



**Take Action: Calls to Congress
Needed this Week!
BCHA needs your help.
Calls to members of Congress are critical
this week!**

July 2017

We have learned that Congress could begin negotiations this week regarding 2018 funding for a number of programs important to horsemen, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund and recreation and trail programs administered by the federal land management agencies. There is much at stake for equestrians and trail users.

Congress has an important role to play in ensuring the agencies receive sufficient funding for the public to continue to enjoy and to access our public lands via trails that are safe, accessible and well maintained.

President's Budget Proposal Would Doom Trails

Yet the President proposed a budget for 2018 that would eliminate most funding for trails and fails to provide even the most necessities to support and manage volunteers, like you, who maintain a growing proportion of these trails.

The President's budget also would cut the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by 84% compared to the amount approved by Congress for 2017. LWCF has proven crucial to completing the Pacific Crest and the Continental Divide national scenic trails.

Similarly, the President's budget would cut the trails program of the U.S. Forest Service by 84%. There is little doubt the agency would be forced to make sweeping personnel changes that would leave few staff among local ranger districts to work with volunteers and partners—to say nothing about the complete lack of seasonal trail crews that could be expected next year. Such budget cuts would be disastrous and unprecedented.

Congress has the Power to create and Pass its own Budget

The good news is that Congress does not have to follow the President's proposed budget for 2018. Nevertheless, members of Congress need to hear from you. Otherwise, they just might fall in line behind the President's budget proposal.

Take Action!

- BCHA asks that you call your member of Congress today.
- Let them know that trails and outdoor recreation are important to you.
- Ask them to maintain the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 2018, at the minimum, at a level consistent with what Congress approved in 2017.
- Ask that they support levels of funding that keep agency trail programs intact, volunteers alone cannot be expected to do it all.
- Ask that funding for trails reflect the growing importance of trails to the American public, including the outdoor "recreation economy," which directly supports 7.6 million jobs across the U.S.

To find information, including a phone number, for your representative in Congress click on this link:
<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

For contact information for your U.S. senators, click here:
https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

The Facts (and our Strong Opinion!)

BCHA has worked with the American Hiking Society, American Trails, and the Partnership for the National Trails System to create a three-page background paper if you are interested in the details of the President's proposed budget for 2018 and our joint request to Congress. Perhaps it is more information than you want, but feel free to pass along either or both to your member of Congress if their staff person requests more information.

To find data on the growing outdoor recreation economy, which includes horseback riding, see a summary of the new study posted on the website of the Outdoor Industry Association.

Hear Back from Your Representative?

If you receive feedback from your member of Congress or their staff, it would be very helpful if you would share their response with BCHA's director for Public Lands & Recreation. His email address is WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org

Please share this alert with friends and family. As we are doing with the hikers and other partners, let us all speak up for trails together! Our future access to public lands depends on it.

Please take action TODAY to preserve access to trails on public lands.

Thank you.

Freddy Dunn
BCHA Chairperson