



July 11, 2018

Testimony of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks legislative hearing on "S. 3172, the Restore Our Parks Act"

Organization: Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Address: PO Box 9257, Missoula MT 59807

Point of Contact: Julia Peebles

Email: peebles@backcountryhunters.org

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Daines and Ranking Member King,

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) is a North American conservation organization that voices the concerns of sportsmen and women for our wild public lands, waters, and wildlife. We have 23,000 BHA members and represent 250,000 hunters and anglers continentwide.

Over the past five years, BHA doubled its membership annually and represents 68 percent sportsmen and women between the ages 18 and 45 years old. We are the fastest growing and the only hunting and fishing organization in North America that represents the younger generations.

We contact you regarding your hearing on the discussion of the National Parks Service maintenance backlog and Senator Rob Portman's (R-OH) bill, Restore Our Parks Act (S. 3172). I commend the Subcommittee's attention to this critical issue, but encourage you to amend S. 3172 and include two provisions, such as:

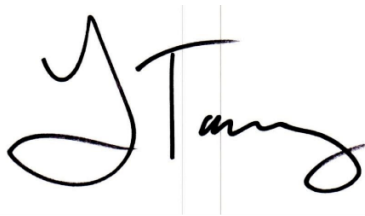
1. Permanently reauthorizing and dedicating funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF);
2. Expanding the National Park Service Legacy Fund Restoration Fund to all public land agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hunters and anglers depend on public lands to access the outdoors and create memories with family and friends. According to a recent study by the FWS, an estimated 36 percent of hunters in the United States and 72 percent of hunters located in the west depend on public lands. Without LWCF to enhance access to outdoor recreation, the future of hunting and fishing in places like Tenderfoot Creek, Montana where 8,200 acres of prime deer, elk, moose, and trout habitat reside, or Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Maine with valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds, are threatened.

While we believe it's important to resolve the NPS maintenance backlog, we cannot forget about the most critical public land agencies for hunting and fishing activities. According to Congressional Research Service, the total deferred maintenance for FS is \$5.49 billion, \$1.4 billion for FWS, and \$810 million for BLM. The deficiencies amongst three of the public land agencies **are not** insignificant and provide economic value to our annual \$887 billion outdoor economy.

Thank you for your attention and for this opportunity to submit testimony for the record. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and encourage you to amend the Restore Our Parks Act. It's vital to include permanent reauthorization and dedicate funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and address the maintenance backlog for all public land agencies in the legislation, so we can continue funding access to our nation's wild public lands, waters, and wildlife.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Land Tawney". The signature is stylized and written over a light gray grid background.

Land Tawney
President and CEO
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

cc: Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell