

Federal Transportation Funds Benefit Recreation

**Federal Highway
Administration programs
benefit trails.**



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

Who is FHWA?

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), part of the US Department of Transportation, provides expertise, resources, and information to improve the nation's highway system and its intermodal connections.
- The **Federal-Aid Highway Program** provides financial assistance to the States to construct and improve the National Highway System, other roads, bridges, and trails.
- The **Federal Lands Highway Program** provides access to and within national forests and parks, Indian reservations, and other public lands by preparing plans, letting contracts, supervising construction, and inspecting bridges.
- FHWA conducts and manages a comprehensive research, development, and technology program.

FHWA Funds for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Projects and Trails

- Pedestrian and bicycle projects are eligible for every major Federal-aid funding category.
- The Federal Surface Transportation Program is the largest single funding source for shared use paths, trails, and related projects in the United States:
 - \$400 million/year for pedestrian and bicycle related facilities; will increase with new Safe Routes to School Program.
 - Recreational trails funding rises from \$60 million in FY 2005 to \$85 million in FY 2009.
- Pedestrian Safety is one of FHWA's "Vital Few" priority areas.

Key Programs for Trail Projects

- Federal Lands Highways Program
- Surface Transportation Program
- **Transportation Enhancement Activities**
- Safe Routes to School
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
- National Scenic Byways Program
- **Recreational Trails Program**
- **TE and RTP can support Youth Corps**

Federal Lands Highways Program

- Provides access to and within Federal lands.
- Project decisions made by the Federal land management agencies in coordination with local governments.
- Trails are eligible for funding, but Federal agencies have been placing higher priority on highway access and safety projects.
- Increasing emphasis on pedestrian safety.

Federal-Aid Highway Program Funds for Trails

- **Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**
- Broad range of eligible projects from highway construction to pedestrian and bicycle projects and transportation trails.
- SRTS projects are eligible within about 2 miles of elementary and middle schools, and may include trails.
- CMAQ projects must benefit air quality. CMAQ funds may be used as STP in States with no nonattainment areas.

Transportation Enhancements

- 10% of STP (including Equity Bonus attributed to STP): \$800 million per year (2005-2009)
- 12 eligible categories for projects that relate to surface transportation



Transportation Enhancement Activities

12 Eligible Categories

- 1) Pedestrian and bicycle facilities**
- 2) Pedestrian and bicycle safety and education**
- 3) Scenic or historic easements and sites**
- 4) Scenic or historic highway programs**
- 5) Landscaping and scenic beautification**
- 6) Historic preservation**
- 7) Historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities**
- 8) Rail-trail conversions**
- 9) Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising**
- 10) Archaeological planning and research**
- 11) Mitigate highway water pollution and wildlife mortality**
- 12) Transportation museums**

Transportation Enhancements

- Administered by State DOTs. Each State has its own project selection process.
- States requirements may be stricter than the Federal requirements.
- States are encouraged to use Youth Corps.
- Contact your State TE Manager.
- See www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te and www.enhancements.org.

How does TE project funding work?

- Project sponsors apply to their State DOT.
- Project sizes vary in each State: some have minimum and/or maximum amounts.
- Reimbursable cost share program (not up-front except for case-by-case working capital basis):
 - 23 U.S.C. 132 allows up-front transfers to Federal agencies.
 - 23 U.S.C. 133(e)(3) has an advance payment option.
- In general: 80% Federal share / sliding scale, with some flexibility (23 U.S.C. 133(e)(5)(C)).

Some TE Concerns

- **By law, TE projects must *relate to surface transportation*.**
- TE has been attacked for diverting the Highway Trust Fund for nonhighway purposes, while nonmotorized users don't pay into the fund. Therefore: **Project sponsors must make sure their projects relate to surface transportation.**
- Nothing in Federal law or regulation requires trails to be paved, although TE-funded trail projects must have a firm and stable surface to meet accessibility requirements.
- Project sponsors **must** include various interest groups in the project development process, such as equestrians and other trail users, historic preservation advocates, etc.
- Only a few States are using Youth Corps on TE projects.

