

# Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Center for  
Recreation and Conservation



## Strategic Plan

### Vision

A network of parks, rivers, trails, greenways and open spaces that promotes quality of life and links people to their natural and cultural heritage.

### Mission

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the country and the world.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

### Core Values

- We empower people to conserve natural resources and create outdoor recreation opportunities
- We champion close to home conservation and recreation for multiple benefits including the health and well-being of all Americans
- We embrace a spirit of entrepreneurship and strategic thinking
- We work where we are invited
- We share our partners' commitment to resource stewardship
- We support community-led projects through planning, partnerships and capacity building
- We provide technical skills rather than funding to produce tangible conservation results
- We provide high quality service to communities throughout the nation with the highest standards of professional integrity

### Five-Year Goals

*1. RTCA will help create local, regional and state networks of parks, rivers, trails, greenways and open spaces by collaborating with community partners and National Park areas in every state.*

RTCA will shift the emphasis of its work toward projects that foster physical networks of natural and outdoor recreation resources. We intend to provide RTCA services in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, although we may not be able to place staff in every state. To accomplish this goal, we will inventory and analyze the impact of current work to determine the networks already forming as a result of our work with local, State, Federal and NPS partners. We will revise our criteria for project selection. A majority of our work will become network projects,

and a preference will be given to networks that include National Park Service areas. We will consult with NPS Superintendents and potential partners in communities and states around NPS areas to identify and conduct projects. We will continue to respond to outstanding strategic opportunities beyond networks. A small part of our work will continue to be delegated statutory assignments, such as Wild and Scenic Rivers and Hydropower (re)licensing.

*2. RTCA will hold itself and project partners accountable through measures that demonstrate success and maximize the impact of program financial and human resources.*

RTCA success must be measurable in order for our strategic goals to be met. We will create new measurements for the program nationally that will track our progress towards our goals and provide for accountable program, staff and partnership performance. Interim measurement tools will be in place for Fiscal Year 2005 projects, and we will further refine the system for full application in Fiscal Year 2006. We will measure prior projects to test the new accountability system. Allocation of RTCA funding will be based on performance and achievement of our strategic goals. Keeping our staff in the forefront of their professions is basic to the value of the RTCA program. We will develop a training program for our staff and provide for sharing project innovations and successes among our staff.

*3. RTCA will be recognized and sought out as the community assistance arm of the National Park Service for conservation and outdoor recreation.*

In order to continue to provide the highly valued services, promote the network vision, and implement the NPS mission in communities across the nation, RTCA will market its program and its availability. We will develop a communications plan to guide this activity, and we will train staff for plan implementation. We will share the successes of our partners to provide models for similar efforts in other parts of the country. We will explore new trends in resource conservation and outdoor recreation, in order to develop new tools for conservation, maintain our professional competency and better serve our partners.