



**FISCAL YEAR 2022 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM AWARDS
RECORD OF DECISION
June 16th, 2022**

Recreational Trails Program Authority and Scope

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds for development, renovation, maintenance, and acquisition of land for recreational trails and for trail-related safety, education, and information. Section 206 of Title 23, United States Code, establishes the RTP as a federal-aid program. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers this program at the federal level [23 U.S.C. 206 (b)] while Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is charged with program administration at the state level [23 U.S.C 206 (c)] and as designated by the Governor. After allowing for federal rescissions, overhead, and indirect costs, approximately \$1,524,824 was available for grants from Montana's FY 2022 RTP apportionment.

RTP Grant Application Process and Awards

Montana received a federal RTP allocation totaling approximately \$1,524,824 for Fiscal Year 2022 RTP projects. Table 1 (attached) reflects the approximate funding amount to be awarded to each subrecipient in FY 2022.

This year, FWP received 48 grant applications with requests totaling over \$2.6 million. Of the original applications received, 32 applications are recommended for either full or partial funding based on their application scores and how well the projects adhere to State Trails Advisory Committee and FWP priorities.

The recommended FY 2022 RTP projects were deemed successful based on technical eligibility, application scoring, and funding availability. FWP posted a list of the 32 recommended projects on its website, sent out press releases, and announced a period for public comment. The public comment period ran from March 30 through April 26, 2022.

Environmental Review of RTP Applications

Each of the 32 recommended projects must satisfy environmental reviews for both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Three of the projects were exempt from completion of an environmental review because they included only education/awareness or the purchase of equipment.

The 29 projects that were not exempt from environmental review included environmental review documents with their applications. Most projects provided adequate documentation, including a MEPA/NEPA Environmental Analysis Checklist or a Categorical Exclusion Checklist. Those projects that provided insufficient environmental review documentation have submitted the required documentation to the RTP Manager.

The RTP Manager completed an environmental review of each project. The State Trails Coordinator approved all recommended FY 2022 RTP projects for a FHWA Categorical Exclusion under NEPA (23 CFR 771.117(c)(23)) and MEPA (ARM 18.2.261(2)(w)). The major categories for which impacts are being reviewed include the following:

Soils: Maintenance and renovations of existing trails will have immediate short-term negative impacts during the time of on-ground maintenance but will result in long-term positive impacts. Soil erosion will be reduced, and water runoff will be diverted gradually off trail surfaces.

Vegetation: The primary potential impact from trail projects is from import and spread of noxious weeds. There are always potential impacts to threatened-and endangered plant species; however, no serious effects were noted.

Water Quality, Hydrology, Fisheries: Maintenance and renovation of existing trails will have immediate short-term negative impacts because of disturbance of soils during the “construction” phase, with potential for localized run-off and sedimentation. However, the long-term impact of projects included in this year’s grant program that reduce or mitigate impacts to soil and vegetation resources should have positive impacts.

Wildlife: Almost any type of unusual or intermittent disturbance, including trails and trail use, can have a negative effect on wildlife species and perhaps wildlife habitat. Environmental reviews completed for grant projects analyzed these potential impacts and the effects were determined to be minimal.

Land Use: Grant projects will not change the existing types of use on those trails affected as noted in applications by the land managers.

Economic Impacts: Numerous studies conclude that public trails benefit local economies. A strong trail system both helps preserve natural amenities and provides greater opportunities for enjoying them. Trails are significant economic generators that attract businesses, draw tourism, create jobs, and increase property values. Trails can also result in negative economic impacts, including the potential spread of noxious weeds. Projects included in this year’s program are anticipated to have generally positive economic impacts.

Outdoor Recreation Impacts: Grant projects will have positive impacts on outdoor recreation. Maintenance and renovation of trail systems will enhance the user’s experience while protecting resources. The opportunity for public comment through the grant application process is intended to reduce the possibility of funding projects of questionable merit or with potential to increase conflict.

Cultural Resources: No negative impacts on cultural resources were identified in the individual project environmental review process or through public scoping.

Cumulative and Irreversible Impacts: No significant cumulative or irreversible impacts are anticipated from FY 2022 RTP grant projects.

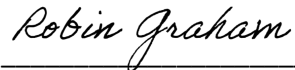
Public Comment Summary

During the public comment period, FWP received a total of 8 comments as follows.

- 2 Comments were in support of the proposed awards,
- 1 comment requested that locations be posted on the list of proposed awards. FWP agrees with this comment and will address this issue during subsequent grant cycles
- 5 comments related to issues outside the scope of the proposed award list and so were not considered for the purposes of this public notice period.

