



# RTCA: Community Assistance Arm of the National Park Service

## Accepting Applications through August 1

### Who We Are:

A program to share expertise of the National Park Service across America

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program works with community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribes or tribal governments, and local, state, and federal government agencies to achieve locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. Projects include natural area preservation, river conservation and development of recreational trails and greenways in urban, suburban and rural communities. RTCA carries out the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America.

A network of 70 community-based planning professionals delivers the RTCA Program nationwide, helping communities to help themselves achieve on-the-ground success. Through RTCA, the National Park Service offers conservation and recreation assistance to communities in every state.



Jepson Prairie Preserve Docents, CA

Each spring when the vernal pools of Jepson Prairie Preserve blossom, a group of highly trained docents reveals the magic of this special landscape to school groups, volunteers and other visitors. RTCA is assisting the docents with organizational development to strengthen their site stewardship, outreach and education efforts. In addition, RTCA will assist in generating a new visitor management plan that will result in new on-the-ground facilities and encourage casual visitors to walk the existing trails and learn on their own about the vernal pool and grassland habitats. Photo: Tyler LaGue.

We measure our success by our ability to help our local partners make their rivers, trails, greenways and open spaces a vital, life-enhancing part of their communities. With well under one percent of the National Park Service budget, RTCA each year helps create over 1,400 miles of trail, protect more than 700 miles of waterways, and preserve 63,700 acres of open space.

### What We Do:

Help move your ideas into action

By invitation, RTCA works collaboratively to assist your natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. RTCA is not a grant program. We offer staff assistance in conceptual and master planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement, tailoring our assistance to meet the needs of our partners.

Whether you are a group of committed citizens launching a new project, a team of local government agencies aiming for a multi-jurisdictional effort, or a public/private committee with a community vision, RTCA can help you catalyze ideas into actions. Working side-

by-side with grassroots groups and local governments throughout the country, the National Park Service is helping to create local, regional and state networks of parks, rivers, trails, greenways and open spaces. We invite you to discover more about how RTCA can help your community achieve its own goals.

## Other National Park Service Assistance Programs

The National Park Service can also assist community-based conservation and recreation projects through the following programs:

- **Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP):** The CCSP provides matching fund amounts to facilitate joint projects of National Park Service units, other NPS programs, and their partners. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/ccsp/](http://www.nps.gov/ccsp/)
- **Hydropower Recreation Assistance:** Provides technical assistance on recreation access and facilities, instream flows for recreation, and riparian corridor protection to all participants in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower licensing and relicensing proceedings. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/hydro/](http://www.nps.gov/hydro/)
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** Provides 50% matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Grants are administered through the states and are contingent on annual appropriation. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/lwcf/](http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/)
- **Federal Lands to Parks:** Helps state and local agencies acquire, at no cost, surplus federal land and facilities for parks and recreation. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/flp/](http://www.nps.gov/flp/)
- **Cultural Resources:** The NPS administers a number of very successful federal historic preservation funding programs. Information about grants, tax credits and other forms of assistance can be found by visiting [www.cr.nps.gov/helpyou.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/helpyou.htm)





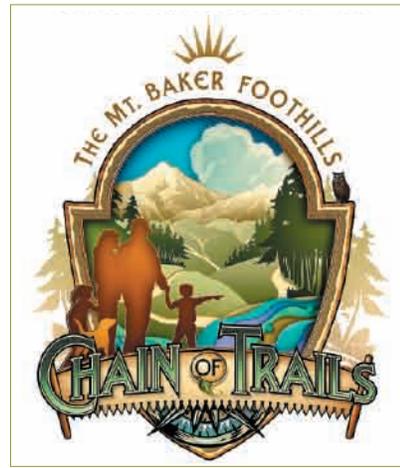
**Warrenton Trail Plan, OR.** RTCA helped bring together partners and the public to plan a system of land and water trails that connects trails and important historical and cultural sites at city, county, state, and federal parklands. The trail system provides expansive views of the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean and includes tsunami evacuation routes. The Fort to Sea Trail, above, connects Fort Clatsop, part of the Lewis and Clark National & State Historical Park, with the ocean. Photo: David Chui.



**Pierce County Trails, WA.** A non-profit collaborative partnership called 'ForeverGreen' is working to build a countywide trail system linking all of Pierce Counties' cities, towns, and unincorporated areas to Mount Rainier National Park. The ForeverGreen Board consists of elected officials, business leaders, community organizations, and recreation directors from city, county, and federal agencies. RTCA assisted ForeverGreen in developing an implementation strategy to coordinate partnership efforts and accelerate development of the trail system. Photo: Kirk Kirkland.



**Shafer Butte Trail System, ID.** Southwest Idaho Mountain Bike Association asked RTCA to facilitate development of a plan for an unmanaged trail system just outside of Boise. By including a variety of partners, the trail system will triple in size and be located entirely on lands where landowners have agreed to provide access. Photo: Roger Philips.



**Mount Baker Foothills Chain of Trails Plan, WA.** RTCA worked with trail and economic development stakeholders to develop a plan for 260 miles of non-motorized trails that connect seven rural communities in the Foothills region of Whatcom County. Photo: Sidney Atkins.



**Keizer Rapids Park, OR.** RTCA partnered with the City of Keizer and the Oregon Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects to host a day and a half charrette (design workshop) to create a master plan for 500 acres of recently acquired land along the banks of the Willamette River. Community members attended a subsequent open house to help select the final design. Photo: Dan Miller.

