

Exhibit A – Project Information

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL CONSTRUCTION APPLICATION

Applicant or Organization Name: U.S Fish and Wildlife Service- Baca National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)		
Complete Mailing Address: Baca NWR, 9383 El Rancho Lane, Alamosa, CO 81101		
Applicant Lead Contact Name: Ty Benally		Title: Baca NWR Refuge Manager
Telephone: 719-256-5527: office	Email: Ty_Benally@fws.gov	Is this the primary contact for this grant? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

PROJECT MANAGER (this person will have day-to-day responsibility for the project)

Name: Kirk Groves	
Telephone: 719-298-7065: cell	Email: Joshua_Groves@fws.gov

PRIMARY PARTNER INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE)

Name: San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!)		
Mailing Address: 610 State Avenue Alamosa, CO 81101		
Partner Contact Name: Mick Daniel		Title: Executive Director
Telephone: 719-522-3910	Email: mickdaniel@slvgo.com	Is this the primary contact for this grant? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project Title: Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail	
Grant Request: \$ 69,653.55	Match Amount (Min. 25%): \$ 52,516.00
Total Project Cost: \$ 122,269.55	
<p>Project Description: Please write a 2-3 paragraph description of your project and the expected accomplishments. Be sure to include Who, What, When and Where. This is your scope of work. (This section is not the place to talk about the project background, the benefits, the funding, or anything other than the actual work to be accomplished. Please address that information in question #1 of the Selection Criteria.)</p> <p>WHO? Who will complete the work, and who will oversee the project? Provide a brief description of your community or organization, highlighting its mission and purpose.</p> <p>WHAT? Explain what you are going to do or accomplish. What is the goal or the reason for your project? Break down the project into a list of specific activities to be completed. These should be quantifiable items that correspond to the categories on your budget page. Include quantity or quality as part of your description of work to be performed. How long? How many? How many feet? How many miles? What materials will be used? Is a specific standard or guideline being used?</p> <p>WHERE? Explain in detail the location of your project. Where is the project located? What county? What National Forest/BLM Office? Provide the names of the trail(s) or trail system and where the work will be performed. List the land manager agency or municipality.</p> <p>DEFINITIONS? Please define all acronyms and specialized terms that are used in your project description.</p>	

Exhibit A – Project Information

Project Description

The Baca National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Nature and Heritage Trail project is overseen by U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and has partnered with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) who will complete the trail work via the Great Outdoors Action Team (GOAT's). The proposed project aims to connect the Town of Crestone to the Baca Visitors center that will span 1.3 miles using the natural surface. Under the guidance of USFWS, SLV GO! will extend an existing trail which will link the network just outside of the Town of Crestone.

The goal of the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage trail is to provide residents and visitors an alternative access route to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge without walking or biking on the narrow county road and to continue to protect wildlife habitats within and around the Refuge. This addition to the Refuge will provide public land users of Crestone, Saguache County, and visitors new opportunities for outdoor recreation, education, and connection with nature while protecting the important habitat that exists on the Refuge. The timeline for construction will begin fall of 2023 and because the Baca Refuge is conveniently located just outside the Town of Crestone, the expected outcomes will be straightforward and completed within the timeline provided.

Previous CPW grants awarded (last 3 years) List award year, category and project name



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/R6/

MAILING ADDRESS:
Post Office Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

October 4, 2022

Colorado State Trails Application 2023

Exhibit A - Construction

U.S Fish and Wildlife Service: Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail, Crestone, CO

The Baca National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Nature and Heritage Trail project is owned and overseen by U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and has partnered with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) who will complete the trail work via the Great Outdoors Action Team (GOAT's). The Service is a federal agency whose primary responsibility is to conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife habitat and promote recreational opportunities directly related to wildlife, such as photography, observation, and hunting. SLV GO!'s mission, aims to provide accessible and inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities that balances conservation, connects communities,

improves wellness, encourages stewardship, and contributes to the economic vitality of the region. The proposed project aims to connect the Town of Crestone from a common community meeting space, known as the kiosk, to the Baca Visitors center just outside the town of Crestone that will span 1.3 miles using the natural surface.

Under our guidance, SLV GO! will extend an existing trail which will link the trail network just outside of the Town of Crestone. The goal of the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage trail is to provide residents and visitors an alternative access route to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge without walking or biking on the narrow county road and continue to protect the wildlife habitats within and around the Refuge.

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail connects the only entrance to Crestone in Saguache County to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. This addition to the Refuge will provide public land users of Crestone, Saguache County, and visitors new opportunities for outdoor recreation, education, and connection with nature while protecting the important habitat that exists on the Refuge.

Committed partner, SLV GO!, was recently recognized in the fall of 2021 as a leader in the state by CPW and the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, and selected as a regional partnership in the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative (RPI). This is an effort to bring together diverse groups of stakeholders in outdoor recreation and conservation to explore with intent how our partners can collaborate to address the increased use of our recreational assets, identify priorities region-wide to envision a more balanced environment, while also providing equitable access and quality outdoor recreation experiences.

Thank you for your consideration of the submitted application package. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at Ty_Benally@fws.gov or telephone at 719 -256-5527.

