



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

State Trails Program  
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### 2024 Non-Motorized Trail Stewardship Grant Pilot Category

This letter is a summary and explanation of the creation of a pilot category Trail Stewardship for the 2024 Non-Motorized Trails grant cycle, as recommended by the State Recreational Trails Committee. We are requesting the creation of a multi-year pilot to create a consistent source of funding for Non-Motorized Trail Crews.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

CPW's Trails Program was created with the adoption of Colorado's "Recreational Trails Act of 1971" codified in sections 33-11-101 through 33-11-112, Colorado Revised Statutes. The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Division's (CPW) Trails Program, a statewide program within CPW, administers grants for trail-related and outdoor recreation projects on an annual basis.

#### **Colorado's Non-Motorized Trails Grant Program**

The Non-Motorized Trails Grant Program provides funding for trail construction, maintenance, and planning/support projects. Local, county, state, and tribal governments, federal agencies, special recreation districts, and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands may apply for and are eligible to receive non-motorized and motorized trail grants. The grant program is a multi-agency partnership that includes CPW, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado Lottery, and the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

#### **State Trails Committee**

The creation and role of the Committee is set forth in sections 33-11-105 to 107, C.R.S. The Colorado Recreational Trails Committee consists of eleven members appointed by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission to represent the trails and outdoor recreational interests of the general public. The committee membership consists of members from each of Colorado's congressional districts of which one represents local government interests; one at-large member who represents OHV interests; one at-large member who represents Snowmobile interests; and one member who represents the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board. The Committee reviews, scores, ranks and submits recommendations for funding of Recreational Trails grants to the Commission for their consideration and final approval. Sections 33-11-105 to 33-11-107, C.R.S., describe the roles, responsibilities and relationship of the State Trails Committee in working with the Commission.

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#### **Need for Increased Non-Motorized Trail Maintenance**

Over the last four years, a surge in visitation to Colorado's public lands combined with multiple



severe weather events and wildfires have caused a significant growth in requests for State Trail Program funds. Specifically, the largest increase has been a demand for additional non-motorized trail maintenance funds as land managers and stewardship groups look to hire paid crews to provide much needed (and often backlogged) maintenance. Based on the conversations with land manager stakeholders and partners, the need to find more funding to hire crews to perform non-motorized maintenance will continue to grow in the coming years.

The program has positioned more funding to help directly address these types of resource damage issues by 1) placing an emphasis on maintenance work to repair existing trails; 2) creating a maintenance specific category for the Non-Motorized Trails Grant Cycle; and 3) recommending increased allocations to these projects. Last cycle, the State Trails Committee recommended \$1.129M go towards maintenance projects which was a 16% increase from the category's 2022 funding level. However, with an overall ask of \$2.2M in the category, there were still many compelling projects we were unable to fund which would have helped address the maintenance needs on Colorado's trails.

### **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY:**

To continue the State Trails Program's goal to improve trail recreation opportunities while protecting wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources, the program is requesting the creation of a pilot Non-Motorized Stewardship grant program to better support the maintenance backlogs across the state. This pilot will build upon the concept of 'Good Management' crews that the OHV Program has shown as a successful model for maintenance of trails and protection of resources and adapt it to work for the partners and land managers of non-motorized trails. Funded by OHV user fees, the OHV Good Management Grants fund crew members who are deployed during the summer and fall to implement Travel Management Plans, maintain trails, promote safety, and educate users on their impacts.

The State Trails will utilize \$500,000 funding from Great Outdoors Colorado to start this pilot. Based upon feedback on this topic from the 2022 CPW/USFS Partners in the Outdoors Trails Workshop, Non-Motorized Trail Stewardship crews will build upon existing trail maintenance crews that have been previously funded through the State Trails Program. Crews would be eligible to work on public lands and perform similar duties as the OHV Good Management crews.

### **Non-Motorized Stewardship Program Criteria:**

A stewardship crew is made up of 2-8 trail workers employed to complete work on an existing trail system. The stewardship crews are paid staff that are hired directly by the organization managing and/or working in the area to keep trails in a sustainable and safe condition to ensure visitor safety, protect natural and cultural resources, and preserve public investment in the trail and/or area. These crews perform the continuous and routine work necessary to keep the trail surface and surrounding area in compliance with its design and construction standards.

### **This work can consist of:**

- Clearing out deadfall after a severe weather event
- Rerouting unsustainable trail sections
- Brushing, clearing, and vegetation management
- Decommissioning and revegetating old and illegal trails
- Repair and/or installation of structures such as turnpikes, check steps, and drains
- Tread reestablishment, armoring, outsloping, and drain clearing
- Signage replacement and/or installation
- Deadfall and hazard tree mitigation
- Assessment, monitoring, and reporting

- Mobilization and planning
- User education and outreach
- Planning and mobilization
- Fencing and/or trail area delineation

Eligible applicants can include Outdoor Regional Partnerships, land managers, and non-profit groups. These increased 'boots on the ground' trail crews will better support one of the Governor's Wildly Important Goals by increasing the trails metric. The number of trail crew hours for maintenance work will also expand the program's investment in balancing conservation and recreation across the state.

**DIVISION RECOMMENDATION:**

The State Recreational Trails Committee and the State Trails Program have provided the Commission with information for consideration and approval to start a pilot program for the 2024 Non-Motorized Grant Cycle. After the pilot program runs for two grant cycles, the Commission will be updated on the effectiveness of the process, including a recommendation from the Committee and State Trails Program in regards to whether policy A-104 should be updated to include the pilot program subcommittee categories.

If you have any questions on this information, or anything else related to the grants program, feel free to contact Fletcher Jacobs at [fletcher.jacobs@state.co.us](mailto:fletcher.jacobs@state.co.us) prior to the Commission meeting. Thank you.