

National Recreational Trails Federal Program

FY2002 Request: \$710,000
Reference No: 6854

AP/AL: Appropriation
Category: Transportation
Location: Statewide
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2001 - 06/30/2005

Project Type: Construction
Contact: Jim Stratton
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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

All across Alaska, Alaskans rely on trails for recreation, subsistence, and travel between communities. These trails need constant maintenance attention to ensure they are safe for passage and to ensure that they remain open and available for use. Funds will be distributed in the form of 80-20 matching grants for recreational trail and trailhead development and maintenance, and for education programs relating to trail safety and environmental protection. Grants are awarded to organizations, businesses, agencies, and governments. Grant applications are advertised statewide in the Spring and awards made to successful applicants the following February.

Funding:	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$4,260,000
Total:	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$710,000	\$4,260,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

SLA00/CH135 - \$710,000
 SLA99/CH2 - \$650,000

Project Description/Justification:

As more and more residents and visitors turn to Alaska's vast trail system for recreation, subsistence, and basic transportation between communities, the need for a more extensive and well-maintained trail system continues to grow. The growing population is also putting development pressure on the existing trail system and many trails are being lost as property is subdivided or sold to private owners. We can assist in slowing the loss of our existing trail system through this granting program and will sustain and improve that system as well.

Specific Spending Detail:

One hundred percent of the grant amount will be spent as follows: 7% for program administration; 5% for education; and of the remainder, 30% is available for non-motorized trail projects, 30% for motorized trail projects, and 40% for projects with both motorized and non-motorized trail uses.

Project Benefits:

State funds are saved by the availability of these federal grant funds for development and maintenance of Alaska's public recreational trails. Public safety is improved by having well maintained trails. Trespass is reduced by securing trail easements with grant funds. Search and rescue costs are reduced by having well marked and maintained trails that are easy to follow. Because this is a matching grant program, grantees provide cash, labor and equipment to match at least

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20 percent of grant funds, effectively stretching state funds. Public recreational trails contribute to Alaska's economy by providing construction and maintenance jobs, attracting tourists and visitors, and by stimulating the business of outfitters, guides and tour companies.

Projected Revenue to the State:

With approximately \$700,000 available to the state in federal matching grant funds, at least \$250,000 in matching funds are raised and donated by grantees toward the improvement of public trails. The Department of Natural Resources receives 7%, or approximately \$50,000 of the total federal receipts for administration of the Recreational Trails Program.

Project Support:

This program receives between 60 and 70 applications each year from communities and local trail organizations across Alaska. Approximately 25 grants are given each year. Every community and organization receiving a Recreational Trails Grant benefits and supports this program. In addition, this program is supported by the Governor's Trails and Recreational Access for Alaska (TRAAK) Program.

Project Opposition: None.

Does this project leverage other funding for the state?

Yes. Grantees are required to provide a minimum of 20% match. The actual match often reaches 50%.

Project History:

The first recreational trails grant funds, originally called Symms Grants, were available in 1993 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. Alaska received \$110,000. The program has subsequently been funded in slowly increasing amounts each year from 1996 to the present (see below). Applications for 2001 grants are currently being evaluated and grants will be made in February, 2001 to successful applicants.

Previous Funding Received:

FFY98 \$365,075
FFY99 \$486,800
FFY00 \$616,600

Alternative Approaches/Financing Considered:

The state's Snowmobile Trail grant program provides limited funding for trails, but it is specifically for snowmobile trails. Limited funds are available through the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities for trail staking in the Bush which benefits rural Alaska only. Public agencies and local governments provide some very limited funding for recreational trail development and maintenance within their jurisdictions as priorities allow, but outside their jurisdictions, limited or no funding is available for the development and maintenance of recreational trails.