



March 22, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

In the National Scenic Trail Act of 1968, Congress designated the Pacific Crest Trail (PCNST) as a National Scenic Trail for use by hikers and equestrians only, and not for motorized use, to enhance the wild and natural character of the trail. The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) is the primary private, non-profit membership organization charged with promoting, preserving, and protecting the PCNST for current and future generations of all Americans. Together with the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and California State Parks, we strive to pull together financial resources of our agency partners and the resources of the public through volunteer hours to accomplish our mission. In keeping with the mission of protecting the trail, the PCTA urges the California Department of Parks and Recreation to fund the entirety of the BLM PCNST restoration grant.

The PCNST is an internationally renowned trail that passes through some of the most beautiful and amazing scenery in our country. Additionally, the trail offers some of the best opportunities to escape developed populated areas, and spend time in nature with all of its physical, spiritual, and emotional benefits. However, in many areas, damaging and illegal Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use has interrupted and ruined that natural experience so highly prized by PCNST hikers and equestrians. Motorized use significantly damages the trail itself by creating erosion problems and by destroying structures on the trail, from signs to erosion check steps. Even more importantly, OHV use presents unsafe situations for hikers and especially equestrians, as horses often get scared and panic because of the noise created by OHV use. This problem is especially acute in the BLM land between highway 138 and Highway 178, Walker Pass. There are significant OHV areas in the surrounding BLM lands, including the completely open Dove Springs OHV area on Ridgecrest BLM land. This makes it even more important to restore and protect the PCNST as an alternative recreation source in the area.

The proposed BLM restoration project will alleviate the negative impacts caused by OHV use on the trail. By involving Student Conservation Association volunteer interns as the data collectors, the BLM supports the PCTA's goal of involving volunteers in the protection of the PCNST. In turn, with the data collected on illegal OHV use on the trail, the BLM will have all the information needed to direct future restoration projects. For these compelling reasons, the PCTA fully supports the grant application by the California office of the BLM.



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Thank you for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,

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Pacific Crest Trail Association



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