proposed as a method to fund recreation opportunities, including non-motorized trail maintenance. Equipment tax proposals usually fall into two categories: excise tax or sales tax. An excise tax is an indirect tax, meaning that it is paid by producers, manufacturers, or importers of a good, who then pass the cost on to consumers. The federal government provides the most well-known examples of excise taxes used for recreational opportunities. The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (16 U.S. Code § 669 et. seq.), also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, uses an excise tax on ammunition, firearms, and archery equipment (26 U.S. Code § 4161(b) and § 4181) to fund wildlife restoration projects including those that support wildlife-associated recreation. Similarly, the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S. Code § 777 et seq.), also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, uses an excise tax on sport fishing equipment to fund fish restoration and management projects that support recreational fishing.

Several proposals at the federal level for additional excise taxes on outdoor recreation equipment have been put forward in the past (see, e.g., Crompton and Decker 1989, Franklin and Reis 1996). Outdoor recreation equipment manufacturers and others have resisted such proposals (e.g., Secunda, no date; Buck 1996; Boian 2016), and none have been implemented. Criticisms have included poor linkages between those who benefit and those who pay (e.g., many daypacks or athletic shoes are not used for outdoor recreation), and administrative complexities for small or out-of-state manufacturers, particularly if the excise tax is implemented by a single state.

A sales tax is a consumption tax levied on the sale of goods or services usually at the point of sale to a consumer and calculated as a percentage of the purchase price. Sales taxes dedicated to outdoor recreation activities, in particular wildlife conservation, exist in several states. Arkansas has a 1/8 of 1% general sales tax that is dedicated to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (45%), Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism (45%), Arkansas Department of Heritage (9%), and Keep Arkansas Beautiful fund (1%; Constitution of the State of Arkansas of 1874, Amendment 75). Missouri has a similar general sales tax (1/8 of 1%) for use by the Missouri Department of Conservation for fish, wildlife, and forestry purposes (Constitution of the State of Missouri, Article IV, § 43(a)).

Texas allocates a portion of its general sales tax revenue to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department based on how much sales tax was collected on the sale, storage, and use of sporting goods (Texas Tax Code, Title 2, § 151.801). The department can use the revenues for operation of outdoor recreation resources, among other uses (Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Title 3, § 24.002). The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts estimates revenue from the sales tax on sporting goods by using a national market survey. Interestingly, according to the controller's estimates, nearly two-thirds of the sporting goods sales tax revenue is generated from sales of bicycles and related supplies, hunting and firearms equipment, exercise equipment, and fishing tackle (Texas Legislative Budget Board 2016).

Virginia also allocates a portion of its general sales tax revenue to a capital improvement fund used by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The proportion is based on 2.0% of estimated sales of hunting equipment, auxiliary hunting equipment, fishing equipment, auxiliary fishing equipment, wildlife-watching equipment, and auxiliary wildlife-watching equipment in the state (Code of Virginia § 58.1-638(E)).

In 2008, Minnesota voters approved a general sales tax increase of 0.375% that is allocated to several funds, including 14.25% of additional revenues to the Parks and Trails Fund (Minn. Const., Art. X, § 15). This fund has been used for a variety of trail maintenance projects on state lands (Minnesota's Legacy 2017), and revenue into it averaged \$26.0 million annually from FY 2014-2016 (Minnesota Management and Budget 2017).

Lottery Proceeds

Several states contribute a portion of their state lottery proceeds to outdoor recreation funding. For example, Arizona allocates \$10 million of its state lottery revenue to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Heritage Fund (Arizona Revised Statutes § 5-572). A portion of the fund may be spent on maintenance, with some restrictions (ARS § 17-298). From FY 1990 to FY 2011, a \$10 million portion of the state's lottery revenues also went into the Arizona State Parks Board Heritage Fund; however, the 2010 Arizona Legislature repealed that fund's enabling and funding statute due to fiscal hardships resulting from the recession of 2008-2009. This action eliminated \$500,000 in non-motorized trail development funds (Arizona State Parks 2015).

Maine has a specific state lottery game—Maine Outdoor Heritage Lottery Ticket—that provides revenues to the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund managed by the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board and the Maine Department of

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (Maine Revised Statutes, Title 8, § 374 and § 387; and Title 12, § 10302 et seq.). Up to 35% of the fund is available through grants in part to maintain state and local natural resource conservation programs and associated compatible public uses, including recreational facility maintenance (Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, § 10303; and Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board 2014). Federal agencies are not eligible to receive grant funding, but it is unclear whether funds could be spent for projects on federal lands.

