

NORTH CAROLINA'S RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION:

GENERAL INFORMATION & GUIDELINES



Division of Parks and Recreation
North Carolina Trails Program

****Disclaimer:*** RTP Grant Information produced by the NC Trails Program is guidance. This document can be updated/changed at any time pending review/ comment from the Federal Highway Administration.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA'S RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

Pre-App -- APPLICATION DEADLINE: **April 8, 2020**

Final App -- APPLICATION DEADLINE: **September 11, 2020**

Source of Funds: 'Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act' (MAP-21)
'Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act' (FAST)

Acronym: RTP - Recreational Trails Program

RTP Funding Allocation for North Carolina: 2020 - 2021 – Approximately \$1.49 Million

Permissible Uses:

- New Trail/Greenway Construction
- Trail/Greenway Renovation
- Approved Trail/Greenway Facilities & Trail Head/Trail Markers
- Purchase of Tools to Construct &/or Renovate Trail/ Greenway
- Land Acquisition for Trail Purposes
- Planning, Legal, Environmental, and Permitting Costs - up to 10% of grant amount
- Combination of the Above

Grants Available to: Governmental Agencies & Non-profit Organizations

Minimum Grant Amount: \$10,000

Maximum Grant Amount: \$250,000

Match Requirement: 25% Match of RTP Funds Received

CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Your NC Trails Program staff is ready to assist you in the development and/or review of your RTP Application. Please contact our [Trails Program Staff](#) for assistance.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Division of Parks & Recreation ([DPR](#)), the [North Carolina Trails Program](#), and the North Carolina Trails Committee ([NCTC](#)) value trail projects that are legal, safe, managed, and provide connectivity, reasonable public access and parking. The North Carolina Trails Program Staff are ready, willing, and available to assist in all phases of the application process of projects that are *construction ready* for grant funding. These sustainable, "shovel-ready" projects leverage local funds to meet recreational trail and trail-needs, to provide low infrastructure economic development opportunities through natural resource tourism. The NC Trails Program Staff are also available to assist applicants with conceptual projects, in order to meet the technical requirements of an RTP Grant before applying.

Projects are evaluated for RTP funding through a two-phase application process, the Pre-Application and Final Application. Any qualifying agency may submit one application per project, prior to the application deadline. The first stage, the Pre-Application, is made available to applicants for submission and review by the NC Trails Program Staff and the NCTC before the second stage – the Final Application, is made available. The Pre-Application requests general information and scope of the project. The Final Application is later made available by invitation to selected applicants for submission and review by the NC Trails Program Staff and the NCTC, in conjunction with the Pre-Application. The Final Application requires more technical and in-depth verification of the project's status. Before a project is considered for an RTP Grant, both applications must be submitted for review. This document is designed to assist applicants through the Federal and State RTP Grant requirements.

It is strongly recommended that applicants carefully review the information provided in this Guide Booklet before and during completion of the application form and gathering of supplemental materials. If a project is awarded funding, the specific information provided on the application will be used to generate a formal contract with the State of North Carolina – to which the applicant is contractually bound. If there are specific questions regarding RTP legislation that are not answered in this packet; please reference [Federal Highway Administration – Recreational Trails Program](#).

Completed Applications are due no later than **11:59 pm on the Application Deadline date as stated on page 2**. Applications received after the due date will not be considered for funding. Applications missing **ANY** required documents, documents in a non-working state, or incomplete documents will not be considered during NCTC review.

We look forward to working with you on your project! - [North Carolina Trails Program Staff](#)

FEDERAL ENABLING LEGISLATION - RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The RTP is a federal grant program authorized by Congress in 2010 as the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST). This authorization provided funding for the RTP through the 2020 fiscal year.

The intent of the RTP is to help fund trails and trail-related recreational needs at the State level. Funding for the RTP comes from federal gas taxes paid on non-highway fuel used in off-highway vehicles. The program is administered at the Federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). At the State level, the Secretary of Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (DNCR) has assigned that responsibility to the NC Trails Program within the Division of Parks & Recreation (DPR). Funding recommendations are made by the NC Trails Committee (NCTC), a seven-member advisory group who reviews all applications and makes recommendations for funding to the Secretary of DNCR. The Secretary of DNCR has the final grant approval authority for North Carolina.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION/RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM WEBSITE AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

For more information about RTP, please visit [FHWA](#). This site includes information about enabling legislation, program guidelines, and funding authorization.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF A TRAIL

Section 206 of the RTP Legislation provides the following definitions for Motorized Recreation and Recreational Trail:

MOTORIZED RECREATION -- The term "motorized recreation" means off-road recreation using any motor-powered vehicle, except for a motorized wheelchair.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL -- The term "recreational trail" means a thoroughfare or track across land, water, or snow, used for recreational purposes such as:

- Pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use
- Skating or skateboarding
- Equestrian activities, including carriage driving
- Non-motorized snow trail activities, including skiing
- Bicycling or use of other human powered vehicles
- Aquatic or water activities
- Motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles

FUNDING & BUDGETING GUIDELINES

The RTP Grant Program is a reimbursement and matching grant program. A grantee must first pay for approved project deliverables and then will be reimbursed by the State for approved costs. The RTP's matching requirement is a 25% minimum for every RTP dollar received by a grantee. The match may be made in cash, by in-kind contributions, or force labor, as explained further in this Guideline Booklet. All listed matches in the application will be noted in the State Grant Contract and a grantee will be expected to account for all listed matches in the application. All match funding must be expended during the contract period of an awarded RTP grant. **Grant recipients must be able to initially finance the project while periodically requesting reimbursements.**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION REQUIREMENTS

The project description section requires a project narrative that will determine the overall sustainability of the trail project as compared to peer applications. The NC Trails Program, DPR, & the NCTC feel that the definitions listed below best define each level of sustainability required for a quality trail project.

