

# 2016 Recreational Trails Program Annual Report

A report on the use and benefits of Federal Recreational Trails Program funds across the United States

Covers the period of Federal FY 1993–FY 2015



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

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Go John Trail, Maricopa County, Arizona; photo by Kathleen Fitzpatrick

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### COVER PHOTOS:

Clockwise from upper left:

- Rock Creek Trail, Washington, DC; photo from the Student Conservation Association
- Iron Range OHV Recreation Area, Minnesota; photo from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails Division
- Lower Columbia River Trail, Oregon; photo by Stuart Macdonald
- Katahdin Ridge Multi-Use Trail, Maine; photo from Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

# 2016 Recreational Trails Program Annual Report

## Executive Summary

The purpose of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Annual Report is to provide information about the program and the projects funded in Federal fiscal year (FY) 2015. This report serves as a useful guide to the RTP for trail managers and the public. It highlights program funding and administration, the RTP Database, and how States use funds. It illustrates eligible project types along with project examples receiving awards from the Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT).

### Program Summary

The RTP is a Federal-aid assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to help the States provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and nonmotorized trail use. Projects include urban greenways and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and off-highway vehicle trails, as well as snow and water routes. Since 1993, States have received over \$1 billion in Federal funding for local projects.

### Funding and Administration

The RTP applies the "user-pay/user-benefit" philosophy of the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Trail users pay the Federal motor fuel excise tax for fuel used for nonhighway recreational trail use, and receive the benefit of the RTP through funds provided to the States for trail projects. This program implementation is consistent in practice with other expenditures from the Highway Trust Fund.

The RTP was created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), reauthorized in 1998 as part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), again in 2005 through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and the 2012 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). On December 4, 2015, the RTP was reauthorized as part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, for FY 2016-20 (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/>).

### Use of Recreational Trails Program Funds

States may use RTP funds for a variety of project types and expenditures which fall under eight categories of permissible uses. The RTP legislation identifies these general permissible use categories:

- Trail maintenance and restoration
- Trailside and trailhead facilities
- Equipment for construction and maintenance
- Construction of new recreational trails
- Acquisition of trail corridors
- Assessment of trail conditions
- Safety and environmental education
- Administration

### RTP Database

The RTP Database (<http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>) provides an online record of RTP project data for the FHWA, Congress, the State administrators, project managers, and the public. Over 21,350 projects can be searched by State, County, Congressional District, Trail Name, Project Name, Permissible Use Category, and Year Awarded. Reports can be printed from the search results.

### National Benefits

A review of the RTP Database shows the diversity of local impacts of RTP funding. Like other Highway Trust Fund programs, the RTP provides benefits to virtually every county in the United States.

Projects using RTP funds illustrate a variety of the ways that trails enhance public lands and communities across America. Some important benefits are identified along with examples of how trails support larger public goals:

- Accessibility
- Active Transportation
- Climate Change
- Economic Stimulus
- Habitat Conservation
- Ladders of Opportunity
- Multiple-Use Management
- Repair and Rehabilitation
- Safe and Livable Communities
- Safety and Environmental Education
- Sustainability
- Youth Service and Conservation Corps

The legislation establishes requirements for project eligibility but provides substantial flexibility to the States on project selection.

# Funding and Administration

The RTP is a Federal-aid assistance program of the FHWA with funds provided to each State to build and maintain recreational trails and related facilities and activities.

Each State:

- Receives funds apportioned by statutory formula
- Administers its own program, usually through a State resource or park agency
- Develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding
- Establishes a State Recreational Trail Advisory Committee (representing both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail users) to assist with the program

States are required to use 40 percent of their RTP funds for diverse recreational trail use, 30 percent for motorized recreation, and 30 percent for nonmotorized recreation. (The 40-30-30 calculation takes place after accounting for State administrative costs. A small State exclusion exempts Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Rhode Island from 30 percent motorized and nonmotorized requirements).

The specifics of how to apply this formula to project selection is up to the States, and varies considerably around the country. States with large Federal land ownership sometimes fund backcountry projects with both motorized and nonmotorized use to achieve diversity. Others may fund projects with adjacent paved and unpaved trail surfaces for diverse nonmotorized activities, or trails with winter snowmobiling and summer all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use.

The Federal funds will provide up to 80 percent of the project cost and require project sponsors to provide the remaining amount in matching resources (generally at least 20 percent). In many cases, the actual match from the project partners is 50 percent or more.



Foy's to Blacktail Trail, Montana; photo by Liz Seabaugh. Montana was a 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trail Award winner for Outstanding State Trails Program.

## ✳ 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

An ongoing goal of State administration is efficient use of RTP funds. This includes streamlining required reviews, clarifying financial accountability, improving project selection, reducing project implementation costs for sponsors, and tracking program and project performance.

### Managed Uses

Managed Uses include a wide variety of both motorized and nonmotorized trail activities that are appropriate to recreational trails. The RTP legislation defines the term “recreational trail” as “a thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes,” and includes the following activities:

- A. Pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use;
- B. Skating or skateboarding;
- C. Equestrian activities, including carriage driving;
- D. Nonmotorized snow trail activities, including skiing;
- E. Bicycling or use of other human powered vehicles;
- F. Aquatic or water activities; and
- G. Motorized vehicular activities, including all terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off road motorized vehicles.

**Table 1 – RTP Apportionments:  
All States, All Years**

This table shows RTP funding authorized by Congress for use by States each year of the program. Beginning under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the States return one percent annually to FHWA for program administration: up to \$841,600.

The funds were allocations in 1993, 1996, and 1997, but the funds were apportionments for 1998-2015.

**ONLINE RESOURCE:**

For current apportionments to States and details of year by year apportionments and obligations:

<http://goo.gl/hVwBI8>

Apportionments (All States)	RTP Funding	Obligated
1993 Allocation	\$7,275,000	\$5,696,543
1994 Allocation	\$0	\$1,581,335
1995 Allocation	\$0	\$0
1996 Allocation	\$14,688,000	\$11,595,075
1997 Allocation	\$14,688,000	\$16,256,403
1998 Apportioned	\$29,550,000	\$14,691,339
1999 Apportioned	\$39,400,000	\$33,750,926
2000 Apportioned	\$49,250,000	\$44,161,037
2001 Apportioned	\$49,250,000	\$44,826,248
2002 Apportioned	\$49,250,000	\$47,586,188
2003 Apportioned	\$48,929,875	\$44,915,197
2004 Apportioned	\$57,656,952	\$43,957,595
2005 Apportioned	\$59,160,000	\$43,459,118
2006 Apportioned	\$68,468,400	\$57,983,555
2007 Apportioned	\$74,160,000	\$65,913,964
2008 Apportioned	\$79,160,000	\$62,787,840
2009 Apportioned	\$84,160,000	\$81,113,236
2010 Apportioned	\$84,160,000	\$52,908,922
2011 Apportioned	\$96,570,196	\$88,649,335
2012 Apportioned	\$78,569,033	\$68,360,434
2013 Apportioned	\$79,212,744	\$65,371,220
2014 Apportioned	\$80,741,889	\$64,842,044
2015 Apportioned	\$80,741,889	\$71,980,520
<b>1993-2015 Totals</b>	<b>\$1,225,041,978</b>	<b>\$1,032,388,074</b>
1993-2015 Obligation Rate		84.27%

----- NOTES -----

**Table 1 (Page 5) and Table 3 (Page 7)**

The difference in the totals in Table 1 and Table 3 is due to the different sources providing the information (see the notes below) and the manner in which a State obligates its funding (e.g., some States obligate funds every other year). Additionally, the RTP Database does not currently have complete data for all States; data collection and validation for the RTP Database is an on-going effort. Data will be regularly entered into the Database as it is received from the States and the District of Columbia.