The Colorado Constitution (Article XXVII) establishes the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) program. The GOCO program is funded entirely by revenues from the Colorado state lottery. Ten percent of lottery net revenues go to the Colorado Division of Parks and Recreation for acquisition, development, and improvement of new and existing state parks, recreation areas and recreational trails. Forty percent of lottery net revenues go to the Conservation Trust Fund, allocated to local governments by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of new conservation sites or for the capital improvement or maintenance of public recreation sites such as parks and open spaces. Up to 50% of lottery net revenues, up to a statutory limit, are allocated to a GOCO trust fund managed by a board that consists of two members of the public from each congressional district in the state, a representative designated by the Colorado State Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, a representative designated by the Colorado Wildlife Commission, and the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The purposes of the GOCO trust fund are investments in the wildlife resources through the Colorado Division of Wildlife, investments in outdoor recreation resources through the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, including trails in state parks, competitive grants to counties, municipalities, other state government entities, and nonprofit organizations to manage open space and natural areas of statewide significance, and competitive matching grants to local governments or other entities to manage open lands and parks. GOCO has several grant programs, including a Youth Corp program that funds trail maintenance.¹⁵ Federal agencies are not eligible to receive GOCO funding, but they may be able to partner with eligible organizations to accomplish work on federal lands that meets GOCO objectives. The extent to which GOCO funding has been used for non-motorized trail maintenance, on any land ownership, is unknown.

Minnesota allocates 0.375% of its gross state lottery receipts (in lieu of sales tax) to a variety of funds including 22.5% of 72.43% of the revenues to the Natural Resource Fund to be used for state parks and trails (Minnesota Statutes 297A.94). Between FY 2014 and FY 2016 appropriations to the state parks and trails portion of this fund averaged \$6.0 million annually (Minnesota Management and Budget 2017). The remainder of the lottery tax revenues go to several other natural resource-related funds that also finance outdoor recreation opportunities.

Other Revenue Programs

Several other funding mechanisms states use to provide outdoor recreation opportunities were identified, but none specifically target non-motorized trail maintenance. For example, income tax checkoffs, where taxpayers voluntarily pay more tax that is then directed to a specific fund, are used by 30 states to fund nongame wildlife preservation and by six states to fund state parks (NASL 2016). Numerous states use taxes on real estate transfers to fund land conservation programs that support outdoor recreation (Walker and Crompton 2005).

A legislative task force in Oregon recently completed a review of more than 100 funding options to increase support for fishing, wildlife and related outdoor recreation and education with part of the funding targeted at deferred maintenance (HB 2402 Joint Interim Task Force Oregon Legislature 2016). The task force identified an income tax surcharge and a wholesale beverage surcharge as preferred funding mechanisms for Oregon. The proposed income tax surcharge would be graduated from \$0 for those earning less than \$25,000 to almost \$80 for those earning more than \$150,000. The proposed beverage surcharge would be 2.19% at the wholesale level resulting in about a \$0.07 increase in the retail price of a 6-pack of soda. The task force felt these two options best meet their evaluation criteria: providing sufficient revenue that will increase with population growth; broad-based with minimal financial impact on any group of individuals, communities, or interests; cost effective; and a strong connection between the source of funding and the benefit received. The wholesale beverage surcharge also captures revenue from out-of-state visitors. The task force estimated increased funding from each option at \$43 million annually.

¹⁵ <http://www.goco.org/grants/apply/youth-corps>

CONCLUSIONS

IDPR's commitment to trails as expressed in the department's strategic plan is: "No net loss of motorized or non-motorized access to recreational trails," where access means not only a point of entry but the full recreational opportunities that trails provide (IDPR 2016b). Idaho's national forests contain about 10,000 miles of non-motorized trails. These trails provide recreation for thousands of visitors each year, which helps support many of Idaho's rural communities. Trail maintenance is important not only for recreationists' experiences, but for protecting soil, water, and other resources affected by trail use.

The state of Idaho through IDPR supports trail maintenance on national forests through a variety of funding mechanisms. The federally-funded but state-administered RTP program provides the most support. IDPR awards approximately \$406,000 annually directly to national forests for trail maintenance projects (both motorized and non-motorized) and another \$373,000 to organizations that potentially could partner with national forests for trail maintenance activities. Smaller amounts of funding are provided through IDPR's Non-Motorized Trails Program, motor vehicle specialty license plates, and winter recreational parking permits.