Sustainability is defined as a project that is economically feasible, environmentally appropriate, structurally sound, with demonstrated, quantifiable social and fiscal support from the sponsoring community, which ultimately provides the greatest return on the investment of public funds.

It is highly recommended that you read the following definitions carefully to ensure you are covering each level in your project description.

Note: Include applicable documents with application submission.

Definitions for Components of Sustainability:

- Physically Possible: Any potential use must be physically possible given the size, shape, **topography**, and other characteristics of the site.
 - Is the project just in a concept phase? Are the plans developed and approved?
 - Is the project ready to build? If the project is funded; how soon will the project be completed or can construction start? (*Note: Projects must be completed within 3 years of receiving a contract.*)
 - Are all the necessary permits obtained?
- Legally Permissible: Only those uses that are or may be legally allowed and fall within environmental regulation will be considered for trail projects.
 - What is the public usage and rights of the land status?
 - Is the project ADA compliant, where required?

- *Economically Feasible:* The trail project must have adequate funding sources to justify the costs of construction and long-term maintenance.
 - What kinds of commitment: financial, letters of support, or other types?
 - What sources of additional funding, other than the Grant and Match?
 - Can the initial costs of construction be funded in order to be reimbursed?
- *Maximally Productive:* The trail project must indicate all potential opportunities have been leveraged, not a duplicate of other efforts of the same scale and location and shows a defined public need for the use of public funds.
 - What is the public need for the project?
 - Does the project complete a critical gap in an existing trail system?
 - Does the project provide a linkage to a larger existing trail system?
 - Does the project connect neighborhoods to schools, parks, or business districts?
 - How has the public been informed about the trail project?

PERMITTED USES OF RTP GRANT FUNDS

- Construction of new trails on state, county, municipal, or conveyed easements across private lands, where a recreational need for such construction is shown and where such construction is approved by the administering agency
- Construction of new trails crossing federal lands, where such construction is approved by the administering agency charged with management of all impacted lands
- Development of urban trail linkages
- Maintenance of existing recreational trails
- Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails
- Development of trail-side and trail-head facilities with preference for trail-head and trail information signs and parking areas; and consideration given to restrooms, drinking fountains, and other trail side facilities
- Development of canoe/kayak access facilities and camping platforms
- Provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities
- Acquisition of easements for trails
- Acquisition of fee-simple title to property from a willing seller for trail use, when the objective of the acquisition cannot be accomplished by acquisition of an easement or by other means

Note: *RTP guidance prohibits condemnation of any kind of interest in property and you must follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 – 49 CFR Part 24*

- Planning, design, engineering, permitting, and environmental compliance study costs of not to exceed 10% of any RTP grant award
- Acquisition of trail construction and maintenance tools and/or equipment
- Rental of trail construction and maintenance tools and equipment for a specific trail project

NON-PERMITTED USES OF RTP GRANT FUNDS

- Trail brochures and maps
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Construction of any recreational trail on National Forest System lands for motorized uses, unless such lands (other than wilderness areas) are otherwise consistent with the management direction in such approved land and resource management plan and are permitted
- 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 is either prohibited or has not occurred
- Feasibility Studies
- Law Enforcement
- Railroads
- Roads
- Sidewalks
- Wilderness areas are subject to restrictions of the Wilderness Act (16 USC 1131)

FEDERAL RTP ALLOCATION REQUIREMENTS

- 30% Reserved for Motorized Trails -
Not less than 30% of the State's allocation must be reserved for uses relating to motorized recreation. This includes motorized single use projects and motorized diverse use projects.
- 30% Reserved for Non-Motorized Trails -
Not less than 30% of the State's allocation will be reserved for uses relating to non-motorized recreation. This includes non-motorized projects for a single use and non-motorized diverse use projects.
- 40% Diverse Use Projects -
40% of the State's allocation is discretionary funding, but preference will be given to projects with the greatest number of compatible recreational purposes or that provide for innovative recreational trail corridor sharing to accommodate motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use.

FEDERAL MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The RTP grant is a reimbursement structured grant program requiring matching funds. For every RTP dollar received, the grantee must provide a required 25% match. This 25% match must come from a non-FHWA source in the form of cash, force labor services, in-kind services, donated materials, or the value of acquired or donated land for this specific trail project.

