WEBINAR
Legacy Trails Grant Program

DATE:    July 26, 2023

TIME:    2:00 - 3:00 p.m. ET

The CorpsNetwork
Welcome!

- Thank you for joining us today!
- Future webinars will be listed on website + shared in *The Crewleader* and on social media

Special thanks to our planning partners and supporters!
Friendly Reminders

• Please stay on mute until Q&A

• If you have questions during the session, drop them in the chat

• Captioning is enabled

• Session will be recorded

• Stay for important reminders at the end

• Don’t forget to take our post-event survey
Today’s Topic
Legacy Trails Grant Program

• Second round of Legacy Trails Grant Program.
• Program is administered by American Trails through a challenge cost share agreement with the USDA Forest Service.
• Funds up to $1.5M of awards per year for 5 years through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
• Supports partner trail projects that further the Legacy Roads and Trails criteria on National Forest System trails throughout the nine Forest Service Regions.
Today’s Key Learning Objectives

1. Understand the Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails criteria for this new program.

2. Better comprehend the types of projects that this fund will support.

3. Become familiar with the planned application process and timeline.

4. Understand how project proposals will be evaluated and what it takes to submit a high-quality application.
Presenters

Cathy Corlett
Trail Fund Program Director, American Trails
The Trail Fund Grant Programs

**Legacy Trails Program**
For trail projects on land managed by the National Forest Service that:

- **Restore** aquatic habitat,
- **Preserve** access,
- **Remove** unauthorized trails,
- **Decommission** unauthorized and previously closed roads/trails and/or
- **Create** more resilient and sustainable National Forest Service Trails, trail bridges and trail infrastructure

**Trails Capacity Program**
Invests in building trails community capacity nationwide through research, education and stewardship.

- **Legacy Trails Program yearly budget**: $1.5 M
- **Trail Capacity Program 2022/23 budget**: $122K
Who can apply to the Legacy Trails Program?

Nonprofit organizations, businesses, or non-Federal agencies may apply* for this funding. American Trails manages the program and awards the funding.

 Volunteer involvement is encouraged!

*Applicants must have a letter of support from their local Forest Service office.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legacy Trails Program</th>
<th>Grant Program Overview</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding Available</strong></td>
<td>Funding between $5,000 and $100,000 per project.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Important Dates</strong></td>
<td>Fall application for Spring award</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Match Requirement</strong></td>
<td>50% match – In-kind Is acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trail Types</strong></td>
<td>Motorized or non-motorized trails in National Forests</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
American Trails and our project partners will seek to award project funding equitably, proportionate to percentage of National Forest System Trail miles on the ground.
The Forest Service estimates that the current maintenance backlog on roads, trails, and bridges is in the billions of dollars.
An access problem

National Forest System Trails suffer from deferred maintenance.
A problem for fish

The upper reaches of many watersheds are no longer accessible to fish and other aquatic organisms, making these populations vulnerable to decline.

Culverts can prohibit upstream fish passage.

The headwaters of many streams and rivers are disconnected, such as the Sacramento River in California.
Projects should address problems

- Deferred maintenance
- & Overuse
  which can lead to
- Unauthorized/informal trails
  & Unsafe/confusing trails
  vulnerable to
- Extreme weather
  which causes/worsens
- Erosion and flooding
  which causes/worsens
- Damage to habitat
- Impacts to public drinking water sources
Grant Intent

To carry out projects on National Forest System Trails and trail bridges to improve resilience to weather events, flooding, or other natural disasters.

Build Trail Bridges
To improve aquatic habitat and improve resilience

Convert Roads to Trails
While allowing for continued recreational use.

Relocate trails
To increase resilience.

Decommission Unauthorized Trails
User created trails that are not National Forest System Trails.

Decommission Closed Trails
After public comment*

Protect watershed health
And public drinking water

Restore Fish Passage
& aquatic habitat.

* Projects which decommission forest roads and trails may only be funded if public comment was previously and separately solicited for changing the management status of the applicable National Forest System road or trail: 1) to close the road or trail to access; and 2) to minimize impacts to natural resources; and has closed the road or trail to access.
Project examples

**Build Trail Bridges**
To improve aquatic habitat and improve resilience

**Restore Fish Passage**
& aquatic habitat.

A successful project allows anadromous fish passage and natural water flow year-round. Well designed and constructed trail-stream crossings accommodate flash floods or other extreme weather events without trail washouts.
Project example

**Convert Roads to Trails**
While allowing for continued recreational use.

Projects can include clearing, brushing, tread repair, bridge and structure repair or replacement, and installation of trail signs provided they contribute to the goals of the Legacy Trails Program. These activities can also reduce existing trail deferred maintenance.

*All trail work must meet National Quality Standards and the Forest Service Trail Management Objectives.*
Project example

Decommission Unauthorized Trails
User created trails that are not National Forest System Trails.

