



ORR OUTDOOR RECREATION ROUNDTABLE

It's Time for Congress to Address the Maintenance Backlog on America's Public Lands and Waterways

The outdoor recreation economy is among our nation's leading economic sectors, with an **annual gross output of \$673 billion, or 2 percent of U.S. GDP**. America's public lands and waterways provide significant economic benefits, and proper maintenance is essential for providing public access and ensuring that the full economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry is realized. That is why it is time for Congress to address the **\$18.62 billion combined deferred maintenance and repair backlog** of the four major federal land and water management agencies.

As Congress debates a legislative solution, it must consider key factors:



DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS ARE IMPACTING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Recreational infrastructure, from roads and trails to campgrounds and water systems, is **suffering from accumulating deferred maintenance**, negatively impacting visitor access, enjoyment, and safety on public lands.



THE PARK SERVICE IS NOT ALONE IN SHOULDERING THE MAINTENANCE BACKLOG

While the National Park Service holds the largest share of the \$18 billion backlog, **all four major land management agencies face mounting deferred maintenance backlogs** that negatively impact outdoor recreational pursuits and the associated economic benefits. Any of the four federal land management agencies left out of the solution will **continue to be limited in ability to optimize multiple-use access, prioritize shared conservation stewardship, and serve the American public**.



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS MUST BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Public-private partnerships hold the potential to augment public financing of maintenance and repair projects. Federal land management agencies should be required to submit request for proposals to the public to operate, maintain, improve, or fund outdoor recreation assets with insufficient funding prior to closure, unless there is an imminent health or safety threat. This would provide opportunities for current businesses, non-profit organizations, volunteers, concessioners, and other governmental and private entities to weigh in on increasing access and improving infrastructure on public lands and waterways.

The longer this systemic problem continues, the more challenging it will be for the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to manage public lands and waters in a way that maximizes opportunities for recreational and conservation activities. Congress should act in a comprehensive manner—considering these key factors—to address the maintenance and repair backlog faced on America's public lands and waterways.