

Recreational Trails Program: Preliminary Report on State Trail Projects



**COALITION
FOR
RECREATIONAL
TRAILS**

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For the Federal Highway Administration by the
Coalition for Recreational Trails

Recreational Trails Program
Preliminary Report on State Trail Projects

June 1, 2010

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(Cooperative Agreement No. DTFH61-06-H-00050)**

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RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM DATABASE PROJECT

Executive Summary

In 1999, the Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), working in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), developed a database of State trail projects that had received funding from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) since the program's inception. The RTP was part of, first, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), then the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998 and, most recently, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005. In July 2000, again in cooperation with the FHWA, CRT initiated an update of the database. In October 2001, FHWA and CRT entered into a three-year agreement, with the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) acting as CRT's agent, to continue the database project on a more systematic basis. As part of this effort, reports were prepared for the FHWA in March and October 2002, May 2004 and April 2005. In September 2006, ARC – again on behalf of the CRT – signed a five-year cooperative agreement with the FHWA to update the database, expand the type of information it included, and enhance its utility as an online resource. In August 2007, the first phase of a two-part data collection effort was initiated, requesting data for the years 2004-2006. The second phase, which involved asking individual states to use a Web-based application to provide additional project information, was initiated some months later. Twenty-eight States responded to one or both data-collection phases with updated information. In February 2010, a major effort to update the database was undertaken, again as part of a two-phase effort. As of May 31, 2010, 48 states and the District of Columbia had submitted information on their RTP projects and funding through 2009. The State of Texas also submitted data, but too late to be included in this preliminary report. The total RTP funding now reported has reached \$545,730,498 and has been matched by \$436,647,396 in other funding. The information contained in this latest report is accessible on the Internet at www.funoutdoors.info/rtp/home.html.

Although phase two of the latest data-collection process, which allows projects to be classified by project type and trail use and previously reported data to be revised, has not yet been initiated, some trends are evident. The leading use of RTP funds – 44% – is trail construction or development, which continues the trend observed in earlier reports. The gap between RTP spending on trail construction or development and spending on trail maintenance has narrowed markedly, as 43% more in RTP funds – a difference of \$83.6 million – has been directed toward those types of projects, down from the 74% gap reported in 2005. The per-project cost for both construction and maintenance projects has risen significantly from \$81,192 to \$98,362 for construction projects and from \$56,446 to \$70,301 for maintenance projects.

Each State is allowed to use up to 5% of its RTP funds for educational programs that promote trail-related safety and environmental protection. After remaining at around 3% of projects reported through 2003, and close to 3% of the RTP funding, educational projects do show an increase in the recent data with 4% (545) of the projects, and 4% of the RTP funding, reported as educational.

Background

A Federal assistance program for recreational trail construction, renovation and maintenance was created under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Under the program, known initially as the National Recreational Trails Funding Program, funds were allocated to all States and the District of Columbia during only three of the legislation's initial six years (a total of \$37.5 million) as well as during the transitional period of October 1997 to June 1998.

In 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) amended the program – now known as the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – most notably by significantly increasing funds apportioned to the States (reaching \$50 million annually for the last four of the legislation's six years) and providing contract authority for the program. Seven years later, program funding received another substantial boost from the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), increasing from \$60 million in Fiscal Year 2005 to \$85 million in Fiscal Year 2009, a funding level that has been extended through Fiscal Year 2010.

The legislation establishes requirements for project eligibility but provides substantial flexibility to the States on project selection. Presently, there is no unified reporting process from the States to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which administers the program, on use of the funds. It should be noted, however, that most States have substantial, though not uniform, information available to the public on use of RTP funds.

The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), representing all major national trail interests, has taken an active role in the RTP since its inception and shares FHWA's interest in ensuring that the program is efficient, operates in full compliance with the law, and is understood by all interests. CRT regards it as essential that RTP projects can be identified and evaluated by the Administration, the Congress, and program advocates. The increase in funding for RTP approved as part of TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU demonstrated Congressional support for trails programs, but this support will be sustained only if sufficient accomplishments can be demonstrated. Moreover, FHWA has a need to monitor projects for compliance with statutory direction.

For these reasons, in 1999, CRT worked cooperatively with FHWA and the States to collect initial information on projects funded under RTP since the program's beginning. The data requested included project date, location and description, contact name, amount of RTP funding and other funding, types of trail uses, the Congressional district involved, and project highlights. All the States and the District of Columbia reported information, in varying levels of detail. CRT compiled this information into a database, which it made available to FHWA, trail administrators, and major national trail organizations. A report highlighting key information from the database was prepared and submitted to FHWA. As part of that report, CRT recommended that the data-collection effort be continued.

