



NEWS RELEASE
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WTA's 2025 Roads Report: The future of roads connecting people to public lands is eroding

SEATTLE — Washington Trails Association has just [released their 2025 roads report](#) highlighting 10 key roads in Washington that are crucial to outdoor recreation and in turn, Washington's public health and economy. The featured roads include the Chiwawa River Road and the notorious Silver Star road in Lewis County. The report also includes an ask to fund road maintenance in order to prevent loss of access to public lands. Like trails, roads require annual maintenance to continue providing access to iconic recreation areas.

The report is particularly timely given the recent reduction in Forest Service staff by thousands. Staffing cuts will have severe impacts on our public lands, leaving trails and roads less safe and under-resourced at a time when they are growing in popularity."

Access to public lands has decreased over the years as U.S. Forest Service funding has decreased. Roads require significantly more funding than trails to keep them serviceable. The U.S. Forest Service has just 15% of the budget it needs to maintain the 90,000 miles of forest roads in Oregon and Washington. As budgets are cut, road damage piles up faster and more severely, increasing the likelihood that favorite areas are rendered inaccessible.

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, and putting pressure on other trails that remain accessible.

"We cannot access the majority of Washington's incredible outdoor places without forest roads. The roads that get us to trailheads are an integral piece of the outdoor recreation that our state is known for, a sector that supports local economies and also the physical and mental health of our communities," said Andrea Imler, WTA's advocacy director.

Ninety percent of Washington state residents use trails. 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. Investing in our public lands benefits Washington's communities, economy and environment.

The public can review the report as well and join WTA's Trail Action Network, which helps keep people who love the outdoors updated on issues and opportunities to speak up for public lands.

Available for Interviews:

Michael DeCramer, Policy and Planning manager, WTA

To book, contact Anna Roth: anna@wta.org

About Washington Trails Association

Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the nation's leading state-based hiking and trail maintenance organization powered by the passion and dedication of hikers. Every year over 5 million outdoor enthusiasts come to us for education, inspiration and opportunities to protect and advocate for public lands. We work to ensure that Washington's trails remain sustainable and accessible to everyone for generations to come. By fostering a welcoming environment and engaging with the hiking community, WTA is committed to nurturing an inclusive organization where everyone feels valued, represented and able to contribute to the future of trails.