

Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Land and Habitat Conservation

Developing local and regional conservation strategies

The National Park Service works with partners to expand conservation networks,
develop land protection strategies and restore damaged ecosystems.



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.

Texas

North Beach Eco Park

Migratory birds aren't the only ones flocking to Corpus Christi, Texas. With a goal to expand recreational and educational opportunities, the city recently began implementing plans for a 30-acre eco and birding park in North Beach that will cater to both their human and avian visitors.

In 2019, the city requested NPS-RTCA to assist with the park's design and organizational development for community partners. In collaboration with the American Society of Landscape Architects, NPS-RTCA held public meetings to identify community ideas and generate feasible designs for a migratory bird habitat with resources for recreation enthusiasts. Three park designs were developed from community input, resulting in a master plan for a park that will be home to healthy wetlands and wildlife, as well as trails, boardwalks, observation decks, interpretive signs and educational resources for outdoor programming.



Utah

Restoring the Jordan River and the Big Bend Habitat

In collaboration with local partners, the City of West Jordan in Utah had a vision to restore a section of the Jordan River where an abandoned steel mill once operated. The natural course of the river was dredged, realigned and hardened to support the mill. Over time, invasive plant species pushed out the natural riparian vegetation and industrial contaminants accumulated in the waterway.

NPS-RTCA collaborated with the city, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, and 15 other partners to develop strategies for restoring the river and adjacent lands which became the Big Bend Habitat Restoration project. To help make the project a reality, NPS-RTCA facilitated community engagement to gain public support for river restoration and researched funding opportunities.

Today, the partnership is working on rehabilitating the river to its natural meandering flow, restoring the natural riparian vegetation and wetlands, developing 70 acres of habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, and creating outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy.



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

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