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Chairman Hastings Statement on President's Great Outdoors Initiative

"The government has a responsibility to maintain the land it already has before spending money we don't have to acquire more land."

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement regarding today's White House event on America's Great Outdoors:

"America has a responsibility to care for our treasured public lands and ensure that they are there for future generations to enjoy. Proper conservation requires a balanced approach. This means protecting and maintaining the land the federal government already owns and ensuring our multi-use public lands remain open to public enjoyment and available to help build our economy and create jobs.

"Being good stewards of our land does not require imposing restrictive policies that block recreation, agriculture, energy production and other job-creating activities. Yet this is too often the approach of the Obama Administration. For example, the Interior Department's new 'Wild Lands' policy will not only hinder public access and cost jobs, but is a gross circumvention of Congress' authority to designate Wilderness areas.

"It's concerning that the President is proposing hundreds of millions of dollars in new spending for the federal government to purchase more federal land, even though it cannot properly maintain the land it already owns. The Interior Department currently has maintenance backlogs that measure in the billions of dollars.

"America has a debt that is costing jobs and putting future generations at risk. This requires us to set priorities. There are many worthy projects and programs that our country simply cannot afford right now. I believe the government has a responsibility to maintain the land it already has before spending money we don't have to acquire more land."

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