Northern Forest Destination Development Initiative
Outdoor Recreation Grants Program Call for Proposals

For projects in:
Oxford and Franklin counties, Maine
Coos County, New Hampshire, and
Caledonia, Essex and Orleans counties, Vermont

An initiative of the Northern Forest Center in Maine and New Hampshire,
and in partnership with Northeastern Vermont Development Association/NEK Collaborative
in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

Supported by the Northern Border Regional Commission

The Northern Forest Destination Development Initiative outdoor recreation grants program will award $424,000 over the next two years for outdoor recreation infrastructure development in selected counties in northeast Vermont, northern New Hampshire, and western Maine, using funds granted by the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC). An additional $200,000 is available for projects in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom through a separate NBRC grant to the Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

The program is open to public and non-profit applicants for projects that design, build, maintain or market trails, parks, wayfinding and related outdoor recreation and community infrastructure and amenities in ways consistent with community-developed plans and priorities.

Grant Size
Grants will be from $10,000 to $50,000.

Eligible Applicants
• Public entities
• Indian Tribes
• Non-profit entities described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code

Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities, LLCs and other entities that are not a 501(c). A non-profit identified by a state that does not have a federally recognized 501(c) status is not an eligible applicant.

Eligible Project Activities
Projects must be located in one or more of the following counties: Caledonia, Essex, Orleans counties in Vermont; Coos County, New Hampshire; Oxford and Franklin counties, Maine.

• Wayfinding & Interpretation. Public access and navigation improvements including signage, maps and/or other informational materials.

• Outdoor recreation infrastructure. Trails development, signage/kiosks/maps, or other outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements. Any infrastructure must be owned by or under the long term control (minimum 20-year lease) of the eligible applicant.
• **Marketing.** Marketing activities tied directly to outdoor recreation (as a portion of a larger project; application cannot be for marketing alone).

• **Supporting amenities.** E.g. parking, downtown infrastructure that will directly support outdoor recreation development. *Any infrastructure must be owned by or under the long term control (minimum 20-year lease) of the eligible applicant.*

**Match and Timeline Requirements**

- Applicants must provide a minimum of 20% match in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions.
- Projects with committed match at the time of application will be prioritized. Projects with pending match at the time of application will be accepted; however, if selected for an award all match must be secured within one month.
- If your project will use funds from multiple federal sources, including this grant, no more than 80% of your total project cost can be comprised of federal funds.
- Projects must be complete within one year of award.

**How to Apply**

For 2020, applications are due by 5 p.m. ET April 7, 2020. Approximately $212,000 is available this year, with an additional $100,000 available to projects in the Northeast Kingdom. A second round of funding in similar amounts will be made available in early 2021.

Eligible applicants should submit the following required materials:
- Application cover sheet
- Application narrative in response to seven project evaluation criteria
- For non-profits only: Certificate of Good Standing and IRS Determination Letter
- For trail or other recreation infrastructure projects, map(s) showing the location(s) of the infrastructure to be built.
- Documentation of matching funds (additional detail below)

Applicants may also choose to include the following optional attachments to the extent they directly address the application evaluation criteria:
- Up to Three (3) letters of support
- Photographs, drawings, site plans or any other information helpful in evaluating the project

Preferred submission format is a single pdf document. Applications should be emailed to jshort@northernforest.org and must be received by 5 p.m. eastern time on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Vermont applicants/projects should also copy dsnedeker@nvda.net

**Responsibilities of Sub-Grantees**

Grants under this program will be made in the form of sub-grants from larger grants given by the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), a federal funding entity. As such, sub-grantees are required to follow the requirements of the NBRC and use of federal funds, including but not limited to contract requirements, bidding requirements, etc. Applicants are strongly advised to review NBRC requirements, which can be found in the NBRC 2020 Compliance Manual, [http://www.nbrc.gov/uploads/Strategic%20Plan/ComplianceManual2020.pdf](http://www.nbrc.gov/uploads/Strategic%20Plan/ComplianceManual2020.pdf)
An excerpt of specific grant requirements that will be part of all sub-grants made as part of this program is included in Appendix A.

