

May 10, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you prepare the FY2020 Interior Appropriations bill, we write to encourage increased funding for key accounts within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), including at least \$20 million for cultural resources management and at least \$45 million for the National Conservation Lands.

The BLM manages the largest, most diverse, and most scientifically important body of cultural, historical, and paleontological resources of any federal land management agency. Yet only about 10 percent of BLM lands have been surveyed for heritage resources. We urge Congress to provide at least \$20 million—an increase of approximately \$3 million—for the BLM's cultural resources management account to help BLM fulfill its statutory requirements to inventory and protect cultural resources, manage paleontological resources, and improve government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes. This modest increase in funding would also support ongoing collaboration with state historic preservation officers in the West to standardize and integrate cultural resources data for BLM lands through a National Cultural Resources Information System. This effort will protect important cultural resources while also streamlining land-use planning and permitting by making better cultural resource data available earlier in the planning and project development process.

The BLM also needs increased funding for management of its system of National Conservation Lands, which is made up of nationally significant places designated by Congress or the President for their outstanding historic, cultural, ecological, and scientific values. The National Conservation Lands encompass more than 36 million acres, including more than 50 national monuments, national conservation areas (NCAs) and similarly designated areas on BLM lands, compared with 32 just ten years ago. Despite this increase, funding has not kept pace to properly manage these important places. With this in mind, we recommend at least \$45 million in FY2020—an increase of approximately \$5 million—in base funding for the National Conservation Lands. Additional funding should be directed toward ensuring each unit of the National Conservation Lands is appropriately staffed with land managers, law enforcement, and cultural resources experts, as well as inventory and monitoring of cultural resources that contribute to the special designation of these places. We also recommend robust funding for National Scenic and Historic Trails, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and wilderness areas that are part of the National Conservation Lands and funded through other areas of the BLM's budget.

Our nation's public lands contain remarkable and irreplaceable ecological, historical and cultural resources that reflect thousands of years of human connection to our lands. We thank you for your consideration of increased funding for proper stewardship of these resources in the FY2020 Interior Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

National Trust for Historic Preservation
American Alliance of Museums
American Anthropological Association
American Cultural Resources Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Ancient Forest International
Archaeological Institute of America
Center for Digital Antiquity

Coalition for American Heritage
Conservation Lands Foundation
NATHPO
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
Partnership for the National Trails System
Rainbow Heritage Network
Scenic America
Society for American Archaeology
Society of Architectural Historians
Society for Historical Archaeology
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
The Archaeological Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
US/ICOMOS
World Monuments Fund

Arizona

Archaeology Southwest
Arizona Conservation Partners
Arizona Heritage Alliance
Arizona Preservation Foundation
Cienega Watershed Partnership
Friends of Agua Fria National Monument
Friends of Arizona Joshua Tree Forest
Friends of Ironwood Forest
Friends of the San Pedro River
Grand Canyon Trust
Save Our Ancient Redrocks (SOAR)
Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation

California

Amargosa Conservancy
California Native Plant Society
California Wilderness Coalition
Californians for Western Wilderness
Fort Ord Recreation Trails Friends
Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
Friends of Juniper Flats
Friends of the Desert Mountains
Friends of the Inyo
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Middle California Broadband
Lost Coast Interpretive Association
Mattole Restoration Council
Mojave Desert Land Trust
Native American Land Conservancy
Nature for All
The SummerTree Institute
Tuleyome

Colorado

Conejos Clean Water
Dolores River Boating Advocates
Western Slope Conservation Center

Florida

Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum

Idaho

Birds of Prey NCA Partnership

Western Watersheds Project

Illinois

Illinois Archaeological Survey

Iowa

Association of Iowa Archaeologists
Crawford County Historic Preservation Commission
Midwest Ethnohorticulture

Maryland

Preservation Maryland

Montana

Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument
Montana Wilderness Association

Nevada

Friends of Basin & Range
Friends of Gold Butte
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Red Rock Canyon
Friends of Sloan Canyon
Get Outdoors Nevada

New Mexico

New Mexico Archaeological Council

New York

Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology

Ohio

Heritage Ohio, Inc.

Oregon

Friends and Neighbors of the Deschutes Canyon Area
Friends of the Owyhee
Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council

Rhode Island

Providence Preservation Society

Texas

Council of Texas Archaeologists

Utah

Amazing Earthfest
Conserve Southwest Utah
Friends of Cedar Mesa
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Preservation Utah
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Utah Diné Bikéyah
Utah Rock Art Research Association