In July 2000, again in cooperation with FHWA, CRT contacted the States to obtain information on RTP trail projects undertaken since the initial request for data in 1999. By December, 47 States had responded with data on new 1999 and 2000 projects and 16 States provided updated information regarding earlier projects. Arizona, Florida, Ohio and the District of Columbia did not submit information because they had not allocated funding in those years. In October 2001, a new three-year effort to update the database was

initiated by CRT under a contract between the FHWA and the American Recreation Coalition. Reports published in March 2002, October 2002, May 2004 and April 2005 included 4,780, 5,572, 6,650 and 7,665 projects, respectively. As part of the contract, beginning with the October 2002 report, data have also been compiled into a searchable database that is accessible on the Internet at www.funoutdoors.info/rtphome.html. In addition to reviewing the basic findings summarized in the following tables, those accessing the database on the Internet can search for projects by specific criteria, including State, type of project, type of trail activity and level of project funding.

In the Spring of 2003, in addition to contacting the States to obtain information on RTP projects undertaken in 2002, CRT requested that the States submit corrections for past projects that had been altered (*e.g.*, funding amounts changed, project cancelled) since the project information was originally submitted to CRT. In November 2003, CRT made available a Web-based system allowing States to view and edit their projects' records in the database. Beginning in late 2003 and throughout much of 2004, the database was updated again to include projects for 2003. Forty-eight States and the District of Columbia submitted and updated their RTP project records. Because of these updated records, numbers of projects and RTP funding amounts for previous years (1993-2003) do not always reflect numbers presented in previous versions of this report.

In September 2006, a five-year cooperative agreement was signed with the FHWA to update the database, expand the type of information it included, and enhance its utility as an online resource. In August 2007, the first phase of a two-part data collection effort was initiated, requesting data for the years 2004-2006. The second phase, which involved asking individual states to use a Web-based application to provide additional project information, was initiated some months later. Twenty-eight States responded to one or both data-collection phases with updated information, including 2007 data. In February 2010, a major effort to update the database was undertaken, again as part of a two-phase effort. As of May 31, 2010, 48 states and the District of Columbia had submitted information on their RTP projects and funding through 2009 as part of the first phase. The State of Texas also submitted data, but too late to be included in this preliminary report. The second phase, which will allow the states to classify their projects by project type and trail use and revise previously submitted data, will be undertaken during the summer of 2010. The total RTP funding now reported has reached \$545,730,498 and has been matched by \$436,647,396 in other funding. The information contained in this latest preliminary report is accessible on the Internet at www.funoutdoors.info/rtphome.html.

Database Findings

Forty-eight States and the District of Columbia have submitted data regarding their use of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds through 2009. Total trail project funding reported now includes those projects and totals \$545,730,498, an increase of \$299,978,273 over the total reported in 2005 for the first 11 years of the program (1993-2003). The number of projects reported increased from 7,665 to 13,332. In addition, the States reported that an amount equivalent to 80% of the RTP funding level – \$436,647,396 – had been provided by other sources, including Federal agencies (*e.g.*, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management), States, towns, counties, and trail clubs (*e.g.*, mountain biking groups, equestrian councils, and snowmobiler associations).

