



TECHNICAL BRIEF

Finding Matching Funds for Trail Projects

The states highlighted in this technical brief understand the flexibility that is inherent in Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities and put it to the test by encouraging innovative projects and creative funding. While these innovations are evident in all categories of TE projects, bicycle and pedestrian related projects receive the majority of Enhancements funds. Even though trails are part of this lion's share of Enhancements funds, trail project sponsors nonetheless face the same difficulty as all other TE project sponsors: how to generate the local match funds. Innovative partnerships with state Departments of Transportation (DOT) and other government organizations can help sponsors raise necessary funding, as can savvy networking. The trick is not only knowing where the money is and how to access it, but also the guidelines for making financing easier.

The *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) of 1998 improved upon the earlier legislation in the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* (ISTEA) of 1991 by acknowledging that TE projects do not usually need the same level of oversight as highway projects. New guidance was developed that allows more flexible match requirements. Specifically, *"(I) funds from other Federal agencies and the value of other contributions (as determined by the Secretary) may be credited toward the non-Federal share of the costs of a project to carry out a transportation enhancement activity"* (23 U.S.C. 323 (c)). This change in legislation broadens the sort of in-kind donations that may count towards the match, as well as includes other, non-DOT Federal agencies as possible funding sources. Now, state DOTs are allowed to consider the value of contributions—such as donations of funds, materials, land or services, as well as the costs of preliminary engineering prior to project approval – toward the non-Federal share of TE projects.

Trail building can be a daunting effort, especially when combined with raising money, finding Federal funds, and either too much or too little advice. This technical brief contains innovative fundraising ideas to help project sponsors meet that challenge, both specific project examples and information about Federal assistance programs. Some are practical and policy-driven, such as utilizing force account labor to lower the overall project costs, while others are more imaginative, such as selling honorary acres of greenspace. All help defray the cost of making a trail a reality.

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Successful Networking: Using Resources, Grants, and Partnerships to Fund Trails

Greene County, Ohio Uses State Funds and In-Kind Contributions

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in Greene County, Ohio has found success in aggressively pursuing both cash and in-kind financing for its trail program. The DPR has been able to save money on all projects and actually complete many without Federal funding.

The first principle of the DPR is to exhaust all state and local sources of funding first. The DPR has an array of local opportunities such as Ohio's "Nature Works" program, "Ohio to Erie Trail" funds, state Capital Improvement funds, state Recreational Trail funds, and county budgets. The DPR then pursues private in-kind contributions from Chambers of Commerce and local banks that like to be identified with trail amenities such as benches and gateway kiosks. Finally, significant force account work (design or construction of a project performed by the agency's own work force) is contributed. For example, the county competitively awards small annual contracts for earth moving on a "tasking" basis. The basic unit of procurement is the "equipment operating hour"—just request the machine, tell the operator what is to be done, and pay by the hour when the work is completed. This method is approximately 15% to 20% less expensive than more conventional approaches.

In the past, these arrangements could lead to project completion even without Federal funds. Now that in-kind contributions can be credited toward the local match, these sources can be used to leverage Federal TE funds for additional eligible projects. ■ *For further information, contact Charles Dressler at 937-376-7440 or cdres80344@aol.com.*

Franklin County, Vermont Defrayed Costs through Partnerships

The Missisquoi Valley Rail-Trail is a 26.4-mile multi-use path through Franklin County, Vermont. The trail is owned by the state of Vermont through a cooperative agreement between the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) and the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (DFPR). The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council (the Council), a non-profit organization representing communities along the trail, trail users, and interested citizens, acts as advisor to the state on management and use issue and helps develop long-term plans for trail amenities. The key to this innovative agreement was to assign roles based on the strengths of each organization. The DFPR operates trails in state forests and parks, so their maintenance shop is accustomed to building sign-in boxes and kiosks, while the AOT assumes responsibility of the maintenance of major structures (trestles, culverts, gates, traffic signs) and the rail bed.

The benefits of shared trail responsibility are varied; financially, it means that when the Council applies for a TE award, the match is generally waived because the state has a link to the project. The Council was awarded a Vermont Youth Conservation Corps greenway crew in 1998 and 1999 to perform trail enhancements. The AOT pays for the crew's time and materials (including the 20% match for the overall TE project award), the DFPR acts as an advisor for using the crew

effectively, and the Council provides the project coordination and “on the ground” assistance. In addition to the financial benefits of dividing costs amongst the partners, there are also numerous in-kind donations from the AOT and the DFPR that count towards the 20% match for projects the Council sponsors, such as any kiosks, signs, sign-in boxes, and picnic tables.