It is the responsibility of the grantee to secure all necessary state and local permits required for their project. Funded projects must also comply with—or demonstrate exemption from—federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

**For More Information**

For questions, please contact:
- Joe Short, Northern Forest Center. 603-229-0679 x104, [jshort@northernforest.org](mailto:jshort@northernforest.org)
- Vermont applicants must also contact David Snedeker, Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA). (802) 748-8303, [dsnedeker@nvda.net](mailto:dsnedeker@nvda.net)

We will also host optional teleconference info sessions to discuss the program and answer questions. Please RSVP to receive conference call info.
- Wednesday, March 18, 9-10 a.m. (RSVP to [jshort@northernforest.org](mailto:jshort@northernforest.org))
- Monday, March 23, 1-2 p.m. This call will have a particular focus on Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom but potential applicants from any eligible geography are welcome. (RSVP to [katherine@nekcollaborative.org](mailto:katherine@nekcollaborative.org))

Application begins on the next page.
Outdoor Recreation Grants Program

APPLICATION

(an editable Microsoft Word version of this application can be downloaded at:
https://nfcenter.org/outdoor_rec_app

COVER SHEET

Please complete the following information, replacing the instruction text in the right-hand column with your information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name:</th>
<th>[Enter the name of the project]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Name:</td>
<td>[Enter the name of entity applying for funds]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIN:</td>
<td>[Enter the applicant’s 9-digit federal tax or employer identification number (e.g.: 12-3456789)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Type:</td>
<td>[Enter applicant type. Eligible applicants include local government entities, tribes, municipalities, and non-profits]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Location:</td>
<td>[Provide the location of the proposed project. The specific street address, city/town/village, county, and state are required]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Contact:</td>
<td>[Provide name, phone number and email address of the person that will be responsible for the project during the application process]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount requested:</td>
<td>[Enter request amount. The maximum award is $50,000. If your project will use funds from multiple federal sources, including this grant, no more than 80% of your total project cost can be comprised of federal funds]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost:</td>
<td>[Enter the sum of all project expenses. This can only include costs that will be incurred after the grant is awarded]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Summary</td>
<td>[Provide a brief (&lt;150 words) summary of the project]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation Criteria and Application Questions

Projects will be evaluated against the seven evaluation criteria outlined below. Evaluation will also take into account the completeness of the proposal and a desire that the awarded project list reflect a geographic diversity within the region.

Read each of the criteria below and respond to the question that follows each one, describing how the project addresses each criterion in no more than 500 words. Both clarity and brevity will be taken into account in evaluating responses.

Criterion #1: Consistency with a community-supported outdoor recreation or destination development strategy. (20 pts)
- Project advances recently identified (within the past 2 years) outdoor recreation development priorities and/or related destination development objectives.
- Broad and inclusive community support for the project, including the engagement of low-income residents.

Question #1. Describe how your project has demonstrated community support and is part of a larger vision for outdoor recreation development.

[write your response here]

Criterion #2: Regional connectivity and coordination. (10 pts)
- Project has considered ways to connect recreation assets and strategies locally and regionally (including multi-community, interstate, and/or international connections)

Question #2. Describe how your project creates connectivity to existing or planned outdoor recreation assets and/or connectivity between outdoor recreation initiatives in the region.

[write your response here]

Criterion #3. Economic impact. (10 pts)
- Increased participation and spending from outdoor recreation related activities will improve the economic conditions in the community.

Question #3. Describe how the project will result in increased community economic benefit as a result of outdoor recreation.

[write your response here]

Criterion #4. Environmental Stewardship and Landowner Relationships. (10 pts)
- Project demonstrates a commitment to balancing recreation development with natural resource stewardship
• To the extent the project depends on public or private lands, demonstration of strong landowner relationships and consistency with landowner objectives.

**Question #4.** Describe how the project will contribute to the stewardship of the resource base on which it depends, and, as applicable, how it demonstrates landowner engagement and support.

[write your response here]

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**Criterion #5. Project workplan and timetable. (20 pts)**

- Applicant provides a clear articulation of tasks, who will be responsible for performing them, and when.
- Project readiness- capacity of applicant and partners to move quickly to project implementation and completion, including identification and receipt of all necessary permitting.

**Question #5.** Describe the project activities and timeline.

[write your response here. You may use a table format if helpful.]

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**Criterion #6. Outcomes (10 pts)**

- Desired outcomes are clear, contribute meaningfully to outdoor recreation development in the region and are measurable.

**Question #6.** Describe what a successful project will look like and how that success will be measured.

[write your response here]

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**Criterion #7. Budget (10 pts)**

- Budget aligns clearly with workplan
- Applicant/partners have secured at least 20% of project costs from other non-federal sources (e.g. 20% match).