The primary USFS budget allocation for trail maintenance on Idaho's national forests—Capital Improvement and Maintenance-Trails (CMTL)—declined 19% from FY 2011 to FY 2015. Future federal budget allocations for trail maintenance are uncertain, but the USFS FY 2018 budget proposes an 84% decrease in CMTL funding nationally.¹⁶

The USFS relies heavily on volunteers and partner groups for trail maintenance. In recognition of the value of volunteers and their increasing importance given future budget concerns, Congress passed the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act in 2016 with the goal of increasing the role of volunteers and partners in maintaining national forest trails. However, other changes, such as reduced staffing and increased training requirements for volunteer sawyers, may discourage volunteerism.

Data that show trends specific to the backlog of maintenance of non-motorized trails on national forests statewide in Idaho are lacking. USFS trail maintenance data are not reported separately for non-motorized and motorized trails. Data that were available showed an increasing trend in miles of trails maintained annually from FY 2008 to FY 2016, but the percentage of trails maintained to National Quality Standards remained steady at about 30%. Such trends suggest a growing need for trail maintenance, particularly in light of the effects of recent large wildfires and USFS workforce reductions. Establishing a state or national monitoring system that tracks trail maintenance separated by motorized and non-motorized trails, as well as cost estimates for increasing the percentage of trails meeting standards and addressing maintenance backlog, would be useful for informing policy makers and establishing funding priorities.

A statewide assessment of the effects of the lack of trail maintenance does not exist, but would also be useful for informing policy decisions. More comprehensive data are needed of both the physical and ecological effects of lack of trail maintenance (e.g., erosion, noxious weeds) as well as effects on recreationists' uses and experiences. Basic data about the number of recreationists using non-motorized trails also are needed.

Without additional funding for maintenance through existing or new dedicated sources, non-motorized trail opportunities on Idaho's national forests are likely to decline. Opportunities to increase state support for non-motorized trail maintenance on national forests under existing programs include encouraging the purchase of specialty license plates and winter recreational parking permits. Increased General Fund support of the IDPR's Non-Motorized Trails Program also could augment trail maintenance activities. Systems used by other states to fund outdoor recreation opportunities include user fees, motor fuel tax allocation, excise or sales taxes on equipment, lottery proceeds, income tax form checkoffs, and real estate transfer taxes. Such systems have potential for adoption to assist with non-motorized trail maintenance on Idaho's national forests.

¹⁶ <https://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/usfs-fy18-budget-overview.pdf>.

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APPENDIX A. National Forest Trail Management System.

Table A-1. National Forest System Trail Classes.

<p>WFO AMENDMENT 2309.18-2008-3 EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/16/2008 DURATION: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.</p>	<p>2309.18_10 Page 8 of 26</p>
<p>FSH 2309.18 - TRAILS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK CHAPTER 10 - TRAIL PLANNING</p>	

14.2 - Exhibit 01

TRAIL CLASS MATRIX

Trail Classes are general categories reflecting trail development scale, arranged along a continuum. The Trail Class identified for a National Forest System (NFS) trail prescribes its development scale, representing its intended design and management standards.¹ Local deviations from any Trail Class descriptor may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, or other factors, provided that the deviations are consistent with the general intent of the applicable Trail Class.

Identify the appropriate Trail Class for each NFS trail or trail segment based on the management intent in the applicable land management plan, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Apply the Trail Class that most closely reflects the management intent for the trail or trail segment, which may or may not reflect the current condition of the trail.

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Tread & Traffic Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tread intermittent and often indistinct. ♦ May require route finding. ♦ Single lane, with no allowances constructed for passing. ♦ Predominantly native materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tread continuous and discernible, but narrow and rough. ♦ Single lane, with minor allowances constructed for passing. ♦ Typically native materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tread continuous and obvious. ♦ Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volume in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. ♦ Native or imported materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tread wide and relatively smooth, with few irregularities. ♦ Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volume in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. ♦ Double lane where traffic volume is high and passing is frequent. ♦ Native or imported materials. ♦ May be hardened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tread wide, firm, stable, and generally uniform. ♦ Single lane, with frequent turnouts where traffic volume is low to moderate. ♦ Double lane where traffic volume is moderate to high. ♦ Commonly hardened with asphalt or other imported material.

continued.

