



PHOTO BY RYAN OJERIO

Eroding Access to Our Public Lands

The future of roads that connect us to the outdoors, from the frontcountry to the backcountry

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PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER PEACE4MEL

Washington Trails Association has a more than 50-year legacy of engaging the hiking community. WTA enhances hiking experiences in Washington state by empowering a diverse and growing community of hikers to explore, steward and protect trails and public lands. WTA is the nation's largest state-based trail maintenance and hiking advocacy nonprofit organization, with more than 26,000 members and an online community of more than 200,000. Each year more than 3,500 WTA volunteers perform over 125,000 hours of trail maintenance (\$4.78 million in donated labor) on federal, state and local lands across the state.

Acknowledgments

The information in this report is thanks to staff from Colville National Forest, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Olympic National Forest, Washington Trails Association and 1,271 individual hikers who participated in a public survey.



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER NILLOC29

Introduction

Ninety percent of Washington state residents use trails.¹ Each year, trails contribute over \$8.2 billion to Washington state's economy and support more than 81,000 jobs. Trail-based recreation is responsible for more than \$390 million in health savings annually.² Investing in our public lands benefits Washington's communities, economy and environment.

However, access to public lands is eroding over time. There are 90,000 miles of roads on national forests in Oregon and Washington. The U.S. Forest Service has approximately 15% of the budget it needs to maintain these roads.³ Nationally, the backlog of deferred maintenance for forest roads exceeds \$5 billion.⁴ This lack of funding for maintenance results in road conditions that discourage public use. Some roads are left undrivable, cutting off access to trails and entire trail networks in our national forests. The effects of a changing climate will only increase these maintenance needs and threats to outdoor access as wildfires and floods become more frequent and intense.

This report features 10 forest roads in Washington state that exemplify the need for road maintenance funding to preserve or regain outdoor access. Not only are these roads important individually, together they demonstrate how chronic underfunding of forest roads is rendering areas of our state's national forests inaccessible to the public.

The challenge: decreasing funding for forest roads

- Deferred maintenance for the U.S. Forest Service has grown over \$2 billion (38%) over the past decade (FY2013-FY2022)⁵, eroding access to public lands.
- The backlog of deferred maintenance for forest roads exceeds \$5 billion, and the effects of a changing climate will only increase these costs as more frequent floods and wildfires damage infrastructure.
- Lack of maintenance can leave roads undrivable, prevent recreation on public lands and cut off access to entire trail networks.
- When roads are not maintained, erosion and sediments flowing into nearby creeks and rivers can negatively impact the environment.

¹<https://wa-rco-scorp-2023-wa-rco.hub.arcgis.com/documents/3d212cbd61a6459ca5c3a8feeba8c2/explore>

²<https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/HikingBikingExecSummary.pdf>

³<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd485439>

⁴https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/FY23-Stats-Brochure.pdf

⁵<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R43997.pdf>

The need: reliable funding for forest roads

The people of Washington need Congress to invest in outdoor access and provide more resources to maintain key parts of the existing road system.

We need consistent annual appropriations that allow district rangers and local staff to strategically prioritize maintenance projects. The U.S. Forest Service needs a skilled workforce. Having sufficient staffing and local knowledge will allow national forests to maximize public benefits and steward natural resources and infrastructure. It is Congress's responsibility to ensure that the existing Forest Service road system is ecologically and financially sustainable. This means investing resources to protect watersheds and restore fish passage. It also means creating permanent cost savings by decommissioning unneeded roads, as determined by transportation planning. Lastly, we need stable funding outside of the annual appropriations process that is focused on high impact projects, so that we can work together to decrease the costly maintenance backlog on our public lands.

What is needed to improve current conditions

- **At least \$100M in annual appropriations for the U.S. Forest Service for capital improvement and maintenance (CIM) of roads.**
- **At least \$30M per year for the Legacy Roads and Trails program.**
- **Reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund, as has been proposed in the bipartisan America the Beautiful Act (S.5402 – 118th Congress).**

The opportunity: improved outdoor access and climate resilience

Funding forest roads will help secure a future where a variety of trails are available for different types of outdoor experiences, from backcountry trips to day hikes — resulting in more opportunities to get outside and less crowding at the most accessible trails.

