

National Forest System trails, and a comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure that volunteers and partners are used as effectively as possible.

(Pub. L. 114-245, § 2, Nov. 28, 2016, 130 Stat. 990.)

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 114-245, § 1(a), Nov. 28, 2016, 130 Stat. 990, provided that: “This Act [enacting this subchapter and amending section 558c of this title] may be cited as the ‘National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act.’”

§ 583k-1. Definitions

In this subchapter:

(1) Administrative Unit

The term “Administrative Unit” means a national forest or national grassland.

(2) Outfitter or guide

The term “outfitter or guide” means an individual, organization, or business who provides outfitting or guiding services, as defined in section 251.51 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) Partner

The term “partner” means a non-Federal entity that engages in a partnership.

(4) Partnership

The term “partnership” means arrangements between the Department of Agriculture or the Forest Service and a non-Federal entity that are voluntary, mutually beneficial, and entered into for the purpose of mutually agreed-upon objectives.

(5) Priority area

The term “priority area” means a well-defined region on National Forest System land selected by the Secretary under section 583k-3(a) of this title.

(6) Secretary

The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(7) Strategy

The term “strategy” means the National Forest System Trails Volunteer and Partnership Strategy authorized by section 583k-2(a) of this title.

(8) Trail maintenance

The term “trail maintenance” means any activity to maintain the usability and sustainability of trails within the National Forest System, including—

- (A) ensuring trails are passable by the users for which they are managed;
- (B) preventing environmental damage resulting from trail deterioration;
- (C) protecting public safety; and
- (D) averting future deferred maintenance costs.

(9) Volunteer

The term “volunteer” means an individual whose services are accepted by the Secretary without compensation under the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 558a et seq.).

(Pub. L. 114-245, § 3, Nov. 28, 2016, 130 Stat. 990.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972, referred to in par. (9), is Pub. L. 92-300, May 18, 1972, 86 Stat. 147, which is classified generally to section 558a et seq. of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 558a of this title and Tables.

§ 583k-2. National Forest System Trails Volunteer and Partnership Strategy

(a) In general

Not later than 2 years after November 28, 2016, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in trail maintenance.

(b) Required elements

The strategy required by subsection (a) shall—

(1) augment and support the capabilities of Federal employees to carry out or contribute to trail maintenance;

(2) provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers and partners to carry out trail maintenance in each region of the Forest Service;

(3) address the barriers to increased volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance identified by volunteers, partners, and others;

(4) prioritize increased volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance in those regions with the most severe trail maintenance needs, and where trail maintenance backlogs are jeopardizing access to National Forest lands; and

(5) aim to increase trail maintenance by volunteers and partners by 100 percent by the date that is 5 years after November 28, 2016.

(c) Additional requirement

As a component of the strategy, the Secretary shall study opportunities to improve trail maintenance by addressing opportunities to use fire crews in trail maintenance activities in a manner that does not jeopardize firefighting capabilities, public safety, or resource protection. Upon a determination that trail maintenance would be advanced by use of fire crews in trail maintenance, the Secretary shall incorporate these proposals into the strategy, subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary.

(d) Volunteer liability

(1) Omitted

(2) Additional requirement

Not later than 2 years after November 28, 2016, the Secretary shall adopt regulations implementing this section. These regulations shall ensure that the financial risk from claims or liability associated with volunteers undertaking trail maintenance is shared by all administrative units.

(e) Consultation

The Secretary shall develop the strategy in consultation with volunteer and partner trail maintenance organizations, a broad array of outdoor recreation stakeholders, and other relevant stakeholders.

(f) Volunteer and partnership coordination

The Secretary shall require each administrative unit to develop a volunteer and partner co-