

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

The undersigned organizations, representing America's hunters, wildlife professionals, and other conservationists, write to request your help in ensuring that the nation's forests remain well managed and productive for wildlife as we navigate the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

As you consider additional measures to assist workers, families and the U.S. economy, we urge you to include our federal forests and public lands in those strategic investments. Investments in actively managed forests will create jobs, protect communities and private property, and stimulate rural economies. These investments will provide both immediate recovery and lasting benefits to the American public by helping to minimize and mitigate the potential for wildfires, improving forest and watershed health, and providing quality habitat for wildlife and improved access for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation that is critical to the health and welfare of participants and to rural economies these activities support.

We recommend that additional supplemental investments in response to COVID-19 include:

\$750 Million for *Forest Service Capital Improvement & Maintenance – Roads, Trails and Bridges*. This critical investment would address 20 percent of the Forest Service's documented roads maintenance backlog. This funding should focus on providing access for public safety, recreation, and resource management.

\$250 Million for *National Forest System – Forest Products* program, to help prepare and implement timber sales to help sustain rural jobs, reduce fire danger on our National Forests, and improve forest health.

\$250 Million for *National Forest System – Vegetation and Watershed Management* program. These funds should be made available to implement NEPA ready projects to restore wildlife habitat, improve ecological function and watershed health, and implement Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects.

\$200 Million for *National Forest System – Hazardous Fuels* to conduct cross-boundary forest restoration activities to address the 63 million acres in severe need of treatment.

\$100 Million for *National Forest System – Land Management Planning* to ensure that NEPA can be completed for future projects.

\$125 Million for *State and Private Forestry – Forest Stewardship/Cooperative Forest Health* to increase forest management on private lands.

\$50 Million for *Research and Development – Forest Inventory and Analysis* to increase analyses available to the states and forest product industry to bolster economic recovery.

We believe that the U.S. Forest Service can effectively implement these programs in the amounts recommended over the next 2-3 years. The supplemental funding can be put to use quickly by expanding projects and programs that are already under way. In addition, there are many other shovel ready projects waiting to be implemented.

A 2018 analysis of Forest Service resource management investments showed a direct impact of creating 19 jobs per \$1 million invested. Not only would these investments put people to work right away, they will also have lasting benefits for our country.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

American Woodcock Society

Boone and Crockett Club

Mule Deer Foundation

National Wild Turkey Federation

Quality Deer Management Association

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Ruffed Grouse Society

Wildlife Mississippi