APPROVED IN-KIND ACCOUNT LABOR MATCH ALLOWANCES

RTP applicants can use *In-Kind* and *Force Account Labor* services as all or some portion of their required 25% match. The services provided must be performed to assist with or support the project that will be accomplished with approved RTP grant funds. Each listed *In-Kind* and/or *Force Labor* match must reference a specific deliverable. Proof of donation/gift must be provided with the value of the donation documented on official letterhead with the date of donation.

Allowable services are:

General Volunteer Labor:

- 17 years and up – labor valued at \$25.43 per hour as noted by the Independentsector.org in North Carolina. (as of Feb 2020)
- 16 years and under – labor valued at \$7.25 per hour, North Carolina's Minimum Wage

Skilled Volunteer Labor and/or Services:

- Valued at the fair market rate, equal to what the individual is normally paid for such service; documentation of labor and value of labor is required.

Donated Equipment and Operator:

- Equipment and labor valued at the fair market rate, equal to what the individual is normally paid for such service, documentation of gift and value required.

Donated Materials:

- Valued at the fair market value of any materials from the person or persons donating the materials, documentation of gift and value required.

Project Planning and Environmental Compliance Costs:

- The donation of professional or accredited planning and environmental compliance services will be valued at the fair market value, documentation of gift and value required. These services are limited to costs incurred less than 18 months prior to or after the RTP grant contract document is fully executed. This service must apply specifically to guidance or support of the project that will be accomplished with approved RTP funds.

Land Donated for this Trail Project:

- Land donated to a governmental agency or a non-profit organization for public trail – valued at the appraised value of the donation. The donation of land must have taken place less than 18 months prior to or after the RTP grant contract document is fully executed.

Note: *The donation of land or interest in land must be for a minimum of 10 years with no cancelation clauses.*

APPROVED FORCE ACCOUNT LABOR MATCH ALLOWANCES

Allowable services are:

Agency or Organization's Paid Labor:

- Valued at the current hourly rate of pay for employee labor per hours worked for the associated deliverable.

Agency or Organization Owned or Leased Equipment:

- Valued according to the federally approved Federal Emergency Management Agencies (FEMA) equipment rates
 - Information provided on the following [website](#).

Value of Land Acquired by an Agency or Organization:

- Valued at the price paid by the agency or organization for the land. This acquisition of land must have taken place less than 18 months prior to or after the RTP grant contract document is fully executed.

Note: *The acquisition of land or interest in land must be for a minimum of 10 years with no cancellation clauses.*

GUIDANCE FOR DELIVERABLES (Final Application Only)

Applicants will be required to detail their project budget in the Final Application. The project deliverables will define what specifically is to be accomplished. Care must be taken in defining deliverables as they will be included in the contract and serve as the basis for reimbursement.

NOTE: Deliverables should be phased or scaled so that some deliverables are completed and submitted for reimbursement **within 6 months of the contract start date. This timeline is why it is paramount that the project is planned and**

Please refer to the sample Deliverable Form (Figure 1 and Figure 2) on the following pages for examples of how to create your deliverables.

Each deliverable should list one of the following Item Types:

Item Type:

New Trail – Unpaved (boardwalk, natural surface trail, gravel, compacted screenings)

New Trail – Paved (greenway, multi-use paths)

New Trail – Paddle Trail (blueways)

Materials (ex. Lumber, decking, hardware, stone, etc.)

Equipment (ex. Chainsaw, bush hog, motorized trail equipment)

Tools (ex. Pulaski, pry bars, hand tools, hammer drill, etc.)

Design/Planning*

Engineering*

Permitting*

*Total reimbursable amounts cannot exceed 10% of requested RTP funds. Any amount over 10% can be used for match.

Trail Renovation

Existing Trail Routine Maintenance

New Trail Facility

Trail Facility Renovation

New Trail Parking Lot

Trail Parking Lot Renovation

Trail Information – Website

Trail Information – Signs/Markers (Small informational kiosks, signage, blazes)

Fees for Land Acquisition for Trail Purposes (appraisals, closing costs, etc.)

Land Acquisition for Trail Purposes (actual value of land, donated or purchased)

Description: Applicant describes details relating to the Item Type.

Accomplished by: select how the deliverable will be completed

Unit(s): select appropriate unit quantity for item type

Of Measure: select appropriate measurement for your item type

Rate: enter appropriate dollar amount per unit

Total is calculated automatically and put into the Match Column.

Applicant then selects the amount of funds they are requesting be paid with RTP Funds.

Match value will change accordingly.

Match:

- ALL Match items (*In-Kind & Force Account*) must reference a specific *Deliverable #*.
- It is recommended to only list match contributions totaling 25% of the requested grant amount in the Deliverables – Match section.
- Match in excess of the 25% required contribution can also be listed in the Match section, however, documentation of proof of all match must be provided at the time of request for reimbursement. **Excess match, if listed, will be required to fulfill the terms of the grant contract.** Contact your Regional Trails Specialist if you have questions about how to structure your deliverables & match.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A requirement of MAP-21 and FHWA is compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Historic Preservation Act (Section 106), the Endangered Species Act, and other Federal, State, and Local Environmental Laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. Projects awarded funding are required to comply with applicable Local, State, and Federal regulations. **Completion of the Environmental Review section is required for the final application. For a final application to be reviewed by the NC Trails Program Staff and the NCTC, comments must be received from all applicable agencies.** This section enables applicants to coordinate with agencies regarding the applicable permits for the project.