The obligation rate represents the percentage of funds committed to projects compared to the funds available. The obligation rate for the overall Federal-aid highway program averages about 95 percent over time. The obligation rate for the RTP has trended in the 80 to 85 percent range. There are many reasons why the RTP has a lower obligation rate. The obligation authority for the Federal-aid highway program is lower than the apportionments, so some States give priority to other Federal-aid highway programs. Some States select projects on two-year cycles (even-numbered years tend to have lower obligation rates). Some States delay project selection and implementation when there is uncertainty about the reauthorization of the program, or take time to implement the program after each new authorization act.

**Table 2 (Page 6)**

FY 2012 apportionments were reduced from the \$85 million authorized because of mandatory rescissions. States also must consider limitations on Federal-aid highway program obligations.

**Sources**

The source for the data in Tables 1 and 2 is the Federal Highway Administration's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS).

The source for the data in Tables 3 (Page 7) and 4 (Page 17) is information provided by the States for the Recreational Trails Program Database (<http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>).

**Table 2 – RTP Apportionments and Obligations  
by State for Federal FY 2015**

This table shows the number of projects per State for Federal FY 2015.

It shows RTP funds apportioned to each State for the most recent year of the program. The funding is based on the amount each State received in FY 2009. In that year, half of the funds were distributed equally among all States, and half were distributed in proportion to the estimated amount of off-road recreational fuel use in each State: fuel used for off-road recreation by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-road motorcycles, and off-road light trucks.

This table also shows obligations by State. Obligations are the Federal government's legal commitment to pay or reimburse the States or other entities for the Federal share of a project's eligible costs.

<sup>1</sup> State's Governor opted out of the RTP in FY 2015 but obligated past funds.

<sup>2</sup> State has not yet provided a breakdown of the number of FY 2015 projects.

<sup>3</sup> State's FY 2015 projects are combined with an earlier or later fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup> State has not yet not obligated funds for FY 2015.

**ONLINE RESOURCE:**  
Recreational Trails  
Program Apportionments  
and Obligations, FY 2015  
by State:

<http://goo.gl/XOpJlz>

State	2015 Projects	FY 2015	
		Apportionment	Obligation
Alabama	15	\$1,732,289	\$1,732,289
Alaska	31	\$1,512,643	\$1,249,399
Arizona	17	\$1,915,514	\$932,519
Arkansas	28	\$1,479,029	\$492,689
California	3	\$5,698,627	\$3,675,819
Colorado	13	\$1,575,735	\$944,914
Connecticut	33	\$952,594	\$2,121,205
Delaware	1	\$896,623	\$861,120
Dist. Columbia	2	\$816,847	\$2,740,706
Florida <sup>1</sup>	13	-	-\$519,373
Georgia	27	\$1,722,736	\$1,934,583
Hawaii	103	\$950,859	\$1,332,855
Idaho	39	\$1,693,454	\$1,590,153
Illinois	6	\$1,510,044	\$112,014
Indiana	7	\$1,189,692	\$1,232,369
Iowa	6	\$1,361,069	\$491,516
Kansas	11	\$1,370,407	\$1,262,612
Kentucky	26	\$1,410,151	\$1,285,467
Louisiana	16	\$1,502,467	\$1,925,124
Maine	50	\$1,428,314	\$934,419
Maryland	54	\$1,112,384	\$1,112,384
Massachusetts	30	\$1,174,862	\$949,354
Michigan <sup>2</sup>	0	\$2,825,415	\$2,128,562
Minnesota	35	\$2,391,888	\$2,440,859
Mississippi	13	\$1,348,305	\$2,919,743
Missouri	13	\$1,646,765	\$1,861,398
Montana	58	\$1,590,638	\$1,578,041
Nebraska	9	\$1,205,213	\$2,709,188
Nevada	12	\$1,344,370	\$686,414
New Hampshire	27	\$1,255,265	-\$131,197
New Jersey	63	\$1,214,489	-\$624,873
New Mexico	7	\$1,415,533	\$1,058,693
New York	11	\$2,182,510	\$2,592,239
North Carolina	20	\$1,597,424	-\$6,309
North Dakota	6	\$1,120,562	\$947,994
Ohio	15	\$1,655,132	\$1,768,203
Oklahoma	9	\$1,769,212	\$1,668,671
Oregon <sup>3</sup>	0	\$1,594,051	\$1,302,291
Pennsylvania <sup>4</sup>	0	\$1,971,353	\$157,491
Rhode Island	26	\$856,384	\$1,650,355
South Carolina <sup>4</sup>	0	\$1,199,108	\$1,889,429
South Dakota	23	\$1,125,821	\$1,236,387
Tennessee <sup>3</sup>	0	\$1,624,207	\$903,690
Texas	24	\$3,954,874	\$5,980,481
Utah <sup>2</sup>	0	\$1,546,233	\$1,386,326
Vermont	11	\$1,017,730	\$913,830
Virginia	4	\$1,511,889	\$754,964
Washington	25	\$1,867,407	\$1,867,407
West Virginia	15	\$1,297,964	\$1,123,814
Wisconsin	76	\$2,146,076	\$1,420,869
Wyoming	23	\$1,459,731	\$1,401,421
<b>Total to States</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>\$80,741,889</b>	<b>\$71,980,520</b>

**Table 3 – RTP Database Projects and Funding  
Federal FY 1993-FY 2015**

This table shows the number of projects funded plus the amount of funding by State for Federal FY 1993-2015. It shows the total RTP funds obligated by each State during the period. In addition, the “Total Other Funding” column shows how much additional match was provided by project sponsors. Note that the matching funds are generally higher than the 20 percent minimum required by RTP. In 11 States the match is higher than the total RTP funds apportioned.

