

SECTION-BY-SECTION FOR H.R. 845
NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAILS STEWARDSHIP ACT

Section 1. Short Title; Table of Contents.

Section 1 is the short title, the National Forest Trails Stewardship Act, and the table of content.

Section 2. Findings.

Section 2 provides for Congressional findings.

Section 3. Definitions.

Section 3 is the definitions section defining key terms including “outfitter or guide,” “partner” and “partnership,” “priority landscape,” “trail maintenance,” and “volunteer.” Definitions mirror existing law, where possible.

Section 4. National Forest Trails Volunteer and Partnership Strategy.

This section requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a strategy to significantly increase the role of partners and volunteers in trail maintenance. The strategy is designed to augment and support the capabilities of the Forest Service to implement trail maintenance by expanding the use of volunteers and partners. It further requires the designation of volunteer and partnership coordinators in each region of the Forest Service, subject to appropriations.

The section also requires, as a component of the strategy, a study on: (1) the use of fire crews in carrying out trail maintenance; and (2) authorization for the Secretary of Agriculture to accept trail maintenance by an outfitter or guide as in-kind consideration in lieu of permit fees. Upon a determination that such an approach is feasible, the Secretary is authorized to include these elements in the strategy.

Section 5. Priority Trail Maintenance Program.

This section requires the Secretary of Agriculture to identify nine to fifteen priority landscapes for increased trail maintenance. There are specified criteria for selecting these landscapes. The Secretary is required to develop an approach to substantially increase trail maintenance within priority landscapes, incorporating volunteers and partners as appropriate. The section also establishes a trail maintenance fund, subject to future appropriations, to support trail maintenance in the priority landscapes.

Section 6. Cooperative Agreements.

This section authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements with States, local governments, Tribes, and private entities to implement the legislation.