The benefits of funding forest roads

Community health

Access to the outdoors is critical for people's physical and mental health — but without forest roads to drive on, many trails will be unreachable.

Climate resilience

Forest roads help increase public lands' climate resilience by providing safe exits during natural disasters and facilitating fire response.

Clean water

Well-maintained roads resist erosion and keep sediment out of streams to protect water quality and fish habitat.



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER RBS 13

WTA's vision of access

Everyone deserves time in nature. With Washington's population increasing and participation in outdoor recreation incredibly popular and good for people's health, we need to think proactively about the long-term sustainability of our state's trail systems. Climate change is bringing an increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires and more frequent flooding, leaving some trails and areas inaccessible. Meanwhile, government land managers have dwindling financial resources to meet these challenges and demands.

WTA envisions a statewide trail network providing outdoor experiences for all types of visitors, including barrier-free trails, family-friendly hikes and multi-day remote backpacking trips. WTA is committed to creating a sustainable trail system that supports the core human need for time in nature as well as the conservation of our public lands. This includes a system of backcountry roads designed and maintained to provide outdoor access while minimizing environmental impacts. This report is an articulation of that vision, and a tool that WTA will use to advocate for appropriate road access to our public lands.



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER NILLOC29

Hiker survey on forest road conditions

In August 2024, WTA solicited feedback from the hiking community on forest roads and their conditions. Themes that emerged from the 1,271 responses to the survey included:

- Forest roads support mental and physical health by providing access to outdoor places.
- Forest roads connect people to beloved places in our state.
- Access to hiking opportunities is decreasing over time because of road conditions.
- Road conditions can deter visitation because of safety concerns (getting in an accident or becoming stranded) or the potential for expensive car damage.
- Some forest roads can only be traveled by expensive high-clearance vehicles, causing inequitable access to our public lands.
- Improved road conditions could disperse hikers to more trailheads.
- Road conditions can deter people from getting outdoors, particularly those who are new to hiking or who are recreating alone.
- Road conditions cut off access to trails and nature that would otherwise provide outdoor opportunities for children and people with limited mobility, populations that have specific requirements for trails.
- Well-maintained roads are critical for trail maintenance and wildfire response.
- The desire to improve access to trails via public transit and electric vehicles, for climate-friendly travel options.

92.6% of hikers surveyed reported that road conditions were a factor, or a main consideration, in determining where they hike.

66.6% of hikers surveyed reported that, in the past year, road conditions caused them to change their hiking plans.

Results from the hiker survey paint a picture of the critical role that forest roads play in our ability to get outdoors and the need to address decreasing maintenance funding to preserve access to beloved outdoor places.



PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ XST40

The role of road decommissioning

The U.S. Forest Service conducts **travel analysis** on forests and in watersheds to determine where it makes sense to decommission roads. WTA supports road decommissioning efforts for unauthorized and unnecessary roads, such as dead-end roads that no longer serve a purpose. We also advocate for some roads to be converted to trails to improve outdoor experiences for hikers.

Alternative transportation to trails

WTA thinks holistically about how people get outdoors. One element is a sustainable system of forest roads for passenger vehicle travel. Public transit opportunities are another element. WTA continues to advocate for the federally proposed Transit to Trails Act, which would create a federal grant program to fund transportation projects that connect more communities to trailheads. WTA wants to see the creation of shuttle systems to improve visitor access at places like Mount Rainier National Park and other popular recreation corridors.

The criteria used to evaluate the roads in this report

- **Variety of recreation opportunities.** We prioritized roads that lead to multiple recreation opportunities and that represent different hiking experiences to serve a diversity of users.
- **Severity of maintenance needs.** We factored in whether the road is accessible in any vehicle, only by high clearance vehicles, by foot or not at all.
- **Access for trail maintenance.** We favored roads that would increase access for WTA and partners to perform trail maintenance, amplifying the increase in recreation opportunities.
- **Statewide distribution.** The slate of selected roads reflects the geographic diversity of WTA's statewide hiking community.