Any project found not in compliance with environmental regulations will be disqualified from the grant cycle.

All applicants are asked to provide documentation from the corresponding regulatory agency for the project's impact on the environment with the final application of the grant application process. All documentation must be submitted on official letterhead or email correspondence from the agency. Please follow the instructions as detailed below in submitting your correspondence.

“Yes” responses to questions on the Pre-application (Form A): Environmental Review section will require documentation from the corresponding regulatory agency with the Final Application.

“No” responses to questions in the Pre-application (Form A): Environmental Review section of the application will require documentation stating: the regulatory agency and the point of contact at the regulatory agency has determined there will be “No” environmental impact from the project, with submission of Final Application

If your agency is invited to submit a final application (Form B), do not procrastinate in submitting your project information to regulatory agencies. Some have a 4-6 week turn around and may not be able to review your project if you do not submit it in a timely manner.

Environmental Review Guide

Every applicant recommended for RTP funding must fill out an Environmental Review Checklist (ERC). The checklist is part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is required by federal law for projects utilizing federal funds. This requires the applicant to contact all the agencies listed below to obtain the necessary permits or authorizations. Applicants must have obtained any required permits, determinations, and authorizations from all the agencies identified within the ERC prior to any construction activities taking place. The checklist will also need to be completed before the North Carolina Trails Program can generate a contract for the applicants grant award.

Projects occurring on federally administered lands or with federal funds must comply with the NEPA requirements imposed by that federal agency.

What to include in your submissions to environmental regulatory agencies:
Additional or alternate information may be required by an agency depending on the impacts they are evaluating. Please consider any potential environmental impacts and contact the relevant agency prior to submission.

- **Cover letter:** includes a brief description of the project, contact information and request to provide comments.
- **A complete project description:** You can submit a printed copy of your application that should contain all the project details required. This will serve as the main source of information to the regulatory agencies in their review. Please be as detailed as possible in the description of your project including the length and width of the proposed trail footprint. This should contain purpose of the project, construction methods, all permanent and/or temporary impacts and their locations. Specifically note impacts to natural resources such as water resources or vegetation.
- **Clear and concise maps.** Please include the following from your application:
 - Overview map.** This is a general location reference map. Please include applicable cities and towns surrounding the project area, NCDOT roads, rivers and streams.
 - Project specific AND topographic map.** These are more detailed maps of your project area. Please note all project disturbances on this map.
 - Floodplain map.** If your project is located in or near a floodplain please make sure to note it using the mapping service below. You can also include floodplain layers on your project specific map. Floodplain Mapping Services are offered here: <http://www.ncfloodmaps.com/>

- **Construction Drawings:** drawings of structures pertaining to impacts to natural resources such as bridges or boardwalks.

Agency Contacts

- Due to frequent employee turnover, we ask that you contact the agency directly with the numbers/links listed below to determine the optimal person for project submission and review.

Cultural Resources:

- All projects should consider potential impacts to cultural resources including historical and archaeological. Please visit the [State Historic Preservation Office](#) webpage for a GIS mapping service that provides locations of potential impacts.
- If impacts are listed, please consider alternative or avoidance plans to comply with the listed structures or sites.
- All project must be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for review even if the GIS mapper doesn't present listed impacts.
- Applicants must allow 30 days for review once project is submitted.

Projects can be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for review here:
http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/er/er_email_submittal.html

Threatened and Endangered Species:

- Determine if projects will impact federally threatened and endangered species by contacting your regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office. There are two regional offices serving North Carolina, please visit their [website](#) to determine which office serves your county. **Please allow at least 30 days for review.**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Asheville Regional Office:

160 Zillicoa St.
 Asheville, NC 28801
 (828) 258-3939

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Raleigh Regional Office:

P.O. Box 33726
 Raleigh, NC 27636-3726
 (919) 856-4520

Wetland and Jurisdictional Waters of the United States:

- The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) determines the permitting requirements for impacts to wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the United States.
- Please contact your county USACE permitting specialist. County contacts can be found here:
<http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/RegulatoryPermitProgram/Contact/CountyLocator.aspx>
- All projects must be submitted to the appropriate USACE representative for review. USACE review times can extend upwards of 45 days.

Department of Environmental Quality Review:

- The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provides a clearinghouse review for several divisions including:
 - Division of Air Quality
 - Division of Coastal Management
 - Division of Waste Management
 - Underground Storage Tanks Section
 - Solid Waste Section
 - Superfund Section
 - Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources
 - Erosion and Sediment Control Section
 - Stormwater Section
 - Dam Safety Section
 - Division of Water Resources
 - Water Quality Permitting Section
 - Public Water Supply Section
 - Wildlife Resources Commission
 - Division of Marine Fisheries

*Please Note: There may be additional sections that will provide comments not listed above.

You do not need to contact the DEQ offices above individually for the requirements of this environmental review - one project review may be submitted to Lyn Hardison in the Washington Regional Office to be distributed to all DEQ Divisions. Please allow at least 60 days for review.