RTP Database Projects and Funding 1993 – 2009

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
AK	110	271	\$7,124,052.00	\$3,393,126.00
AL	92	234	14,091,334.00	3,990,865.00
AR	69	236	8,903,736.00	3,429,572.00
AZ	80	116	8,024,338.00	6,167,110.00
CA	73	235	28,777,426.00	11,862,897.00
CO	206	348	9,556,288.00	19,992,409.00
CT	58	222	4,497,878.00	1,624,456.00
DC	10	22	5,098,212.00	1,482,467.00
DE	57	90	2,786,123.00	2,477,865.00
FL	60	145	16,356,265.00	11,304,925.00
GA	79	164	14,189,089.00	16,017,452.00
HI	94	574	4,196,717.00	1,165,438.00
IA	34	76	10,322,049.00	3,231,620.00
ID	105	352	8,296,709.00	13,803,952.00
IL	53	162	11,079,669.00	4,944,158.00
IN	47	85	11,453,423.00	3,897,981.00
KS	119	269	11,059,806.00	5,939,856.00
KY	149	318	9,526,742.00	6,256,029.00
LA	122	244	11,578,346.00	10,331,643.00
MA	124	241	5,064,010.00	5,337,388.00
MD	289	525	11,458,593.00	5,955,675.00
ME	209	394	8,362,521.00	2,267,518.00
MI	86	189	19,127,301.00	10,169,466.00
MN	104	246	10,475,270.00	26,743,647.00
MO	109	221	12,792,537.00	17,534,532.00
MS	74	153	10,332,620.00	2,247,666.00
MT	270	556	10,042,717.00	3,511,815.00
NC	114	344	12,991,310.00	23,855,714.00
ND	72	183	7,718,207.00	1,654,880.00
NE	47	105	9,182,670.00	5,501,160.00
NH	266	536	7,660,456.00	11,378,738.00
NJ	264	559	9,733,417.00	18,501,477.00
NM	22	90	5,152,631.00	4,086,744.00
NV	98	211	8,702,978.00	6,005,152.00
NY	96	250	15,367,839.00	7,690,068.00
OH	65	188	13,107,632.00	16,186,468.00
OK	68	189	11,140,186.00	5,765,342.00
OR	91	259	10,002,728.00	13,949,762.00
PA	118	318	18,025,084.00	11,795,588.00
RI	80	151	2,516,091.00	3,573,782.00
SC	63	172	8,212,145.00	3,656,271.00
SD	123	272	9,837,153.00	7,258,566.00
TN	81	195	12,806,328.00	4,270,393.00
TX		283	12,945,553.00	7,703,811.00
UT	135	269	13,121,377.00	8,976,012.00

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
VA	95	256	13,214,126.00	6,290,588.00
VT	285	565	6,897,933.00	21,912,930.00
WA	181	389	23,004,527.00	19,573,587.00
WI	95	331	9,780,274.00	9,996,409.00
WV	125	223	9,922,934.00	2,852,043.00
WY	148	306	10,113,148.00	9,130,383.00
TOTAL	5614	13332	\$545,730,498.00	\$436,647,396.00

*Connecticut data include 2004-2006, not 2004-2009

The trail projects reported were varied and included: building new trails and adding trail connections; building bridges, trailheads and restrooms; providing water fountains; developing and implementing educational programs; maintaining trails; resurfacing trails tread; lighting trails; providing accessibility for mobility-impaired persons; purchasing trail construction and maintenance equipment; installing interpretive signs, purchasing land for trails, and much more. The following table represents a categorization of the different projects reported. The percentages shown reflect the percentage of all projects that reported trail project descriptions, with some projects fitting into more than one category. The leading use of funds, by a substantial margin, in both the current and previous reports was trail construction or development. The percentages reported for each category did not change markedly, with a few exceptions, including increases in: sign purchase and installation (from 13% to 16%); the purchase of trail equipment (from 10% to 13%); trail grooming (from 4% to 8%); and trail maintenance (from 15% to 19%).

RTP Database Trail Project Work by Project Category 1993 - 2009

For 10,065 Projects that Reported Project Descriptions

Description of Work Done	1993-2009 Cumulative	
Acquire Land	107	1%
Administrative	63	1%
Bridge Construction or Renovation	1115	11%
Brochures	153	2%
Educational	545	5%
Maps	161	2%
Parking Lots	577	6%
Restroom Facilities	424	4%
Sign Purchase and Installation	1573	16%
Trail Construction or Development	4421	44%
Trail Equipment Purchased	1263	13%
Trail Grooming	758	8%
Trail Improvements	1906	19%
Trail Maintenance	1919	19%
Trail Renovation and Relocation	2042	20%
Trailhead Work	761	8%
TOTAL	10065	

A broader definition of trail maintenance was used for the following table, which includes projects reported as renovations, improvements, and grooming, as well as maintenance. The 4,812 projects reported with those descriptions accounted for \$193.6 million in RTP funding and another \$144.7 million in matching funding.