**Question #7.** Complete the Revenue and Expense tables below, adding rows if needed. Use the notes column and, if needed, additional narrative after the tables to fully explain the budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Grant Requested</th>
<th>Other Funding</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[enter activity/line item]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Cash/In-kind</th>
<th>Secured?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Forest Outdoor Recreation Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>Requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[enter additional sources]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other Revenue</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Attachments**

In addition to your application cover sheet and evaluation criteria narrative, please attach:

- For non-profits only: Certificate of Good Standing and IRS Determination Letter
- For trail or other recreation infrastructure projects, map(s) showing the location(s) of the infrastructure to be built.
- Documentation of matching funds.
  - Projects are required to provide a minimum of 20% matching funds. For example, if the project budget is $10,000, the maximum grant request can be $8,000.
  - If your project will use funds from multiple federal sources, including this grant, no more than 80% of your total project cost can be comprised of federal funds.
  - For all committed match resources, the applicant must support each source, cash or in-kind, with a letter of commitment from the contributing entity, whether a public or private source. Such supporting documentation must be provided in the form of letters of firm commitment, memorandums of understanding, or other signed agreements.
  - Each letter of commitment, memorandum of understanding, or agreement to participate should include the organization’s name, the proposed level and type of commitment, and the responsibilities as they relate to the project. The commitment must be signed and dated by an official of the organization legally able to make commitments on behalf of the organization.

**Optional Attachments**

Applicants may also choose to include the following optional attachments to the extent they directly address the application evaluation criteria:

- Up to Three (3) letters of support
- Photographs, drawings, site plans or any other information helpful in evaluating the project
Appendix A.

Grants under this program will be made in the form of sub-grants from larger grants given by the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), a federal funding entity. As such, sub-grantees are required to follow the requirements of the NBRC and use of federal funds, including but not limited to contract requirements, bidding requirements, etc. Applicants are strongly advised to review NBRC requirements, which can be found in the NBRC 2020 Compliance Manual, http://www.nbrc.gov/uploads/Strategic%20Plan/ComplianceManual2020.pdf

The following conditions and requirements will be included in all sub-grantee Agreements.

**DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (2 CFR 182)**- Recipient must comply with the drug-free workplace regulations.

**HATCH ACT (5 CFR 900)**—The Hatch Act restricts the political activity of executive branch employees of the Federal Government and state or local officers or employees whose principal employment is in connection with an activity that is financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the United States or a Federal agency.

**STEVENS AMENDMENT (PL 100-463) – SEC. 511.** When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with Federal money, all grantees receiving Federal funds, including but not limited to State and local governments, shall clearly state (1) the percentage of the total costs of the program or project which will be financed with Federal money, (2) the dollar amount of Federal funds for the project or program, and (3) percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by nongovernmental sources.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**—The recipient agrees to report on program performance measures and outcomes as part of its final progress report, and three years after the final progress report using the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) information collection document.

**REPORTING**—The recipient will be required to submit quarterly reporting over the course of the project, and to submit the following additional reports at the end of the project:

i. A video of no more than three minutes in duration describing the project results must be submitted with the final progress report.

ii. An inventory of any equipment purchased as part of the project must be submitted with the final progress report. Equipment is defined as an item of tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a unit cost of more than $5,000. A depreciation schedule may be used for determination of fair market value.

iii. Standard Form 429A concerning any real property purchased as well as any recorded deed restrictions associated with the property must be submitted with the final progress report. Any leases of real estate developed as part of the project must
also be submitted at that time.

PROCUREMENT—Procurement of goods and services will be carried out following the recipient’s own procurement procedures provided they meet the minimum standards established in 2 CFR 200.317-326 and Appendix II of 2 CFR 200. Methods of procurement must conform to procedures identified in the recipient’s own procurement procedures and those identified in 2 CFR 200.320 and OMB memo 18-18. Northern Border Regional Commission has not instituted an approval process for thresholds higher than $10,000 for micro-purchases. The recipient must take all affirmative steps identified in 2 CFR 200.321 to assure that small and minority businesses, women’s business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are solicited and utilized when possible. The recipient must develop and maintain a code of conduct for officers, employees, and agents which prohibits financial and familial conflict of interest and curtails solicitation or acceptance of gratuities in accordance with 2 CFR 200.318(c).

All services necessary for design and engineering phases of the project be discharged by qualified personnel. Contracts for architect and engineering services shall be arranged using the competitive procedures identified in 2 CFR 200.320(d)(5) under which price may not be used as a selection factor. Also, the recipient may not enter into a cost-plus percentage of cost or a cost plus a percentage of constriction cost contract.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.318(b), the recipient will exercise oversight to assure that contractors perform in accordance with the delivery requirements of the contract and that they comply with all terms and conditions. The recipient shall enter into a sound and complete agreement with any contractor which is enforceable in the jurisdiction where the contract is to be performed and which contains the applicable clauses of 2 CFR 200.