Relocate trails
To increase resilience.
The Application Packet

**Project Narrative**
- Project description
- Specific accomplishments
- Benefit of the project

**Project Budget**
- Budget narrative
- Spreadsheet with match

**Project Timeline**
- Project timeline narrative
- Complete in 2 yrs

**Letter of Support**
- Signed by District Ranger
- Identifies project location

**Documentation of Legal status**
- IRS letter: Tax exempt status
- EIN or business license

**Other Documentation**
- Additional letters of support
- Map of project site/context
- Photos of site/context
The Application/Award Process

1. Project Scoping
   - Meet with District Ranger
   - Define Scope
   - Build Community Support
   - Project Narrative

2. Budget & Timeline
   - Cost Estimates
     - Match
     - Budget
     - Timeline

3. Application
   - Digital Portal
     - Gather and Input all Application Materials

4. Award
   - Notification
     - Congratulations!
     - Publicity

5. Reporting
   - Invoicing
   - Project Reporting
   - Summary
**How feasible is your project?**
- Approval by District Ranger/Forest Supervisor
- Amount of match

**What does your project accomplish?**
- Miles of trail improved
- Maintenance needs in priority areas
- Overall benefit to National Forest Trail System (NFTS)

**Priority projects protect or restore:**
- Water quality/watershed function,
- A watershed that supplies a public drinking water system
- Habitat of threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish or wildlife, or species of conservation concern,
- A watershed with a watershed protection and restoration action plan

**Who does it engage, does it have support?**
- Volunteer participation and community support is encouraged.
ASSEMBLE PROJECT INFO

Project Budget and Timeline

And other Documentation

2

Matching contribution
• Must be at least 50% of total requested funding
• In-kind is an acceptable match

Budget amounts
• Small – between 5-20K
• Large – up to 100K

Project Timeline
• Can span two field seasons
APPLY AND GET FUNDED

Total funding amounts are expected to be $1,500,000 per year for the next five years beginning in 2023. This program is dependent on the FS depositing Challenge Cost Share Program funding with American Trails each year. A final federal budget and allocation into this agreement is required prior to project awards.
## Required Project Prequalification

Projects that meet all basic grant requirements will be further evaluated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Overall Benefit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Activities</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Priority Program Goals</td>
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<td>Improvements By The Mile</td>
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<td>Trail/Stream Crossings (bridges, culverts, other)</td>
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**Overall Assessment**: Y/5/5/5/5/5
Projects that score highest will maximize resiliency and sustainability

**Social benefit**
Project results in responsible trail behavior. Broad and sustained engagement over time.

**Environmental protection**
Project significantly improves watershed function and habitat quality.

**Overall benefit**
Addresses critical trail issues such as habitat degradation, erosion and/or trail user safety.

**Economic impact**
Trail access that benefits community and is durable and resistant to future failure.
Social Engagement & Benefit

A successful project engages a significant number of volunteers relative to its size, and improves social harmony, connectivity and access.

Project serves a wide variety of ages and abilities, culturally diverse and/or locally under-represented or under-served populations.
Environmental Protection

The most successful project reconnects impacted aquatic habitat, reduces erosion, and improves viability for impacted species.
Metrics

Priority goals

• Improves a watershed that supplies a public drinking water source
• Number of listed species positively impacted
• Cultural impacts mitigated

Trail improvements by the mile

• Deferred maintenance miles
• Miles of trail improved or relocated
• Miles of unauthorized trails decommissioned
• Miles of closed trails decommissioned
• Miles of road converted to trail
• Miles of upstream habitat reconnected

Trail/stream improvements

• Number of trail bridges
• Number of culverts replaced
Economic Impact

The highest-scoring project shows significant local investment, significantly improves infrastructural resilience to weather events, flooding or other natural disasters, and economically benefits the community.
Overall Benefit

A successful project engages and benefits the trail using public, addresses critical ecological and infrastructural issues, and represents a fair distribution of funding around the country and by trail type.
# Sample Project Evaluation

Projects meeting all pre-screening criteria with scores above a certain level will be considered for award.

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From U. S. Forest Service

- USFS Legacy Roads & Trails Program website
- National Stream and Aquatic Ecology Center website
- Aquatic Organism Passage slide deck
- National Inventory and Assessment Procedure for Identifying Barriers to Aquatic Organism Passage at Road-Stream Crossings
- Aquatic Organism Passage Restoration video
THE TRAIL FUND

Legacy Trails Program
Cathy Corlett,  
Trail Fund Program Director at American Trails  
cathy@americantrails.org

Lauren Edwards-Johnson,  
Program Manager, The Corps Network  
ledwards-johnson@corpsnetwork.org

Get in touch with The Corps Network:  
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