State	1993-2015 Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
Alabama	334	\$24,619,280	\$8,217,229
Alaska	427	\$14,161,689	\$5,284,007
Arizona	237	\$19,533,683	\$9,089,355
Arkansas	346	\$13,195,213	\$8,713,699
California	384	\$51,567,276	\$25,172,580
Colorado	419	\$15,435,652	\$25,868,099
Connecticut	369	\$19,178,479	\$12,141,349
Delaware	136	\$6,851,327	\$12,281,361
District of Columbia	35	\$7,876,842	\$1,811,757
Florida <sup>1</sup>	209	\$25,787,510	\$19,718,071
Georgia	307	\$26,504,382	\$22,377,412
Hawaii	1,248	\$11,395,131	\$14,374,297
Idaho	617	\$21,235,049	\$20,491,445
Illinois	281	\$26,609,837	\$12,818,635
Indiana	141	\$19,331,521	\$6,138,545
Iowa	117	\$26,753,386	\$33,473,356
Kansas	305	\$17,098,994	\$10,769,987
Kentucky	489	\$17,212,421	\$16,798,294
Louisiana	355	\$20,436,303	\$17,156,217
Maine	650	\$15,201,355	\$22,079,817
Maryland	822	\$19,277,400	\$26,748,765
Massachusetts	471	\$13,219,774	\$24,397,138
Michigan <sup>2</sup>	304	\$38,380,501	\$67,253,271
Minnesota	452	\$28,092,909	\$71,209,991
Mississippi	265	\$20,620,959	\$25,823,410
Missouri	323	\$23,858,486	\$50,399,710
Montana	858	\$18,952,783	\$40,442,783
Nebraska	136	\$15,728,311	\$23,273,143
Nevada	327	\$14,595,484	\$9,017,368
New Hampshire	763	\$13,367,166	\$28,773,841
New Jersey	846	\$18,014,988	\$63,167,385
New Mexico	190	\$14,574,815	\$20,571,294
New York	428	\$32,067,152	\$45,252,163
North Carolina	520	\$27,225,291	\$87,331,057
North Dakota	253	\$14,127,184	\$18,446,635
Ohio	303	\$24,008,498	\$48,226,862
Oklahoma	272	\$22,789,784	\$35,979,766
Oregon <sup>3</sup>	415	\$19,270,539	\$39,229,270
Pennsylvania <sup>4</sup>	371	\$30,470,082	\$49,543,786
Rhode Island	362	\$7,024,155	\$10,178,942
South Carolina <sup>4</sup>	240	\$14,731,804	\$20,291,705
South Dakota	368	\$18,850,392	\$29,611,947
Tennessee <sup>3</sup>	248	\$19,394,999	\$25,447,812
Texas	501	\$56,729,032	\$77,015,081
Utah <sup>2</sup>	427	\$21,263,401	\$45,086,897
Vermont	1,197	\$13,269,735	\$23,000,841
Virginia	296	\$20,701,248	\$29,900,156
Washington	633	\$24,606,613	\$89,867,272
West Virginia	290	\$13,205,585	\$17,002,811
Wisconsin	626	\$28,270,035	\$65,578,025
Wyoming	458	\$20,150,852	\$34,372,999
<b>Total:</b>	<b>21,358</b>	<b>\$1,064,319,050</b>	<b>\$774,615,140</b>

<sup>1</sup> State’s Governor opted out of the RTP in FY 2015 but obligated past funds.

<sup>2</sup> State has not yet provided a breakdown of the number of FY 2015 projects.

<sup>3</sup> State’s FY 2015 projects are combined with an earlier or later fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup> State has not yet not obligated funds for FY 2015.

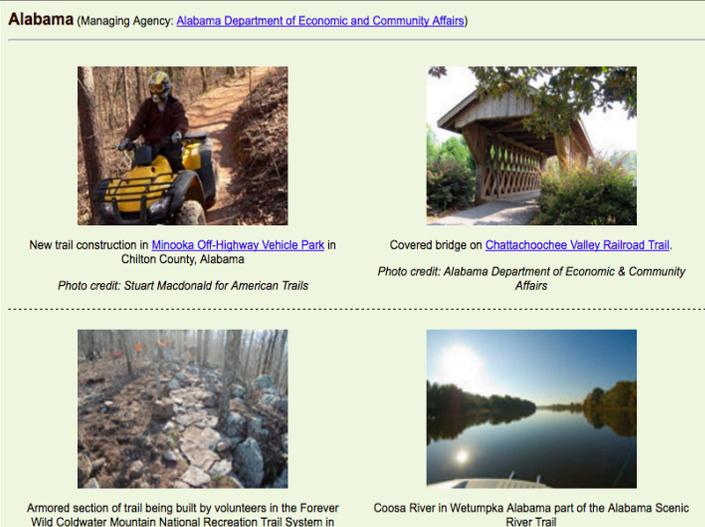
# RTP Database

The RTP Database (<http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>) includes more than 21,350 projects that have received more than \$1 billion in funding. These projects have been matched with \$774 million.

The RTP Database provides a central repository for RTP project data that is usable by the FHWA, Congress, the States, RTP administrators, project managers, and the public. To promote program transparency, FHWA seeks to know how States use RTP funds in a manner that provides sufficient information to the public without undue burden on State program administrators.

In 2012, FHWA contracted with KMS Enterprises, Inc. (which subcontracted with American Trails) to develop, operate, and update a searchable RTP Database to be available on a website, and to provide annual reports on RTP funding. New data is regularly entered into the Database as it is received from the States, District of Columbia, and other sources.

Updating the RTP Database is important because there are more than 1,000 new RTP projects each year. American Trails also gathers photographs for the Image Library to provide examples of permissible



The RTP Database Image Library provides examples of projects funded by the Recreational Trails Program from every State and the District of Columbia.

uses and managed uses for trails, related facility construction, and other project types.

Database users can search by State, County, Congressional District, Trail Name, Project Name, Permissible Use Category, and Year Awarded. Reports can be printed from the search results. Database users can view a record of the project for more information. A link to a brief webinar on how to navigate and use the RTP Database is located online: <http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>.

The RTP Database provides a comprehensive data search by location, project/trail name, permissible use categories, and project timeframe.



[<<< Return to Search](#)

## Results for Comprehensive Database Search

Your Search Criteria:

- State: *Default Value: All States*

Your search returned 20481 results.

[\(Printing tip\)](#)

[Print to PDF](#)

Show 10 entries

Keyword Search:

State	Project Year	Trail Name	Project Name	Description	Cong. District(s)	County(s)	RTP Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
AK	2014		<a href="#">FY 2014 RTP Administrative Allowance</a>	FY 2014 Recreational Trails Program Administrative Allowance	1		\$106,741	\$10,596	\$117,337
AK	2014	<a href="#">Point Bridget Trail</a>	<a href="#">Point Bridget Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Juneau Borough	\$12,667	\$1,257	\$13,924
AK	2014	<a href="#">Battery Point Trail</a>	<a href="#">Battery Point Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Haines Borough	\$17,494	\$1,737	\$19,231
AK	2014	<a href="#">Mosquito Cove Trail</a>	<a href="#">Mosquito Cove Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Sitka Borough	\$5,475	\$543	\$6,018
AK	2014	<a href="#">Settlers Cove Trails</a>	<a href="#">Settlers Cove SRS Trail System</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$5,485	\$544	\$6,029
AK	2014	<a href="#">Forest and Muskeg Trail</a>	<a href="#">Forest and Muskeg Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Sitka Borough	\$5,125	\$509	\$5,634
AK	2014	<a href="#">Loop Trail (Methodist Camp Trail)</a>	<a href="#">Loop Trail (Methodist Camp Trail)</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Juneau Borough	\$9,895	\$982	\$10,877
AK	2014	<a href="#">Iditarod National Historic Trail</a>	<a href="#">Eagle River Nature Center Historic Iditarod Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Anchorage Borough	\$9,704	\$2,426	\$12,130
AK	2014	<a href="#">Black Sands Beach State Marine Park Trail</a>	<a href="#">Black Sands Beach State Marine Park Trail</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$4,994	\$496	\$5,490
AK	2014	<a href="#">Kachemak Bay Interpretive Trails</a>	<a href="#">Restoring Kachemak Bay Interpretive Trails</a>	Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles	1	Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$49,989	\$12,496	\$62,485
Grand Totals (all results)							\$1,003,323,178	\$727,402,449	\$1,730,725,627