Sincerely,

Refuge Manager

Exhibit A – Project Information

LAND OWNERSHIP		
1. Provide the name/s of the property owners: U.S Fish and Wildlife Service for the Baca NWR Nature		
2. The trail corridor is controlled by: <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Simple <input type="checkbox"/> Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Easement <input type="checkbox"/> License <input type="checkbox"/> Right-of-Way		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is owned by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service		
USER INFORMATION (Please check all that apply)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hiking, Walking, Running	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biking	<input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian
<input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding, In-Line Skating	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Sports (non-motorized)	<input type="checkbox"/> ADA Accessible
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
TRAIL SURFACE		
<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural	<input type="checkbox"/> Crusher Fines	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
PROJECT LOCATION (For multiple project sites attach a separate list.)		
Nearest Town or City: Crestone (Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail)		
County(ies): Saguache County (Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail)		
Latitude & Longitude Coordinates (in decimal degrees): 37.9867420, -105.7082250		
State Congressional District (https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members): CO 3		
<i>Please fill out all applicable categories for your project:</i>		
Acreage of new trailhead	.95	Miles of trail being planned
Miles of new trail construction	1.3	Miles of trail maintenance
Miles of inter-connecting trail		Miles of trail reroute
Miles of trail to be decommissioned		Miles of trail to be restored
Miles of trail to be signed		Miles of trail grooming
Other		Other

Applicant Printed Name: **Ty Benally**

Applicant Signature: **TY BENALLY** Digitally signed by TY BENALLY
Date: 2022.10.04 14:06:33 -06'00' Date: **10/04/2022**

CONSTRUCTION GRANT SCORING CRITERIA

All applicants must respond to the criteria questions. Use the numbered blank pages at the end of this section. This application will be scored on a 100-point basis. The maximum number of points that can be awarded for each question is shown in parentheses. Outside reviewers and State Trails staff will review each project. Projects will be ranked according to reviewer and staff scores.

Grant review subcommittee members review and score grant applications based on the totality of information available. This may include not only the answers provided to the application questions, but also additional information provided to the review subcommittee from agency staff and subcommittee member knowledge and information that is relevant to the proposed project.

Failure to provide a response to any question (unless otherwise noted) will reduce your project's score. Please read and understand all application questions prior to answering. Respond in **12-point font**. Reference all attachments.

1. Scope (10 points)

Describe the proposed project including the length/width of trail construction, and major components necessary to complete the trail such as materials, under/overpasses, bridges, trail heads, trail sections, etc. Address each trail component separately, specifically mentioning its characteristics. Please describe if this is a multi-phase project, and the plan for how future phases will be funded. Discuss the ownership status of the trail corridor and any easements or land acquisitions that have been acquired for the trail. Please include a few site photos and a map of the area.

2. Access/Trail Connections (5 points)

Briefly discuss how this project expands trail loops, links, improves and/or restores trail use and connectivity to other trails, parks, and/or other outdoor recreation opportunities. If the project is connected to a larger trail system, describe the size, extent, and predominant uses of that system.

3. Need (15 Points)

Describe the project's urgency and why it is being pursued at this time. Who are you building the trail for and how does it benefit them? Does this project create or enhance experiences that otherwise do not exist in the area? Why are CPW State Trails funds necessary to complete this project and what opportunities are lost if the grant is not awarded? Describe the community this project will serve and provide population and economic data. Briefly describe how the proposed trail will accommodate non-motorized uses within the region. List each user group and estimate their percentage of overall trail use, e.g., bicyclists - 40%, hikers - 50%, equestrian - 10%. What features make this trail suitable for these uses?

4. Planning and Prioritization Process (10 points)

Discuss the planning process that identified the construction of this trail(s) as a priority. Is this project part of an approved master plan, federal Forest or Resource Management Plan, or a landscape level regional planning effort (such as an Outdoor Regional Partnership)? If so, what priority is it given in that plan? Has this project been deemed a priority by any other agencies or given any significant designations? Please explain any existing trails in the area and describe the need for additional trail routes to be constructed.

5. Design and Construction (10 points)

How is the trail designed to ensure longevity and sustainability to meet current and future use levels? Who is designing/will design the trail and oversee the trail work and what are their qualifications? What best management practices will be used to construct the trail to ensure that the trail and its amenities will be sustainable? Who will build the trail (staff, volunteers, conservation corps, contractors, etc.)?

6. Maintenance and Sustainability (10 points)

Describe how the project will be maintained and managed for long-term sustainability. Has an operations and maintenance plan been developed for the project areas? If so, please explain the plan in detail including who will be responsible for this work, the estimated annual costs and funding plans. Have trail reroute options been considered for current on-the-ground unsustainable trails and trail sections in the project area? If so, are there plans to decommission and/or restore these unsustainable trail sections?

7. Wildlife and Natural Resources (15 points)

Describe how potential impacts to wildlife and natural resources were evaluated during the planning process for the trail (such as utilizing resources listed in Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind). Describe any plans for avoiding sensitive habitat as well as minimizing, and/or mitigating wildlife and natural resource impacts. Describe the plan for trail management and monitoring after construction. Were CPW staff members engaged in the planning process? Describe how their recommendations will be implemented. For example, if a seasonal closure is recommended, what are the dates of the closure and how will it be implemented to be effective (signage, gates, game cameras, etc.)?

8. Public Engagement (10 points)

Public notification is mandatory for all projects.

Describe the public process for this trail project (regular meetings, public meetings, working groups, etc.). Please highlight any collaborative approaches that were taken and summarize the feedback received from the public that determined the need for this project? Describe any received opposition to the project, and how the concerns have been addressed.

