

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S 2017 ACTIVE TRAILS GRANTS PROGRAM

Made possible through the generous support of:
The Coca-Cola Company and The Coca-Cola Foundation

Grant Applications Due: Friday, October 21, 2016

The National Park Foundation is pleased to announce that it is accepting applications from **ALL** National Park System units and all affiliated units officially administered by the National Park Service to participate in our **2017 Active Trails Grants Program**. Applications must be submitted by a National Park Service staff person or Executive Director/Manager of a site administered by the National Park Service.

Optional Informational Call: An optional informational call to discuss this RFP and the proposal process will be held on **Wednesday, September 28, 2015 at 3:00 pm EST**. All parties interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to attend the call, but it is not required that you be on this call to submit a proposal.

Conference Line: 641-715-3200
Passcode: 301096#

Deadline: Proposals are due no later than **Friday, October 21, 2016** (midnight EST). *We strongly recommend you submit by Wednesday, October 19. If you wait until the last day to submit your proposal and there is a technical glitch (server down, power outage, can't remember access codes, can't get support letter, etc.) you put your submission at risk.*

Award Amount:

Each national park grant recipient can be awarded up to \$25,000 to carry out project activities from January 1 through the end of December 2017.

Notification: Applicants will be notified of award selections by early November 2016.

Eligibility to Apply:

- If your park has never applied for an Active Trails grant you are eligible.
- If your park has previously applied for an Active Trails grant and been denied, you are eligible.
- If your park has previously received Active Trails funding you are eligible.

NOTE: A Friends Group or other partner can operate the grant, but the application must come from the park unit.

Selection Process: All applications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the National Park Foundation, the National Park Service, and The Coca-Cola Company. Grantee selections will be based on the applicant's ability to meet and exceed program requirements and required outcomes.

Questions: Contact Carolyn Hill, chill@nationalparks.org, 202-796-3162, or Farah Anwar, fanwar@nationalparks.org, 202-796-3161, with questions about this RFP or any other questions regarding this program.

RFP Contents:

- A. Program Overview**
- B. Program Requirements**
- C. Program Goal and Outcomes**
- D. Program Timeline**
- E. Program Evaluation**
- F. Proposal Instructions**
- G. Proposal Template**
- H. Checklist**

A. Program Overview

Now entering its ninth successful year, the multi-faceted Active Trails program is an enrichment program that strengthens national parks, strengthens relations between parks and community members and organizations, and supports individual growth and well-being. Through the Active Trails program community members of all ages get out and active on the trails – whether hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, doing Zumba or yoga on historic battlefields, or volunteering to help improve existing trails or build new ones. By connecting people to one another and to outdoor experiences in national parks, Active Trails provides engaging and diverse recreational, educational, and service opportunities to local community members and visitors alike.

*Note: This year the **Active Trails Program** has broadened the focus beyond health- and wellness-related activities. The idea is to help engage local community members with park trails and resources in ways that provide value to both the participants and the parks through recreation, learning, volunteering, wellness, citizen science, etc.*

Traditional Youth Conservation Corps projects are NOT a focus of this grant.

The **Active Trails Program** provides a platform through which grantees can:

1. Raise awareness that park trail resources are available, and of benefit to local communities.
2. Motivate community members to get outside and get active in parks.
3. Deepen connections between national parks and local communities through relevant partnerships.
4. Inspire the next generation of park visitors and supporters.

Given that this year's cycle starts in the winter, you have an opportunity to offer winter activities such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, winter wildlife walks, winter star-gazing, and more! Or, as the snow melts (or temperatures cool down a bit depending upon your location), why not offer "spring into action" type activities such as refurbishing trails, phenology studies, guided flower walks with a local botany group, or get in shape boot camps. As the summer heats up there is no shortage of things to do on land and water trails. And, as the leaves change or the hurricane season winds down, it's time to get creative – fall into hiking, study what makes leaves turn colors, "bike to the pumpkin festival" and more!

Working in collaboration with community partners there is no shortage of ways you will be able to motivate people to take advantage of the wonderful park trail resources.

B. Program Requirements & Grantee Responsibilities

The **Active Trails Program** provides an excellent platform through which to raise awareness about, and increase usage of the variety of land and water trails that are found in national parks.

Following are the grantee responsibilities for the January - December 2017 cycle:

1. Engage the public in trail-related activities (i.e. recreation, volunteering, education, wellness).
2. As feasible, provide activities/opportunities that are not, or not readily available in the community.
3. As feasible, incorporate some element of durability or sustainability (i.e. offer ongoing series of activities to core group to build long-lasting connection to park, remove invasive species, build or refurbish trail, leverage grant funds to continue into coming year, etc.)
4. Affiliate with community partners, engaging at least one new partner.
5. As feasible, engage both young and old participants.
6. As feasible engage at-risk or non-traditional audiences that are not utilizing the park at all, or in full capacity.
7. Conduct outreach/promotional activities related to the park activities including at least one press release based on the template provided by NPF.
8. Participate in bi-monthly conference calls with the NPF and evaluator.
9. Participate in all assessments and evaluations and provide materials as requested for bi-annual reports to donor.
 - Mandatory online interim and final reports
 - Tracking participation
 - Engaging partners and volunteers to survey a sample of participants
 - Interviews with the external evaluator as requested.
10. Submit collateral materials such as photos, videos to NPF on ongoing basis (as applicable/available).