Showing 1 to 10 of 20481 entries

Previous 1 2 3 4 5 ... 2049 Next



Northern Delaware Greenway Trail; photo by Stuart Macdonald

# Use of Recreational Trails Program Funds

The RTP legislation identifies eight categories of permissible uses for how States may use RTP funds. The following pages provide details and examples for each use. The categories are:

- A** Trail maintenance and restoration
- B** Trailside and trailhead facilities
- C** Equipment for construction and maintenance
- D** Construction of new recreational trails
- E** Acquisition of trail corridors
- F** Assessment of trail conditions
- G** Education for safety and environmental protection
- H** Administration

See the text of the legislation defining the categories:  
<http://goo.gl/C5Z0y>

## Project Example

### Northern Delaware Greenway Trail, Delaware

The Northern Delaware Greenway Trail links parks and communities between the Delaware River and the Brandywine River. The purpose of the greenway trail is to help protect water quality, safeguard historic and cultural resources, improve air quality, maintain plant and animal biodiversity, sustain and enhance Delaware's scenic beauty, and provide space for recreation and active transportation. The trail serves a wide variety of neighborhoods in the greater Wilmington area, and gives residents in lower-income areas easy access to parkland.



**PERMISSIBLE USE**

**A**

## Trail maintenance and restoration

**Category A:** Maintenance and restoration of existing trails: trail maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation. This category may include maintenance and restoration of trail bridges, or provide appropriate signage along a trail.

**Project Example**

### Blanca Peak Trail, Colorado

The photos above show the Blanca Peak Trail before and after the maintenance project completed by Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI) staff and volunteers. The project focused on stabilizing the primary trail corridor and included building risers, retaining walls, drainage structures, and 583 rock steps. Leveraging the RTP funds, RMFI secured matching funds from organizations such as the Colorado Mountain Club and the Forest Service to complete the project. Photos from RMFI.

✳️ *2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner*



**Project Example**

### Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park, West Virginia

The Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia worked with the Beaver Coal Company to use RTP funds for repairs and maintenance of the over 100-mile OHV trail system. Work to improve user safety as well as the environment included stabilization and repair of badly rutted and deteriorated trail sections, clearing and grubbing of trail corridors, and addressing runoff and erosion. Continued improvements to the park will increase the number of visitors, which positively affects the economy of the area and helps promote tourism in southern West Virginia.

Burning Rock OHV Trail; photo by Dyane Corcoran, Burning Rock Adventure Park



**PERMISSIBLE USE**

**B**

## Trailside and trailhead facilities

**Category B:** Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails. Typical eligible work includes parking areas, toilets, horse and vehicle unloading facilities, signs, and seating.

**Project Example**

## Bois D'Arc Trail, Oklahoma

The Bois D'Arc Trailhead's interpretive signage at Hugo Lake State Park in Choctaw County provides visitors with an overview of the park's navigation that is easy to read, as well as history and background about the park. With help from the RTP, the Dixie Community Action Agency was also able to install restrooms, a fishing dock, a pavilion, picnic tables, and rest areas as part of this project. Photo from Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.



Restroom installation at Lake Joanna Trail; photo from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**Project Example**

## Lake Joanna Trail, Missouri

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers used RTP funds to purchase two restrooms for the Lake Joanna Trail at Mark Twain State Park. Both restrooms are fully accessible and designed to be low maintenance, minimizing operating costs and the environmental footprint. A local chapter of Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen also donated hitching posts, refurbished picnic tables, and installed trailhead maps and trail ethics signs. The project was also supported by local Boy Scouts, high school vocational students, and the Mark Twain Lake Friends of Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Council.

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## PERMISSIBLE USE

# C

### Equipment for construction and maintenance

**Category C:** Purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment. Examples include snow trail grooming equipment, mechanized trailbuilding equipment, vehicles for trail maintenance, and other equipment to help maintain the trail surface, drainage, and adjacent vegetation.



## Project Example

### Alakai Swamp Boardwalk, Hawaii

The Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources used RTP funds for helicopter support to replace the 20-year old disintegrating boardwalk made of redwood planks and chicken wire. Trail users trying to navigate around decomposing boards were trampling the plants and getting stuck in the thick alpine bog mud. As one of the world's highest-elevation temperate rainforests and almost a mile above sea level, the Alakai Swamp is home to many rare native species.

Leasing the helicopter enabled supplies to be flown in, avoiding damage to the delicate ecosystem. The boardwalk renovation was accomplished with recycled plastic boards reinforced with fiberglass that can withstand the fluctuating climate. The ongoing funding by the RTP also provided additional tools, equipment, and materials. The goal of the project was to ensure that the new boardwalk will be more durable, while enhancing the public's enjoyment and safety. Photos from Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

## Project Example

### OHV Trails Maintenance Project, Montana

RTP funds enabled the purchase of equipment needed to maintain Montana's motorized recreation trails and manage their steadily increasing use. Photo from Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association.

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## PERMISSIBLE USE

# D

### Construction of new recreational trails

**Category D:** Construction of new recreational trails. This is the largest category of expenditures in most States, and includes paved and unpaved trails, water trails, snow trails, and bridges. The needs of local communities, agencies, and trail users are reflected in the great variety of trail construction that has been accomplished. Urban trails, greenways, natural surface pathways, paddling routes, and recreational vehicle routes are all well represented in RTP funding.

## Project Example

### Boardman Bridge, Idaho

A failing pier had permanently closed this bridge in 2012, but its replacement reopened connectivity to over 150 miles of motorized and nonmotorized trails. As the only bridge within 25 miles that allows safe crossing over the South Fork of the Boise River for trail access, the bridge provides access for an assortment of recreational trail users, livestock herders, and land managers. The raised crossing also improves water quality and fish habitat. Photo from the USDA Forest Service, Sawtooth National Forest, Fairfield Ranger District.

✳️ *2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner*

## Project Example

### Cove Spring Park Trails, Kentucky

RTP funds have helped build multiple new trails. At approximately 250 acres, this trail system provides multiple types of transportation and recreation for residents and visitors, including raised boardwalks, accessible trails, an archery range, and wetlands preserve. The most recent phase of the trail system connects several neighborhoods with downtown Frankfort. Photo from Kentucky Department of Local Government.