9. Matching Funds and Partnerships (10 points)

Discuss partnerships established for this project and their contributions. What other funding sources have been dedicated or are anticipated to be dedicated to this project? If matching funds are not yet secured, what are the plans for raising those additional funds? Will applicant and/or partner funds be lost if State Trails funds are not awarded? Submit letters of commitment/support from landowners and/or funders as a separate attachment (resolution from the governing body should include support and resource commitment; a separate support letter is not required). Beyond these letters, up to 5 non-funding letters of support may be submitted.

10. Ability/Contingency (5 points)

Describe your organization's ability to complete the specific grant transaction(s) that will be necessary to accomplish this project. Please provide examples (if any) for grant projects of similar magnitude that demonstrate your organization's ability to manage the requested level of grant funding; including the project title, grantor, award amount and year the project was funded. If State Trails funding is not awarded, what is the plan to complete the project?

1. Scope of Work (10 points)

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail, owned by USFWS, will be a natural surface trail extending just over 1 mile and will consist of a mix of new tread and old road conversion. This trail will connect the only entrance into the Town of Crestone at the intersection of County Road T and Camino Baca Grande to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center. Phase 1 of the overall project has been completed, the first segment of the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail connects the Refuge's Visitors Center to Colorado College campus. The second phase is the proposed 1.3 mile extension which will continue from the campus across the Briseis acquisition to the intersection of County Road T and Camino Baca Grande. This will serve as a critical linkage between the entry point to the Town of Crestone and the Refuge.

USFWS purchased this new tract of land in 2020 with a plan to connect it with a regional planning support group, Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition (ESLVTC). The main trail head will be at the entrance to the property with parking already available at the intersection. Components that will be installed include a bench, trail signs, and interpretive signage throughout the trail with funding from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

2. Access/Trail Connections (5 points)

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is an extension project within Trails Connect, a campaign launched by SLV GO! with the goal of closing the “last mile” gaps between San Luis Valley (SLV) neighborhoods and the outdoors. Trails Connect views trails across the SLV as a complete ecosystem, taking into account communities, wildlife and their habitat, geographic features, outdoor recreation resources and education, and ensuring they coexist in the healthiest manner possible. The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is a connecting feature of this overall ecosystem and in turn, will promote and provide access for users to recreate and experience the Refuge in a responsible manner.

If awarded funds to complete this project, the connecting system of trails will be approximately 3 miles in length total, creating a vast improvement for users to safely navigate and recreate via foot and bicycle.

3. Need (15 points)

The Baca NWR Nature Heritage Trail will primarily serve the remote Town of Crestone, a population less than 200, within Saguache county. The only existing trails in Crestone are steep grades to access the Sangre de Cristo mountain range; these trails do not serve everyday access for residents, who mainly walk or bike on the unsafe county roads. The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail will be the first instance of public access for walking and biking to the Baca Refuge. Sections of the Refuge have been available for licensed hunting during appropriate seasons, but otherwise, this open space has been inaccessible to the public. The trail will accommodate public access to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center via a loop starting at the community meeting hub, the kiosk.

The proximity of the proposed trails to their respective communities is significant. Studies by Headwaters Economics, an independent nonprofit research group, shows that; trails improve public health by increasing physical activity and providing safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists. For low-income residents, accessibility proved to be a strong motivator for healthier activity, with 50% of residents more likely to use trails located within 10 minutes of their home. In the SLV, where poverty rates are more than double the state average, and have the highest rates of child poverty at 37.8 and 43 percent respectively, the need for accessible trails is amplified. The creation of the proposed trail will introduce sustainable and inclusive infrastructure which significantly impacts the well-being and socioeconomic health in the SLV community.

Based on experiences working with the involved communities in the past, as well as information gathered through surveys as part of community Master Plans, the anticipated percentage of user groups are 70% hikers, 20% bikers, and 10% equestrian trail users. We expect the percentage of bikers to grow exponentially in the area as the anticipated user percentage for the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is 50% hiker and 50% biker.

The Town of Crestone is in urgent need of this proposed outdoor space. A lack of accessible outdoor spaces already existed before the COVID-19 pandemic and now there is an amplified need for safe places outside of home to reap the health and wellness benefits of the natural landscape. Many of our communities are unable to safely go for a walk without driving to an established trail, which could be over 10 miles away. It is vital that these communities have access to their public lands as soon as possible, as many have turned to the outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While many parts of Colorado have an abundance of accessible trails for recreation, the SLV is struggling due to an absence of easily accessible non-motorized trails to access public spaces. SLV GO! has received a grant from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area which will serve as a match for the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail project. If the State Trails grant is not awarded, we would lose the collective opportunity for shared partnership, our trail ecosystem would be unfinished, we will miss out on opportunities to provide outdoor education, and we could not provide equitable access to the outdoors for these communities. This is our last chance to utilize these matching funds to complete this specific project.

4. Planning and Prioritization Process (10 points)

The proposed project fits within the Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition approved plan and the Crestone Trails & Open Space Master Plan (TMP). The development of these plans involved reaching out to local community members via public surveys and community meetings to collect input on types of recreational areas and activities they were interested in seeing. Outcomes revealed interest in the conservation, improvement, and further development of trail systems. Plans for the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail are a direct result of this process and reflect the interests of Crestone residents and trail users.

