

# Federal Funding FAQ's



Understanding Federal Funding for Natural Surface Trails | IMBA.COM

## Land & Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Enacted in 1965, the program was made permanent in 2019, and received full and dedicated funding in 2020. Beginning in FY 2021, LWCF will be appropriated at the mandatory \$900 million, split into federal land acquisition, and the stateside program and is funded by profits from offshore oil and gas leasing. The program was created to preserve outdoor recreation and ensure future generations have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

**How Much?** \$900 Million from federal offshore drilling fees. The minimum/maximum grant request for Land and Water Conservation Funds is \$100k – \$750k.

**Who's Eligible?** Only Local, County, & State governments are eligible, mountain bikers must work in partnership

**Timeline** Application Deadlines are generally at the end of November.

**Types of Projects** Construction, Maintenance, Planning/Support Applications

**How Much?** 2021 legislation would increase to \$250M annually.

**Who's Eligible?** The RTP provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses.

**Timeline** Grant process schedules vary widely.

**Types of Projects** Since 1991, more than 22,000 RTP-funded projects have been documented nationwide with details available on the RTP database: [www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org](http://www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org).

## Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

RTP is an excise tax of 18.4% through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that non-highway recreational users pay at the gas pump to develop and maintain outdoor recreational trails. Currently the maximum is set at \$84 million per year. The minimum match varies and is set by each state. The program has been in existence since 1991 and has funded over 25,000 projects benefiting both non-motorized and motorized users. Introduced legislation would expand the program from \$84 million to more than \$250 million.

**Who's Eligible?** Each state is required by law to produce a SCORP to be eligible for these resources.

**Timeline** Each state must develop or update their SCORP every five (5) years.

**Types of Projects** These plans are usually general in nature and not project specific, but rather creates guidelines for projects to be considered.

## State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP)

The above programs (RTP, LWCF Stateside) are state matching grants and therefore distributed by individual states. States strive to use the SCORP as a guide for setting funding priorities.

## National Forest System Trails Stewardship Partner Funding Program Grants

This program came out of the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act that passed Congress in 2016 which IMBA helped draft and usher through Congress.

**How Much?** \$285 M allocated for this program annually to USFS through 2025. \$1.6 B allocated for this program annually to DOI agencies through 2025.

**Who's Eligible?** Federal Lands Management Agencies: NPS, FWS, USFS, BLM, Bureau of Indian Education and other federal agencies under USDA and DOI.

**Types of Projects** The USFS has identified a broad mix of critical infrastructure projects to reduce its deferred maintenance backlog while improving the quality of the visitor experience and contributing to local economies.

**How Much?** The program is funded by dedicated but fluctuating USFS dollars and is managed by the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance.

**Who's Eligible?** Grants are available to any diverse trail and stewardship non-profit organization recognized by the IRS.

**Timeline** Grants are awarded through an annual spring competitive application process.

## Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund

The Great American Outdoors Act provides for up to \$1.9 billion a year for five years to help address a multi-billion-dollar deferred maintenance backlog at national parks, on other public lands, and at tribal schools. The new Legacy Restoration Fund will allow the Forest Service to improve critical infrastructure that is essential to the use and enjoyment of national forests and grasslands. The Forest Service receives 15 percent of all LRF funds, and for FY21 has received \$285 million for deferred maintenance projects. The agency is preparing for up to \$285 million of LRF funding to be allocated to the agency annually in the FY22 - FY25 budgets.

## Congressional Appropriations

Each Federal land agency has a federal appropriation that fills their coffers specifically for recreation purposes, and some have special funds that are directed specifically at certain programs. The following are the agencies that are included in the yearly appropriation process:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- United States Forest Service (USFS)

The largest account for **BLM** is Management of Lands and Resources which in FY 2020 was over \$1.2 billion. This account manages the recreation portfolio, energy and minerals, rangelands, endangered species, among other issues.

The most prominent recreation components administered by the **Fish and Wildlife Service** are the Pittman-Robertson Act, and the Dingell Johnson Act. These programs directly fund conservation and recreation projects.

The largest appropriation for the **NPS** goes to park operations which include resource stewardship, visitor services, park protection, facility operations, etc.

The **USFS** account that focuses on recreation is the National Forests System which was set at \$1.9 billion for FY 2020.