## PERMISSIBLE USE

# E

### Acquisition of trail corridors

**Category E:** Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors. This category may include acquisition of old road or railroad bridges to be converted to trail use. Acquisition of any kind of interest in property must be from a willing landowner or seller.



#### Project Example

### Haw River Trail Acquisition, North Carolina

The 8.3-acre land acquisition for the Haw River Trail in Alamance County, North Carolina was funded by the RTP in 2013. The grant enabled Alamance County and the City of Graham to purchase this property as part of ongoing efforts to preserve land along the river. This acquisition provides new recreation opportunities and increases the health of the Haw River, which stretches over 100 miles. It had been avoided for decades due to heavy pollution from the many textile factories along its edge. Photo by Brian Baker, Alamance Parks.

## PERMISSIBLE USE

# F

### Assessment of trail conditions

**Category F:** Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance, authorizes specific projects to assess trails to determine the level of accessibility for people who have disabilities, to develop programs to provide trail access information, and to assess trails for current or future maintenance needs.



#### Project Example

### New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Inventory and Assessment Program

Trail assessments help keep the thousands of miles of trails across our country maintained for consistent safety and enjoyable use. The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) used an RTP grant matched by volunteer donations to assess and catalog trail conditions and perform maintenance as needed. A technical specialist trained volunteers to use GPS devices and attach digital photos and descriptions, in order to record conditions and maintenance needs for over 700 miles of trails in New Jersey.

An additional benefit of RTP funding has been to illustrate the productive and efficient aspects of trail assessment. As a result, the NYNJTC has received continued support from its major partners in the park systems of New York and New Jersey. Photo by Jeremy Apgar, NYNJTC.

# Education for safety and environmental protection

**Category G:** Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection.

A State may use up to five percent of its apportionment each fiscal year for the operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection as those objectives relate to the use of recreational trails.



## Project Example

### Blue Tree Trail System and Spring Mountains Youth Camp, Nevada

The 50-mile Blue Tree Trail System is in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The Forest Service uses RTP funds to improve the trails with help from youth at the Spring Mountains Youth Camp. This camp is part of the Clark County Juvenile Justice Program and provides education and work experiences for youth offenders between the ages of 12 to 18, who learn skills in trail building and resource protection.

Another significant project partner was the Bristlecone Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of Nevada. This group helped with trail maintenance, installed all of the signs, and provided volunteer pack stock support for the trail crews with both Great Basin Institute and Spring Mountains Youth Camp. The Backcountry Horsemen also work with the Future Farmers of America from a local high school. These students learn horsemanship, packing skills, and trail work. These efforts have added 50 miles of quality trails that improve sustainability of recreation resources, and protect important cultural and natural resources. The result is a safer, high quality recreation system for a variety of user groups.

The project brought together a wide array of interest groups who pulled together to support a common vision and bring it to reality on the ground, learning new skills along the way. Photo from the USDA Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

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## Project Example

### North Dakota Off-Highway Vehicle Safety Campaign, North Dakota

North Dakota’s Parks and Recreation Department contracted with a production company to make a series of OHV safety public service announcements (PSA) to be aired on television, radio, YouTube, and in safety presentations. The purpose of the PSAs is to raise public awareness about how to operate OHVs safely and in an ethical manner. The titles of the PSAs are: “Stick To The Trail,” “I Learned It In Class,” “2 Are Better Than 1,” “The Right Fit,” and “Helmet Superman.” The videos can be seen on the ND Parks and Recreation Department’s YouTube page: <http://goo.gl/GDI5ids>.



Field trip on ATVs for members of Colorado's State Recreational Trails Committee; photo by Stuart Macdonald



The Committee has made funding of youth corps a priority; photo from Rocky Mountain Youth Corps

## PERMISSIBLE USE

# H

## Administration

**Category H:** Payment of costs to the State incurred in administering the program.

In addition to Staff time to administer the program and grants, other activities related to recreational trails are eligible under this category, including:

- Costs related to the State recreational trail advisory committee—newsletters, websites, or other communications
- Publications and conferences related to trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, operation, and assessment
- Statewide trail planning

A State may use up to seven percent of its apportionment each fiscal year for State administrative costs in that fiscal year. Any funds not used for administration within a fiscal year must be used for on-the-ground trail projects.

## Project Example

### State Recreational Trails Committee, Colorado

An excellent example of effective citizen involvement with policy for trails is Colorado's State Recreational Trails Committee. The nine members represent the full spectrum of trail interests and act as the State's principal liaison with trail user groups. The Committee oversees all of Colorado's motorized and nonmotorized trail grant application review processes—not just the RTP.

The Committee has fostered many partnerships with Federal, State, and local agencies, nonprofits, and volunteer organizations to promote trails in Colorado. It also coordinates trail development among local governments.

The Committee is also involved in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's efforts to adopt a new Strategic Plan. The Committee identified three critical initiatives for trails in Colorado:

- Establish a sustainable, nonmotorized trails funding mechanism for Colorado
- Reinforce the capacity of volunteer stewardship organizations in Colorado
- Promote and ensure integrated design approaches for existing and future trail systems that match with Colorado's land management mosaic

Colorado was a 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award winner for Outstanding State Recreational Trails Advisory Committee.

 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

FHWA guidance is available at: <http://goo.gl/IM1GDu>

**Table 4 – RTP Database Trail Project Work by Permissible Use  
Federal FY 1993-FY 2015**

Data collection and validation for the RTP Database is an ongoing effort. Data will be regularly entered into the Database as it is received from the States, District of Columbia, and other sources.

<b>A. Maintenance and Restoration</b>		<b>12,702</b>
Trail Restoration/Rehabilitation	4,275	
Trail Relocation	458	
Trail Grooming	1,950	
Trail Maintenance	4,466	
Bridge Restoration/Rehabilitation	871	
Bridge Relocation	62	
Bridge Maintenance	620	
<b>B. Trailside and Trailhead Facilities</b>		<b>10,022</b>
Trailhead Work	2,309	
Parking	1,586	
Signs	3,353	
Restrooms	940	
Accessibility Features	558	
Access Ramps	409	
Other Trailhead & Trailside Facilities	867	
<b>C. Equipment for Construction and Maintenance</b>		<b>2,329</b>
<b>D. Construction of New Recreational Trails</b>		<b>7,522</b>
Trail	6,020	
Bridge	1,502	
<b>E. Acquisition of Trail Corridors</b>		<b>346</b>
<b>F. Assessment of Trail Conditions</b>		<b>158</b>
<b>G. Education for Safety and Environmental Protection</b>		<b>2,311</b>
Publications (Maps & Brochures)	477	
Safety Programs	812	
Environmental Programs	809	
Other Educational Programs	213	
<b>H. Administration</b>		<b>541</b>

----- NOTES -----

RTP funds may be used for projects within eight permissible use categories. The table shows the number of projects funded within each category since the inception of the program. Some categories are broken down further to specify the project type.

Many projects qualify under more than one category. Maintenance and restoration projects are the most common projects, followed by trail facilities, and new trail construction.