The Crestone Trails and Open Space Master Plan, which was completed in 2016, aims to provide a system of trails in the Crestone vicinity that foster a culture of hiking, preservation, education, and accessibility of precious wildlife and native vegetation while serving as a primary form of way-finding. The development of the TMP recognized the potential and opportunity to bring a wider diversity of trails and trail uses to the community and region by creating a trail network that would interconnect the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area to the Crestone region. With this nexus of trails, the community and its visitors will be able to access the region's diverse natural assets, from the high alpine environment that attracts backpackers and climbers, to the unique transition zone that Crestone lies in, which is rich in flora and fauna and attracts many wildlife, bird watchers, as well as hikers, and everyday residents.

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail has been identified as a high priority trail in the TMP for its important linkage between the greater Crestone trails to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. With the previous Refuge's Manager, Ron Garcia, being a huge proponent and visionary for the project, and now with Ty Benally the new Refuge Manager, the momentum continues in the construction of the first trail that will be open to the public on the property. The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail will encourage exploration, education, and visitation at the Refuge's Visitor's Center, as well as the nearby Town of Crestone.

Concurrently, SLV GO! has recently been recently recognized in the fall of 2021 as a leader in the state by CPW and the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, and selected as a regional partnership in the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative (RPI). This is an effort to bring together diverse groups of stakeholders in outdoor recreation and conservation to explore with intent how our partners can collaborate together to address the increased use of our recreational assets, identify priorities region-wide to envision a more balanced environment, while also providing equitable access and quality outdoor recreation experiences.

5. Design and Construction (10 points)

Crew leaders from the Great Outdoors Action Team (GOATs), Southwest Conservation Corps youth crew, with additional guidance from the SLV GO! Operations Director, Patrick Ortiz, will design and construct the trail. Between the SLV GO! staff, the GOATs crew, and youth crew, there is over 50 years of combined trail building experience that span various climates, terrains, and ecosystems. At this time there has been no planning around seasonal closure, USFWS is confident that if awarded this construction grant the selected construction team will be able to complete the needed work in an effective and efficient manner.

The sandy soils of the Refuge presents the biggest challenge to trail design and construction for our team. Given the relatively flat terrain, climate, wetland characteristics of the property, and expected use, SLV GO! chose to construct the first segment, phase 1, of the Baca Nature and Heritage trail in 2020 as an elevated, crusher fine trail to provide a harder surface that will be more accommodating for bikers, and will sustain a greater number of users as expected, all while promoting water runoff and long term sustainability of the trail. The SLV GO! GOAT's will be assessing their initial work on the trail to ensure future sustainability and will make any needed adjustments to reduce future maintenance needs.

Rick Basagoitia, District Wildlife Manager, and Ty Benally, the Baca National Wildlife Refuge's new Manager, have been and will continue to be consulted for these projects. Some of the best management practices utilized for the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail include: working closely with the Baca National Wildlife Refuge to ensure adherence to policies, safety of habitat and minimal wildlife disturbance, pursuit of NEPA and Section 106 environmental assessments, outdoor education opportunities, and sustainable, modern methods of trail construction.

6. Maintenance and Sustainability (10 points)

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is a connecting thread within an ongoing plan for the Town of Crestone. SLV GO!, Saguache County and ESLVTC are currently coordinating a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project which will complement the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail and require one more connection between the subdivision and the school, the school and the Town of Crestone, all leading to the Baca Refuge.

Long-term management and sustainability has been addressed noting a stewardship reserve which has been included in the budgets. These funds will be held by SLV GO! for the ongoing maintenance of the trails. Where short and long term damage occur, the GOAT's trail crew will be enlisted to plan, design, and construct the work necessary to ensure the health of each trail. Both section 106 and NEPA assessments have been conducted on the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail as part of the planning process.

With an approximate annual cost of \$5,000, funding the maintenance of this project is included in our budget as part of a five year sufficient stewardship track. We believe this is an important consideration as new trails are developed, because building trails correctly from their inception will help minimize future maintenance costs. The San Luis Valley has unforeseen extreme weather events, the stewardship reserve that has been funded through Saguache County, which has utilized youth corps trail crews over the last three years, will allow us to respond to those events quickly and keep our public resources activated and available.

SLV GO! will lean on this existing partnership by bringing on youth corps crews to help our GOAT's trail crew with maintenance, and if needed, reroute possibilities will be discussed in the design of the trail in this unique terrain.

We are confident the proposed work can be completed with the requested budget. In the future, we will look toward developing other trails connected to this project.

7. Wildlife and Natural Resources (15 points)

CPW District Wildlife Manager, Rick Basagoitia, has been part of the SLV GO! coalition since early 2013 as a partner in their work. USFWS and SLV GO! have engaged Rick, as well as trails coordinator Josh Stoudt, during the planning process of these projects and will support the efforts of the newly built connecting trail through their continued engagement.

The alignment of proposed trails along or near existing human-created or natural edges is designed to avoid bisecting large blocks of undisturbed sensitive environmental resources, limit access to critical habitat patches, and minimize potential fragmentation. To avoid wildlife impact on the Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail, a full NEPA review of the proposed area, which has been strategically laid out along the natural edge of the riparian zone, has been conducted.

At this time, there have been no recommendations for seasonal closures. If we discover such a need in any of the environmental assessment or NEPA processes, we will work with the respective land managers for that closure.