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER YOUcandoIT

Cayada Creek Road/Forest Road 7810

CARBON RIVER/MOWICH, MOUNT RAINIER AREA

Worst road leading to one of the best hikes.

Summit Lake trail offers views of Mount Rainier, chances to spot wildlife and wildflower-filled meadows, all against the backdrop of a mountain lake. The trail's relatively gentle grade and camping opportunities provide a host of outdoor recreation opportunities for individuals and families.

Cayada Creek Road, which leads to the Summit Lake trailhead, was the road most cited by hikers in WTA's August 2024 statewide survey on forest roads in need of maintenance. This is a testament to the trail's popularity and the barrier that the road's current condition is posing. Hikers cited safety as a major concern on this road, as well as costly damage to their vehicles.

The Forest Service reports that no maintenance has been carried out on this road in recent history, making it a prime candidate for funds to better maintain it. Forest Service staff also report that the road surface has worn away, making regular maintenance in the form of regrading impossible. Replacing a 4-inch road surface would require \$125,000 to open this beloved hike to more Washington residents. An additional \$825,000 would replace deficient culverts to address drainage issues and improve the road's long-term sustainability.

"I'd feel safer driving out to hikes if the roads were safer. I did Summit Lake once and don't feel comfortable doing it again."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network

"We drove a jeep there and the alignment got wrecked. This is one of the most gorgeous hikes, it would mean so much if we could go back!"

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER GRUDIS

Deadhorse Creek Road/Forest Road 37

MOUNT BAKER AREA, NORTH CASCADES

Recovering a road, and summertime paradise, after years of closure.

Skyline Divide is a 6,000-foot-high ridge of panoramic mountain views and unending wildflower fields in the summer, making it one of the most popular trails in the Mount Baker area. In 2021, a flood washed out Deadhorse Creek Road 9.6 miles before the Skyline Divide trailhead, putting this trail out of reach for all but the most intrepid hikers. The effective closure of this well-used trail is concentrating hikers on other area trails.

Plans to reconstruct and reroute Deadhorse Creek Road are currently in the National Environmental Policy Act process with no timeline set. The road has received disaster relief funding for the reroute. However, with the long-term closure, unknown issues in the closed section of road may mean dramatically deteriorating conditions. There is no road surface left, making it impossible to regrade the road for better travel and drainage. The Forest Service estimates that \$2.5 million will be needed for road surface replacement and drainage reconstruction along the 12.5 miles of road.

"Forest Road 37 has been washed out for 2 years now, and it's been congesting other hikes in the area not having Skyline Divide open."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER JRAP

Forest Road 5600: Middle Fork to Dingford

NORTH BEND AREA, SNOQUALMIE PASS

Increasing opportunities in an outdoor recreation hot spot.

The Middle Fork Snoqualmie area is a hiking destination within an hour drive of Seattle, making it a key location to provide sustainable outdoor recreation. Forest Road 5600 is paved to the Middle Fork trailhead, serving well-used trails including the Middle Fork Snoqualmie, Pratt River and CCC trails, in addition to a campground. Past that point, the Forest Service has designated the remaining 6 miles of road for travel by high-clearance vehicles.

Funding is needed for maintenance to bring this road to usable condition for even high-clearance vehicles. This would provide access for visitors and stewardship activities. Visitors in high-clearance vehicles report difficulty in traveling this section of road, due to many large potholes. A portion of the road that crosses the Taylor River has 40 feet of guard rail missing, creating a safety concern. Forest Service staff report that road conditions hinder their ability to perform regular maintenance on the bathroom at the Dingford Creek trailhead. WTA staff report that road conditions limit their ability to recruit volunteers for backcountry trail work at this location.

Bringing this road up to standards for high-clearance vehicles would improve access to trails in one of the most visited areas in Washington for outdoor recreation. Mere miles from the well-trafficked paved section of the Middle Fork Road, this stretch of Forest Road 5600 offers a variety of outdoor activities, from day hikes to multi-day backpacks and access to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and the congressionally designated Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. From the Dingford Creek trailhead, it is possible to thru-hike from the west to the east side of the Cascades. Addressing maintenance needs on this road would bring this unique backpacking experience within reach. In 2020, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust estimated deferred maintenance needs for this section of road upwards of \$16,000. Additionally, the Forest Service estimates \$3,000 to replace the missing guard rail.