## Current Project List: Idaho, Oregon, Washington

### IDAHO

- Aberdeen Trail\*
- Boise River Greenbelt – Ada County Extension
- Shafer Butte Trail System

### OREGON

- Alsea River Water Trail
- Crown Zellerbach Multi-Use Trail
- Deschutes River Water Trail
- Five Rivers Water Trail System
- Hood River County Trail System
- Lower Willamette River Water Trail\*
- North Santiam Canyon Trail

- Ontario Pathways & Greenbelt
- Portland Groundwork
- Sandy River Conservation Area
- Warrenton Multi-use Trail\*
- Willamette Valley Birding Trail

### WASHINGTON

- Delridge Trail System
- Eatonville Regional Trail System\*
- Enumclaw Forested Foothills Recreation Area\*
- Greater Columbia Water Trail – NW Section\*
- Lake Sawyer Park\*

- Mason County Trail System\*
- Maxwellton Valley Preserve\*
- North Bellingham Trails & Greenway
- North Cowlitz River Trail Loop
- Southwest Washington Regional Trail\*
- Spokane County Regional Trail System
- Spokane Mountain Bike Trail System

\*Indicates projects that include a unit of the National Park System.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation  
Assistance Program  
Pacific West Regional Office  
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U.S. Department of the Interior

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For more information on Pacific West  
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Our e-mail follows this convention:  
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**Internet Web Site**

National Program: [www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)  
Pacific West Region's Program:  
[www.nps.gov/rtca/pwr](http://www.nps.gov/rtca/pwr)



# Application Guidelines



## About the Program

The National Park Service (NPS) manages some of our nation's most historic sites, scenic resources, and critical natural areas. NPS also provides assistance to locally-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. RTCA staff work in urban, rural, and suburban communities to help applicants to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. Our staff help on a variety of natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects including multi-use trails, single-purpose trails, greenways, water trails (also called blueways), river corridor conservation, land protection, and park planning.

RTCA staff help with partnership-building to achieve community-set goals, organizational development, assessing resources, developing concept plans, public education and participation, and identifying potential sources of funding. The project applicant may be a state or local agency, tribe, non-profit organization, or citizens' group. Federal agencies, including the National Park Service, may apply only in collaboration with a non-federal partner. RTCA does not provide financial assistance to support project implementation.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project with RTCA staff before sending in an application. It can be helpful to schedule an advance field visit by our staff to best understand how RTCA can be of assistance.

For further information about RTCA and the work we are doing around the country with nearly 300 communities, please visit our national web site at <http://www.nps.gov/rtda>.

## Project Selection Criteria

Please make applications brief (generally no more than 3 pages, see attached application form). Applications are evaluated according to the following criteria (questions 1-5 on the application):

1. The project has specific, partner-defined goals and tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results expected in the near future.
2. The project protects or improves important natural resources or enhances outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Roles and contributions of project partners are substantive and well-defined.
4. There is evidence of broad community support for the project.
5. The anticipated role for RTCA is clearly stated and is appropriate.

Questions 6-10 on the application provide background information to allow us to better understand your project.

In evaluating applications, preference will be given to projects that:

- a. provide physical connections among resources, including connecting communities to parks;
- b. include both natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation;
- c. partner with an NPS area;
- d. partner with a health organization.

Projects should include significant community involvement and outreach, and should also include the commitment, cooperation, and cost-sharing of all partners. Because partnerships are key to the success of community-based projects, we strongly encourage the inclusion of support letters with your application.

Applications are due by August 1st for assistance beginning the following fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). Assistance is for one year, and may be renewed for a second year upon request. Project selection is generally announced in early November after passage of the federal budget.



# Application for NPS RTCA Assistance

**Please include:**

## Applicant Information

- What is the project name and location? Please include city, county, state, and congressional district.
- Who is the applicant(s)? Please include a primary contact, title, address, email, daytime phone, and fax.

## Project Description

1. Describe the project goals, including any tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results expected (e.g. miles of river protected, restored or enhanced; miles of publicly accessible trail created or enhanced; acres of parkland created.)
2. Identify the important natural resources to be improved or protected, and/or the outdoor recreation opportunities to be enhanced.
3. Identify the partners that will be actively and substantively involved in the project. Describe the existing or anticipated role and contribution of each. Support letters from project partners detailing the nature of their intended involvement are strongly encouraged.
4. Provide other examples of support for the project including: recognition in local, regional and state plans; endorsements from elected officials and boards; supportive public votes or surveys; grants and other funds awarded; or media coverage.
5. Describe the kind of assistance you are seeking from RTCA staff. (For examples of the kinds of technical assistance RTCA staff can provide, click on “What we do” on our website, [www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)).

## Project Background and Context

6. Provide a map showing the project location. Briefly summarize the area’s relevant natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and outdoor recreational resources.
7. Describe how the project provides physical connections to and/or enhances other natural/cultural/recreational resources in the region.
8. Describe public participation in the project so far, and any future plans.
9. Outline the history and prior activity on the project (if any) and its current status. (If known), what is the expected completion date of the project?
10. Which aspects of your project are going well? Where does your project need the most help?

**For projects in California, Hawai’i and Nevada, please submit application materials to:**

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**For projects in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, please submit application materials to:**

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