



**2023 OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE PROGRAM AWARDS  
DECISION NOTICE  
August 7, 2023**

**Off-Highway Vehicle Program Authority and Scope**

The Montana Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant Program consists of two grant opportunities, each created to help improve existing OHV trails and facilities on public lands in Montana. The Traditional OHV grant program provides funding for maintenance and renovation of existing OHV trails and associated areas, special studies, and safety information and education for affected federal agencies and OHV clubs and organizations. The Summer Motorized Trail Pass Program was established to improve OHV designated trails and relies on OHV clubs and organizations to apply for funding.

Both the Traditional and Summer Motorized OHV grant programs are administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' (FWP) Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division (POR). Title 23, Chapter 2, Part 8, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), establishes the Traditional OHV grant program and Title 23, Chapter 2, Part 1, MCA, establishes the Summer Motorized Trail Pass grant program.

**OHV Program Grant Application Process and Awards**

OHV Program grant applicants prepare and submit proposals online through WebGrants, FWP's grant management system. For the 2023 grant cycle, FWP received 12 applications totaling \$500,000 in requested funding. All 12 applications met minimum program requirements and thus were scored and reviewed for approval.

POR staff and members of the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee (OHVAC) scored the OHV Program grant applications individually, based on program criteria. POR staff and the OHVAC then met in Helena on May 11, 2023, to determine the OHVAC funding recommendations for the 2023 grant cycle.

Available funding for the 2023 OHV Program grant awards is \$500,000. POR staff and the OHVAC recommend full funding for all 12 applicants based on the amount of funding available, application quality, environmental review, and distribution of funds (see Tables 1 and 2 for funding amounts).

**Environmental Review of OHV Program Applications**

All successful applicants satisfied the environmental review requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The United States Forest Service (USFS) develops and implements National Forest-specific plans (i.e., a plan for each

National Forest located in Montana). The affected “Forest Plans” include a “Motor Vehicle Use Travel Plan” and “Over the Snow Motor Vehicle Use Travel Plan (hereafter Traditional and Summer Travel Plans),” to identify projects to be implemented over the relevant periodic planning cycle (e.g., 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, other). For the purposes of NEPA compliance, these Traditional and Summer Travel Plans evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with the recommended projects.

POR staff reviewed all 12 of the affected Forest Plans and associated Traditional and Summertime Travel Plans to determine if any significant adverse effects would be expected because of the proposed projects. The resource categories for which impacts were reviewed for the purposes of NEPA compliance include the following:

- Air Quality
- Soils
- Vegetation
- Watershed, Aquatic, and Riparian Ecosystems, including Conservation Watershed Networks
- Wildlife
- Land Use
- Economy
- Outdoor Recreation
- Cultural Resources
- Cumulative Impacts
- Irreversible Impacts

Based on review of the affected Traditional and Summertime Travel Plans, and associated Forest Plans, POR staff concur with the USFS determination that none of the 12 recommended 2023 OHV Program projects would be expected to significantly affect any of the resources analyzed for the purposes of NEPA.

Further, FWP staff determined all 12 proposed projects meet the applicable criteria for a general exclusion from MEPA review pursuant to ARM 12.2.430(5)(c) and (f). More specifically, all proposed projects constitute either maintenance of existing facilities/trails (ARM 12.2.430(c)) and/or simply provide funding for affected staff salaries to conduct the work (ARM 12.2.430(f)). Therefore, none of the proposed projects would be expected to significantly affect any of the resources that require analysis for the purposes of MEPA (ARM 12.2.432(3)(d) and (e)).

### **Public Process Summary**

FWP held a Public Comment Period for all 2023 OHV proposed awards beginning June 1 through June 15, 2023. Comments could be submitted by mail, email, or phone. No comments were received during the public comment period.

## Decision

Based on review of the applications, environmental review documents, OHVAC discussion and recommendations, and the lack of public comment received, FWP hereby approves the 12 proposed projects for full funding under the 2023 Montana OHV Grant Program, as listed in Table 1 & 2 (attached).

Any questions regarding the proposed grant awards should be directed to:



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**Table 1: 2023 Montana Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Program Awards - Traditional OHV**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
Pipestone Trail Steward	BLM Butte Field Office	\$16,000.00
Trail Maintenance and Volunteer Support	Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association	\$8,000.00
Dillon RD Motorized Routes Maintenance and Improvements	USFS-Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest Service-Dillon Ranger District	\$16,000.00
Trail Steward	USFS-Bitterroot National Forest-Darby Ranger District	\$16,000.00
Trail Steward	USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Bozeman Ranger District	\$16,000.00
Trail Steward	USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Hebgen Lake Ranger District	\$15,840.00
Re-establishing old Connections: Upper Clear Creek, Beaver Peak, and the Idaho Centennial Trail	USFS-Lolo National Forest-Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District	\$23,676.82
Hawk Mountain OHV Trail Improvement	USFS-Lolo National Forest-Superior Ranger District	\$46,323.68
Harley Creek Road to Trail conversion and Elk Saddle ATV Trail	Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association	\$25,000.00
Cooperative Motorized Trail Maintenance on National Forests in Montana	Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association	\$17,159.50
	<b>\$200,000 Available</b>	\$200,000.00

**Table 2: 2023 Montana Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Program Awards – Summer Motorized Trail Pass**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
Sign's and More in Mineral County's West End	Montana Nightriders Snowmobile Club	\$59,000.00
Cooperative Motorized Trail Maintenance on National Forests in Montana	Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association	\$241,000.00
	<b>\$300,000 Available</b>	\$300,000.00