WO AMENDMENT 2309.18-2008-3
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/16/2008
DURATION: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

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14.2 - Exhibit 01--Continued

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles common, naturally occurring, often substantial, and intended to provide increased challenge. Narrow passages; brush, steep grades, rocks and logs present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles may be common, substantial, and intended to provide increased challenge. Blockages cleared to define route and protect resources. Vegetation may encroach into trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles may be common, but not substantial or intended to provide challenge. Vegetation cleared outside of trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles infrequent and insubstantial. Vegetation cleared outside of trailway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles not present. Grades typically < 8%.
Constructed Features & Trail Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures minimal to non-existent. Drainage typically provided without structures. Natural fords. Typically no bridges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures of limited size, scale, and quantity; typically constructed of native materials. Structures adequate to protect trail infrastructure and resources. Natural fords. Bridges as needed for resource protection and appropriate access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures may be common and substantial; constructed of imported or native materials. Natural or constructed fords. Bridges as needed for resource protection and appropriate access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures frequent and substantial; typically constructed of imported materials. Contracted or natural fords. Bridges as needed for resource protection and user convenience. Trailside amenities may be present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures frequent or continuous; typically constructed of imported materials. May include bridges, boardwalks, curbs, handrails, trailside amenities, and similar features.

continued.

Table A-1. continued.

W/O AMENDMENT 2309.18-2008-3
 EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/16/2008
 DURATION: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

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14.2 - Exhibit 01--Continued

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Signs²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route identification signing limited to junctions. Route markers present when trail location is not evident. Regulatory and resource protection signing infrequent. Destination signing, unless required, generally not present. Information and interpretive signing generally not present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route identification signing limited to junctions. Route markers present when trail location is not evident. Regulatory and resource protection signing infrequent. Destination signing typically infrequent outside wilderness areas; generally not present in wilderness areas. Information and interpretive signing uncommon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route identification signing at junctions and as needed for user reassurance. Route markers as needed for user reassurance. Regulatory and resource protection signing may be common. Destination signing likely outside wilderness areas; generally not present in wilderness areas. Information and interpretive signs may be present outside wilderness areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route identification signing at junctions and as needed for user reassurance. Route markers as needed for user reassurance. Regulatory and resource protection signing common. Destination signing common outside wilderness areas; generally not present in wilderness areas. Information and interpretive signs may be common outside wilderness areas. Accessibility information likely displayed at trailhead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route identification signing at junctions and as needed for user reassurance. Route markers as needed for user reassurance. Regulatory and resource protection signing common. Destination signing common. Information and interpretive signs common. Accessibility information likely displayed at trailhead.
Typical Recreation Environments & Experience³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural and unmodified. ROS: Typically Primitive to Rooded Natural. WROS: Typically Primitive to Semi-Primitive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural and essentially unmodified. ROS: Typically Primitive to Rooded Natural. WROS: Typically Primitive to Semi-Primitive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural and primarily unmodified. ROS: Typically Primitive to Rooded Natural. WROS: Typically Semi-Primitive to Transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be modified. ROS: Typically Semi-Primitive to Rural Transition. WROS: Typically Portal or Transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be highly modified. Commonly associated with visitor centers or high-use recreation sites. ROS: Typically Rooded Natural to Urban. Generally not present in Wilderness areas.

¹ For National Quality Standards for Trails, Potential Appropriateness of Trail Classes for Managed Uses, Design Parameters, and other related guidance, refer to FSM 2353 and FSH 2309.18.

² For standards and guidelines on the use of signs and posters on trails, refer to the Sign and Poster Guidelines for the Forest Service (EM-7100-15).

³ The Trail Class Matrix shows combinations of Trail Class and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) or Wilderness Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WROS) settings that commonly occur, although trails in all Trail Classes may and do occur in all settings. For guidance on the application of the ROS and WROS, refer to FSM 2310 and 2353 and FSH 2309.18.

Source: USFS directives available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>.

Table A-2. National Forest System Managed Uses for Trails.

WO AMENDMENT 2309-18-2008-3
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 DURATION: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.
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14.3 - Exhibit 01

POTENTIAL APPROPRIATENESS OF TRAIL CLASSES FOR MANAGED USES

This matrix shows the potential appropriateness of each of the Trail Classes for the Managed Uses of National Forest System (NFS) trails. These combinations are generally applicable throughout the NFS, although local deviations may occur.

Managed Use	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Non-Motorized	Hiker/ Pedestrian Bicycle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standard Terra	Pack and Saddle	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
	Motorcycle	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
Standard Terra	All-Terrain Vehicle	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
	4WD Vehicle > 50"	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
Snow Trail	Cross-Country Ski	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
	Snowshoe	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
	Snowmobile	No, although may be allowed	Yes	Yes	No, although may be allowed
Water Trail	Motorized Watercraft	[Trail Class and Managed Use guidance to be developed]			
	Non-Motorized Watercraft	[Trail Class and Managed Use guidance to be developed]			

¹ Trail Class 1 includes the least developed and most challenging NFS trails. Trails in this category are typically very rugged and steep, with little or no defined tread or clearing and many or continuous obstacles.