Lyn Hardison
DEQ Environmental Assistance and Customer
Service Washington Regional Office
943 Washington Square
Mall Washington, NC 27889
Lyn.Hardison@ncdenr.gov (252) 948-3842

When all necessary permits, authorizations, and/or additional environmental review documentation are obtained, please make copies and submit all documents electronically to the Grant Management System. Refer to the GMS Quick Start Guide for further guidance on proper bundling and uploading of attachments.

If your grant is awarded, you will be required to submit documentation of all environmental permits prior to construction activities. Only after verification of all required permits and surveys will you be issued a formal Notice to Proceed with construction. Please contact your regional trail specialist for details and guidance.

Environmental Review Checklist

Please attach this page to your final application along with agency comments, even if comments state that no permit is required.

Name of Project: _____

The following programs have reviewed the proposed RTP Project:

_____ North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

_____ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

_____ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

_____ North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (Clearinghouse)

GUIDANCE FOR REQUIRED DOCUMENTS & MAPS

Maps and documents are a vital part of the application process. These are used to evaluate the project and are utilized during the environmental review process. All documents & maps should be sized to an 8½" × 11" page, in .pdf format. Checked boxes indicate an understanding of what attachments are required for the application and inclusion with the application submission.

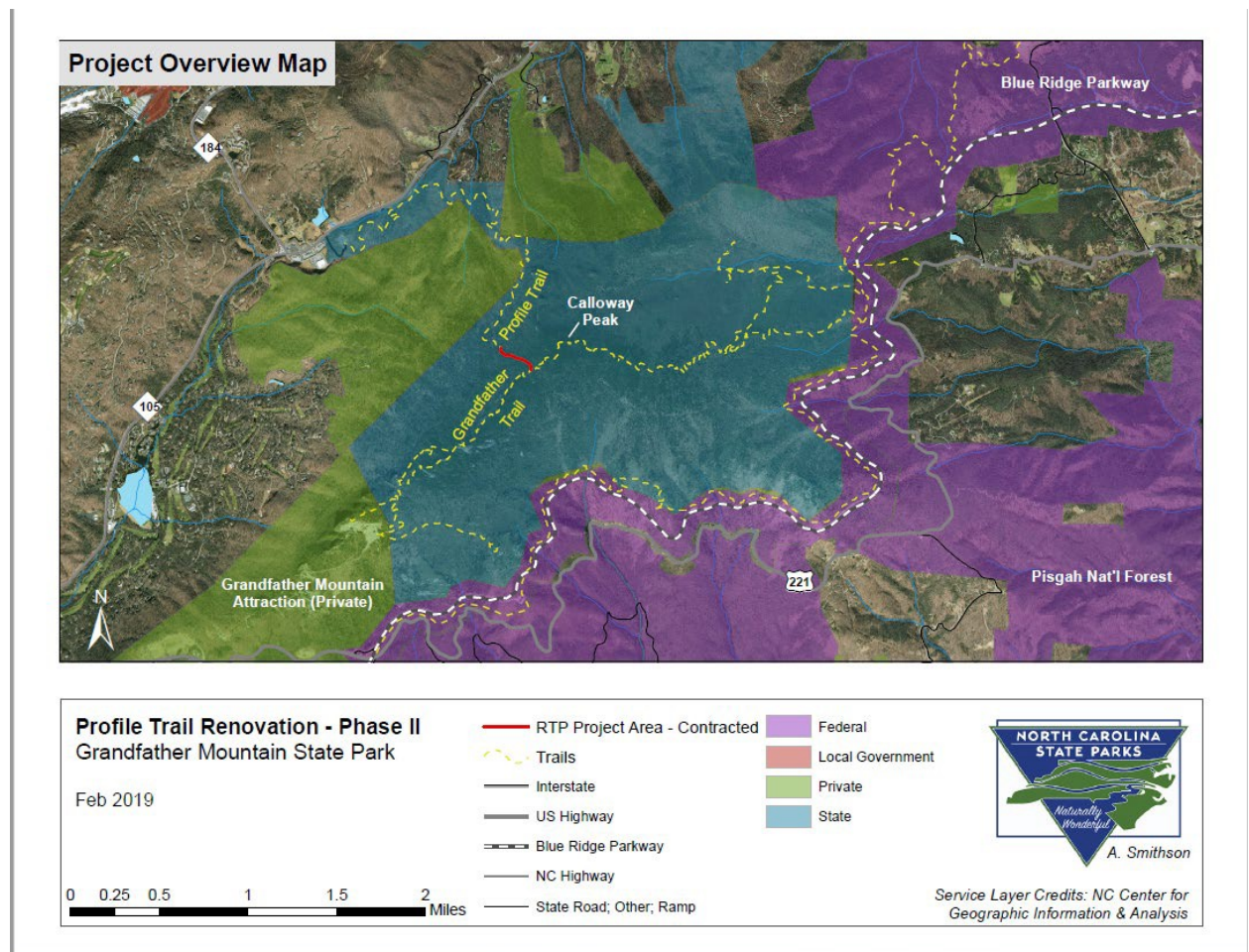
All projects are required to have corresponding maps and documents that reflect the scope of the trail project. For large plans, include counties adjacent to the project area with existing and planned segments clearly identified on the map. All documents should be on official letterhead. We want to understand how the project fits into the greater trail or greenway plan.

