

May 10, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

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