Decision

The decision of Montana State Parks, a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, is to approve the FY 2022 Recreational Trails Program grant awards for the projects listed in Table 1 (attached), as recommended by Montana State Parks staff and the State Trails Advisory Committee.



Robin Graham, Administrator
Operations and Fiscal Services Division

Table 1 2022 Recreational Trails Program Awards

Organization Name	Project Title	Selected Funding Amount	Type of Funding
Beartooth Recreational Trails Association	Grooming of West Fork Road & Nordic Center	\$ 15,175.00	Partial
Billings, City of	Making the Connection: Torgerson Trail Link (TTL) and Old Washington Street Trailhead	\$ 28,500.00	Full
Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club	Winter Grooming at Chief Joseph Pass and Lake Como Recreation Area	\$ 19,964.31	Partial
Bitterroot Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club	Snowmobile Grooming in Sapphire and Bitterroot Mountains	\$ 22,500.00	Full
Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation	Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$ 65,200.32	Full
Butler Creek Trail Association	Butler Creek Shared Use Path	\$ 87,000.00	Full
Butte-Silver Bow Government	Spartan Articulating Brush Cutter Attachment Purchase Project	\$ 7,280.00	Full
Flathead Land Trust	Bigfork-Harrell Forest Community Trails	\$ 100,000.00	Full
Flathead Snowmobile Association	Flathead Area Snowmobile Trail Grooming and Equipment Maintenance	\$ 75,000.00	Full
Foy's to Blacktail Trails Inc.	Foy's to Blacktail Trail: Emmons Ridge trail construction	\$ 71,560.00	Full
Frenchtown Pond State Park	Frenchtown Pond State Park Access Trail to All Abilities Dock	\$ 10,000.00	Full
Gateway to Glacier Trail	Crystal Cedar Trail Construction (Phase Two)	\$ 72,250.00	Full
Glacier Nordic Club	Big Mountain Nordic Ski Trail Grooming and Equipment Purchase	\$ 32,617.00	Full
Kings Hill Grooming Association	Kings Hill Grooming Association snowmobile trail grooming and trail maintenance	\$ 79,600.00	Full
Last Chance Nordic Ski Club	Grooming Equipment Storage Shed at MacDonald Pass Cross-country Ski Trails	\$ 73,000.00	Full

Lions Bitterroot Youth Camp	Vault Toilet Installation and Trail Rehabilitation	\$ 43,594.63	Full
Missoula County	Missoula County New Meadows Trail System: Construction of a universally designed perimeter trail and connector trail to the regional shared-use path system	\$ 62,111.55	Full
National Park Service- Yellowstone National Park	Pebble Creek Trail Restoration	\$ 12,350.00	Full
Seeley Lake ROCKS	Hill 16 Community Trail System (CTS) Phase 3-- Maintenance, weed control and reconstruction of a new interconnection segment of the Lakeview Trail	\$ 22,000.00	Full
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation	Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Volunteer Trail Clearing and Maintenance	\$ 15,696.00	Full
University of Montana - Research and Sponsored Programs	M-Trail Rehabilitation - Rebuild	\$ 25,200.00	Full
USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Bozeman Ranger District	2022 Bozeman RD Summer and Winter Trail Maintenance and Volunteer Field Leadership Project	\$ 58,500.00	Full
USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Hebgen Lake Ranger District	Motorized Trail Maintenance	\$ 18,625.60	Partial
USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Yellowstone Ranger District	Burned Area Trail Maintenance on the Yellowstone Ranger District	\$ 72,500.00	Full
USFS-Flathead Avalanche Center	Flathead Avalanche Center - Avalanche Forecast and Avalanche Safety Education Project	\$ 45,000.00	Full
USFS-Gallatin National Forest-Avalanche Center	Saving lives through avalanche forecasting in SW Montana	\$ 35,300.00	Partial
USFS-Lolo National Forest-Ninemile Ranger District	French Lake Heavy Maintenance and puncheon reconstruction near Frenchtown and Superior	\$ 21,880.00	Full
USFS-Lolo National Forest-Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District	Relocating Iron Mountain Trailhead: Increasing Capacity and Deceasing User Conflict	\$ 95,397.00	Full
USFS-Lolo National Forest-Superior Ranger District	Construction of the Route of the Olympian Trailhead in St. Regis, MT.	\$ 96,775.00	Full

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce	Daily Grooming for Winter of 2022-23	\$ 75,000.00	Full
Whitefish Legacy Partners	Expanding Recreation Opportunities on the Whitefish Trail in Beaver Lakes	\$ 45,000.00	Partial
Wild Montana	2022 RTP - Wild Montana - Volunteer Trail Crew - 8 multi-day trail maintenance projects located across the state	\$ 20,248.00	Full