



## EVERGREEN MOUNTAIN BIKE ALLIANCE

Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (Evergreen) develops, protects, and maintains sustainable mountain biking opportunities in the State of Washington. Our membership quadrupled in the past 5 years, from 2,000 in 2016 to **8,000 members** today. We are the largest state-wide mountain bike not-for-profit (501c3) in the nation and operate through 8 regional chapters.

Evergreen is committed to:

- Promote and develop sustainable non-motorized recreation opportunities;
- Build and maintain high quality trails;
- Educate riders, including youth camps, adult clinics, women's ride programs;
- Build community through events and volunteerism;
- Diversify our sport and improve equity in access to trails and mountain bike opportunities; and,
- Engage volunteers statewide to help land managers maintain trails and trailheads.

We are an important partner to federal, state and local land managers as we leverage agencies' investments with cash matches and volunteer labor, creating **impactful public-private partnerships**. Our work benefits public lands, encourages healthy lifestyles, and ignites economic development in rural communities.

Since 2015, Evergreen has delivered more than 200 miles of new mountain bike trails in partnership with state, local and federal land managers. This investment was more important than ever in 2020 when thousands of new outdoor enthusiasts began exploring trails and outdoor recreation opportunities due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### MOUNTAIN BIKING IS POPULAR AND GROWING FAST!

According to the 2013-2018 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP):

- 24% of Washington residents ride bicycles on trails.
- Nearly 700,000 WA residents participate in mountain biking.
- Cycling has one of the highest annual days of activity: 39 days/year.
- Current facility capacity only satisfies 30% to 45% of recreation needs in our State.

Front-country trails and mountain bike parks near urban areas are seeing significant increases in use. ***Continued investment in mountain bike facilities is crucial to meet demand and provide easily accessible and healthy outdoor activities for families and communities across Washington!***

### MOUNTAIN BIKING BENEFITS THE ECONOMY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Outdoor recreation has a greater impact than information technology and aerospace industries! According to the Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington, \$21.6 billion in annual spending is directly tied to outdoor recreation. Additionally, outdoor recreation supports more than 200,000 jobs and generates \$2 billion in state and local taxes.

Biking accounts for almost \$3.2 billion of economic contribution annually. \$3 billion is travel-related expenditures, rather than equipment, and this spending has the greatest impact on rural economies. Additional community benefits from outdoor recreation include greater physical and mental health, reduced medical costs, and improved quality of life.



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# 2021 PROJECT & LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Evergreen partners with [Washington Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#) to increase the recreational value of working forests and natural resource conservation areas. **We support full funding of DNR's recreation and budget request, including:**

- **\$3.9 million for the Outdoor Recreation and Community Engagement Program**
- **\$444,000 operating budget for the Natural Areas Program**
- **\$8.5 million capital budget for the Sustainable Recreation Program** (\$8.3M in Governor's Budget)
- **Natural Areas – \$5.05 million** (\$4.9 million Governor's budget)
- **Community Forest Program** (\$2.4 million (\$2 million Governor's budget)
- **\$25,000 Budget Proviso for new E-bike access evaluations and signage** on non-motorized natural surface trails
- **\$25 million capital budget for Forest Resiliency.** This effort links the Forest Action Plan, Forest Health Strategic Plan, and Wildfire Strategic Plan; and promotes rapid job creation in multiple sectors statewide.

DNR has taken innovative leadership in establishing new recreational resources in working forests. The agency has shown great leadership in addressing underserved trail needs and has set progressive new trail standards. With a fast-growing recreation community, **State investment is imperative to completing several planned new recreational resource projects**, including new trail development, trail maintenance, trailhead development, and funding for skilled employees to manage, oversee and maintain trails and facilities on DNR lands.

