COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

State Trails Program
13787 US Hwy. 85 N • Littleton, CO 80125
PH: (303) 791.1954 | F: (303) 470.0782

July 16-17, 2026

2027 Non-Motorized Trail Stewardship Grant Pilot Category

This letter is a summary of the successful execution and the requested continuation of the pilot category Trail Stewardship for the 2027 Non-Motorized Trails grant cycle, as recommended by the State Recreational Trails Committee. We are requesting the extension of this pilot for another year to clearly define expectations for crews and potentially acquire an additional funding source for the program before institutionalizing.

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,

Laura Clellan, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Parks and Wildlife Commission: James 'Jay' Tutchton, Chair · Gabriel Otero, Vice-Chair
Jessica Beaulieu · Frances Silva Blayney · Tai Jacober · John Le Coq ·
Peter Maguire · Dallas May · Jack Murphy · Rebecca 'Becky' Niemiec · Richard Reading

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.

The Committee reviews, scores, ranks and submits recommendations for grant funding to the Commission for their consideration and final approval. (Appendix A lists the current Committee members.) 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.

Need for Increased Non-Motorized Trail Maintenance

In recent 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 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 $574,445 go towards trail stewardship projects which was a 16% increase from the category's 2025 funding level. However, with an overall ask of $1.5M 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 a year extension of the pilot Non-Motorized Stewardship grant program to better support the maintenance backlogs across the state. Following the concept of 'Good Management' crews from the OHV Program, Stewardship crews have shown themselves to be successful in equipping our partners and land managers to maintain

and protect trails throughout Colorado.

Since the creation of the pilot in 2024, the program has received 47 applications for funding, with the number of applicants gradually increasing. Of these applications, 15 stewardship crews were selected for a total of $1,552,568.87 in funding. Each grant provides funding to a crew for one season, in which they have been highly successful in maintaining trails and completing projects. For the projects already completed, most crews fully expend their funds, with only $12,500 being unspent and subsequently allocated back into the program. As this is a pilot program, the crews were also scored under the maintenance category. A total of 16 stewardship crews were moved to the maintenance category and received a total of $955,797.46 in funding.

The State Trails Program would like continue to utilize $500,000 of the $1.5M of Great Outdoors Colorado funding that goes toward the Non-Motorized program to continue this pilot. Based upon our completed stewardship crews and feedback from workshops at State Trails Committee meetings, this next year will focus on creating a clear distinction between maintenance crews and trail stewardship crews to help guide how the program will operate once institutionalized. Additionally, the program will work to identify the appropriate crew funding amounts and the following program criteria.

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 'boots on the ground' trail crews will increase the number of trail crew hours for maintenance work will continue to expand the program's investment in improving exceptional and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities across the state.

Applicant Criteria:

Eligible applicants may include land managers and non-profit organizations that have

a long-term relationship with a land management agency. If not a land manager, applicants need to provide a letter from any relevant land manager(s) where work would occur that outlines the existing partnership (including the number of years of the relationship) and shows support of the proposed crew opportunity.

Successful applicants will:

- Have success with retaining a paid professional staff and completing quality work.
- Have shovel-ready trail projects to work on when funding is received.
- Provide a competitive wage in the State and their community or an ability to increase based on additional funds.
- Prioritize work based on user safety and the detriment to surrounding resources and wildlife.
- Prioritize public and partner organization engagement via volunteer work and/or support letters.

Expectations for Non-Motorized Stewardship crews:

- Prior crew management
- Meeting work hours and objectives
- Detailed quarterly reports sent in prior to the deadline
- Invoices submitted in a timely manner over the course of the grant and all funding expended by the grant end date
- Long-term Organization Tracking:
    - Monitoring points of the trail to track maintenance and sustainability over time
    - Before and after photos (can be a part of monitoring points)
- Annual inspections by CPW staff

Eligible items for funding:

- Working time - boots on the ground project work
- Mobilization and prep-time
- Tool purchases and maintenance
- Equipment or vehicle rental
- Fleet vehicle(s) for trail crew members - fixed and variable expenses, fuel and fluids
- Normal maintenance and repairs on trail machines and equipment
- Per diem (backcountry projects only)

Maximum Grant Request	**Crew Size**	**Season Length**
$75,000	2-4 paid staff	May 2027 – December 2027
$150,0000	5-8 paid staff	May 2027 – December 2027

Division Recommendation:

The State Recreational Trails Committee and the State Trails Program have provided the Commission with information for consideration and approval to continue the pilot program for the 2027 Non-Motorized Grant Cycle. After the pilot program runs for an additional grant cycle, the Commission will be updated on the effectiveness of the process, including a recommendation from the Committee and State Trails Program in regard to whether policy A-104 should be updated to include the pilot program subcommittee categories.

If you have any questions on this information, please feel free to contact Fletcher Jacobs at fletcher.jacobs@state.co.us or 720-622-4129 prior to the Commission meeting. Thank you.