

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Administered in Virginia by the
Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Planning & Recreation Resources



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Recreational Trails Program Overview



3350D230 – Appalachian Conservation Corps –
Shenandoah Mountain Trails Maintenance

Purpose

To develop and maintain public recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized use.

Funding

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
80/20% Reimbursement/Match

RTP in Virginia

Since 1993, over 360 projects awarded

Applicant Eligibility



TP 326N190 – Shenandoah Valley
Circle Coalition – Tillman Trails Project

- Local governments
- State agencies
- Tribal governments
- Federal government agencies
- Public recreation government entities (parks, authorities, etc.)
- Non-Profit Organizations (w/ letter of support from local government body)

Funding and Award Amounts

Receive ~\$1.5 million/ year from FHWA

Unrestricted/ Multi-use - (typ. 3-5 grants per year)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$250,000-\$350,000

- **All funds paid as reimbursement**

Unrestricted/ Single use - (2-4 grants per year)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$250,000-\$350,000

- **Requires 25% match** - cash, force account, volunteer labor, donated materials, grant administration expenses, but must be eligible expenses

Restricted - (1-3 grants per year)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award – none, up to available amount

Project Eligibility – Odd Years (2025, 2027,...) Maintenance & Amenities Only

Must be on existing land and water trails

Maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation of existing trails

Development or rehabilitation of **trailside and trailhead facilities and/or amenities** and water trails

Features that increase **access for people with disabilities**

Use or purchase of **trail maintenance equipment***

On-the-ground work is also included:

Acquisition of easements and fee simple property

Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance

These, plus new trail construction are eligible in even years (2024, 2026,...)

Eligible Costs

- Preliminary engineering (design, engineering, NEPA environmental review, public comment period, permitting, bid advertisement)
- Grant administration
- Force account labor for project – related work
- Contractor or consultant services
- Construction materials, equipment
- Amenities (signs, interpretative aids, lighting, benches, etc)



RTP 355N230 – DCR Natural Heritage –
Pinnacles Natural Area Preserve

Evaluation and Scoring

Criteria revised each year, posted on website along with application files in **March**

Applications received by **May** deadline are reviewed by DCR staff for eligibility and completeness

Eligible and complete applications are sent to the DCR Advisory Committee for scoring (5-7 members)

Advisory Committee meets to review the compiled list of projects and recommend projects for funding

Selected project applicants contacted in early **July**

Awarded applications are provided opportunity to provide feedback in **August/September**

2025 RTP Scoring Criteria		
Utah Department of Transportation Recreation Planning Administration		
Sect. B	Project Need	2
15. & 16.	Trail details (select from range for each)	2
	Age of trail section where work will occur (30+ years = 3 pts, 20+ years = 2 pts, 10+ years = 1 pt)	
	Trail usage level compared to nearby trails and population density	
	Degree to which the cause of the issue or development of the area was unanticipated or caused the addresser a barrier	Max. points: 2
16.	Need (select from range for each)	
	Project needed to address critical (5 pts), serious (2-4 pts), or minor (1 pt) safety issues on existing trail	
	Severity of need (due to users excluded, trail closure, lack of funding, etc.)	Max. points: 5
17.	Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Needs (select from range for each)	
	Project listed as (3 pts) or connected to (1 pt) a regional balanced project in the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan	
	OR provides or repairs priority amenities expressed in the corresponding Virginia Outdoors Plan Survey	
	(1) Access: trailhead parking, trailhead facilities, trailhead signage, trailhead benches, lighting (6-9 pts), 12 pts, 10 pts, 8 pts, 6 pts, 4 pts, 2 pts, 1 pt, 0 pt, -1 pt, -2 pt, -3 pt, -4 pt, -5 pt, -6 pt, -7 pt, -8 pt, -9 pt, -10 pt, -11 pt, -12 pt)	
	Degree to which project meets Recommendation for All project prioritization recommendations of the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan (Section 2.1.6) (includes projects on publicly owned lands, expanding recreation opportunities, improving trail conditions, improving trailhead facilities, improving trailhead amenities, improving safety, contributing to health and wellness)	Max. points: 5
18.	Local and Regional Plan Needs (select from range for each)	
	Project need demonstrated in local and/or regional plans	
	Project need demonstrated in local and/or regional plans	Max. points: 2
Sect. C Public Involvement and Impact		
2		
19. -21.	Public participation & collaboration (select from range for each)	
	Degree of public involvement in the project	
	Degree of collaboration between agencies, land managers, users, and/or community stakeholders	
	Project has a workforce development component, such as training youth or training corps, or includes youth group volunteers	Max. points: 5
22. & 23.	User benefits (select from range for each)	
	Degree of positive impact on trail users	
	Degree to which project will benefit or expand access to new, disadvantaged, and/or underserved users	
	Degree of positive local economic or tourism impact	
	User of trail will not require an entrance fee (2 pts) or the fee and reduced options available (1 pt)	Max. points: 10
24.	Access for people with disabilities (select from list or range for each)	
	Project will contain specific design elements to provide an equitable experience for trail users with sensory (including visual), cognitive, neurological, and/or mental health disabilities	
	Project will contain specific design elements to provide an equitable experience for trail users with disabilities impacting mobility (including curbs, edges, width, resting areas)	
	• Project will exceed accessibility standards (4 pts)	
	• Some but not all project elements will meet accessibility standards, other elements fail under an allowable exception	
	• Application contains sufficient information to verify project will meet minimum accessibility requirements or minimum requirements not met (0-1 pt)	Max. points: 7

Common Application Errors

Most all applications are good projects, difference between being funded or not is in whether instructions were followed and whether applicant understands requirements of the program

Missing attachments –maps, photos, right of way docs, conceptual design plan, budget, project schedule

Providing information elsewhere in application but not answering question when asked

Responses showing misunderstanding of grant requirements (ineligible scope in realistic schedule, stating NEPA review not required)

Budget not itemized

Inconsistencies (budget not matching request, items discussed but not in budget)

Application Tips

- Review webinar, manual, and application guidance (updated each year)
- Follow scoring criteria – important to address each item being scored
- Become familiar with grant requirements (NEPA environmental review, permitting, procurement procedures, timeline) and reference appropriately
- Scope: more than one thing (accessibility improvements and restroom, paving and signage, etc.)
- Critically needed: trail closure, safety hazard, high use
- Collaboration, community, and/or volunteer involvement



354N230 – Friends of
the Rappahannock –
Rapidan River Access

Virginia RTP Grants Contact Information

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