² Trail Class 5 includes the most highly developed and least challenging NFS trails. Trails in this category are typically wide, paved, and heavily used and are also often fully accessible.

Source: USFS directives available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>.

Table A-3. National Forest System National Quality Standards for Trails.

WD AMENDMENT 2309.18-2008-3 EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/16/2008 DURATION: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.	2309.18_10 Page 18 of 28
FSH 2309.18 - TRAILS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK CHAPTER 10 - TRAIL PLANNING	

15 - Exhibit 01

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS FOR TRAILS

Key Measure: HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS

1. Visitors are not exposed to human waste along trails.
2. The trail and trailside are free of litter.
3. The trail and trailside are free of graffiti.

Key Measure: RESOURCE SETTING

1. *Effects from trail use do not conflict with environmental laws (such as the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Clean Water Act).¹
2. Resource management adjacent to and along the trail corridor is consistent with RDS objectives and desired conditions of adjacent management areas.
3. Trail opportunities, trail development, and trail management are consistent with the Recreation Management System (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, Scenery Management System, and Benefits Based Management) objectives and the applicable land management plan.
4. The trail, use of the trail, and trail maintenance do not cause unacceptable damage to other resources.
5. Trail use does not exceed trail capacity.

Key Measure: SAFETY & SECURITY

1. *Hazards do not exist on or along the trail.¹
2. Applicable laws, regulations, and special orders are enforced.

Key Measure: RESPONSIVENESS

1. *When a trail is signed as accessible, it meets current agency policy and accessibility guidelines.¹
2. Information is posted in a clear and professional manner.
3. Visitors are provided opportunities to communicate their expectations for and satisfaction with NFS trails.

Key Measure: CONDITION OF FACILITIES

1. Annual/Routine Maintenance. The trail and its structures are serviceable and in good repair throughout their designed service life.
2. Deferred Maintenance. Trails that are in disrepair due to lack of scheduled maintenance, are in violation of applicable safety codes or other regulatory requirements (such as applicable accessibility guidelines), or are beyond their designed service life are repaired, rehabilitated, replaced, or decommissioned, as appropriate.
3. Capital Improvement. New, altered, or expanded trails meet Forest Service design standards and are consistent with standards and guidelines in the applicable land management plan.

¹ Indicates a Critical National Quality Standard. If it cannot be met, action must be taken as soon as practicable to correct or mitigate the problem. Refer to FSH 2309.18, section 15.

Source: USFS directives available at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>.

APPENDIX B. Idaho's National Forests Trails Data.

Miles of Trail

Both the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) provided estimates of miles of trail on national forests in Idaho. The IDPR estimated there were 9,622 miles of non-motorized trails on Idaho's national forests (**Table B-1**). The USFS estimated there were 10,349 miles of non-motorized trails on Idaho's national forests (**Table B-2**). The difference in estimates exists for a variety of reasons as described below.

Table B-1. Miles of Trails on Idaho's National Forests, 2017.

National Forest	Single-Track			TOTAL
	Motorized	ATV	Non-Motorized*	
Bitterroot**	0	0	552	552
Boise	791	433	561	1,785
Caribou-Targhee	505	894	1,094	2,493
Clearwater	280	761	1,201	2,242
Idaho Panhandle	555	772	918	2,245
Kootenai**	0	0	19	19
Nez Perce	496	144	1,336	1,977
Payette	509	103	1,268	1,880
Salmon-Challis	476	268	1,739	2,484
Sawtooth	748	196	719	1,663
Wallowa-Whitman**	0	0	215	215
Total	4,361	3,571	9,622	17,554

*Includes both Wilderness and General Forest Area (outside designated Wilderness).
 **Trails located in Idaho but administered by a national forest in an adjacent state.
 Data source: IDPR.

Table B-2. Miles of Trails on Idaho's National Forests, FY 2012.

National Forest	Motorized	Non-Motorized*	Wilderness**	Non-Motorized plus Wilderness	TOTAL
Boise	1,520	424	13	437	1,957
Payette	743	691	668	1,359	2,102
Salmon-Challis	1,305	881	1,310	2,191	3,496
Sawtooth	1,408	672	225	897	2,305
Caribou-Targhee	2,317	1,385	176	1,561	3,878
Idaho Panhandle	2,988	1,167	11	1,178	4,166
Clearwater	1,505	924	341	1,265	2,770
Nez Perce	1,052	444	1,017	1,461	2,513
Total	12,838	6,588	3,761	10,349	23,187

*In General Forest Area (outside designated Wilderness).
 **Motorized uses are prohibited by statute in designated Wilderness.
 Data source: USFS.