RTP Database Maintenance Project Funding 1993 - 2002
Including Maintenance, Improvement, Renovation and Grooming Projects

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
AK	50	132	\$3,134,883.00	\$1,977,998.00
AL	38	70	3,694,470.00	1,027,977.00
AR	4	37	1,196,207.00	621,764.00
AZ	70	97	6,175,921.00	2,924,982.00
CA	36	97	11,931,718.00	5,297,900.00
CO	173	240	5,724,515.00	10,804,665.00
CT	18	81	1,269,000.00	285,092.00
DC	5	11	2,312,383.00	768,316.00
DE	24	42	1,299,035.00	899,515.00
FL	14	35	4,095,372.00	2,399,352.00
GA	27	51	3,648,404.00	2,755,932.00
HI	84	86	1,151,305.00	429,442.00
IA	16	32	3,027,896.00	321,542.00
ID	61	193	4,428,010.00	3,798,063.00
IL	30	90	4,916,081.00	2,487,190.00
IN	4	10	1,338,659.00	295,163.00
KS	27	57	1,797,693.00	905,907.00
KY	62	121	3,515,802.00	2,517,167.00
LA		9	325,862.00	271,408.00
MA	67	110	2,466,965.00	1,904,778.00
MD		68	1,402,656.00	1,372,656.00
ME		78	1,659,970.00	894,756.00
MI	46	106	10,723,354.00	6,218,935.00
MN	63	125	4,454,343.00	10,418,818.00
MO	56	82	4,431,913.00	3,436,020.00
MS	34	45	3,835,414.00	820,407.00
MT	99	262	3,883,965.00	1,597,336.00
NC	22	74	2,604,155.00	2,409,372.00
ND	20	50	2,317,552.00	452,025.00
NE	6	17	889,083.00	356,254.00
NH	195	314	4,573,171.00	6,379,305.00
NJ	118	242	3,631,597.00	5,716,006.00
NM	9	21	792,252.00	1,092,475.00
NV		31	918,277.00	665,101.00
NY	62	75	6,228,121.00	1,264,583.00
OH	28	71	3,864,860.00	3,920,848.00
OK	31	64	4,258,503.00	1,897,273.00
OR	38	99	3,769,351.00	5,733,933.00

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
PA	102	211	12,498,637.00	8,500,412.00
RI	26	50	591,435.00	484,953.00
SC	21	43	2,578,766.00	817,869.00
SD		47	1,211,898.00	502,115.00
TN	27	57	4,547,133.00	1,283,256.00
TX		102	3,768,369.00	2,219,370.00
UT	28	60	2,477,247.00	1,014,440.00
VA	29	88	3,731,332.00	1,261,907.00
VT		154	1,744,151.00	7,404,636.00
WA	139	255	18,348,888.00	15,595,457.00
WI		132	2,621,257.00	2,684,728.00
WV	29	55	3,057,048.00	876,845.00
WY	44	133	4,691,795.00	4,745,615.00
TOTAL	2082	4812	\$193,556,674.00	\$144,731,859.00

While the quantity of projects incorporating trail construction versus trail maintenance is 6% higher (5,099 vs. 4,812), the amount of RTP funding used for trail construction is 43% higher than the amount used for trail maintenance. While still notable, this difference reflects a substantial decrease from the 74% difference reported previously. Total funding used for construction projects is 48% higher than total maintenance funding, down from the 70% difference reported through 2003. As would be expected, the average per-project cost for construction projects is markedly higher than for maintenance projects: \$98,362 vs. \$70,301. Since 2003, the per-project average costs for both construction and maintenance projects have increased significantly, from \$81,192 and \$56,446, respectively.

RTP Database Construction Project Funding 1993 – 2009 *Including Trail Construction and Bridge Construction & Renovation*

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
AK	43	93	\$2,825,106.00	\$1,069,990.00
AL	64	172	10,355,566.00	2,977,339.00
AR		108	3,994,265.00	1,822,531.00
AZ	8	13	2,238,244.00	1,762,683.00
CA	69	140	21,282,579.00	9,348,662.00
CO	68	134	6,286,099.00	17,187,589.00
CT	12	82	1,918,709.00	1,196,487.00
DC	7	12	2,829,017.00	953,662.00
DE	34	50	1,614,838.00	877,350.00
FL	26	84	10,123,540.00	6,670,588.00
GA	67	120	11,398,432.00	14,274,246.00
HI	20	22	886,533.00	429,442.00
IA	12	29	4,332,315.00	2,894,886.00
ID	49	108	3,291,133.00	4,050,273.00
IL	27	70	6,346,526.00	3,440,889.00
IN	39	70	9,675,825.00	3,093,537.00
KS	28	107	4,936,812.00	3,345,694.00

