

**File Code:** 2350  
**Date:** March 31, 2020

Dear Interested Party:

The USDA Forest Service is soliciting nominations for volunteers to serve on the advisory council for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (Pacific Northwest Trail, or PNT).

As the Regional Forester of the Pacific Northwest Region, I have responsibility for day-to-day, trail-wide administration of the Pacific Northwest Trail, which I accomplish in coordination with Leanne Marten, the Regional Forester of the Northern Region. We invite you and your community to submit nominations for the advisory council. Nomination instructions and forms are available on the Forest Service's PNT website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnt>. The deadline to submit nominations is May 31, 2020.

### **Background**

The Pacific Northwest Trail is a 1,200-mile route that begins near the Continental Divide in Glacier National Park in Montana and travels through northwest Montana, the Idaho Panhandle, and Washington to reach the Pacific Ocean at Cape Alava in Olympic National Park. In 2009, Congress designated the Pacific Northwest Trail as a national scenic trail under the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 116-9) (NTSA). The Forest Service is completing a comprehensive plan for the Pacific Northwest Trail, as described in Section 5(e) of the NTSA.

The unique role of the advisory council is to serve as a venue where citizens and representatives of Tribes, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations can talk together to develop shared recommendations to the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture on matters related to the Pacific Northwest Trail, as described in Section 5(d) of the NTSA.

The advisory council was previously active, holding three meetings in 2015 and 2016, before its charter expired in 2018. The Secretary of Agriculture has renewed the charter, effective March 10, 2020.

### **Advisory Council Composition and Membership**

The advisory council will have approximately 25, and no more than 35, members who will provide representation within each of the following categories:

- (1) The head of each Federal department or independent agency administering lands through which the trail route passes, or their designee.
- (2) A member to represent each state (Montana, Idaho, and Washington) based on the recommendation of the Governor.
- (3) Members appointed to represent private organizations, including corporate and individual landowners and land users which, in the opinion of the Secretary, have an established and



recognized interest in the Pacific Northwest Trail. These members may represent social, environmental, or economic organizations (such as nationally or regionally recognized trails organizations, nationally or regionally recognized environmental organizations, nationally or regionally recognized wildlife organizations) and interests (hiking, equestrian, mountain biking, archaeological and historical, the timber industry, tourism and/or commercial outfitters, county governments and/or gateway communities, environmental education, youth engagement and employment) and/or private landowners.

(4) Members appointed to represent tribal interests.

Members commit to a two-year term with the potential to be reappointed by the Secretary to serve a second term. Service on the advisory council is unpaid, though members may be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Serving on the advisory council requires a considerable time commitment. The advisory council will have two multi-day, in-person meetings per year with additional virtual phone- or web-based meetings, pre-work, and follow-up tasks.

Volunteers for the advisory council should understand that its work will focus on broad, trail-wide issues. The advisory council does not make decisions about the location of the Pacific Northwest Trail route, which was designated by Congress and can only be relocated in accordance with Section 7(b) of the NTSA.

Advisory council members will be expected to make good-faith efforts to work with other members to develop recommendations to the Secretary that contribute to the long-term vision for administration and management of the PNT in accordance with the National Trails System Act. Members will be expected to share their points of view, listen to and consider other perspectives, and ask for more information when it is needed.

Advisory council members will be expected to follow the advisory council's bylaws (to be developed and adopted at the first meeting) and applicable Federal ethics laws, rules, and guidelines. Ethics training will be provided and is required for all members.

The Forest Service is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment in which all people are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, and are free from harassment. This commitment extends to all Forest Service employees, contractors, and anyone who does business with us.

### **How to Submit Nominations**

Any individual or organization may nominate one or more qualified persons to represent the interests in category #3 above, and Tribes and tribal organizations may also nominate persons for category #4. Individuals may nominate themselves.

To be considered for membership, nominees must submit all of the following:

- Complete form AD-755 (Advisory Committee or Research and Promotion Background Information), which can be found on the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Trail website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnt>;

- Résumé describing qualifications, experiences, and skills relevant to the advisory council;
- Cover letter identifying:
  - which organization(s) and/or interest group(s) the nominee would represent and how they are qualified to represent the group(s),
  - the nominee's rationale for serving on the advisory council (i.e., why they are interested and what they could contribute), and
  - the nominee's past experience working successfully as part of a collaborative team or group;
- Letter of endorsement, if applying to represent an organization (e.g., letter or email from the organization's executive director, president, board chair, etc.).

The form AD-755 and additional application information can be found by visiting the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Trail website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnt>, or by contacting the advisory council's Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Becky Blanchard, by email at [SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov](mailto:SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov) by phone at (503) 808-2449.

Nominations should be submitted by May 31, 2020. Submit nominations by email to [SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov](mailto:SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov), or by mail to:

USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region  
Attention: Becky Blanchard, PNT Advisory Council DFO  
1220 SW Third Avenue, Suite 1700  
Portland, OR 97204-2825

### **Timeline for Appointment of Members and Meetings**

All nominations will be vetted by the USDA. The Secretary of Agriculture will appoint members to the Council from the list of qualified applicants. Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies shall be followed in all appointments to the advisory council.

It may be a number of months from the time nominees submit their applications to the time appointments are made. We will communicate with all applicants any updates we receive about the status of the process. We appreciate your patience.

The first virtual (web- or phone-based) meeting will be held soon after the Secretary selects and appoints members to the advisory council. Advisory council members will also be asked to complete required web-based ethics training.

We anticipate holding the first in-person meeting of the advisory council in fall 2020. This will be a two- or three-day meeting at a location to be determined in Montana, Idaho, or Washington, proximate to the Pacific Northwest Trail. We anticipate holding similar in-person meetings twice a year, in the spring and fall, for the duration of the advisory council.

### **More Information**

The advisory council is not the sole opportunity for members of the public and interested entities to get information about administration and management of the Pacific Northwest Trail or to

provide comments. Federal actions—for example, decisions in the Pacific Northwest Trail comprehensive plan or subsequent project-level decisions such as future new trail construction—are subject to the public involvement provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

More information about the Pacific Northwest Trail and the advisory council can be found on the Forest Service's PNT website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnt>. Additionally, you may contact Becky Blanchard, Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Administrator, by email at [SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov](mailto:SM.fs.pnnstcouncil@usda.gov) or by phone at 503-808-2449.

Sincerely,

GLENN P. CASAMASSA  
Regional Forester

cc: Becky Blanchard, Michelle Mitchell, Jackie Parmer, Mercury 477979