

DCNR Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Projects

The Pennsylvania Recreational Trails funding is appropriated by the U.S. Congress through the federal "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU). At the federal level, the Recreational Trails Program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has been designated as the state agency responsible for this federal program.

The Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB) provides guidance to the Department regarding the policies, implementation and administration of the Recreational Trails funding.

The ten member Board, created in 1992, consists of nine members representing trail user organizations and one member representing physically challenged individuals. Each member serves a three-year term. Trail users represented on the board include hiking, cross-country skiing, off-highway motorcycling, snowmobiling, horseback riding, all terrain vehicle riding, bicycling, four-wheel driving, water trail users and the physically challenged.

APPLICATION AND FUNDING CONDITIONS:

1. All facilities and/or trails renovated or developed, must serve a public purpose and help advance the DCNR goals and priorities.
 2. All facilities and/or trails must be open for use by the general public.
- **Eligible Applicants** – Federal and state agencies, local governments, appropriate/authorized organizations and for-profit enterprises are eligible to apply for funding. For the purposes of this program, appropriate/authorized organizations and for-profit enterprises must be established under Pennsylvania law or must be authorized to do business in Pennsylvania under applicable Pennsylvania law.
 - **Funding Distribution** – 30% of the money received annually shall be for uses related to motorized recreation and 30% shall be for uses related to non-motorized recreation. 40% shall be to facilitate diverse recreational trail use within a recreational trail corridor.
 - **Match** – Funding assistance is an 80/20 matching ratio, except for acquisition projects, which will be a 50/50 matching ratio. The total project cost includes the Recreational Trails grant plus the grantee's required funding match, which can consist of cash and non-cash as approved by the Bureau.

ELIGIBLE Costs – A grant recipient may use money for:

- **Maintenance and Restoration** of existing recreational trails;
- **Development and Rehabilitation** of trail-side and trail-head facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails;
- **Purchase and Lease** of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment;
- **Construction** of new recreational trails;
- **Acquisition of Easements and Fee Simple Title to Property for Trails;**

- **Operation of Educational Programs** to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to 5% of available funds).
- **Extra Consideration** will be given to projects that:
 1. Provide for the redesign, reconstruction, non-routine maintenance or relocation of recreational trails to benefit the natural environment or to mitigate and minimize the impact to the natural environment;
 2. Provide enhanced recreational access for people with disabilities;
 3. Use qualified youth conservation or service corps for the construction and maintenance of recreational trails;
 4. Are on National Scenic Trails, Natural Historic Trails (provided the project provides a recreational purpose) and trails designated as National Recreational Trails or Millennium Trails.

INELIGIBLE Costs - A grant recipient may not use money for:

1. Condemnation of any kind of interest in property;
 2. Construction of any recreational trail on Bureau of Land Management or National Forest System lands for motorized uses unless:
 - (a) such lands have been designated for uses other than wilderness by an approved agency resource management plan or have been released to uses other than wilderness by an Act of Congress; and
 - (b) such construction is otherwise consistent with the management direction in such approved land and resource management plan.
 3. Upgrading, expanding or otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to trails predominantly used by non-motorized trail users, and on which, as of May 1, 1991, motorized use was prohibited or had not occurred;
 4. Trail feasibility studies, or trail planning unless the plan is a relatively small portion of an overall trail project;
 5. Projects on railroad rights-of-way on which the railroad tracks are in place (projects may be located within or along railroad rights-of-way if trail users will not traverse on or between railroad tracks);
 6. Improvements to roads and/or bridges intended to be generally accessible by low clearance passenger vehicles (regular passenger cars);
 7. Paths or sidewalks along or adjacent to public roads or streets, unless this path or sidewalk is needed to complete a missing link between other recreational trails;
 8. Routine law enforcement.
- **Projects funded through the PA Recreational Trails** program must be identified in or further a specific goal of the (2009-2013) Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – “Pennsylvania Outdoors- The Keystone for Healthy Living” or identified in a trail plan included or referenced in this document.

- **Projects on Federal Land** - If applicable, a signed statement by the Federal Agency that the construction of new trails crossing Federal lands is in compliance with all applicable laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

If construction of any recreational trail on Bureau of Land Management or National Forest System lands for motorized uses is proposed, **a signed statement certifying that the lands have been allocated for uses other than wilderness** by the approved agency resources management plan or have been released to uses other than wilderness by an Act of Congress, and such construction is otherwise consistent with the management direction in such approved land and resources management plan.

- **Work on Public or Private Lands** – Grantees whose project is located on public or private lands not owned by the grantee are required to enter into a separate agreement with the land owner(s) to undertake the project before any work may begin.

Grantees whose project is located on private lands must also enter into an Easement or other legally binding agreement that ensures public access to the recreation trail before any work on the project may begin.

The Bureau will not release the fully executed Grant Agreement until the grantee provides a copy of this agreement to DCNR.

- **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Review** – Under federal and state law, all projects are subject to review by the State Historical Preservation Officer to determine whether the project affects any historical or archaeological sites in the state. Projects selected for funding will be submitted to the PHMC for review. **The historic and archaeological site investigation efforts must be approved by the PHMC prior to the grantee receiving a fully executed project agreement from the Bureau.**
- **Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program/Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Review** – In an effort to continuously move toward creating and maintaining sustainable sites and to protect our natural resources of special concern, DCNR will be requiring Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) status to be determined for each C2P2 grant application submitted to the Department, with the exception of certain Planning projects including; Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans (CRPP), County and Municipal Greenway and Open Space Network Plans, Feasibility Studies involving rehabilitation of an existing site, and Rivers Conservation Plans.

The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PHNP) gathers and provides information on the location and status of important ecological resources in the Commonwealth. PHNP helps guide conservation work and land-use planning, ensuring the maximum conservation benefit with the minimum cost. As part of DCNR's grant application process applicants are required to complete a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) review by logging onto <http://www.gis.dcnr.state.pa.us/hgis-er/Login.aspx>. **Before logging onto the PNDI site please read the [PNDI instructions page](#).** Information on how to complete a PNDI review for large projects, such as trail projects, can be found on the PNDI instructions page.

The result of your PNDI review will help determine if the activities proposed for the project site have the potential to conflict with natural resources of special concern. These resources, which include plant and animal species, exemplary natural communities and ecosystems, and outstanding geologic features, will be protected in accordance with applicable state/federal laws and regulations.

It is important that you complete the PNDI Environmental Review Tool early to avoid any complications that may cause you to miss the application submission deadline. Once you have completed the PNDI Environmental Review, **for the purposes of the grant application, please submit just the receipt.** In some cases the PNDI Receipt will indicate the need for clearance letters to be obtained if a species of concern was found on the site. Please do not proceed in obtaining letters until further notice from the Department. For assistance or further information specific to the PNDI process, please contact DCNR at (717) 214-7512 or email ndewar@state.pa.us.

- **Please note that the resolution of all PNDI concerns and clearances will need to be resolved and obtained for the site prior to receiving a fully executed project agreement from the Bureau.**

1/29/2010