Maps Packet

All maps should be scanned and uploaded as one packet

Overview Maps:

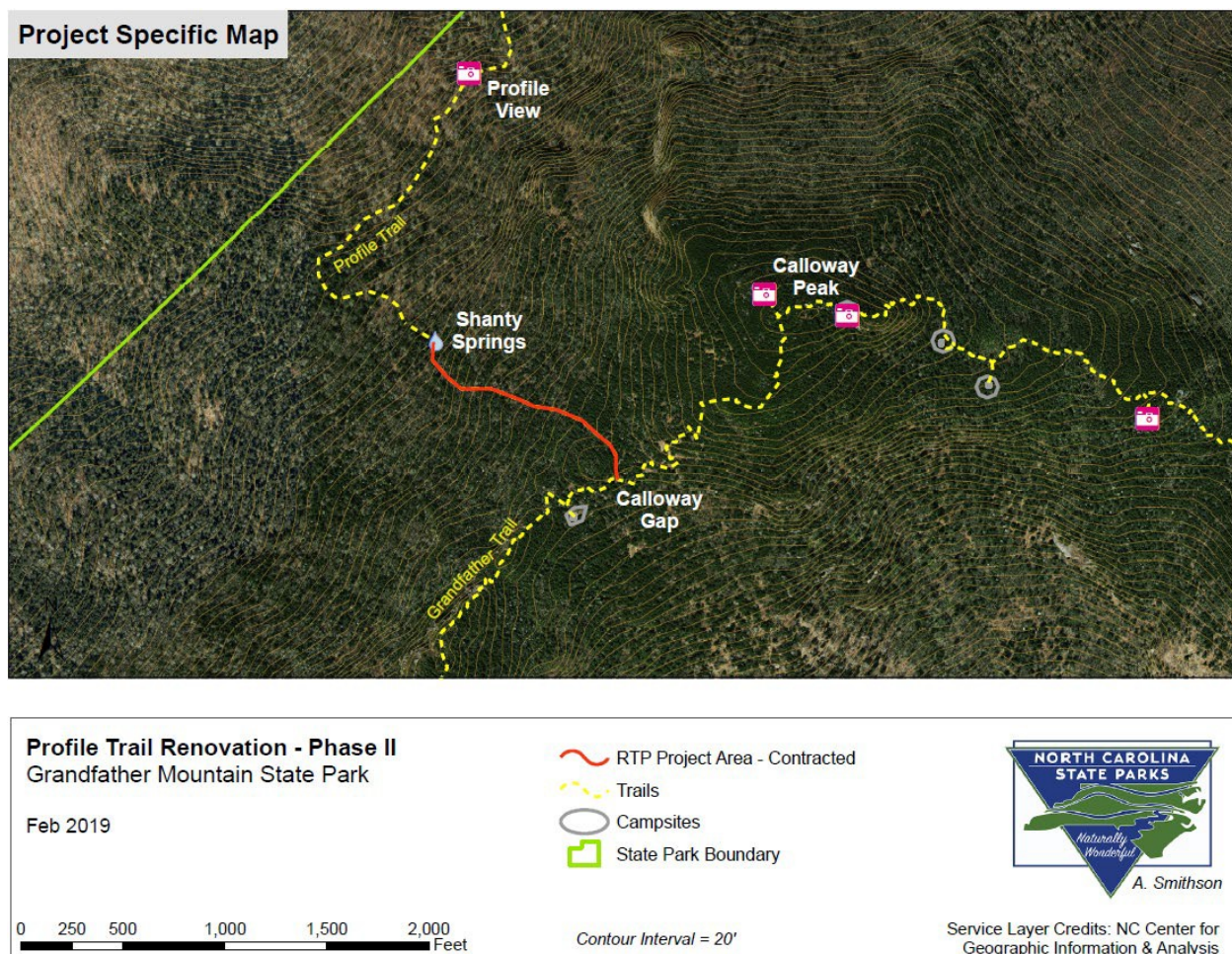
All projects must include an overview map that clearly shows how the project fits into any larger trail/greenway system of planned and/or existing trails and facilities. If the project is a segment or phase of a larger trail/greenway project or plan, include an additional map showing the entire planned trail project. A project that is submitted for consideration should be clearly delineated and defined.