IDPR used a geodatabase to estimate the miles of trail within the state boundary of Idaho. Some trails within the boundary of Idaho are administered by a national forest in an adjacent state. For example, trails in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in Idaho are administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest headquartered in Baker City, Oregon. The USFS estimate was based on the national forest within Idaho that administers the trail. Some trail miles in an adjoining state that are administered by an Idaho national forest were potentially counted as trails physically located in Idaho. Additional reasons for the difference in estimates include that the IDPR estimate was based on 2017 data while the USFS estimate was based on FY 2012 data, and the IDPR analysis eliminated some trail miles because they were not in a usable condition or under emergency closure.

The difference in motorized trail mileage between the IDPR and USFS estimates is likely due in part to differences in how primitive roads or wider trails open to larger 4x4 vehicles were accounted for.

The USFS was also able to provide estimates of trail mileage in Idaho over time (**Table B-3**). Between FY 2007 and FY 2016, trail mileage (both non-motorized and motorized) increased 8% from 21,189 miles to 23,168 miles. This is due to a variety of factors including re-designation of roads to trails when roads were closed to cross country motorized travel or logging roads were converted to trails, and improved accuracy through updated mapping.

Table B-3. Miles of Trails on Idaho’s National Forests, FY 2007-2016.

Year	Caribou-		Salmon-		Idaho	Nez	Clearwater*	TOTAL	
	Boise	Targhee	Payette	Challis					
2007	1,617	3,634	2,265	3,372	2,164	3,154	2,879	2,103	21,189
2008	1,653	3,605	2,265	3,373	2,271	3,372	2,869	2,140	21,547
2009	1,722	3,637	2,126	3,457	2,284	3,403	2,722	2,151	21,502
2010	1,934	3,699	2,124	3,501	2,275	3,811	2,719	2,767	22,830
2011	1,940	3,764	2,100	3,501	2,312	4,120	2,457	2,785	22,978
2012	1,952	3,779	2,101	3,489	2,304	5,081	2,513	2,767	23,985
2013	1,954	4,190	2,102	3,460	2,306	4,164	2,513	2,728	23,417
2014	1,938	3,947	1,843	3,484	2,494	4,133	5,245		23,084
2015	1,970	3,950	1,841	3,453	2,492	4,117	5,276		23,099
2016	2,010	3,962	1,846	3,444	2,499	4,127	5,280		23,168

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes beginning in FY 2014.
Data source: USFS.

Trail Maintenance

Trail maintenance data over time was provided by the USFS (Table B-4, Table B-5, and Table B-6).

Table B-4. Miles of Trails Maintained to Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2006-2016.

Fiscal Year	Caribou-		Salmon-		Idaho		Nez		Total
	Boise	Targhee	Payette	Challis	Sawtooth	Panhandle	Perce*	Clearwater*	
2006	197	160	250	353	500	557	580	1300	2,897
2007	296	238	328	436	460	661	680	365	3,464
2008	595	356	345	473	451	863	1,154	503	4,741
2009	608	545	517	523	708	960	850	600	5,311
2010	611	520	505	340	1,079	1,367	850	1,510	6,782
2011	884	798	872	319	1,775	1,783	1,246	796	8,472
2012	660	629	781	610	1,018	1,507	1,293	1,225	7,722
2013	920	744	785	922	918	1,135	1,053	996	7,474
2014	700	624	896	577	1,284	1,130	1,885		7,095
2015	592	1,172	854	514	1,143	1,709	1,718		7,703
2016	920	1,102	884	1,031	1,195	1,354	2,122		8,608

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes beginning in FY 2014.
Data source: USFS.

Table B-5. Miles of Trails Improved to Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2007-2016.

Fiscal Year	Caribou-		Salmon-		Idaho		Nez		Total
	Boise	Targhee	Payette	Challis	Sawtooth	Panhandle	Perce*	Clearwater*	
2007	2	1	0	0	3	7	88	20	121
2008	0	9	8	8	10	54	26	22	137
2009	5	5	2	2	8	0	25	15	62
2010	7	9	4	3	55	83	25	30	215
2011	32	9	2	10	26	54	25	24	181
2012	0	15	11	16	12	71	33	56	215
2013	16	11	2	70	11	51	17	24	201
2014	6	30	2	34	3	40	35		149
2015	4	14	1	16	27	158	37		258
2016	5	7	1	29	17	210	43		312

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes beginning in FY 2014.
Data source: USFS.