8. Public Engagement (10 points)

In Crestone, a condo association had originally been approached regarding a trail easement on their property to connect to the Colorado College campus. The condo association, though generally supportive of the idea, felt the community was already infringing on parking for a nearby restaurant and were not receptive to the idea. With this feedback, the project pivoted to revisiting the Jamie Ireland property, which USFWS ultimately purchased for water rights and this trail project.

Throughout its existence, SLV GO! has worked with numerous counties and municipalities throughout the San Luis Valley to help move outdoor recreation Master Plans into reality. We have worked in the background with Costilla County on the Rito Seco State Trails grant and with Rio Grande County and Del Norte Trails on the Del Norte Trails network. A similar collaborative process was conducted in the Crestone community through surveys and gatherings, and in 2016 the Crestone Trails & Open Space Master Plan deemed the Baca National Wildlife Refuge as priority space for outdoor recreation and education access.

9. Matching Funds and Partnerships (10 points)

The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail project involves numerous, deep-rooted partnerships including; the Town of Crestone, Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition (ESLVTC), the Baca National Wildlife Refuge and SLV GO! These partners have been working in concert to help identify and guide the purchase of the project property by USFWS. Saguache County thus far has dedicated two weeks of its youth corps to this project, valued at \$14,400, and SLV GO! has received the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area grant, which will also support this project.

Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail projects, SLV GO! has secured \$25,694 more than the 30% required match amount. Match sources include; Saguache County, Southwest Conservation Corps youth crew, cash matches from both counties, and SLV GO! project funds. The \$25,000 from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area grant that was awarded to SLV GO! will meet the match requirement for the entire State Trails, it will be restricted to the Baca Nature and Heritage Trail project. If the State trails grant is not awarded we would lose these funds as it is our last chance to apply them to this specific project. Any additional fundraising will take place as part of an annual giving campaign at the end of the year.

Strengths behind the intention of all partnerships stem from ensuring the impact on the environment with the promotion of outdoor recreation is sustainable and that experts in the field are consulted with to mitigate potential damage and conflict with other resources. The Baca NWR Nature and Heritage Trail is a great example of how our teams work closely with all relevant stakeholders throughout the process of planning, designing, constructing, and implementing projects to achieve a shared goal.

10. Ability/Contingency (5 points)

Funding sources which have been dedicated to this project include two weeks of youth corps work, valued at \$7,200 per week from Saguache County and \$22,700 from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

If the State Trails grant is not awarded, our matching funds from the Heritage Area grant would no longer be applicable to this specific project, as the grant requires the construction of the proposed trail. Additionally, the youth corps trail crews would be tasked with doing menial work such as pulling weeds rather than receiving valuable trail work experience. In this case, SLV GO! would continue pursuing funds for these projects, via other grant opportunities and fundraising, though it would be significantly more difficult without State Trails support.

SLV GO! has previously been involved in two State Trails grants—the Del Norte State Trails project was successfully completed in 2016 and the Costilla County State Trails grant which was completed summer 2022. Saguache County was awarded \$900,000 for Safe Routes to School projects from Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT); and recently received \$250,532 from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) in support of our work throughout the San Luis Valley.

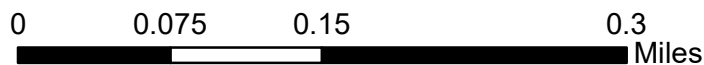
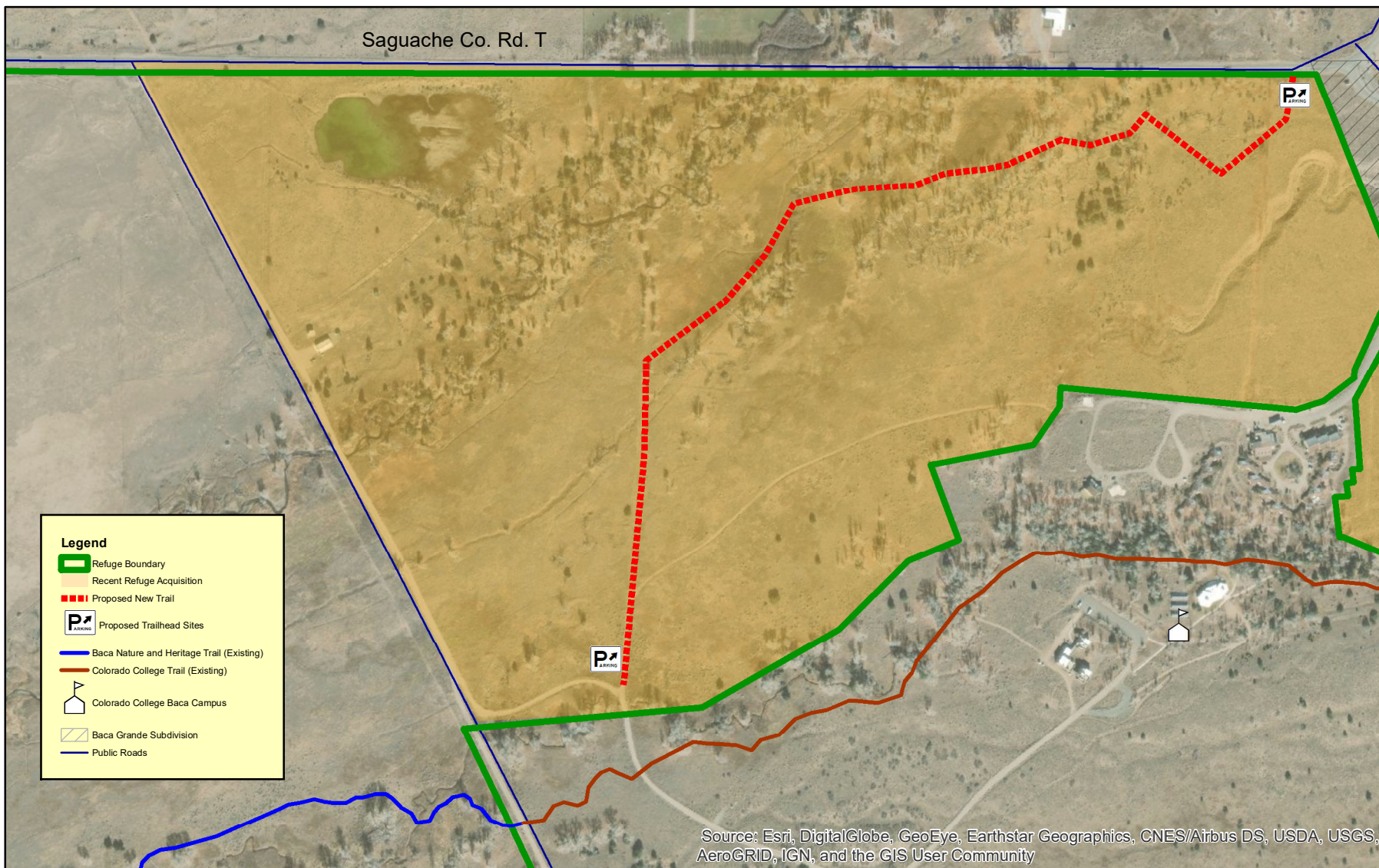
USFWS is very accustomed to working with grants and grant reporting at the State Trails level and understands the importance of close communication with funders and timely on our reports; we have lived up to these standards with every grant we have received to the best of our ability. Each project is a learning process and we value diligent work to provide the information and project management necessary to do our best work. We are confident that we will be able to complete the grant transactions necessary to accomplish our projects under the State Trails grant.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Baca National Wildlife Refuge
Saguache and Alamosa Counties