“The potholes are large enough to swallow smaller vehicles, limiting access to the trails. Repairing roads to key access points can help spread trail users, reducing parking congestion and overuse of any one trail system.”

— Hiker, WTA’s Trail Action Network



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER THE WARDER

Sloan Creek Road

MOUNTAIN LOOP HIGHWAY, NORTH CASCADES

Bringing wilderness within reach, for hikers and trail crews.

The trail networks on the Mountain Loop Highway provide access to federally designated wilderness that is within a 1 hour drive for 4 million people. This beloved recreation destination is part of WTA's Trails Rebooted campaign, which works to support popular trails and hiking areas. Deferred maintenance needs are more than \$42 million for Forest Service lands along the Mountain Loop Highway. With such a pressing need for work in the area, WTA has collaborated with the Forest Service and other partners since 2019 to evaluate the needs of current and future visitors and prioritize resources.

In a visitor study led by the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station in 2020, the North Fork Sauk trail was one of the top 10 favorite places in the Mountain Loop Highway area. Hikers find beauty in the old growth along this trail, and they value its access to remote wilderness areas and the Pacific Crest Trail. With the Whitechuck Trail washed out, the North Fork Sauk trail has become the main route to climb Glacier Peak. Climbers mix with backpackers and day hikers on the way to various destinations along this trail. The North Fork Sauk is one of six trailheads located along Sloan Creek Road. Those trails provide access to the Glacier Peak and Henry M. Jackson wilderness areas.

The road surface has worn away, making it hard to provide effective regular maintenance. There are also numerous culverts facing increased drainage issues as they age. Reconstruction on the 9.5 miles of Sloan Creek Road would require \$1.9 million, improving access to six different trailheads for recreation as well as trail maintenance. Road reconstruction would make those trails, and the wilderness they access, available to more Washington residents.

"I am a certified sawyer, but due to the road conditions I cannot get out to help clear these trails."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network

Silver Star Road/Forest Road 4109

LEWIS RIVER REGION, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Regaining an outdoor experience for all ages and physical abilities.

Silver Star is a popular recreation destination for the Portland/Vancouver population center, offering sweeping views of iconic mountains in both Washington and Oregon — Rainier, Hood, St. Helens and a multitude of other peaks. Equally unique is that this experience is accessible from the parking lot, for people of all ages and physical abilities. Those that reach the trailhead are within 3 miles of the summit, but the superlative views and opportunities to observe wildflowers and wildlife begin right away.

However, the road to the trailhead is notoriously difficult to navigate, even for high-clearance vehicles, rendering this landmark location out of reach. In response to WTA's survey on forest road conditions, we received many comments from individuals describing dangerous conditions on this road, causing expensive damage to their vehicles and making it impossible for them to visit this beloved destination.

In December 2021, WTA brought together a planning team, including representatives from various trail user groups, land managers and one Tribal nation, formed to collaborate and communicate a vision for outdoor access at Silver Star. The vision plan produced by these partners highlights challenges posed by the conditions on Forest Road 4109 that go beyond recreation access.

Years of funding shortfalls for roads across the Gifford Pinchot National Forest have left Forest Road 4109 with ruts deep enough to deter most vehicles. These conditions attracted owners of high-clearance vehicles in search of off-roading. Unfortunately, the road's condition and lack of presence of other users resulted in unsanctioned motorized recreation, including incursions into sensitive meadows. The Silver Star Vision Plan recommends several alternatives for improving conditions on FR 4109 to reopen the mountain to recreation, and also to allow for stewardship activities to restore damaged areas.

At a minimum, the road needs maintenance on water bars that divert rainfall off the road surface. With more investment, road reconstruction could make the road more resilient in the future through the addition of base rock, re-contouring and culvert construction. Cost estimates range from \$200,000 to \$700,000 to improve access to Silver Star for recreation and restoration.