Table B-6. Miles of Trails Meeting Standard, Idaho National Forests, FY 2008-2016.

Fiscal Year	Caribou-		Salmon-		Idaho		Nez	Clearwater*	Total
	Boise	Targhee	Payette	Challis	Sawtooth	Panhandle	Perce*		
2008	482	980	535		451	600	1,233	700	4,981
2009	991	980	1,015	1,000	617	12	1,290	1,100	7,005
2010	1,122	260	950	1,500	713	800	1,355	1,450	8,150
2011	720	393	1,089	430	1,760	433	1,379	1,033	7,237
2012	656	846	733	432	1,001	1,033	1,436	1,323	7,460
2013	772	738	738	412	1,051	862	1,355	1,008	6,936
2014	840	123	706	557	842	970	1,951		5,989
2015	592	263	332	469	1,048	1,336	1,621		5,659
2016	810	172	937	403	1,196	1,187	2,118		6,823

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes beginning in FY 2014.
Data source: USFS.

Trail Maintenance Funding

The USFS provided data on the Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) budget, the main federal source of trail maintenance funding, for three fiscal years (2007, 2011, 2015) by national forest in Idaho (**Table B-7**).

The Policy Analysis Group used data from IDPR reports of recreational grants to estimate how much Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding was awarded for trail maintenance funding between FY 2009 and FY 2017 (**Table B-8**).

Table B-7. Capital Improvement and Maintenance—Trails (CMTL) Budget for Idaho’s National Forests, FY 2007, FY 2011, FY 2015.

National Forest	FY 2007		FY 2011		FY 2015	
	nominal	adjusted**	nominal	adjusted**	nominal	adjusted**
Boise	\$206,350	\$235,883	\$559,547	\$589,592	\$357,771	\$357,771
Caribou-Targhee	\$445,222	\$508,943	\$719,496	\$758,129	\$637,340	\$637,340
Payette	\$297,481	\$340,057	\$451,738	\$475,994	\$338,321	\$338,321
Salmon-Challis	\$459,314	\$525,051	\$629,360	\$663,153	\$665,805	\$665,805
Sawtooth	\$475,011	\$542,995	\$534,990	\$563,716	\$546,347	\$546,347
Idaho Panhandle	\$746,104	\$852,887	\$1,021,100	\$1,075,928	\$911,849	\$911,849
Clearwater*	\$566,369	\$647,428	\$710,800	\$748,966		
Nez Perce*	\$875,498	\$1,000,800	\$1,018,100	\$1,072,766	\$1,374,368	\$1,374,368
Total	\$4,073,356	\$4,654,045	\$5,647,142	\$6,023,282	\$4,833,816	\$4,833,816

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes beginning in FY 2014.
**Adjusted for inflation to 2015 dollars using U.S. Consumer Price Index (2007=207.342, 2011=224.939, 2015=240.007).
Data source: USFS.

Table B-8. RTP Funding for Trail Maintenance in Idaho’s National Forests, FY 2009-2017.

Fiscal Year	Boise	Caribou- Targhee	Payette***	Salmon- Challis	Sawtooth**	Idaho Panhandle	Nez Perce*	Clearwater*	Total
2009				\$226,880		\$164,180	\$9,504	\$22,500	\$423,064
2010		\$41,000				\$103,415		\$68,233	\$212,648
2011	\$49,200	\$62,092				\$81,200			\$192,492
2012	\$253,924	\$15,000	\$106,000		\$82,800	\$90,440	\$80,000		\$628,164
2013	\$7,500	\$71,828	\$60,000		\$46,700	\$138,500			\$324,528
2014		\$77,538		\$20,000	\$123,730	\$187,685			\$408,953
2015		\$68,092	\$46,994		\$166,592	\$238,274			\$519,952
2016		\$49,228	\$30,186	\$5,500	\$140,629	\$117,079	\$52,775		\$395,397
2017		\$37,400		\$107,000	\$148,739	\$62,555			\$355,694

NOTES: Includes projects where national forest was direct recipient of RTP funding, not projects that funded other organizations that may have performed trail maintenance on national forests. Includes projects described as maintenance, reconstruction, and rehabilitation, but not new construction. Motorized versus non-motorized trail maintenance could not be distinguished so both are included.

RTP funds are distributed to states based in part on estimates of non-highway recreational fuel use for each state. Revised estimates for fuel use for FY 2009 to FY 2012 contributed to the large increase between FY 2011 and FY 2012. (See https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/funding/fueluse_est_2012.cfm.)

