



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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2021 Non-Motorized Trail Grant Pilot Categories as recommended by the State Recreational Trails Committee

This letter is a summary and explanation of the pilot adjustment to the 2020 Non-Motorized Trail Grant Categories and a request to continue the pilot for the 2021 grant cycle.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since its establishment in 1971, the CPW State Trails Program has administered grants for trail-related projects to local, county, and state governments, federal agencies, special recreation districts, and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands. This statewide program is supported by the State Trails Committee (the Committee) who serves as an advisory body to the Parks and Wildlife Commission (the Commission) and CPW staff on all matters pertaining to trails, their use, extent, location and funding. The Committee also makes recommendations to the Commission concerning State Trails Program grant funding and processes (A-104, I) including the annual non-motorized trail grant program. Local, county, and state 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.

Per Parks and Wildlife Commission Policy A-104, there are three standing grant review and ranking subcommittees that are appointed for the purpose of ranking non-motorized grant applications and formulating specific grant funding recommendations to the Committee (A104, VI, A). The three standing non-motorized trail grant subcommittees are:

- Large Construction/Maintenance Recreational Trail Grant Subcommittee
- Small Construction/Maintenance Recreational Trail Grant Subcommittee
- Recreational Trail Planning Grant Subcommittee

To continue the State Trails Program's goal to improve trail recreation opportunities while protecting wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources, the program implemented several changes to our 2020 Non-Motorized Trail Grant cycle. We updated the scoring criteria to ensure we were properly considering wildlife impacts, added several questions to the application focused on how potential impacts would be avoided or minimized, and asked applicants to share maps of existing trails to help staff and grant reviewers consider potential impacts on a landscape level. We also publicly shared the Regional Wildlife Impact Memos and asked the applicants to directly address any comments related to their specific projects during their grant presentation to the subcommittee.

Additionally, State Trails Program has been focused on how to adequately address and prioritize the state's need for maintenance and management of existing trail systems with the need for new trail construction. To help meet that goal, the Commission approved the pilot to



change the grant categories to the following:

- Construction
- Maintenance
- Planning & Support

Based on feedback from the Non-Motorized Subcommittee members, the Committee believed this change allowed them to better address the differences between types of trail projects and have a more direct comparison of different applications. It also allowed the Committee to discuss the allocation of funding for each category. Previously, we allocated funding for each grant category based upon the ratio of funds requested in each category against the total amount of grant funds available that year. This year the Committee recommended a larger percentage of funding for maintenance projects (from 19% of the total available amount to 33%) by decreasing the amount of funding for construction projects (from 76% of the total amount to 62%).

On April 30, 2020, the Commission approved 16 grants for a total award amount of \$2,688,014.50 which included 5 maintenance grants for \$601,316.79 that will fund non-motorized maintenance crews and projects across the state. Given the current financial conditions, the Committee recommended that we pilot these categories for another year to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach to ensure we are responding to the state's recreation and resource needs.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY:

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 2020 Non-Motorized Grant Categories to include Construction, Maintenance, and Planning. After the pilot program runs for another grant cycle, 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 the pilot program subcommittee categories. If you have any questions about this change or anything else related to the trails program, please feel free to give me a call prior to the Commission meeting. Thank you.