Project Specific Maps:

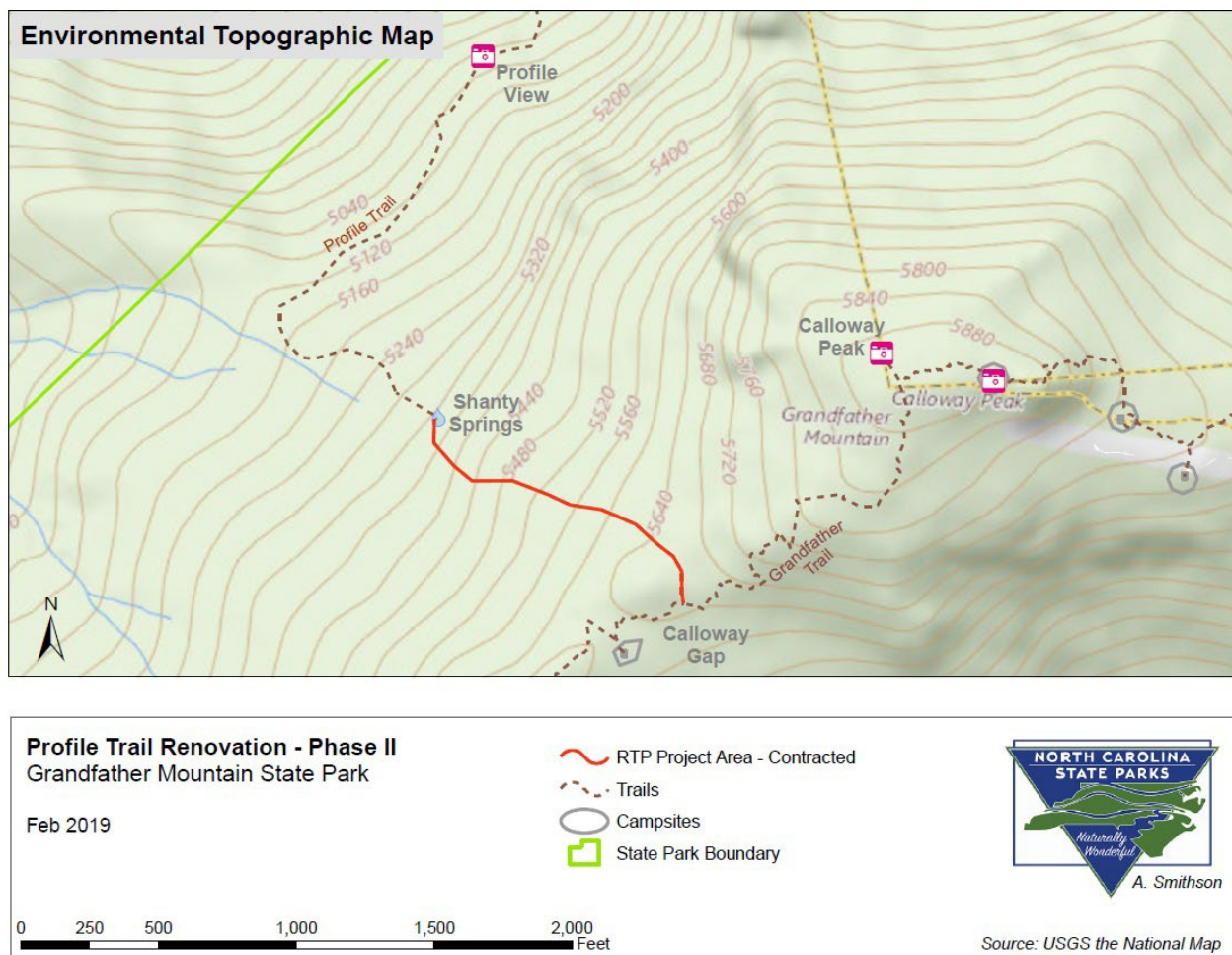
All projects must include a project specific map that clearly shows the location of the trail project. This map focuses on the location of the project to be accomplished and any connections to existing and planned trail systems. It should include both existing and planned trails/greenways/sidewalks, parking areas, roads, accesses, facilities, and points of interest. All map components - aforementioned items and property lines - should also be clearly indicated.

Project Specific Map(s) shall also show the deliverables to be completed during the project. Maps should include locations for bridges, trail, facilities, trailheads, parking lots, and any other deliverables or features referenced in the project description. Map shall note which deliverables will be contracted out. Map shall note which deliverables will be completed in-house. Map should not which deliverables will be accomplished with requested tools, materials, and/or equipment rental.



Environmental Topographic Map:

All projects must also include a topographic map showing the project area. The map excerpt must delineate how the project site falls on the land. This includes indication of all bridges or water crossings, known locations of waterbodies (streams, ponds, lakes, etc.) and wetlands in relation to all project development. Documents and Maps must be submitted as a PDF packet to minimize difficulty in located documents and maps on the Grant Management System. **Please only upload attachments using the instructions provided here and in the GMS Quick Start Guide.**



Support Documents Packet

Scan all documents in order and submit as one packet

Project Timeline:

Includes project start date, major milestones, and completion date. Use deliverable budget as guidance regarding milestones.

Private Land Stipulation Documents:

Official documents with property owner's stipulations granting easements, leases (*minimum of 10 years of public use*), licenses, MOA, MOU, or other permissions. (* Required if "Yes", to question referencing "current status of land.")

Letters of Commitment:

Official letters of commitment or intent for donations listed in *Project Deliverables*, *Budget*, and/or *Non-Contract Contributions*.

Governing Body Commitment:

Official letters of commitment or resolution supporting at least 25% match and completion of the project within a 3-year time frame.