A difficulty that may arise when sharing responsibility for a trail is that no one organization feels a sense of ownership. When a project is costly or time-consuming, it can be tough to decide who ultimately has to find the money or the time. Make sure any agreements are institutionalized within an organization so that changes in leadership do not negate implementation, and that all aspects of trail management are covered, from maintenance to possible future TE projects.

■ *For further information, contact Bonnie Waninger at 802-524-5958 or bwaninger@nrpcvt.com.*

Bikes Belong Coalition is an organization funded by and representing the bicycle industry, whose mission is, “Putting more people on bikes more often through the implementation of TEA-21.” To that end, Bikes Belong awards grants of up to \$10,000 each to projects that seek TEA-21 funding for bicycle facilities. Bikes Belong is always looking for grant seekers, groups, or communities for which a Bikes Belong grant can provide financial support. Because each state differs in what it allows to qualify for local match of a project, it is a good idea to check with your state TE coordinator before applying. Bikes Belong grants have been used for concept plans, cartography, design, outreach, and preliminary engineering, as well as contributions to the local match. To date, Bikes Belong Coalition has awarded grants for projects in the District of Columbia, California, Wisconsin, and Maine. The grant application, guide, and other information can be viewed at www.bikesbelong.org. ■ *For further information, contact Richard Olken at 617-734-2800 or rich@bikesbelong.org (preferred).*

Bikes Belong Coalition Awards Grants to TEA-21 Bicycle Facility Projects

In Calhoun County, Alabama, sponsors of a TE funded rail-trail sought out non-U.S. DOT Federal funds to help finance their project. The sponsors of this rail-trail, the Chief Ladiga Rail-Trail (CLT), received \$100,000 of Land and Water Conservation Funds for the acquisition of 22 miles of the trail corridor. Trail sponsors also secured \$30,000 from the US Forest Service budget for bridge rehabilitation. The Forest Service money and \$12,000 raised by a very active county citizens committee was used to rehabilitate four bridges on the Cleburne segment of the CLT. One bridge is crossed by both the CLT and the Pinhoti Hiking Trail and thus constitutes a vital link in an eventual connection with the Appalachian Trail in north Georgia. In addition, the trail’s sponsors obtained National Recreational Trail program funds for trail connections in Weaver, Anniston, and Jacksonville, Alabama. These connections each cost \$25,000. The total cost of the Chief Ladiga Rail Trail project was \$1.7 million. ■ *For further information, contact Jack Plunk at 256-237-6741 or jplunk@coa.state.al.us.*

Alabama Trail Sponsors Utilize Other Federal Funds for Trail Financing

Imaginative Fund-raising Ideas

Apollo, Pennsylvania Sold Honorary Acres

A few years ago, the people of Apollo wanted to purchase 300 acres of undeveloped land for use in future trails and greenspace. They applied for TE awards and other Federal funds, but also started a “300 Club,” a project that gave the townspeople something tangible to work with while the application process was underway. The price of the land Apollo was buying was \$400 an acre. They sold honorary acres at \$400 each, which meant that each purchaser could have honorary ownership of one acre of the land. Over 100 acres were sold, raising \$40,000. This amount, in addition to the TE awards and other funds, enabled Apollo to buy the land. One factor that many states use when deciding which projects should receive awards is the amount of local support a project has. Fundraising events such as this serve the dual purposes of raising needed money while demonstrating a “trail-positive” community to the DOT. ■ *For further information, contact Don Stevenson at don_stevenson@hotmail.com.*

Montpelier, Vermont: Agency of Transportation Shares Creative Efforts

Because Vermont does not fund any additional project costs over the original award, many project sponsors have found themselves doing creative fundraising. Selling paving bricks has been lucrative because people like the sense of ownership that comes with having their name in the ground for posterity. It also strengthens the sense of community and builds up local project support. Businesses can often be convinced to “buy a bench” – they pay money to the Vermont AOT, and in return a plaque with the name of their business is placed on benches surrounding a community square or sidewalk. When bids are higher than expected, the sponsors must cut costs somewhere; either by bidding out the different trades separately (in effect, sub-contracting the project), or by finding less expensive building techniques or materials. Sometimes if a town sponsors a project they can save money by procuring materials in bulk, such as gravel for sidewalks and trails. ■ *For further information, contact Lani Ravin at 802-965-3897 or lani.ravin@state.vt.us.*