Baca National Wildlife Refuge Baca Nature and Heritage-Trail Extension (Proposed)



Federal Environmental Form and Land Manager Approval
Only to be completed if all or part of the project is located on federal land

The applicant is responsible for securing all necessary permits, licenses, clearances, SHPO, and environmental analysis documentation necessary to comply with local, state, and/or federal laws.

Project Name The Baca National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Nature and Heritage Trail

Project Sponsor U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

As the official responsible for management of the land on which the project will be accomplished, I agree to the following:

1. The project as described in this application has my approval.
2. The project is located on federal public lands and is in conformance with the appropriate Forest Management Plan, BLM Resource Area Management Plan or other decision document.

Title of document: Comprehensive Conservation Plan, San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Date of document: October 2015

3. A decision has been issued as part of the NEPA environmental review process.

Title of document: 1) Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation, and 2) Checklist for NEPA Con



Date of document: 1) June 2021, and 2) September 2020.

If a decision has not been issued as part of the NEPA environmental review process, please state the reason why. No funds will be distributed until any required NEPA documentation is completed.

For more information about the NEPA environmental review process, contact:

Name: Scott Miller

Phone number: 719-589-4021

Email: Scott_G_Miller@fws.gov

4. The next planning process that may affect this project is planned for 12/2022.

Land Manager's Name: Ty Benally

Land Manager's Title

Land Manager's Signature: Refuge Manager

TY BENALLY

Digitally signed by TY BENALLY
Date: 2022.10.04 15:26:53 -06'00'

