

June 12, 2017

Mr. Mick Mulvaney, Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

The 124 undersigned organizations represent millions of Americans who partake in outdoor recreation on this nation's forests, parks, and other public lands. Our members ski, climb, mountain bike, paddle, hike, and camp on public lands and they reap enormous benefits from these experiences. To pursue these activities, our members depend on having access to federal lands where they can immerse themselves in nature with their friends and families, away from urban areas and development.

On March 13th 2017, the President signed Executive Order 13781 directing you to develop a plan for reorganizing the executive branch including recommending agencies, programs, and functions for elimination.¹ Subsequently, you launched a 28-day comment period asking the American public to weigh in on how to reorganize, reduce, and eliminate agencies.² **We write to you today to express our strong support for continued and robust investment in the conservation and recreation programs of the land management agencies: the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.** Together, these agencies administer on behalf of the American people 674 million acres of lands that see over half a billion visits annually.³

For a modest investment (less than 0.4% of the federal budget), our federal land management agencies generate innumerable benefits worth billions of dollars. They provide us clean water and air, trails and campgrounds, and unmatched outdoor recreation experiences. Most importantly, they provide the recreation infrastructure and opportunities that fuel a \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy that generates 7.6 million jobs.⁴ In the 12 Western states alone, the agencies manage 193,500 miles of hiking trails and 12,659 miles of mountain bike trails. Likewise, virtually all backcountry skiing, 43% of whitewater paddling, and 71% of climbing in the West occurs on lands managed by these agencies⁵.

Funding the recreation and conservation programs of these agencies has an outsized impact and is a great investment for the American people. Consider that recreational visits to parks, forests, refuges, and other public lands generate \$33 billion in direct spending and nearly 600,000 jobs, and contribute \$37 billion to GDP annually.⁶ Consider also that the clean water that our national forests provide to over 66

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/13/presidential-executive-order-comprehensive-plan-reorganizing-executive>

² 82 Fed. Reg. 22355 (March 15, 2017)

³ See US Forest Service, 2012. National Visitor Use Monitoring Report. Available at: https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/2012%20National_Summary_Report_061413.pdf, Page 24; National Park Service. Annual Visitation Highlights. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/annual-visitation-highlights.htm>; Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 2015. Public Lands Statistics. Page 186; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 2015.

⁴ Outdoor Industry Association, 2017. The Outdoor Recreation Economy. Available at: <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2017-outdoor-recreation-economy-report/>

⁵ Data from Winter Wildlands Alliance, American Whitewater, and Mountain Project

⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior Economic Report, FY 2015. Prepared by the Department of the Interior Office of Policy Analysis, June 17, 2016. Available at: https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy2015_doi_econ_report_2016-06-20.pdf. Table 2-2. See also US Forest Service, 2012. National Visitor Use Monitoring Report. Available at: https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/2012%20National_Summary_Report_061413.pdf. Page 24.

million people in 3,400 communities in 33 states is worth over \$7.2 billion annually.⁷ In that same vein, clean air, clean water and other ecological services provided by our National Wildlife Refuges provide \$32.3 billion in benefits to local communities.⁸

Outdoor recreationists understand the link between healthy lands and healthy lifestyles. **We therefore urge you not to cut – and in fact invest more – in the conservation and recreation programs administered by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. Likewise, we fully support the Environmental Protection Agency.** The EPA and its programs ensure that our public lands provide clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. Without the EPA our public lands will lose these essential qualities.

While we disagree with the premise that drastic changes to our federal land management agencies are necessary, to the extent that you intend to reorganize and possibly eliminate agencies, we respectfully request that you consider the importance of the federal land management agencies and their conservation and recreation programs. These include, but certainly are not limited to, the 1) Forest Service's Recreation, Wilderness, and Heritage; Legacy Roads and Trails; Trails; Land Management Planning, Assessment, and Monitoring; and Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Management Programs; 2) the BLM's Recreation Resources Management, National Landscape Conservation System; 3) The Operation of the National Park System, National Recreation and Preservation, and many other accounts within the National Park Service budget; and 4) Cross-cutting programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Adam Cramer
Executive Director
Outdoor Alliance
Washington D.C.

On behalf of the following organizations:

Alaska

Brian Okonek
President
Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition
Anchorage, AK

⁷ USDA Forest Service. Information on Water Resources. Available at:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/cs/detail!/ut/p/z0/04_Sj9CPyKssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfljo8zjiQwgnNHCwN_DI8zPyBcqYKBfkO2oCABZcx5g/?position=Contribution%20Content.Html&pname=Forest%20Service&ss=119995&navtype=SubNavigation&pnavid=110140100000000&navid=1101401100000000&ttype=detail&cid=stelprdb5107778

⁸ Southwick Associates, 2011. The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States For: The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/refuges/news/pdfs/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation%5B1%5D.pdf>

Alabama

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Anniston, AL

Mary Anne Swanstrom
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SORBA Huntsville
Huntsville, AL

James Wells
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Dothan, AL

Joe Fuller
Chapter President
West Alabama Mountain Bike Association
Tuscaloosa, AL

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Desert Foothills Mountain Bike Association
Cave Creek, AZ

Brent Roberts
Board President
Prescott mountain Bike Alliance
Prescott, AZ

Michael Bonnette
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Rim Country Mountain Biking Association
Payson, AZ

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Los Angeles, CA

Nate Greenberg
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Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center
Mammoth Lakes, CA

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Friends Of Joshua Tree
Joshua Tree, CA

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Meadow Valley, CA

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Friends of the Inyo
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Foundation
Mammoth Lakes, CA

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Mono Lake Committee
Lee Vining, CA

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San Diego, CA

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SHARE Mountain Bike Club
Corona Del Mar, CA

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Tahoe Backcountry Alliance
South Lake Tahoe, CA

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(SEMBA)
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Boulder, CO

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Boulder, CO

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Overland Mountain Bike Club
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Protect Our Winters
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Sun Valley, ID

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Teton Valley Trails And Pathways
Driggs, ID

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Sun Valley, ID

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Olive Branch, MS

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Madison, MS

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Hilary Eisen
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Blue Mountain Singletrack Trails Club
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Chief Instigator and NCIA race league director
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President and Chief Coach
Mach One Slalom Team
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Cat Newsom
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South Carolina

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Midlands SORBA
Columbia, SC

Tennessee

Jason Campbell
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SORBA Mid TN
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Utah

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Shop Owner
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Moab Mountain Bike Association
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Canoe Kayak and Paddle Co. LLC
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rvaMORE
Richmond, VA

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Wenatchee, WA

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Spokane Mountaineers
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Seattle, WA

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Inland Northwest Backcountry Alliance
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The Mountaineers
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Jon Hoekstra
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Mountains to Sound Greenway
Seattle, WA

Shanna Gachen
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Washington Kayak Club
Seattle, WA

David Mainer
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Paddle Trails Canoe Club (200+ members)
Seattle, WA

Andrea Imler
Advocacy Director
Washington Trails Association
Seattle, WA

Wyoming

Charles Manganiello

Executive Director

Togwotee Backcountry Alliance

Lander, WY

Marco Restani

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Wyoming Wilderness Association

Sheridan, WY

cc. Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior
Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture
Senate Interior Appropriations Committee
House Interior Appropriations Committee