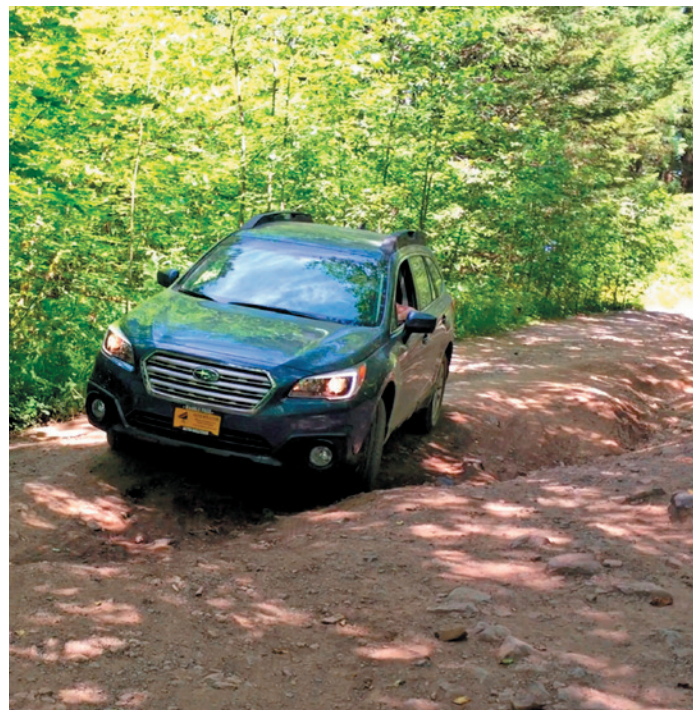


PHOTO BY CHERYL HILL

"This is a fantastic hike that is relatively close to us, and my kids can manage the distance. They love the view from up top! Unfortunately, the potholes and ruts on the road really deter me from going up because I'm uncomfortable driving with its current condition."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network

"Car nearly tipped over on deeply rutted 4109."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network

"Despite the efforts of volunteers to improve, it remains inaccessible to most vehicles."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network



PHOTO COURTESY USFS

Forest Road 2875 to Slab Camp Creek

HOOD CANAL, OLYMPIC PENINSULA

From eyesore to entry point into nature.

Slab Camp Creek is a classic Olympics river hike, providing a day hike or backpack experience with established campgrounds. Forest Road 2875 also accesses Ned Hill, Gray Wolf River and Deer Ridge trails. Slab Camp Creek is an entry point into Buckhorn Wilderness, and to Olympic National Park for those continuing on to Deer Park. The gentle grade makes it ideal for families and those newer to outdoor recreation.

Interrupting this peaceful experience in nature is the drive on Forest Road 2875 to reach the trailhead. Visitors, including families, encounter a heavily-potholed road and hot spot for illegal dumping on their drive.

This 3.6 miles of road needs a slew of maintenance work, including removing encroaching trees, cutting back brush, addressing slide areas and a combination of blading and surfacing to create a smooth and passable road surface. An estimated \$70,000 would improve the road's condition to help this neglected road fulfill its potential as an entry point to nature and the Olympic National Forest for new hikers, families and anyone wishing to explore.

"I saw a vehicle that fell off the road in an attempt to avoid the worst of the potholes."

— WTA trip reporter **AdrianneH**

"Confidence that I can reach the trailhead without being afraid that I'll damage my vehicle or get stuck would increase my motivation to go hiking and to explore more trails."

— **Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network**



PHOTO BY USFS

Chiwawa River Road/Forest Road 6200

STEVENS PASS – EAST, CENTRAL CASCADES

Gateway to a host of outdoor treasures.

Chiwawa River Road provides access to a host of trails (Chiwawa River, Chikamin Tie ORV, Little Giant Pass, Schaefer Lake, Basalt Ridge, Trinity Trailhead, Buck Creek Pass, Seven Fingered Jack, Carne Mount, Phelps Creek/Mount Maude, Rock Creek, Estes Butte) in addition to several campgrounds. Phelps Creek Trail, at the road's end, offers relatively easy access to the remote Glacier Peak Wilderness. Of particular interest to day hikers and backpackers are Spider Meadows and the larch-rich Carne Mountain. Multiday hikers use Spider Meadows as a first stop on backpacking trips into the beautiful areas to the east of Glacier Peak, and incorporate the trail in thru-hikes to Holden Village above Lake Chelan.

