



January 31, 2019

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Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
Co-Chairs Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Support for HB 5527 and Oregon Parks & Recreation Department
Budget**

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Joint Subcommittee:

I am writing on behalf of Northwest Youth Corps and our 20,000 alumni to offer our strong support of the proposed budget for the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department.

Northwest Youth Corps (NYC) is a non-profit organization that provides opportunities for youth and young adults to learn, grow, and experience success, by engaging them in paid conservation service programs throughout the state of Oregon. Our programs emphasize leadership, challenge, education, and community development. NYC partners with agencies like the U.S. Forest Service; National Park Service and Oregon Parks and Recreation to provide field-based service projects. NYC's programs serve over 500 young Oregonians annually.

In particular, we strongly support continued funding for the Office of Outdoor Recreation and policy package 105 which would enhance the Department's ability to meet its obligation to provide an opportunity for all Oregonians to experience the wonder of our outdoor spaces. Outcomes from this type of investment to Northwest Youth Corps will allow us to grow our conservation service programming for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth, Tribal youth, Urban youth, and youth with disabilities. Engaging these young people and their families in the outdoors has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my work, and it is critical for us to ensure that all Oregonians can share in the richness of our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5527. We urge your strong support for the full proposal before you today and hope to continue strengthening funding for Oregon's recreational assets in budgets to come.

Sincerely,


Jeff Parker
Executive Director