



FISCAL YEAR 2026 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM AWARDS
RECORD OF DECISION
April 30th, 2026

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 \$1.5 million was available for grants from Montana's FY 2026 RTP apportionment.

RTP Grant Application Process and Awards

Montana received a federal RTP allocation totaling approximately \$1.5 million for Fiscal Year 2026 RTP projects. Table 1 (attached) reflects the approximate funding amount to be awarded to each subrecipient in FY 2026.

This year, FWP received 49 RTP grant applications with requests totaling approximately \$3million. Of the original applications received, 35 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 2026 RTP projects were deemed successful based on technical eligibility, application scoring, and funding availability. FWP posted a list of the 35 recommended projects on its website, sent out press releases, and announced a period for public comment. The public comment period ran from April 13th through April 28th, 2026. No comments were received.

Environmental Review of RTP Applications

Each of the recommended projects must satisfy environmental reviews for both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Five (5) of the projects were exempt from completion of an environmental review because they included only education/awareness or the purchase of equipment.

The 30 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 before the RTP Agreement is issued. All recommended FY 2026 RTP projects qualified 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:

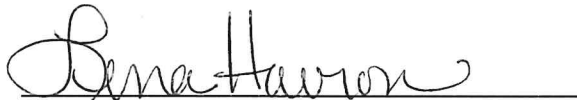
- **Soils:** Maintenance and renovations of existing trails will have immediate short-term negative impacts during the time of on-ground maintenance but will result in long-term positive impacts. Soil erosion will be reduced, and water runoff will be diverted gradually off trail surfaces.
- **Vegetation:** 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 2026 RTP grant projects.

Public Comment Summary

During the public comment period, FWP received no comments.

Decision

The decision of Operations and Fiscal Services, a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, is to approve the FY 2026 Recreational Trails Program grant awards for the projects listed in Table 1 (attached), as recommended by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff and the State Trails Advisory Committee.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lena Havron", written over a solid horizontal line.

Lena Havron
Chief Financial Officer

Table 1 2026 Recreational Trails Program Awards

Organization Name	Project Title	Funding Amount
Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation	Facilitating Employment and Trail Maintenance in Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness	\$ 47,000.00
Beaverhead Trails Coalition	Mountain Bike Skills Course-Beyond Bike Park	\$ 50,000.00
Billings TrailNet	Restore and Revitalize Amend Park Multiuse Path	\$ 60,000.00
Bitter Root Land Trust, Inc.	All-Abilities Loop Trail and Trailhead Amenities at Groff Family Park.	\$ 100,000.00
Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists	Lick Creek Trail System Improvements	\$ 15,000.00
Bitterroot Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club	BRR Snowmobile Trail Grooming	\$ 40,000.00
BLM Miles City Field Office	Glendive Short Pines OHV Shade Structure	\$ 100,000.00
Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation	Volunteer Trail Projects in the BMWC	\$ 40,000.00
Continental Divide Trail Coalition	Trail Maintenance Projects Along Montana's Continental Divide Trail	\$ 15,000.00
Flathead Area Mountain Bikers, Inc.	Flathead National Forest Focused Recreation Trails Project	\$ 20,000.00
Flathead Cycle Riders	Tally Lake Ranger District Motorcycle Trail Maintenance and Improvements	\$ 25,000.00
Flathead Snowmobile Association	2026 Flathead Winter Recreation Trail Grooming and Maintenance	\$ 92,400.00
Foy's to Blacktail Trails Inc.	FTBT Trail Maintenance Project	\$ 15,000.00
Gallatin Valley Land Trust	Bikefill Community Bike Park	\$ 62,000.00
Glacier Nordic Club	Big Mountain Trail Grooming and Maintenance Project 2026	\$ 30,000.00
Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association	Helena Lewis & Clark National Forest trail maintenance	\$ 35,000.00
Great Falls, City of - Parks Department	Trail Maintenance Equipment Acquisition, Rivers Edge Trail	\$ 36,734.16
Highlands Cycling Club	Big Butte Open Space Park Trail Initiative	\$ 50,000.00

Kings Hill Grooming Association	Kings Hill snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance	\$ 57,970.00
Malta Trails Inc.	Trafton Trailhead 2027	\$ 54,491.00
Mile High Nordic Ski Education Foundation	Grooming Equipment for Two Rural & One Municipal XC Ski Areas, Southwest Montana	\$ 15,000.00
Missoula Snowgoers Snowmobile Association	2026 Lolo Pass Winter Recreation Trail Grooming and Maintenance	\$ 18,000.00
Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association	MTVRA Mechanized Trail Maintenance BLM emphasis w/ USFS supplement	\$ 25,000.00
Piikani Lodge Health Institute	PLHI Community Trail	\$ 62,000.00
Scenic Montana Trails	Seeley Lake Trail System	\$ 62,000.00
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation	2027 Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Volunteer Trail Clearing and Maintenance	\$ 40,000.00
Silver Crest Trails Association	Silver Crest Trail Corridor Restoration Project	\$ 44,000.00
The Dirt Concern DBA Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association	Bridger Bowl Crosscut Trails Project- Phase II	\$ 37,000.00
Three Forks, City of	Pond To River Section Maintenance.	\$ 37,000.00
USFS-Custer Gallatin National Forest-Bozeman Ranger District	Lee Metcalf Wilderness Access Trails Rehabilitation	\$ 17,000.00
USFS-Flathead Avalanche Center	Avalanche Forecasting and Education for Winter Trail Users	\$ 22,500.00
USFS-Gallatin National Forest-Avalanche Center	Saving Lives through Avalanche Forecasting	\$ 22,500.00
West Central Montana Avalanche Foundation	Avalanche Information and Education	\$ 35,000.00
West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce	Snowmobile trail grooming on trails radiating from West Yellowstone, Montana	\$ 94,000.00
Whitefish Legacy Partners	The Whitefish Trail - Front-Country Community Trails Connection	\$ 25,000.00