



Great American Outdoors Act projects Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area

Mountains to Sound Greenway-Heritage Area Multi Asset Recreation Investment Corridor

The Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area is an iconic 1.5 million-acre landscape in Washington State, stretching across the Cascade Mountains from Central Washington to Puget Sound in Seattle. The Greenway promotes a healthy and sustainable relationship between people and nature by providing nearby parks and trails, connected wildlife habitat, places for culture and tradition, world-class outdoor recreation and education, working forests and local agricultural production, and thriving communities. The Greenway is valued by a broad cross-section of society, working together as an effective coalition to conserve this place and its heritage for future generations.



When Congress passed the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020, we knew how important this legislation would be to the state of Washington. For 30 years the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust has witnessed the positive impact access to nature brings to the region for public health, habitat and wildlife, and local economies. Many public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and individuals have worked tirelessly to sustain this abundant access to nature, with outdoor recreation gaining popularity each year. As public agency budgets and staff simultaneously shrink, the backlog of much-needed maintenance for trails and recreation areas has grown dramatically. The Great American Outdoors Act offers part of the solution to this maintenance backlog for public land management agencies, and will benefit all people who live, work and play in the Mountains to Sound Greenway and in public lands across the country.

What projects will the Great American Outdoors Act support in the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area?

The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust works collaboratively with land management agencies on building, maintaining, and advocating for outdoor recreation projects across the landscape. Staff at the Greenway Trust work with local state and federal partners to help prioritize recreational project needs across the landscape and help to leverage resources to accomplish project goals. Many of these projects are destined to be funded as part of the Mountains to Sound Greenway-Heritage Area Multi-Asset Recreation Investment Corridor project in the Great American Outdoors Act, which spans portions of both the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests in Washington.

Projects in the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area

Denny Creek Improvements, FY21

Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Denny Creek is a recreation hub situated just below Snoqualmie Pass, nestled in the beauty of the Cascades. Closely accessed from Interstate 90, and complete with trails to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, waterfalls, vistas of Mt. Baker and other prominent North Cascade Peaks, and a Forest Service campground, this area experiences high-visitation year-round - over 90,000 people each year with more to come in future years. Recreationalists looking for a place to fish, a day hike or multiday trip in the summer, a snowshoe or backcountry ski trip in the winter, or a riverside picnic, can find what they are searching for at Denny Creek.



With such high use, parking challenges such as lines of cars alongside the road to the small trailhead, limited ADA accessible vehicle use to the area, and inaccessible passing for Search and Rescue vehicles to reach the area, creates compounding issues as more and more people frequent this site. Improvements to this area will expand parking for ADA accessible vehicle parking spots, passenger vehicles, RVs, horse trailers and bus parking for future public transportation shuttles to the area, as well as additional CXT restrooms at the trailhead area.

Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie Valley recreation infrastructure improvements, partially included FY21

Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, Alpine Lakes Wilderness

The Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie Valley is spectacular river basin just an hour's drive from the bustling city of Seattle. This area has ample opportunities to explore rivers, peaks, and forested trails and campgrounds, attracting the day users and those seeking access to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness for a multi-day experience. The influx of use has increased over the past decade, even more so in recent years with the paving of the Middle Fork Road increasing access for more vehicle and bicycle access. This has increased the need for maintaining restrooms, addressing trampled trails and side trails, and dealing with trailhead overflow parking issues.

The Middle Fork Trailhead provides the hub to outdoor adventure in all directions for hikers, bikers, equestrians, climbers, campers, and more. Trails are in dire need of repair after damage caused by landslides. The Middle Fork Trail, backbone trail through the valley, requires a major reroute to avoid slide-prone areas. Restrooms need repair and maintenance. The valley needs more restrooms, and one current project will be the installation of a CXT toilet at the new Pratt Bar Trailhead, which provides a short walk to the river.



CCC Trail Repair, Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley
Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

This trail was a former road built during the era of Civilian Conservation Corps. The trail meanders through the middle fork of the Snoqualmie River valley for 14 miles, a forested landscape full of streams, waterfalls, and moss-covered rock faces and blanketed forest floor. In its entirety, this trail is a connector of some of the valley's most popular recreation areas, including Mount Si, Little Si, and Mount Tenerife. In early 2020, immense rain events lead to a massive landslide that impacted the CCC trail, fully displacing bridges and damaging the trail tread. Replacing the bridges will allow for safe access to the entire trail system, and passable for hikers, bikers, and equestrians that use the trail.



Snoqualmie Point Park Repair and Maintenance
City of Snoqualmie



Located with sweeping views of the Central Cascades and the Snoqualmie Valley, Snoqualmie Point Park was built in 2007 when the land was conserved through public ownership instead of being converted to a planned commercial development, thanks to funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the U.S. Forest Service, state and local agencies, elected officials, the Trust for Public Land, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, and local citizens. With access for hiking, picnicking, road biking, mountain biking, a

playground, and adjacent Rattlesnake Mountain, this remains a perfect family-friendly park. Over the years, maintenance of this park has fallen behind, and the picturesque iconic log picnic shelter, shaped as a Native American longhouse, has deteriorated over the years and is in need of significant repair. Additionally, this park contains the location of a multi-year long forest restoration project that will improve the forest and wildlife habitat of this area.

Upper Yakima Winter Recreation Trails assessment and access

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest



The Upper Yakima Basin has been a hotspot for winter recreation over the past years, especially non-motorized recreation, specifically at the popular Crystal Springs and Cabin Creek Sno-Park areas. Many of the areas lack appropriate winter trails, necessary maintenance or trailhead facilities. In order to plan for the winter recreation demands on this area, an environmental assessment will need to be conducted to address long-term maintenance needs in these heavily-used recreation sites.

Campground Improvements at Wish Poosh and Kachess Campground, FY21

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest



The Cle Elum Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest sees ever-increasing numbers of visitors from the Seattle area. Located ‘just a latte away’, these forests provide the illusion of distance from the crowded urban environment. However, developed campgrounds are full to capacity every day of their season, and their adjacent trails, picnic areas, and boat launches struggle to hold up under the volume of use. The high concentration of visitors also creates sanitation issues and conflicts with local wildlife.

GAOA funds will provide engineering and design services to upgrade two popular campgrounds – Wish Poosh and Kachess. The flow of vehicles through the campgrounds must be redesigned to prevent traffic backing up onto adjacent roadways. Water and power hookups are needed for campground host and guard station facilities. Parking expansion will help relieve day-use pressures, and additional vault toilets will address sanitation concerns. GAOA will also enable campground-wide safety and experience improvements, such as new fire rings, bear-proof food storage lockers, picnic tables, and fee collection boxes.

Trail Maintenance and Bear Containers, FY 21

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest



Photos: U.S. Forest Service

Both national forests represented in the Mountains to Sound Greenway see significant recreation use and have extensive forest health needs. Great American Outdoors Act funds will be used for trail maintenance on heavily-used trails. This maintenance is needed to protect native plants and water quality by preventing soil erosion and compaction. Well-designed and maintained trails also improve public safety and ease of wayfinding, very important issues for search and rescue efforts.

And with ever-increasing recreation use, wildlife encounters and conflicts continue to increase. Bear containers will be installed on both sides of the Cascades, helping to protect both people and wildlife at high density recreation areas in the Cle Elum and North Bend Ranger Districts.