En route to these outdoor treasures, WTA trip reporters cite issues on the Chiwawa River Road, particularly the last few miles. Trip reporter Wandering Washington wrote in September of 2024, “large potholes but also very rocky, likely will tear something off a low clearance car.” Forest Service staff estimate \$975,000-\$1 million is needed to address maintenance issues on the most critical 3.6 miles of road. Work would include placement of crushed aggregate for the road surface, roadside brushing, road and ditch reconditioning and reconstruction and addressing problem spots where the road dips. Additional funding would allow for culvert replacement to improve drainage and lengthen the road's lifespan. Further assessment would determine where culvert work is needed.

WTA trip reporter Peace4Mel wrote, “Spider Meadow is an awesome place and doesn't feel real when you're walking through it. If you can make the trek, I highly recommend it.” Addressing maintenance issues on Chiwawa River Road would lower the barrier to entry to one of the most beautiful areas in Washington to a whole segment of the population that does not have access to a high clearance vehicle or the comfort level to navigate the current road conditions.

“The Chiwawa River Road is notoriously bad and has been for years. You name the issue, it's there: washboard, major damage from storms and erosion, deep ruts and rocks.”

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network

“The road ... is just horrendous. '10 out of 10' for worst forest road.”

— WTA's trip reporter 'Ivy' Clark

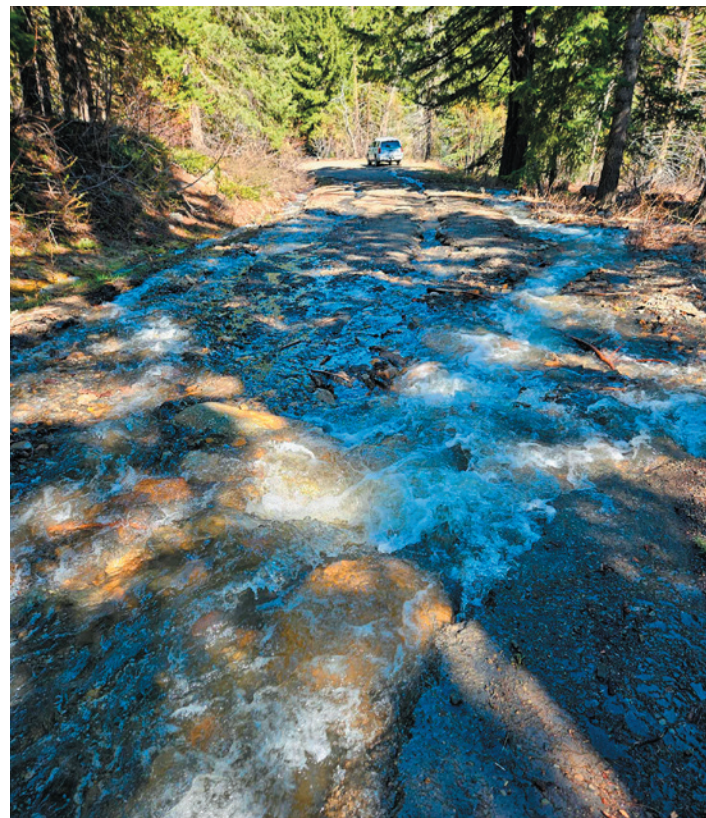


PHOTO COURTESY USFS

Hart's Pass Road/Forest Road 54

NORTH CASCADES HIGHWAY, NORTH CASCADES

A unique outdoor experience for all physical abilities.

The Hart's Pass Road is the highest road you can drive to in Washington state, providing a unique experience for visitors of all physical abilities. It is a primary access point for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Additionally, there are two campgrounds, a historic lookout site on Slate Peak and multiple trailheads are accessed from this road. The trails lead to subalpine meadows, scenic wildflowers and into the Pasayten Wilderness. The road sees year round use: in summer for scenic driving, hiking and camping, and in the winter for snowmobiling.