The source for the data in Tables 3 (page 7) and 4 is information that the States provided for the RTP Database (<http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>).



French Broad River Greenway, Asheville, North Carolina; photo by Stuart Macdonald

# National Benefits

A review of RTP-funded projects reveals the many benefits of providing quality trails in our communities and across our public lands. Some important benefits are identified along with examples of how trails support larger goals for maintaining the health of people as well as the environment, encouraging economic activity, providing jobs and education, and improving communities across America.

## Accessibility

RTP funds have been used in every State to improve the accessibility of trails for persons with disabilities to make communities, trails, and recreation facilities more available to all. These projects have also highlighted the needs of older people, families with children, and those who are new to trail activities.

The “Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas” under the Architectural Barriers Act provide specifications for accessible recreational trails and other components of outdoor developed areas on Federal lands or constructed by a Federal agency. Although the guidelines do not necessarily apply to Federal-aid projects (unless on Federal land), they provide best practices that States may adopt to ensure equivalent compliance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



An accessible trail in Rotary Park; photo by Nick Powell, Montgomery County Engineer

This recently opened trail in Clarksville, Tennessee is the first fully accessible trail in the Montgomery County Park system. Located within the only natural park in the system, it has multiple surfaces including concrete, composite decking boardwalks, and graded chert. Updating the parking lot to improve accessibility was also an important part of this trail project.

 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

## Active Transportation

A significant amount of RTP funding is used to help build transportation networks in cities across America. The term “active transportation” refers to bicycling, walking, and other nonmotorized transportation modes. Often these trail and sidewalk networks are well integrated with public transit. Trails can be both efficient modes of transportation as well as linear parks and habitat corridors.

Active transportation networks can also enhance recreation, and people will use attractive and safe trails as a way to get to school, work, or shopping instead of driving. The ultimate benefit is in increasing physical activity to reduce the rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and other chronic health conditions across the United States.

In Asheville, North Carolina (see photo on page 18), paved trails are an important aspect of providing transportation alternatives. The City’s “Greenway Master Plan” includes 24 trail corridors and reports that “greenways consistently rank high on the public’s list of infrastructure priorities.”

## Climate Change

In “Strategic Issues Facing Transportation,” the Transportation Research Board states that “Climate change presents a fundamental challenge to engineering and planning practice given that transportation infrastructure has traditionally been planned and designed based upon historical climate data under the implicit assumption that the climate is static and the future will be like the past. Climate change challenges this assumption and suggests that transportation professionals might need to consider new kinds of risks in facility design and system operations.”

RTP funding can address concerns about climate change by building more durable trails that will withstand extreme weather events. In making efforts toward reducing greenhouse gases, new facilities and improvements to encourage bicycling and walking can reduce driving and emissions.

Trails also address climate change by preserving natural lands, which absorb and store carbon dioxide. Trail and greenway corridors provide an opportunity for replanting trees as well as enhancing wetlands and other habitats. Trails often traverse former industrial areas that present opportunities for new plantings to create cooling corridors through our cities.

FHWA provides publications and tools that may help trail managers perform vulnerability assessments and address climate change resilience; see [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/climate\\_change/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/climate_change/).

## Economic Stimulus



Great Allegheny Passage at the Eastern Continental Divide, Pennsylvania; photo by Mary Shaw

The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) which links Cumberland, Maryland and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania sees almost a million users every year. The 2015 GAP survey found that that 62 percent of visitors were planning an overnight stay. Businesses reported a 41 percent increase in trail user traffic from 2014, while 40 percent of the businesses planned to expand, and of those planning to expand, 67 percent attributed their expansion to the impact from the trail.

Many studies show that trails and greenways promote economic activity through spending, employment, and tax revenues. Increased property values, tourism, and recreation-related spending on equipment, bicycles, food, and lodging are ways trails positively impact community economies. A major benefit of trail tourism is that visitors spend money in rural towns and economically disadvantaged areas.

Many towns have been successful at identifying their recreation resources, creating systems of trails, and

making them more available through maps, signs, marketing, events, and tours. Communities adjacent to public lands benefit from trails on those lands. Much of the investment in maintaining and creating trail systems comes from volunteers and donations from businesses.

## Habitat Conservation

The positive contributions of trails promote natural resource management strategies that help ensure environmental quality. Often the environmental mitigation work is done by volunteers and conservation corps crews through projects such as restoring degraded stream corridors and other habitats in the process of trail building, and guiding visitors away from sensitive wildlife habitat and into more sustainable settings.

RTP funding is also commonly used for projects involving acquisition of land for protection and reroutes to avoid habitat impacts.



Visitors on a native plant tour at the Housatonic River Walk; photo from Great Barrington Land Conservancy

The Housatonic River Walk in Great Barrington, Massachusetts is an outdoor classroom for students from kindergarten through graduate school. The Great Barrington Land Conservancy offers tours on the river's restoration, native plants, and biodiversity. College interns earn credits by assisting with development, performing maintenance, studying reclamation of riverine ecosystems, and learning about maintaining public spaces. Greenagers, a local organization that fosters the ethics of stewardship in area youth, trains volunteers in skills to perform trail maintenance and improvements.

## Ladders of Opportunity

The goal of the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Ladders of Opportunity" initiative is to strengthen communities, create pathways to jobs, and improve the quality of life for all Americans. RTP funding can support trails that add to the success of these kinds of community projects:

- Better connect communities to employment, education, and services
- Increase availability of and access to multiple modes of transportation alternatives
- Contribute to increased transit access and reduce the need for automobile ownership for employment
- Provide trail-related training and employment for youth in economically distressed areas

## Multiple-Use Management

RTP funds frequently are used for improvements that support multiple trail uses. Since diverse forms of transportation are often allowed on trails, this is an important and challenging part of trail management. The goals for land managers are maintaining user safety, protecting natural resources, and providing high-quality user experiences.

To address these challenges, managers employ a wide array of physical and management options such as trail design, information and education, user involvement, and regulations and enforcement. Specific project work includes trail sharing and etiquette signs, trailhead facilities, stream crossing improvements, and trail work to improve sight lines and maintain tread width.



Trail etiquette sign on Clear Creek National Recreation Trail, Colorado; photo by Stuart Macdonald

## Repair and Rehabilitation

Just as our communities and transportation systems are vulnerable to major damage, so are our trails and parks. Extreme weather events in recent years have provided more visibility of damaged trails and parks. Whether or not these events could be categorized under “Climate Change,” a significant amount of funding is being applied to weather-related repairs:

- Blown-down trees in parks and forests
- Erosion damage and washed-out trails and culverts
- Flooded recreation facilities
- Wind-damaged buildings and campgrounds
- Bridges needing replacement or rehabilitation

Val Riess Park in Chalmette, Louisiana was left in ruins after Hurricane Katrina. RTP funds were matched by a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant and funds from Murphy Oil Corporation. St. Bernard Parish and the City of Chalmette were then able to rebuild the trails and structures at Val Riess Park. The community once again has a center for gatherings and outdoor recreation.