Dollar values in **Figure 7** are adjusted for inflation to 2017 using the U.S. Consumer Price Index (2009=214.537, 2010=218.056, 2011=224.939, 2012=229.594, 2013=232.957, 2014=236.736, 2015=237.017, 2016=240.007, 2017=244.076).

*The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests were combined for reporting purposes in FY 2012.

**Sawtooth National Forest includes projects in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

***Payette National Forest includes projects in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

Data Source: IDPR, County Recreational Grant Awards (by Fiscal Year), <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/grants-and-funding>.

APPENDIX C. IDPR Proposal for Stewardship Priority Area under National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act.



C. L. "Butch" Otter
Governor

David R. Langhorst
Director

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I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (H.R. 845)*. We are excited at the possibilities it provides, and the associated recognition of the importance in maintaining recreation opportunities on USFS lands for the enjoyment of the public. The emphasis on coordinated volunteer efforts is a welcome approach, and critical to solving the maintenance backlog we collectively find ourselves facing.

While there are no doubt thousands of miles of trails across the country in need of repair/maintenance, we feel strongly the central portion of Idaho has reached a critical juncture and should be prioritized as an area of emphasis. More specifically, we'd like for you to consider this area as one of the "priority" areas, as identified in H.R. 845.

The borders of this particular area would be defined as follows: North on state highway 55 (from the juncture FH 24, Banks, Idaho) to state highway 95. North on state highway 95 to the juncture with state highway 13. Northeast on state highway 13 to the juncture with state highway 12. East on state highway 12 to the juncture with state highway 93. South on state highway 93 to the juncture with highway 75. West on state highway 75 to the juncture with highway 21. West on Forest Highway 24 back to the juncture with state highway 55. An enclosed map is included for the sake of reference.

This area is unique for a variety of reasons, most notably for including the entire Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. Outfitters, hikers, and equestrians have all expressed concern over trails effectively disappearing in this area due to lack of maintenance and associated use.

These trails have immeasurable historical and recreational value, and once served as the conduit for advocacy of the original Wilderness designation of these lands. While the Wilderness designation limits use and access by design, it simply must have *some* degree of access for people to enjoy its benefit.

Those that advocate for state control over federal lands (in Idaho at least), are pointing to this particular area as an example of the need for "change" of land management in general. While we are extremely sympathetic to the reduced recreation budget allocations of the USFS, there is no arguing that some type of focused, concerted effort needs to be made or those voices will continue to get louder.

Additionally, this area of central Idaho has some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. The loss of traditional, extraction-based revenue through logging, grazing, and the timber industries has severely impacted rural communities in this area. Many of those communities are transitioning into a recreation-focused economy, only to see their “product” eroding to an inaccessible, and largely “unmanaged” landscape. We see H.R. 845 as an opportunity to address those very real financial and recreational losses.

If you are not already aware, IDPR distributes \$6-10 *million* dollars in grants annually for recreation providers across the state. Approximately \$3 million dollars of that is specifically ear-marked for trail opportunities in particular. Identifying this area as a “priority” area would likely communicate a sense of urgency to both the IDPR Board and the associated grant committees that could result in increased funding for this area.

We are sufficiently concerned about this issue that we are also prepared to offer state assistance and resources to assist the USFS in implementing HR 845. We have a Non-Motorized Trails Program Manager (Leo Hennessy) and an Outdoor Recreation Analyst (Jeff Cook) we will make available for this effort. Between them they have 40+ years of experience in trails maintenance and management. By leveraging existing relationships with USFS recreation staff, user groups and the public, we believe they can lend considerable technical expertise to the process of determining priority trails, coordinating volunteer projects, and tracking progress.

I have also instructed our Recreation Programs Bureau Chief (Dave Claycomb) to do whatever he feels is necessary to ensure the success of this effort, should this area be selected as one of the “priority” areas. Dave has previously served as the IDPR Grant Program Manager and IDPR State OHV Trails Program Manager and brings a unique background of technical, financial, and management experience to the table.

Finally, I believe it’s important to note that we brought a wide-spectrum of stakeholders together to discuss this potential priority area and the idea of our department lending staff support to the project. Both ideas met with unanimous support. Some of those stakeholders include the Backcountry Horseman Association, Idaho Trails Association, Idaho Conservation League, the Valley County Economic Development Council, the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, and the Idaho Recreation Council.

I thank you again for the opportunity to provide input in this process, and look forward to seeing the successful implementation of H.R. 845 across the national landscape.

Sincerely,



David R. Langhorst, Director

Enclosure

Cc: Kent Wellner
Chris Hartman