Not A Typical Yard Sale: Jackson County, Oregon

The Great Bear Creek Greenway Foundation in Oregon has learned to be imaginative when helping Jackson County raise matching funds for trails and publications designed to raise awareness of trails. In addition to the usual fundraising events of membership drives, silent auctions, and direct appeals, the Greenway Foundation has held a successful Great Bear Creek Greenway Yard Sale for the last four years. For \$40, a person can purchase a symbolic “yard” of the trail and have their name added to the donor list. A future permanent marker at each trailhead will bear the name of the contributor, and the section to which they contributed. The yard sale idea was first applied to a two-mile extension of the Greenway trail into the city of Ashland to help match the \$690,000 ISTEAA award. The goal of the Greenway program is to connect five cities with an eighteen-mile non-motorized trail. ■ *For further information, contact Karen Smith at 541-774-6231 or smithks@jacksoncounty.org.*

Non-DOT Federal Funding Possibilities for Local Match of TE Trail Projects

A number of Federal programs can help trail sponsors finance a TE-funded trail project. These sources provide non-DOT Federal funds that could qualify for a TE award's local match under the legislative guidance. Please refer to the *Catalogue of Domestic Federal Assistance* for a complete listing at: www.gsa.gov/fdac/default.htm

The following is a list compiled by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. It lists Federal assistance programs for trails, a contact (either phone number or web site), and a short description of how each program could benefit trails. Who may apply will differ with each program, so please research them individually. *Hint: when exploring these Web sites, look at each site's Links section for links to other potential funding sources.*

AmeriCorps

- www.cns.gov/ameriCorps

Eligible types of projects: Funds must be used to operate or plan nation and community service programs. Programs could include trail building, environmental education, and community restoration work

Coastal Zone Management Administration Award

- www.nos.noaa.gov/ocrm/czm/welcome.html

Eligible types of projects: state approved Coastal Zone Management programs which are funded through formula grants based on coastal populations and shoreline mileage. Projects could include improvements for public access and special areas management planning.

Community Development Block Grants – Entitlement Program

- www.hud.gov/progdsc/cdbgent.html

Eligible types of projects: Neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and provision of community facilities and services. All eligible activities must either benefit low or moderate-income persons, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or meet other community development needs having a particular urgency.

Community Development Block Grants – Special Purpose Grants

- www.hud.gov/progdsc/ezec.html

Eligible types of projects: To help states, units of local government, Indian tribes, and area wide planning organizations to plan, develop, and administer local Community Block Grants.

Community Facilities Loans

- www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/Nonprofit/np_splash.htm#Community

Eligible types of projects: The construction, enlargement, extension or otherwise improvement of community facilities. Trail benefits could include improved access through utilities extensions.

Community Partnership Study Demonstration Grant

- **Contact: Division of Community Prevention and Training (301) 443-0369**

Eligible types of projects: Projects to study models of partnership development that encourage community leaders, diverse organizations and/or interest groups in local communities to more effectively coordinate prevention programs and to develop prevention initiatives to demonstrate that the development of broad-based support within the community can substantially contribute to the elimination of alcohol and other drug abuse. Trails and open space conservation and recreation could be part of such a coalition.

Community Services Block Grant – Discretionary Award

- **Contact:** Office of Community Services (202) 401-9341

Eligible types of projects: Projects of national or regional significance that alleviate the causes of poverty in distressed communities, and programs designed to provide instructional activities to youth. Rivers, trails, and open space conservation and recreation could be part of such projects, particularly in the field of instruction for low-income youth.

Conservation Reserve Program

- <http://willow.ncfes.umn.edu/stewardship/financial.htm>

Eligible types of projects: Provide payments to farm owners or operators to place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive cropland into a 10-15 year contract. The participant then agrees to implement a conservation plan for converting highly erodible cropland or environmentally sensitive land to a less intensive use. Maintaining highly erodible land as open space could be beneficial to trails.

Cooperative Forestry Assistance

- **Contact:** Forest Service (202) 205-1657

Eligible types of projects: Mostly forestry activities, but there are provisions for improvement and maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat and the planning of urban forestry programs. Restoration projects could apply under the provision for improvement and maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat, presumably for areas associated with an urban forest. Urban forestry could also be included in trail project proposals.