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
KY	111	238	7,450,567.00	4,857,037.00
LA		73	2,962,622.00	1,561,494.00
MA	45	91	2,314,212.00	1,825,599.00
MD		87	2,367,622.00	2,452,622.00
ME		70	1,490,111.00	1,025,989.00
MI	52	95	12,539,561.00	3,901,650.00
MN	37	93	4,693,524.00	15,413,053.00
MO	75	142	9,241,995.00	14,620,435.00
MS	38	83	5,941,178.00	1,283,491.00
MT	36	114	2,133,333.00	915,753.00
NC	92	234	9,323,711.00	16,513,947.00
ND	27	81	3,026,876.00	655,381.00
NE	4	40	3,441,110.00	3,335,170.00
NH	125	240	3,316,362.00	4,781,352.00
NJ	86	173	3,839,151.00	4,729,972.00
NM	12	49	3,442,680.00	2,363,713.00
NV		54	1,776,985.00	1,182,198.00
NY	36	43	3,851,177.00	1,311,594.00
OH	37	113	9,203,202.00	13,449,920.00
OK	36	113	7,002,635.00	3,856,683.00
OR	67	129	6,450,197.00	8,304,683.00
PA	74	157	11,725,319.00	8,584,720.00
RI	4	37	1,182,840.00	2,652,462.00
SC	50	123	6,613,824.00	3,104,156.00
SD		32	823,771.00	925,925.00
TN	46	128	8,077,982.00	2,776,216.00
TX		168	8,492,285.00	5,392,966.00
UT	37	75	4,152,104.00	1,969,842.00
VA	52	150	8,646,244.00	3,904,784.00
VT		74	761,580.00	847,274.00
WA	21	85	4,269,708.00	3,472,924.00
WI		109	3,637,874.00	3,975,275.00
WV	83	153	7,598,468.00	2,190,284.00
WY	10	39	1,071,034.00	814,989.00
TOTAL	1866	5099	\$277,197,383.00	\$224,349,401.00

A State is allowed to use up to 5% of its RTP funds for educational programs that promote trail-related safety and environmental protection. Only 545 such programs have been reported by 47 States and the District of Columbia. Those programs used \$21,294,849 in RTP funds – 4% of the RTP funding reported overall -- and an additional \$20,981,697 in other funding, bringing the per-project average cost to \$77,572, representing almost no change from the \$77,224 average cost reported through 2003.

RTP Database Education Project Funding 1993 – 2009

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
AK	8	22	\$433,520.00	\$310,198.00
AL	3	5	383,894.00	95,973.00
AZ	12	14	2,464,905.00	2,152,665.00
CA	6	17	2,866,168.00	1,512,317.00
CO	26	28	1,176,279.00	3,200,518.00
CT	6	15	143,541.00	72,069.00
DC	1	1	8,315.00	1,685.00
DE	2	2	15,000.00	-
FL		1	250,000.00	62,500.00
GA	7	7	559,725.00	687,859.00
HI		1	449,770.00	112,442.00
IA	6	7	261,648.00	8,300.00
ID	9	18	462,513.00	491,507.00
IL	2	6	147,495.00	89,617.00
IN	3	5	267,530.00	35,320.00
KS	4	10	183,152.00	383,369.00
KY	6	8	266,987.00	67,633.00
MA	20	24	266,796.00	640,059.00
MD		14	160,841.00	160,841.00
MI	8	8	736,500.00	-
MN	1	1	10,000.00	10,000.00
MO	9	11	294,441.00	271,011.00
MS	7	7	414,113.00	102,028.00
MT	9	33	575,093.00	258,329.00
NC	2	10	270,612.00	154,150.00
ND	5	7	196,660.00	70,535.00
NE	2	2	70,822.00	27,238.00
NH	4	10	104,592.00	106,200.00
NJ	23	29	418,624.00	255,994.00
NM	5	5	125,773.00	132,426.00
NV		8	159,937.00	369,716.00
NY	3	4	220,210.00	5,800.00
OH	6	11	331,847.00	1,130,315.00
OK	3	3	241,043.00	127,510.00
OR	6	11	509,846.00	353,218.00
PA	10	18	1,177,180.00	777,370.00
RI	1	1	1,702.00	-
SC	2	4	148,500.00	170,375.00
SD		3	19,460.00	6,985.00
TN	6	9	423,332.00	123,089.00
TX		9	246,540.00	100,025.00
UT	12	27	613,306.00	296,741.00
VA	16	24	1,380,659.00	522,860.00
VT		11	549,793.00	4,536,391.00
WA	24	52	878,957.00	794,294.00
WI		2	21,833.00	26,049.00
WV	2	3	62,400.00	21,200.00

State	2004-2009 Projects	Total Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
WY	11	17	322,995.00	146,976.00
TOTAL	298	545	\$21,294,849.00	\$20,981,697.00