

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



River Restoration

Restoring rivers to their natural systems

The National Park Service facilitates the collaboration of technical experts to implement strategies that restore rivers and riparian areas.

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.

Reestablishing Moose Creek's Fisheries

Before coal mines and a railroad were constructed through Moose Creek in the 1920s, the creek was a winding and slow meandering stream supporting various Alaska salmon species. During construction, the creek was modified with human-made waterfalls which became barriers to the fisheries along the rerouted waterway and ultimately led to migrating salmon losing access to their upstream habitat.

In 2003, the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council requested assistance from NPS-RTCA to develop a partnership approach for restoring Moose Creek to its natural course. NPS-RTCA engaged local and agency partners in developing a strategy for restoring the creek. With support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, community volunteers and other funders, the creek was reconstructed to its original channel morphology and gradient, giving salmon access to historic spawning and rearing areas. Learning about the area's natural history from tribal elders and collecting data about salmon through survey work aided with the restoration efforts and educational outreach.



Today, Moose Creek is once again home to salmon populations, proving how successful partnerships can support local initiatives, enhance natural resource stewardship, and provide outstanding opportunities for cultural and environmental education.

Montana

Restoring a Creek in Downtown Bozeman

What began as an urgent need to rehabilitate the decaying Bogert Park in Bozeman, Montana, soon evolved to include the restoration of Bozeman Creek. When the City of Bozeman requested assistance from NPS-RTCA, it quickly became apparent that the scope of the problem extended beyond the park's borders. Long ago, the creek

had been narrowed and straightened to handle storm water runoff. As a result, the runoff flushed the creek of its fisheries habitat, reduced the riparian vegetation and led to invasive species taking root.



With help from NPS-RTCA, the city and the Bozeman Creek Enhancement Committee engaged neighborhood associations and individual landowners in the process of restoring the park, along with six miles of impaired creek. Over six years, this collaboration resulted in the reconstruction of the creek's channel to slow its flow and filter stormwater runoff. The community stabilized the banks with native plants to create a meandering stream and strengthen the riparian zone. The restoration work also enhanced conditions for aquatic species by including deep pools to help fish survive winters, boulders for safe resting sites, and gravel to support spawning conditions.

Today, Bogert Park and the natural flowing Bozeman Creek provide residents with opportunities to fish and enjoy the natural setting within the heart of the city.

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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