After Chalmette, Louisiana was decimated by hurricane Katrina, RTP funds helped rebuild trails. Photos by St. Bernard Parish Government (top) and Susan Klees, Bike St. Bernard (bottom).

 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

## Safe and Livable Communities



In Fayetteville, Arkansas, the new 12-foot wide concrete segment of the Lake Fayetteville Trail separates users from the roadway they previously shared with traffic. Photo from the City of Fayetteville.

Trails are an important part of our transportation infrastructure. Trails support the economy through tourism and civic improvement, and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health. Cities, suburbs, and towns all benefit from trails and greenways that make our communities more attractive to residents as well as employers.

Trails also help our parks and open space by reducing crime and illegal activity through regular use and high visibility of users. Modest increases in property values near trails have also been documented.

## Safety and Environmental Education

Every State has used RTP funding for educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection. OHV safety training and educational materials have been the largest type of RTP expenditures for these activities.

New safety issues have emerged with the popularity of boating and designated water trails. Safety is a key part of the training and resources provided by States and organizations for planning, managing, and promoting water trail facilities.

Trail-related environmental education teaches about economic, social, and ecological interdependence while experiencing nature and the outdoors. Trails and the natural areas they pass through are outdoor laboratories for schools as well as adults. For children active in natural

settings, research indicates a number of benefits in better understanding of the environment as well as improvements in physical and mental health.

## Sustainability

For trails, sustainability may mean better route planning, mitigation of impacts, using recycled materials, and reducing erosion. To trail managers, sustainability is key to reducing expenditures on maintenance by better design of trails, and the use of appropriate materials and structures. Sustainable trails should also:

- Protect resources and the environment
- Require minimal maintenance
- Provide satisfying experiences for users
- Reduce conflict between different user groups

FHWA has been promoting sustainability in project development, through context-sensitive solutions, habitat restoration, ecological connectivity, and site vegetation.

## Youth Service and Conservation Corps

Youth Service and Conservation Corps are Federal, State, and local programs that engage youth and young adults in service and projects. Corps members receive training and mentoring, a modest stipend, and opportunities for education and career preparation. Public agencies benefit because Corps provide cost-effective labor, and also provide training for a pool of potential employees to work in conservation and outdoor recreation.

Federal transportation law allows States to sole-source contracts and cooperative agreements to qualified youth service and conservation corps for recreational trail projects. Youth corps projects are usually administered through State resource agencies that have ongoing relationships with youth corps organizations.



In 2010, a Conservation Corps North Bay crew worked on erosion control for the new Ridge Trail segment on Sonoma Mountain; photo by Kim Batchelder, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

A challenge in North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve is managing runoff from the 2,000-foot peak. Controlling erosion along the trails keeps them stable and safe for recreationists, while preventing sediment from impacting nearby wetlands.



Iowa Department of Natural Resources AmeriCorps Trails Crew uses cable rigging to move rocks; photo from Iowa DNR.

Each year the AmeriCorps Trails Crew develops and maintains trails throughout Iowa's State Parks, mitigating human impact on the land while providing safe recreational opportunities. Crew members learn lifelong skills and pass their knowledge on to the community by providing trainings for partner groups.

 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

# Annual Achievement Awards for RTP-funded Projects

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), a federation of national trail-related organizations, hosts an annual achievement awards program to recognize outstanding trail projects funded by the Recreational Trails Program. The winners are recognized each year in Washington, DC during the American Recreation Coalition's Great Outdoors Month in early June. The awards are part of the Coalition's ongoing effort to build awareness of RTP accomplishments. Award winners are selected from projects nominated by public agencies, State administrators, organizations, or project sponsors.



Completed bridge on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail; photo by Dave Caliebe, Ice Age Trail Alliance

✱ *2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner*

## Award Categories

**Maintenance and Rehabilitation:** maintaining, repairing damage to, or upgrading the quality of a trail.

**Construction and Design:** planning and building a trail, portions of a trail, or trail-related facilities.

**Public-Private Partnerships Enhancing Public Lands Access and Use:** facilitating and/or encouraging cost-effective partnerships between public and private entities, especially to increase access to and use of Federal, State, and local public lands, including parks, forests and wildlife refuges.

**Community Linkage:** providing and/or enhancing opportunities for trail-based recreation and transportation within or near local communities.

**Education and Communication:** enhancing trail use and enjoyment through increased environmental awareness, promotion of safety, and encouragement of trail-related outdoor recreation.

**Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing:** facilitating and/or encouraging the use of a trail corridor by more than one type of trail enthusiast, particularly those enthusiasts that do not ordinarily share trails or trail-related facilities.

**Accessibility Enhancement:** facilitating and/or encouraging access to trail-related recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Youth Conservation/Service Corps and Community Outreach:** making effective use of the services and skills of qualified youth conservation or service corps to construct and/or maintain trails.

**State Awards:** winners for Outstanding State Program and Outstanding State Recreational Trails Advisory Committee are chosen each year by the Awards Committee of the National Association of State Park Directors.

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Read more about the CRT Annual Achievement Awards and see details of the projects that have been recognized since 2000: <http://www.americantrails.org/rtp/crtawards.html>

## About the Coalition for Recreational Trails

The CRT members work together to build awareness and understanding of the RTP. The CRT formed in 1992 following the passage of the ISTEA to ensure that the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (now known as the RTP) established by that legislation received adequate funding.

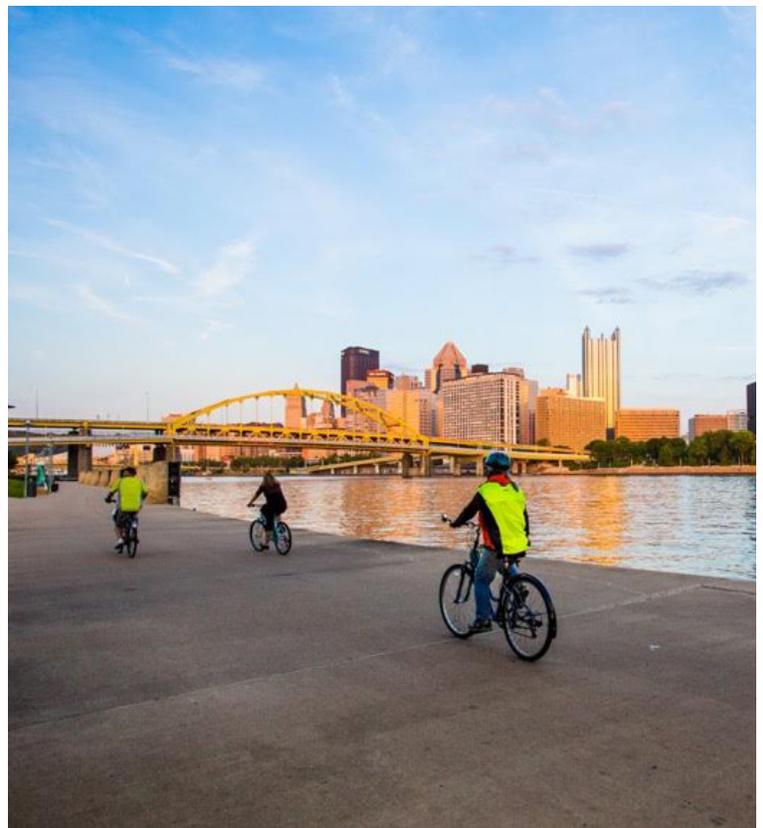
To learn more about the CRT, visit their website at <http://www.funoutdoors.com>