### WASHINGTON STATE PARKS

Interest and initiative in developing new mountain bike trails in our State Parks continues to steadily grow. Several state parks have become popular riding destinations: Squilchuck State Park in Wenatchee, Olallie State Park in North Bend, Moran State Park on Orcas Island, as well as Mount Spokane and Riverside State Parks in Spokane. **Evergreen enthusiastically supports the following [Washington State Parks'](#) funding request to keep this momentum going:**

- **\$219 million (operating) for park operations and programs to meet increasing visitation.**
- **\$122.4 million (capital) for facilities investments to reduce the maintenance backlog.**
- **\$2 million for the No Child Left Inside Program**
- **\$350,000 for Youth and Community Engagement DEI program**

### WASHINGTON WILDLIFE AND RECREATION PROGRAM (WWRP)

Without the successful and innovative [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition](#), many of our trail projects would never have come to fruition. **Evergreen enthusiastically supports the WWRP's request to fully fund:**

- **\$140 million capital budget to support the WWRP.**

WWRP is a critical to developing new and maintaining existing mountain bike trails. This program supports the largest amount of funding for hiking, biking, equestrian, and winter ski trails in Washington State. **Evergreen believes that this full program is critical to a healthy recreation economy in our state** – maintaining high quality of life for residents statewide, encouraging healthy lifestyle, fostering rural economic development, and bringing critical capital projects to fruition.



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# 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: CONTINUED

### WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (WSDOT)

We strongly support funding to widen and improve the State Route 18 corridor between Snoqualmie and the Issaquah-Hobart Road near Maple Valley. We encourage the Washington State Legislature to allocate funding to ensure public safety, wildlife passage and safe recreation access to the East Tiger Mountain Trailhead Summit from both directions of SR 18 through an interchange. SR 18 serves as both a critical transportation and recreation access road which should be preserved and will aid ongoing logging, communication, and recreation activities that occur on Tiger and Taylor Mountains, and Raging River State Forest.

## BILLS WE'RE TRACKING:

**SB 5452 (SUPPORT WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT)**. SB 5452 will allow Class 1 e-bikes on natural surface recreational trails. We support this effort but only with recommended amendment language that keeps access decision authority within the agencies, requires public process to both open and close trails, and ensures that e-bikes are handled with a separate management objective from regular bikes so as to avoid the possibility of trail closures to all bicycles. Evergreen does not support Class 2 or 3 e-bike access to natural surface single track trail. Evergreen supports agencies in moving toward a "open unless closed" trail access environment for e-bikes. *(Transportation)*

**SB 5006 / HB 1025 (SUPPORT)**. SB 5006 / HB1025 provides a funding option for local parks, subject to voter approval, by giving all communities the option to institute a 1/10 of 1 cent sales tax to fund parks. This additional funding mechanism for parks comes at no cost to the state.

**SB 5220 (SUPPORT)**. SB 5220 will direct the Department of Revenue to ensure that critical habitat restoration projects, which provide many public benefits, remain exempt from sales tax. Significant restoration funding is essential in Washington State to enhance natural areas, protect salmon habitat, and ensure that natural resource-based businesses can survive and thrive. Senate Bill 5220 helps maximize our investment for our public lands and does not represent a change to any state revenue.

**HB 1216 (SUPPORT)**. House Bill 1216: Concerning urban and community forestry, HB 1216 would direct the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to conduct analyses of needs and opportunities related to urban forestry in Washington, and provide technical assistance and capacity building resources and opportunities, especially to urban communities.

**HB 1435 (OPPOSE)** - Allows local jurisdictions to adopt a requirement for groups of six or more unrelated bicyclists in which a person or entity has been compensated to organize or lead the bicycle group to obtain a bicycle tour permit to use the jurisdiction's roads, paths, or trails. **We oppose this bill because it adds unnecessary red tape for group rides and mountain bike tours.** *(Local Govt)*

**HB 1330 (NO OPINION)** – This bill introduces E-bike and e-bike equipment sales tax exemption. This will help make e-bikes more affordable and accessible to further encourage bicycle commuting and address climate change and road congestion. The bill **does not have similar benefits for the mountain biking community and may create additional user confusion as State land managers are still determining legal environmental for e-mountain bikes on trails.**

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