

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



NPS / WILLIAM MOBILIAN



Accessibility

Developing equitable access to the nation's lands and waters

The National Park Service works with partners to develop equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

NPS-RTCA

The National Park Service **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program**

About Us

The **National Park Service**, through the **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance** program (NPS-RTCA), has supported locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the United States for more than 30 years. NPS-RTCA assists communities in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors. Through an annual application process, community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, national parks, and local, state and federal agencies can apply for NPS-RTCA technical assistance.

Our Model

Across the country, NPS-RTCA staff pair their professional planning, design and technical expertise with your team and knowledge experts from the community. Together, our 1 to 2 year-long partnership works to achieve your conservation and outdoor recreation vision. Based on the complexity of the project, we tailor our assistance to meet your needs and help you navigate a path to success. Although NPS-RTCA is not a grant-funding program, we can help your organization identify potential funding sources for your project.

Community Engagement

As a collaborative partner, we strive to achieve successful project outcomes by engaging communities in the visioning, planning and implementation of each project. We encourage strong community partnerships and facilitate meaningful engagement to ensure your conservation and outdoor recreation projects last into perpetuity.

Designing the Anza Cultural History Park

The Anza Cultural History Park is a new park in Tucson, Arizona. Adjacent to the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the park is designed to be accessible and enjoyed by everyone, including persons with disabilities of sight, hearing or mobility.

NPS-RTCA collaborated with the school, the Anza Society International, and interpreters from Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and Tumacácori National Historical Park, on design concepts and infrastructure improvements for the park. The park, which is centered around the historic Anza Expedition of 1776 that led more than 240 men, women and children from Mexico to San Francisco, features newly installed accessible amenities which assist all users in accessing the various recreational opportunities.

In addition to telling the story of the expedition, the park serves as a fully accessible outdoor classroom for students and staff. Consisting of short trails and seating areas, the park is an educational and relaxing space that accommodates users of all abilities with text in English, Spanish, Braille and American Sign Language.

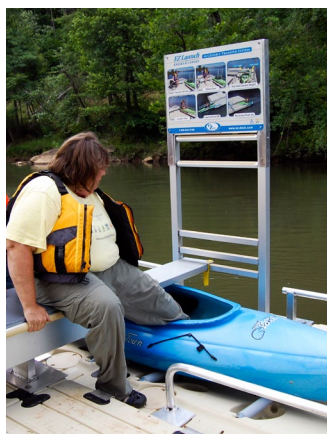


South Carolina

Inclusive Recreation on the Saluda River Blueway

Historically a vital piece of South Carolina's textile industry, the Saluda River has made a new name for itself as a beacon for inclusivity in outdoor recreation. Floating docks, compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines for accessibility, make it possible for everyone to enjoy up to 48 miles of paddling on the river.

The project debuted in 2009 when Anderson County's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, set out to put an EZ Dock accessible boat launch at a riverside park. The county requested assistance from NPS-RTCA to assist with mapping the river and access points, develop a paddle guide, and work with local partners and power companies who were invested in the river. The collaboration resulted in the Saluda River Blueway, an accessible river trail that gained monumental support from communities along the river.



Today, a yearly River Rally, put on by local organizations attracts more than 350 paddlers which has helped spark the county's tourism economy. The Saluda River Blueway gained national recognition in 2015 as the only rural project to be featured by the Americans with Disabilities Act's 25th Anniversary Legacy Tour – inspiring the community to continue expanding opportunities for inclusive recreation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are we?

The **National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA)** assists communities, public land managers and nonprofit organizations with conservation and outdoor recreation projects. NPS-RTCA provides professional planning, design and technical expertise to help achieve your conservation and outdoor recreation vision.

Does NPS-RTCA provide funding?

No. NPS-RTCA is not a grant-funding program, but we can help you identify potential funding sources for your project.

What kind of projects does NPS-RTCA support?

Our program staff support locally-led projects that develop or restore parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as create outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

Are NPS-RTCA staff contractors?

The NPS-RTCA model is to combine the skills of our staff with those of your organization. It's a partnership – we work alongside your team and local knowledge experts to assist with the work that you are leading.

How much time do NPS-RTCA staff spend on each project?

Typically, NPS-RTCA staff collaborate with communities for 1 to 2 years on conservation and outdoor recreation projects. Depending on the complexity of the project and our staffing capacity, the time frame may be extended.

Who can apply for assistance from NPS-RTCA?

NPS-RTCA provides services to established community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, national parks, and local, state and federal agencies.

How can you apply for assistance from NPS-RTCA?

NPS-RTCA support is provided when we are invited to assist you on a conservation or outdoor recreation project. We encourage you to contact us to discuss your project before applying. The application is available on our website: www.nps.gov/RTCA

 nps.gov/RTCA

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