National Scenic Byways Program

- Designates All American Roads and National Scenic Byways: *America's Byways*TM
- Discretionary program rises from \$26.5 m in FY 2005 to \$43.5 m in FY 2009.
- Funds for designated byways.
- Program info, see www.bywaysonline.org
- Traveler info, see www.byways.org



Eligible Scenic Byways Projects

- Plan, design, develop State byway program.
- Corridor management plans.
- Safety improvements to byways.
- Enhance recreation access.
- Protect scenic, historic, recreation, cultural, natural, archaeological resources adjacent to a scenic byway.
- Develop and provide tourist information.
- Develop and implement a marketing program.

Recreational Trails Program

- Funds to develop and maintain recreational trails for **all** trail uses.
 - Only FHWA program to support routine maintenance
- Rises from \$60 m in FY 2005 to \$85 m in FY 2009.
- Funds distributed by formula to States: see www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/recfunds.htm.
- Represents a portion of the Federal motor fuel excise tax paid by OHV users.
- States solicit and select projects for funding.
- States are encouraged to use Youth Corps.
- See www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails.

RTP Eligible Projects

- Maintain and restore existing trails (and bridges)
- Develop and rehabilitate trailside and trailhead facilities
- Purchase and lease trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construct new trails (limits on Federal lands)
- Acquire easements or property for trails (willing seller only: **Condemnation is prohibited**)
- Trail assessments for accessibility and maintenance
- Trail safety and environmental protection education
- State administrative costs

RTP Partnerships

- Each State has a State Trail Committee to assist with the program.
- Committees represent both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail users.
- The committees help trail groups cooperate and communicate with each other.
- Partnerships lead to better projects, and better maintained trails.

RTP Partnerships



Through the RTP, FHWA has worked with:

- Federal Interagency Council on Trails.
- National Trails Training Partnership to develop trail training: www.NTTP.net.
- Federal Interagency trail training course (thru BLM).
- National Trails Day – first Saturday of June: see www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd/index.html.
- National Scenic and Historic Trails.
- US Forest Service Technology and Development Centers to provide trail publications to the public: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs/index.htm.

RTP Partnerships



- National conferences for trail organizations.
- US Access Board, US Forest Service, and other agencies and organizations to develop accessibility guidelines for trails: see www.access-board.gov/outdoor/outdoor-rec-rpt.htm and www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/.
- OHV, Mountain Bike, and Equestrian groups to develop trail design and management manuals.
- Snowmobile and OHV safety information.
- Coalition for Recreational Trails for the RTP Database: www.funoutdoors.info/rtp/home.html.

Who can sponsor an RTP project?

- Federal agencies (restrictions in a few States)
- Tribal government agencies
- State agencies
- Local agencies: county, city, town, township, borough, school, water/sewer district, etc.
- Nonprofit organizations (many States)
- For profit organizations (a few States)
- Project sponsors are encouraged to use qualified youth conservation or service corps.

How does RTP project funding work?

- Project sponsors apply to their State.
- Project sizes vary in each State: some have minimum and/or maximum amounts.
- Reimbursable cost share program (not up-front except for case-by-case working capital basis). **23 U.S.C. 132** allows up-front transfers to Federal agencies.
- In general: 80% Federal share / sliding scale.
 - Flexibilities for Federal agency project sponsors
 - RTP may match / be matched by other Federal funds.

How do I get funds for my project?

- Contact your State RTP or TE Administrator: see www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm or www.enhancements.org.
- Develop a workable, realistic project.
- Get public support.
- Develop funding sources and donations.
- Consider youth corps involvement.
- Youth Corps: seek out project sponsors.
- Develop a good design: consider the trail setting, community benefits, user needs, accessibility.

How do I get funds for my project?

- **Consider potential problems:**
 - Environmental impacts: wetlands, endangered species, archaeological impacts, etc.
 - Permits
 - Public opposition: liability, property rights, safety, environmental impact.
- Complete the project application **completely**.
- If approved, **get to work!**
- Submit an invoice if you want to get paid!

Federal Highway Program Update

The Federal Surface Transportation Program was reauthorized through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), August 10, 2005.

- TE: Minor clarifications, stable funding.
- Byways: Funding rises from \$26.5 to \$43.5 million; minor changes to allow direct Tribal eligibility.
- RTP: Funding rises from \$60 to \$85 million; clarify eligibility; simplify Federal share; allow preapproval planning and environmental costs.

For more information:

- State RTP Administrator contacts:
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm.
- State TE Manager contacts: www.enhancements.org.
- National RTP and TE oversight:
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