PROPERTY TITLE, USE AND DISPOSITION—Title to real property, equipment, and supplies acquired by the recipient using funds from this agreement vests with the recipient. These assets shall be used for their original purposes if they are needed. The following policies apply to the different classes of property identified:

a. REAL PROPERTY—Real property shall be used for its original purpose as long as it is needed. If no longer needed for its original purpose, the recipient must obtain disposition instructions from NBRC. Options available under 2 CFR 200.311(c) are retention, sale, or transfer to a third party. In each case, a settlement of residual financial interests will be made. If real property is retained by the recipient, it shall be treated as being encumbered for a period of 20 years. If the recipient is not a state or local government, such encumbrance will be recorded as a deed restriction and a copy of the restriction must be provided to NBRC no later than the end of the performance period. The recipient must also prepare a Standard Form 429A with respect to each piece of real property acquired and submit a copy to NBRC in accordance with the reporting requirements of this agreement.

EMPLOYMENT—The recipient shall use its regular recruitment, hiring, and employment practices consistent with federal, state, and local law including but not limited to various non-discrimination policies which apply because of the status as a federal assistance recipient or as an employer.
However, the recipient agrees that it will not employ, offer any office or employment to, or retain for professional services any person who (1) on the date that NBRC executed this Grant Agreement or within a one year period ending on that date served as an officer, attorney, agent, or employee of NBRC and (2) occupied a position or engaged in activities which the Federal Co-chair determines involved discretion with respect to the Grant Agreement by NBRC.

NON-RELOCATION—By signing this agreement, the recipient attests that the NBRC funding is not intended to assist efforts by the recipient to induce the relocation or movement of existing jobs from one geographic region to another in competition for those jobs with the following exception: Financial assistance may be used as otherwise authorized by this subtitle to attract businesses to the region from outside the United States per 40 USC, Subtitle V §15501 (f.) If NBRC determines that its assistance was used for such purposes, NBRC reserves the right to pursue appropriate enforcement action including suspension of payment and possible disallowance and recovery of funds from the recipient.

COST ALLOWABILITY—Cost charges to this Grant Agreement, whether direct or indirect, will be determined in accordance with Subpart E of 2 CFR 200. These principles apply uniformly to state, and tribal governments, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations. The principles contain certain general tests of allowability that apply to all types of costs charged to the Grant Agreement and a list of selected items of cost that represent types of cost that are typically encountered by recipients and subrecipients in the course of administering a federal award or types of cost that, by their nature, the federal government refuses to allow. The detailed text of the cost principles identifies which the costs are allowable, which are not allowable, and which are allowable under certain circumstances. The proposed budget of the award was reviewed by NBRC to determine that the costs that are included therein are allowable. However, if, during the performance of this award, a cost occurs that is not included in the budget, it may still be allowable, based on the language in the cost principles. The recipient should take special care to review the listing contained in 2 CFR 200.407 which identifies costs that require prior approval, under certain circumstances.

RECORDS RETENTION AND ACCESS—The recipient shall retain all financial and programmatic records that are pertinent to the Grant Agreement. The records shall be retained for at least three years following submission of the final financial and performance reports for the Grant Agreement. If any audit, claim, or litigation started before the expiration of the retention period, the recipient shall retain the records until such matters are fully resolved. If the recipient is subject to any other more rigorous retention period for the records, the records must be retained to meet that requirement. During the period of retention, the records are accessible to the Comptroller General of the United States, the federal awarding agency, an inspector general, independent auditor performing audits under the Single Audit Act and any of their duly authorized representatives for the purpose of audit, examination, and copying. The rights of access do not expire with the designated retention period but shall last as long as the records are retained.

a. Records in the hands of the recipient are not subject to disclosure to the general public under the federal Freedom of Information Act. However, any records transmitted to NBRC are subject to that statute. Methods for collection, transmission, and storage of the records shall be consistent with instructions contained in 2 CFR 200.335.
AUDIT REQUIREMENTS—The funds made available under this agreement are considered to be a federal award within the meaning of 2 CFR 200.502. Accordingly, the expenditures that the recipient makes from this Grant Agreement count toward meeting the threshold amount of expenditures necessary to trigger an audit pursuant to the Single Audit Act and 2 CFR 200, Subpart F. Thus, if the recipient organization expends more than $750,000 in covered federal awards during its fiscal year, it will arrange for an independent audit conducted by a qualified auditor or firm. The resulting audit report along with a completed SF-SAC and additional documents identified in 2 CFR 200.511 must be submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse not later than nine (9) months after the end of the recipient’s fiscal year. Information about how to accomplish single audit submissions is available at http://harvester.census/facweb/Default.aspx.

CONTINUING ACCOUNTABILITY—The recipient must assume continuing accountability for several matters that extend beyond the performance period. These include custody and maintenance of property that has been retained, records retention and access for records, and the discretionary right of the federal government to conduct audits and investigations on an as needed basis.