Section 3 - Project Budget

Project Name: US Fish and Wildlife Baca Nature and Heritage Trail		For Office Use:						
SOURCE OF FUNDS	Date Secured				CPW Trails Grant Request [A]	Total Project Match [B]	Total Funding (\$) [C]	
CASH								
CPW State Trails Grant					\$69,653.55		\$ 69,653.55	
Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area	6/21/2022					\$22,700	\$ 22,700.00	
Saguache County	TBD					\$14,500	\$ 14,500.00	
IN-KIND								
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors						\$ 4,750.00	\$ 4,750.00	
Southwest Conservation Corps						\$ 4,666.00	\$ 4,666.00	
USFWS						\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS					\$ 69,653.55	\$ 52,616.00	\$ 122,269.55	
[CASH] Description of Work	Qty	Unit	Unit Price	Total (B*D)	CPW Funds	Total Project Match (\$)	Total Funding (\$)	Balance [should be 0]
CATEGORY 1-Contracted Services Identify as: Youth Corps, Engineering, Contractor, etc.								
Southwest Conservation Corp - Youth Corp Saguache County	2	wk	\$ 7,250.00	\$ 14,500.00		\$ 14,500.00	\$ 14,500.00	0
Category 2 - Salary/Wages								
SLV GO! GOATs Seasonal Full Time	2	wk	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00		\$ 32,000.00	0
CATEGORY 3-Materials/Supplies Identify as: Signs, crusherfines, native seed, weed barrier, etc.								
Interpretive Signs	5	EA	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 17,500.00		\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	0
Trail Markers	10	EA	\$ 40.00	\$ 400.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	0
Benches	6	EA	\$ 700.00	\$ 4,200.00		\$ 4,200.00	\$ 4,200.00	0
Dog Stations	3	EA	\$ 200.00	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	0
Additional Categories								
Project Administration	5%	%	\$ 64,357.00	\$ 3,217.85	\$ 3,217.85		\$ 3,217.85	0
Contingency	10%	%	\$ 64,357.00	\$ 6,435.70	\$ 6,435.70		\$ 6,435.70	0
Mobilization to and from the site	1	10%	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00		\$ 1,200.00	0
Mini Excavator	2	wk	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 2,800.00		\$ 2,800.00	0
Track Haulers x 2	2	wk	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 2,000.00	0
Stewardship Reserve	2	wk	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,000.00		\$ 22,000.00	0
USE OF FUNDS - CASH SUBTOTAL					\$ 69,653.55	\$ 37,200.00	\$ 106,853.55	
*ESTIMATE NUMBER OF CREW HOURS [GRANT AND MATCH] CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE					1,000.00	768.00	*REQUIRED INPUT	
[IN-KIND] Description of Work	Qty	Unit	Unit Price	Total (B*D)			Total Funding (\$)	Balance [should be 0]
Category 1 - Contracted Services								
Southwest Conservation Corps	2	wk	\$ 2,333.00	\$ 4,666.00		\$ 4,666.00	\$ 4,666.00	0
Category 2 - Salary/Wages								
Executive Director - SLV GO!	2	wk	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 3,600.00		\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	0
Category 3 - Materials/Tools								
Trail Tools (McClouds/ Picks/ Shovels)	3	wk	\$ 250.00	\$ 750.00		\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	0
Culverts/ materials/ installation USFWS	2	ea	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 6,000.00		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	0
Additional Categories								
Marketing of Trail / Uploading of Info on Trail Sites	16	hrs	\$ 25.00	\$ 400.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	0
IN-KIND SUBTOTAL						\$ 15,416.00	\$ 15,416.00	
TOTAL PROJECT COST					\$ 69,653.55	\$ 52,616.00	\$ 122,269.55	
25% REQUIRED MATCH						\$ 17,413.39		



SANGRE ♦ DE ♦ CRISTO
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

September 26, 2022

RE: Baca Nature and Heritage Trail; Crestone Community

Dear Colorado Parks and Wildlife,

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area supports US Fish and Wildlife and partner San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) in their efforts to construct the proposed Baca Nature and Heritage Trail in the Crestone community and Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be a natural surface trail extending just under 1 mile and will consist of a mix of new tread and an old road conversion. It will connect the only entrance into Crestone and a current meeting area at County Road T and Camino Baca Grande to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife purchased this new tract of land in 2020 with the connection in the plans from the regional planning group Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition. This trail will connect the town of Crestone to the Baca Refuge Visitor's Center. The main trail head will be at the entrance to the new property with parking already available at the intersection. We will install a bench, trail signs, and interpretive signage throughout the trail with matching funds from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. This addition to the Baca Refuge will provide Crestone residents a new opportunity for outdoor recreation, connection with nature, and safer non-motorized travel options to and from the Town of Crestone, while simultaneously protecting the precious habitat that exists on the Refuge. Interpretive signage will include the history of the Baca Ranch, local agriculture, landscape, and habitat.

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be the first instance of public access for walking and biking to the Baca Refuge just outside of Crestone. Parts of the Refuge have been available for licensed hunting during the appropriate seasons, but otherwise, this open space has been inaccessible to the public. The trail will accommodate public access to the Visitors Center via a loop starting at a popular community meeting hub; it will also act as a safe alternative for non-motorized travelers to access open space.

The mission of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is to promote, preserve, protect, and interpret its profound historical, religious, environmental, geographic, geologic, cultural, and linguistic resources. These efforts will contribute to the overall national story, engender a spirit of pride and self-reliance, and create a legacy in the Colorado counties of Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla.

With 11,000 years of documented human habitation, the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is a crossroads of the centuries. Here a unique blend of Native American, Hispano and Anglo settlement is

reflected in the diversity of the people, art and traditions. The geographic isolation of our high desert valley and the peoples' enduring ties to the land have given rise to a rich cultural heritage and ensured its preservation. The area's fertile cultural landscape is complemented by remarkable natural resources, including the mighty Rio Grande, majestic Rocky Mountain peaks, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, Baca Grande National Wildlife Refuge, Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, and the high mountain desert, all of which lend the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area an unparalleled beauty that offers a sense of retreat and a powerful source of inspiration for visitors.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Chacon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Chacon
Executive Director



SAGUACHE COUNTY

505 Third Street • P. O. Box 100

Saguache, Colorado 81149

Phone: (719) 655-2231 • Fax: (719) 655-2635

September 20, 2022

RE: Baca Nature and Heritage Trail; Crestone Community

Dear Colorado Parks and Wildlife,

Saguache County supports US Fish and Wildlife and partner San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) in their efforts to construct the proposed Baca Nature and Heritage Trail in the Crestone community and Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be a natural surface trail extending just under 1 mile and will consist of a mix of new tread and an old road conversion. It will connect the only entrance into Crestone and a current meeting area at County Road T and Camino Baca Grande to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife purchased this new tract of land in 2020 with the connection in the plans from the regional planning group Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition. This trail will connect the town of Crestone to the Baca Refuge visitors center. The main trail head will be at the entrance to the new property with parking already available at the intersection. We will install a bench, trail signs, and interpretive signage throughout the trail with matching funds from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. This addition to addition to the Baca Refuge will provide Crestone residents and new opportunity for outdoor recreation, connection with nature, and non-motorized travel options to and from the Town of Crestone, while simultaneously protecting the precious habitat that exists on the Refuge.

