

Washington Outdoor Alliance

Access Fund - American Alpine Club - American Whitewater - El Sendero
Backcountry Ski Club - Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance - The Mountaineers -
Washington Climbers Coalition - Washington Trails Association

March 24th, 2015

Jeffrey Paniati, FHWA Executive Director
Southeast Federal Center Building
1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20590-9898

RE: Index-Galena Road, Index, Washington

Dear Mr. Paniati,

We are writing to voice our strong support for repairs to the Index-Galena Road at milepost 6.4-6.9 in Index, Washington. These repairs will restore recreational access for our members and the general public while protecting the North Fork Skykomish River by moving the road out of the current channel migration zone.

The Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, El Sendero Backcountry Ski Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition and Washington Trails Association—all human-powered recreation organizations in Washington State—come together as a coalition on issues relating to recreation, access and conservation. As the group Washington Outdoor Alliance, we represent more than 34,000 members who recreate on public lands. The Index-Galena Road is one of the most important access corridors in the greater Puget Sound Region for outdoor recreation.

In November 2006 a major flood washed out the Index-Galena Road between milepost 6.4 and 6.9. This roadway is the only year-round access point to the campgrounds, trailheads, river access sites, and important recreation destination points located in the North Fork of the Skykomish Valley, the primary entry to the recently designated Wild Sky Wilderness. The only alternative access requires a 40 mile detour over a high elevation pass on a single-lane, unpaved Forest Service road that is typically only open six months of the year and was not designed for high levels of public use.

We are requesting that funding for this project be prioritized so that review under the National Environmental Policy Act can proceed. Restoring this important access route will have significant benefits for local communities that depend on outdoor recreation, improve public safety, and restore access to recreational experiences for our members.

Sincerely,

Joe Sambataro, Northwest Regional Director, Access Fund
Eddie Espinosa, Northwest Region Manager, American Alpine Club
Thomas O'Keefe, Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater
Gus Bekker, President, El Sendero Backcountry Ski Club
Glenn Glover, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Martinique Grigg, Executive Director, The Mountaineers
Matt Perkins, Washington Climbers Coalition
Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director, Washington Trails Association

cc:

Lynn Peterson, WSDOT Secretary of Transportation
WSDOT
310 Maple Park Ave. S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98501-1284

Dan Mathis, FHWA Division Administrator
711 South Capital Way #501
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