There's a combined 14.21 miles of roadway between Forest Road 54 to Hart's Pass and the connected Forest Road 5400-600 to Slate Peak. Due to lack of funding and capacity, decades of deferred maintenance have degraded this road system. This lack of maintenance results in nearly annual safety issues and damage to the road infrastructure. These issues routinely cost the Forest Service significant funds to repair, but without addressing the root cause of the damage.

Ninety-five percent of the culverts along these two roads have met or exceeded their estimated useful lifespan. Culvert failures that disrupt water drainage are responsible for a significant amount of the current damage and can lead to loss of miles of road structure. Surveying has determined that the surface drainage of Hart's Pass/Slate Peak Road does not meet the standard of any Forest Service maintenance level. An investment of \$3,270,600 would make the road passable for passenger vehicles, which is how the Forest Service has it designated, providing for safe travel to this iconic destination, and creating a resilient road structure that can reduce costly repairs in the future.

"The Hart Pass Road is so dangerous, it is a shame that this is the access to the northernmost segment of the Pacific Crest Trail."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network



PHOTO BY TRIP REPORTER KRIS B

Forest Road 39 to Iron Gate

PASAYTEN, NORTH CASCADES

A backpacker's dream destination threatened by road conditions.

Forest Road 39 provides a primary access point for the eastern section of the Pasayten Wilderness, the largest wilderness area in Washington state. From the Iron Gate trailhead, hikers can visit destinations including Horseshoe Basin, one of the few places in the contiguous U.S. that contains alpine tundra. Its unique features make the eastern Pasayten a travel destination for visitors from around the state.

Iron Gate trailhead also provides access to the Boundary Trail. This trail spans the width of the Pasayten Wilderness and is part of the longer congressionally-designated Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. The Boundary Trail has been a priority for WTA's Lost Trails Found campaign since it was launched in 2017. We've been working with trail crews, nonprofit organizations and land managers to ensure that this stunning trail and its unbeatable backpacking opportunities remain open to the public in the face of wildfires and funding shortfalls. The collaboration to keep Pasayten trails open is threatened when road conditions deter, or increase the safety risk, for visitors traveling to the trailhead.

The road to Iron Gate trailhead needs reconstruction for safe travel for public use, including work to establish road width, curve widening and clearing. Drainage needs to be reestablished by installing cross drain and ditches where required. The estimated cost for this work is \$100,000.

"I think the accessibility of trails is not only good for hikers ... but also good for the local economy. I imagine the economy of small towns like Loomis (as well as Tonasket, Oroville, Chesaw, Molson, Havilah, etc.) largely depend on people passing through to go ... into the Pasayten, which is absolutely immense and incredible, but could do with more infrastructure."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network



PHOTO COURTESY USFS

Forest Road 245 to Sullivan Mountain

SELKIRK RANGE, EASTERN WASHINGTON

Limiting recreation, stewardship and emergency response.

Forest Road 2212-245 is the only road providing access to Crowell Ridge that is open all summer. Crowell Ridge on Sullivan Mountain offers expansive views of the Selkirk Mountains. In addition to access for recreation, Forest Road 245 would be the preferred route for WTA trail maintenance crews, if the road was in better condition. This road also provides an important route for emergency response for the area's system of trails, which includes the congressionally designated route of the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.

This 7-mile-long road is in need of brushing, maintenance and slide repair, with an estimated cost of \$17,500 in total. Brushing would reestablish the clearing width for sight distance to aid safe travel for public use. Another safety concern is the slide area where the road is barely wide enough for one vehicle to pass. Generally rough and rocky conditions cause extremely slow travel — one user reported taking 3 hours to travel the 7-miles of Forest Road 245 to the trailhead. Users also report needing to provide extra clearance by passengers exiting the vehicle or removing rocks from the roadway during travel.

These conditions severely limit who is willing and able to reach Sullivan Mountain trailhead. Investment in maintenance would effectively reopen this road for outdoor recreation, trail stewardship and emergency response.

"Access to Crowell Ridge is becoming impossible, and will be within the next year or two."

— Hiker, WTA's Trail Action Network