Public Comment Documents:

Official documentation of event(s): list of date(s), location(s), and type of public meeting(s) where the project was presented to the public (*electronically or physically*) and given the opportunity to comment regarding the project. Also, include a copy of official documents of summary/overview of any public comment(s) received.

(* Required if "Yes", to question referencing "public comment".)

Acquired Land Documents:

Official documentation of land acquired or donated and its appraised value, as noted in the *Project Deliverables* and *Budgeting* sections. (* Required if noted in the project Deliverables and Budgeting sections.)

Be sure that all documents are in working order and included with your application submission. **Applications missing any required documents will not be reviewed for funding.** Checking a box indicates an understanding of required application attachments and the documents inclusion with the application submission. All attachments should be sized to an 8.5" x 11" and in a .pdf format. **All documents should be on official letterhead.**

NORTH CAROLINA - STATE RTP REQUIREMENTS

RTP Project Lands:

North Carolina Trails Program will award RTP grants to projects that are:

- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a governmental agency, provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a non-profit organization, provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands that are leased by a governmental agency or non-profit organization for a minimum of 10 years, provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.

Note: *These are listed in priority order for evaluation and funding recommendations.*

Minimum Timeframe for Public Use:

[FHWA](#) states, “The RTP legislation does not require a minimum timeframe for a trail project to remain open to the public. Each State should establish a minimum timeframe appropriate for the type of trail use.”

DPR, after consulting with the NCTC, has established the following minimum timeframe for public use:

Any trail project funded in part with RTP grant funds shall remain open to the public for a minimum period of 10 years. Should a RTP trail project be closed prior to 10 years of public use, without sufficient reason, the State reserves the right to seek repayment of RTP funds based on a 10% per year depreciation schedule; and, the grantee’s grant performance will be used when evaluating future grant applications submitted.

REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The GRANTEE must finance 100% of the project costs. All eligible, incurred and documented expenditures will be refunded to the grantee, up to 90% of the total RTP award amount. The last 10% will be withheld until the project is complete, all records submitted, and a final site inspection has been completed. When all requirements have been met, the final 10% will be reimbursed.

Note: *You must complete at least one of your defined project deliverables in order to request any reimbursement.*

RTP GRANTS MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Guidance is provided in the following categories, *Recommendations* and *Requirements*.

Recommendations are processes tested by time that help to alleviate clerical errors and facilitate the processing of grant contracts. Recommendations are strong suggestions but are not requirements.

Requirements are mandates from internal and external divisions that describe the process for contract execution, funding reimbursements, timelines and other grant contract terms and activities. Requirements are non-negotiable and must be followed. Please do not hesitate to contact your Trails Specialists with any questions or concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Managing Funds:

RTP grants are structured on a reimbursement basis. Through the years we have found that the applicant's attention to the funding streams (cash outlay and reimbursement) prior to contract, results in a more organized project. Plotting out timelines, ensuring cash is available when needed and that reimbursements are available within expected parameters is the responsibility of the applicant.

Staff is available to offer suggestions prior to contract. Ultimately though, the applicant will need to structure the contract deliverables and reimbursement requests to run in concert with applicant's financial needs. Generally, applicants fare better to structure their deliverables and the corresponding reimbursements in blocks. Ten (10) percent of all contracts must be reserved until the completion of the project. Therefore, a 30% - 30% -30% -10% draw structure, or something similar is recommended. This keeps cash flowing in blocks and facilitates processing. Note, this is a recommendation. Other formats can be constructed due to the applicant's needs

REQUIREMENTS

Legally Binding Contract:

Your application becomes part of your contract, and all Grant Contracts issued by DNCR are legally binding. Failure to meet terms results in breach of contract.

Revisions to Application/Budget Amendments; Pre-Contract:

In the guidance section *Managing Funds*, it was recommended that the applicant structure their deliverables to coincide with the needs for reimbursements. Special attention should be given to the structure of deliverables in the application before a contract is issued. The contract is a legally binding document. Therefore, once the terms are contracted, it is the applicant's responsibility to perform the terms as they are stipulated in the contract. The following information regarding requirements should be considered prior to contract.

Pre-contract Requirements:

1. Any application requiring changes prior to contract will have to be revised and resubmitted. This is a requirement of DNCR to ensure uniformity of contract deliverables and terms.
2. Contracts will not be issued until a final approved grant application package has been received by the NC Trails Program.

Reimbursements:

1. Deliverables must be structured in the application so that reimbursement requests relate to a completed deliverable and requisite (25%) match.
2. The entire deliverable must be completed prior to request for the deliverable reimbursement.
3. The match for the deliverable request for reimbursement must be documented.
4. Reimbursements for partially completed deliverables will not be processed.
5. Reimbursements for actions before contract execution and after the contract expiration date will not be processed.
6. Any deviation to the above Reimbursement Requirements must be submitted in writing to, and be approved by, the NC Trails Program Head prior to the completion of the deliverable.

Contract Amendments:

Contract amendments and/or contract extensions may be requested no less than 30 days prior to expiration of the contract. Note that all amendments or requests for extensions must be fully executed prior to the expiration of the grant contract.

We look forward to working with you on your project! Please contact the [NC Trails program](#) with any questions.