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be the first instance of public access for walking and biking to the Baca Refuge just outside of Crestone. Parts of the Refuge have been available for licensed hunting during the appropriate seasons, but otherwise, this open space has been inaccessible to the public. The trail will accommodate public access to the Visitors Center via a loop starting at a popular community meeting hub; it will also act as a safe alternative for non-motorized travelers to access open space.

Sincerely,

Tim Lovato
Commissioner
District 3

Lynne Thompson
Commissioner
District 2

Tom McCracken
Commissioner
District 1



September 23, 2022

RE: Baca Nature and Heritage Trail; Crestone Community

Dear Colorado Parks and Wildlife,

The San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council (SLVEC) supports US Fish and Wildlife and partner San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) in their efforts to construct the proposed Baca Nature and Heritage Trail in the Crestone community to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

SLVEC's mission is to protect and restore the biological diversity, ecosystems, and natural resources in the Upper Rio Grande Basin by balancing ecological values and sustainable human needs. SLVEC's vision seeks to foster an Environmental Community where wildlands are protected and cherished for future generations. We advocate for public policy that nurtures community cooperation and investment. Through encouragement of good stewardship practices we provide tools that teach the wisdom of a complex ecosystem and highlight the design patterns that weave the constructive interplay between human cultures and the natural world. We embrace the preservation of natural beauty, biodiversity and the health of the San Luis Valley and Upper Rio Grande Region.

History

SLVEC played a critical role in the campaign to enact the Grant Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act of 2000, and received congressional recognition for that effort. That 2000 legislation expanded the Great Sand Dunes National Monument into a National Park; and also created the Baca National Wildlife Refuge, now managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service; and added the Forest Service Baca Mountain Tract. These three public land agencies are working together to manage the former Baca Ranch, a private ranch that was converted to public lands due to federal legislation passed in 2000.

Scope of the Baca Nature and Heritage Trail

It is our understanding that the Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be a natural surface trail extending just under 1 mile and will consist of a mix of new tread and an old road conversion. It will connect the only entrance into Crestone that contains a road conjunction that serves as a meeting area between County Road T and the main road into the Baca sub-division, Camino Baca Grande. The trail will connect this "conjunction" area to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife purchased an additional tract of land in 2020 (next to this conjunction area) with the connection in the plans from the regional planning group, Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition. SLVEC has participated with trail crews to construct that Eastern SLV Trail on BLM lands above the town.

This trail will connect the town of Crestone to the Baca Refuge visitors center. The main trail head will be at the entrance to the newly purchased Baca Refuge property with parking already available at the conjunction. SLVEC understands that SLVGO will install a bench, trail signs, and interpretive signage throughout the trail with matching funds from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. This addition

to the Baca Refuge will provide Crestone residents a new opportunity for outdoor recreation, connection with nature, and safer non-motorized travel options to and from the town of Crestone, while simultaneously protecting the precious habitat that exists on the Refuge.

Why is this important?

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will be the first instance of public access for walking and biking to the Baca Refuge just outside of Crestone. Parts of the Refuge have been available for licensed hunting during the appropriate seasons, but otherwise, this open space has been inaccessible to the public. The trail will accommodate public access to the Visitors Center via a loop starting at a popular community meeting hub; it will also act as a safe alternative for non-motorized travelers to access open space.

Once the legislation was passed in 2000, it's took fifteen years to finish the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which included the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. As a result, the Baca refuge was not open to the public until 2015. There were exceptions of course, for specific tours/hunting, etc., but for the most part, the neighboring Crestone/Baca community knows very little about the Baca Refuge. There is an active "Friends of the Refuge" support group, but this small volunteer group is mostly made up of retirees.

The Baca Nature and Heritage Trail will facilitate a better understanding of this special landscape and nurture a "sense of place" for community/family members needing orientation, who have relocated to the Crestone/Baca area, for retirement and/or to raise their families. This will also be a special trail for the American public, who enjoy finding these "gateway communities" to experience their public lands legacy.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christine Canaly
Director
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
P.O. Box 223
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-1518
info@slvec.org
www.slvec.org

CONSTRUCTION OR MAINTENANCE GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

MANDATORY:

Signed letter of resolution from the Governing Body (Board of Directors or Commissioners, City or Town Government, etc.) that states the resources and support committed to the project.

Formal authorization from land manager (federal lands only)

Timeline form has been filled out

Budget uploaded as an unprotected Excel document

Maps/Photos/Graphics uploaded as PDF document(s)

Letters of Support (maximum of five) uploaded. No letters from clubs, groups or individuals who are specifically working on the project. No letters from CPW staff.

Project should be completed within 2.5 years from receiving grant

Required MATCH funding is secured, including CASH match funds. If not secured at time of application, add a note in the comments sections at the bottom of this form.

Scope of work and project location map emailed to CPW Area Manager by September 6, 2022.

Project area is owned by a public land agency or has an easement that designates the area to be open to public outdoor recreation for at least 25 years.

Formal Environmental Assessment (EA) or NEPA (Must be completed prior to applicant presentations in January 2023. Include web link to EA).

Construction projects have been evaluated for required permits. If required, permits have been acquired (404 permit, etc.)

ADDITIONAL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

Youth Corps or youth organization will be used on the project (name of organization)

Volunteers will be utilized on the project (name of organization)

Comments