Cooperative Forestry Research

- **Contact:** U.S. Department of Agriculture (202) 720-4423

Eligible types of projects: Forestry research at certified state institutions in nine categories, including management and protection of forest lands for outdoor recreation.

Cultural Resource Management (BLM)

- www.blm.gov/eso/pages/cult.html

Eligible types of projects: Managing cultural resources, e.g., stabilization of structures and public contact/education, or improving information about cultural resources. Promotion of heritage management and education; development of interpretive signs, archeological training.

Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property

- <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/property>

Eligible types of projects: Surplus items are used by state and local public agencies for carrying out or promoting one or more public purposes, such as conservation, parks, and recreation, by certain non-profit organizations for tax-exempt activities for public health or education purposes. Donated land could be used for the creation of trails, parks and open space.

Economic Development – Public Works & Infrastructure Development

- www.doc.gov/eda/html/prgtitle.htm

Eligible types of projects: Grants for public facilities, including port facilities, tourism facilities, etc. Public works projects can include trail and other recreational facilities.

Environmental Educational Grants

- www.epa.gov/rgytgrnj/ee_grants.html

Eligible types of projects: Project grants for selected projects to establish education and training programs to include design, demonstration, or dissemination of environmental curricula. This program benefits recreation/conservation through improved field methods and assessments of specific environmental problems.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal Portion)

- www.fs.fed.us/land

Eligible types of projects: Funding for land acquisition, including national parks, seashores, lakeshores, forest, wild and scenic rivers, selected national trails, national recreation areas, historic areas, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants

- <http://grants.fws.gov/>

Eligible types of projects: Funds are to be used for acquisition of interests in coastal land or waters, and for restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands on a competitive basis with all coastal states.

NEA Arts Projects on Millennium Trails

- **Contact: National Endowment for the Arts**
(202) 682-5616

Eligible types of projects: Grants will provide assistance through cooperative agreements to high quality, community centered arts projects along the 52 Millennium Legacy Trails.

National Forest – Dependent Rural Communities

- **Contact: Forest Service (202) 205-1657**

Eligible types of projects: Projects assisting rural communities that are economically dependent on national forests. Aid is extended to these communities to help them develop strategic action plans to diversify their economic base and to improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural areas.

National Maritime Heritage Grants

- **Contact: National Park Service**
(202) 343-5969

Eligible types of projects: Preserving historic maritime resources and increasing public awareness and appreciation for the maritime heritage of the US. This includes activities focusing on maritime heritage trails and corridors.

National Park Service Challenge Cost-Share Program

- www2.cr.nps.gov/ccs_p.htm

Eligible types of projects: Any partnership which benefits National Park Service projects or programs. This may include historic and archaeological site restoration, resource management, resource inventory and monitoring, scientific research, trail maintenance, interpretive videos for environmental or heritage education programs, interpretive exhibit enhancement, or a summer youth employment for recreation activities.

Resource Conservation and Development Loans

- **Contact: Rural Utility Service**
(202) 690-2670

Eligible types of projects: Loan assistance to local sponsoring agencies where acceleration of program of resource conservation, development, and utilization will increase economic opportunities for local people through conservation of water and natural resources. Trail projects could fall under the categories of soil development or a shift in land use facilities. River restoration could fall under water-based recreation and water development.

Wildlife Conservation and Appreciation

- **Contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**
(703) 358-2156

Eligible types of projects: Actions of which the principal purpose is to provide opportunities for the public to use and enjoy fish and wildlife through nonconsumptive activities. This program allows the public recreational opportunities pertaining to nongame wildlife enjoyment, including trails and waterways.

DOT Federal Funding Programs for Trails

Other DOT financial programs can benefit trail projects and *though they cannot be used to match TE awards*, they do fund transit projects, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian paths. These include:

National Highway System

- www.fhwa.dot.gov (See TEA-21 section 1006)

Surface Transportation Program

- www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/progadmin/part1.htm#stp
(See TEA-21 section 1108)

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

- www.fhwa.dot.gov (See TEA-21 section 1110)

Federal Lands Highway Program

- www.fhwa.dot.gov/lands.html

Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program

- www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary

National Scenic Byways Program

- www.byways.org (See TEA-21 section 1219)

Recreational Trails Program

- www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrail.htm
(See TEA-21 section 1112)

If you have other examples of how to successfully raise local match funds for a TE project, please share those with NTEC! Write, fax, or email them to us – our contact information is on the front page. Thanks to all who shared their examples with NTEC and made this *Technical Brief* possible.