# Conclusions

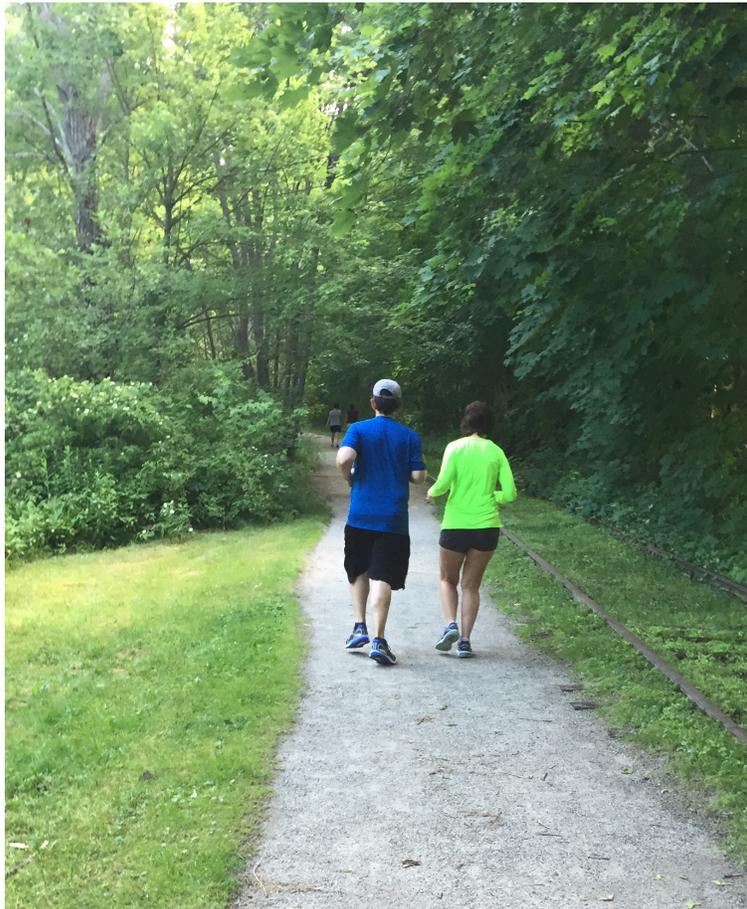
RTP funding has been an essential ingredient in creating and improving over 21,350 trail-related projects nationwide, including urban greenways, nature centers, and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and motorized trails, as well as snow and water routes. States continue to add miles of trails as well as needed maintenance and improvements through grants to local project sponsors each year.

A review of RTP-funded projects also reveals many benefits to employment, environmental education, health, resource conservation, and community development. The program has encouraged productive cooperation among agencies and jurisdictions, facilitated healthy outdoor recreation, and supported economic activity in communities.

Like other Highway Trust Fund programs, the RTP provides benefits to virtually every county in the United States. It is also the foundation for State trail programs across the country. Every State has



Three Rivers Heritage Trail, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; photo from Friends of the Riverfront



Cotton Valley Rail Trail in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire; photo by Tom Sachs

established its own initiatives to develop and improve trails for all users. The RTP Database and Image Library have many examples of RTP-funded projects gathered from all States and the District of Columbia, categorized by State and by permissible use, that demonstrate the value of these projects.

RTP funding is highly leveraged by community and State funds, as well as contributions from organizations and businesses. Of the projects completed between 1993 and 2015, total RTP funding was nearly \$1.1 billion with additional matching funds of \$775 million, showing that RTP dollars were matched by 74 percent with other funds. Further program efficiencies are seen by the use of youth conservation and service corps working in cooperation with private contractors, agency or community staff, and volunteers.

In every State, equestrians and cyclists, hikers and snowmobilers, ATV enthusiasts and paddlers have joined in support of local as well as regional efforts to meet the trail needs of all users. Because the funds are distributed for both motorized and nonmotorized trail work, all trail interests have incentives to cooperate and learn from each other.



RTP grants help fund rangers to educate recreationists on safe and responsible backcountry and wilderness uses, such as this snow ranger in Washington's Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Washington was a 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award winner for Outstanding State Trails Program. Photo from Wenatchee River Ranger District.

✱ 2015 Coalition for Recreational Trails Award Winner

# Resources

For more information on many topics related to RTP funding as well as technical resources on trails of all types, see the following resources.

## Recreational Trails Program

Recreational Trails Program Database: <http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>

The Recreational Trails Program website for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/)

FHWA guidance and policies for RTP: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/guidance/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/)

For policies and funding in every State, see the State RTP Administrators List to find program contacts and websites: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/rtpstate.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/rtpstate.cfm)

The Coalition for Recreational Trails gives awards each year for outstanding projects funded through State RTP grants: <http://www.americantrails.org/rtp/crtawards.html>

## Accessible trails

FHWA guidance to provide best practices for trail accessibility, and trail design, construction, and maintenance: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/guidance/accessibility\\_guidance/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/accessibility_guidance/)

USDA Forest Service trail and outdoor facility accessibility guidelines: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/>

More resources on accessible trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/index.html>

## Trail planning, development, and management

For many resources on trail planning, design, construction, management, accessibility, funding, training, for both motorized and nonmotorized trails, see the National Trails Training Partnership Resources and Library: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/trailbuilding/index.html>

Trail management and maintenance: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/ManageMaintain/index.html>

Trail user protection, safety, and risk management: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/safety/index.html>

Trail training resources: <http://www.americantrails.org/ntp/default.htm>

Online calendar of trail training and education opportunities: <http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html>

## Youth and Conservation Corps

FHWA Youth Workforce Development Resources: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/guidance/youth\\_workforcedev.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/youth_workforcedev.cfm)

FHWA Youth Service and Conservation Corps Questions & Answers: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/qandas/qayscc.cfm>

A guide to transportation funding programs for service and conservation corps; "Conservation Corps and Transportation: Making the Connection" (pdf 1.7 mb): <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/CorpsandTransportation.pdf>

More about opportunities with Corps nationwide at The Corps Network: <http://www.corpsnetwork.org>

## Technical Assistance

Recreational Trails Program Database Website:  
<http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org>

Technical Questions:  
Call the number or send an email to the address below.

RTP Database Technical Assistance Section  
American Trails  
P.O. Box 491797  
Redding, CA 96049-1797  
(530) 605-4395  
[support@recreationaltrailsinfo.org](mailto:support@recreationaltrailsinfo.org)

Website issues:  
Write to [webmaster@recreationaltrailsinfo.org](mailto:webmaster@recreationaltrailsinfo.org).

## Acknowledgements

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway Administration**