C. Program Goal and Outcomes

The Program Goal is to increase the relevance, visibility and value of national parks as a resource for local communities.

Program Outcomes: These 12 participant, partner and park outcomes will be the primary focus of the Evaluation.

1. Participants visit their national parks in person for the first time.
2. Participants engage in trail-related activity(s) at the park (i.e. recreation, volunteering, education, wellness)
3. Participants enhance knowledge about and comfort using national park trails.
4. Participants express interest in returning/or return to the park for more trail-related activity outside of the program.
5. Participants benefit from using park trail resources
6. Partners develop awareness or understanding of parks as a resource.
7. Partners benefit from using park trail resources.
8. Partners intend to make ongoing use of the parks for their clients.

9. Parks increase understanding of what community partners need.
10. Parks enhance ability to work with and leverage partnerships.
11. Parks increase the number of opportunities through which people can engage with trail resources.
12. Parks benefit from the program (i.e. gain new audiences, develop new programming, enhance trails)

D. Program Timeline

Wed, Sep 14, 2016	RFP Released and online application activated
Wed, Sep 28, 2016	Optional informational call with interested applicants
Fri, Oct 21, 2016	Deadline for applications to be submitted
Oct/Nov 2016	Applications reviewed by committee
Nov 2016	Grantees selected, contacted and check information requested
Nov-Dec 2016	Grant Agreements processed and check request processed
Jan thru Dec 2017	Projects active and being implemented
June/July 2017	Online Interim Reports to be completed
Dec 31, 2017	All projects completed
Jan 30, 2018	Online Final Reports to be completed

E. Program Evaluation

NPF contracts the services of a professional external evaluator in order to gauge the effectiveness of specific activities and audience satisfaction. With each new cycle of a program the NPF staff and participants use lessons learned through the evaluation process to refine and improve the program and the grant cycle.

Generally, the evaluator creates Logic Models and program theories from which the evaluation tools flow – interviews, surveys, online interim and final reporting, to name a few. For the Active Trails program basic evaluation elements include:

- Identifying first-time visitors who participate in your program.
- Tracking repeat program participants.
- Providing a partner who will work with the evaluator to administer a survey to a portion of your participants about their experience of your program.
- Reporting on your activities, outreach efforts, participant counts, volunteer hours, partner contributions, products you develop (signs, brochures, maps, podcasts etc.).

Additionally, grantees will be required to provide anecdotal information, quotes, photos and samples of materials developed.

F. Proposal Instructions:

1. Read the RFP

Please read this RFP carefully and then use the online application process to submit.

- 2. Optional:** Informational call to discuss this RFP and the proposal process will be held on **Wed, September 28, 2016 at 3:00pm EST**. All parties interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to attend the call, but it is not required that you be on this call to submit a proposal.

Conference Line: 641-715-3200
Passcode: 301096#

3. Online Application

- a. Use this link to submit application:
https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_328?SA=SNA&FID=35078
- b. If you have previously applied for an NPF grant, please sign in using your existing username and password.
- c. If you have never applied for an NPF grant, you will be asked to create a new account when you sign in to the online application. Please keep your username and password available for future use.

4. Start Online Application and Needing to “Saving and Finish Later”

After you have begun your submission, you may choose to save and complete it at a later date. You can exit the submission at any time and access it later by going to the following URL that is different from the original URL you used to create the account or to start the application:

URL for re-accessing your application once started
https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_328?sa=am (enter your account login information).

2. Complete and submit your finished proposal

Press “Submit” on the last page of the online system. You will receive an automatic email confirming that your proposal has been submitted. If you do NOT receive an automatic email, your proposal has NOT been submitted.

Proposals are due no later than Friday, October 21, 2016.

If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Hill at 202-796-3162 or chill@nationalparks.org or Farah Anwar, fanwar@nationalparks.org, 202-796-3161, with questions about this RFP or any other questions regarding this program.

G. Proposal Template

See following pages

H. Checklist

See page 8

WORD VERSION OF PROPOSAL APPLICATION
(Meant to help you prepare your online application)

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S
2017 ACTIVE TRAILS GRANTS PROGRAM

Made possible by: The Coca-Cola Company and The Coca-Cola Foundation

Grant Applications Due: **Friday, October 21, 2016**

National Park: _____

Name of Superintendent/Exec Director: _____

National Park Site Contact Information:

Contact Person: _____

Contact Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address (Street): _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP-xxxx: _____

Project Lead Contact Information (If different from Park):

Contact Person: _____

Contact Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address (Street): _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP-xxxx: _____

APPLICATION STATEMENTS:

Read and answer each question below.

1. Project Title (max. 100 words)

Project title should be concise and capture the essence of the project.

2. Project Abstract (max. 200 words)

One or two paragraphs that concisely summarize the project.

3. Project Description (max. 500 words)

Fully describe the project. Tell us what it is and why you feel it is a good fit for the Active Trails Grants Program.

4. Your Target Audience

Describe your core target audience and why you feel they are important for this project. If you have a sense of how many youth and adults will be engaged with your project, please include.

5. Project Outcomes (max. 500 words)

Explain how your project plan will meet and exceed any and/or all, of the 12 Program Outcomes.

6. Project Timeline (max. 200 words)

What are the major milestones? Please estimate specific dates. Provide a specific time at which you expect to be at the mid-point of your work and when you expect to have all your activities completed.

7. NPS Staff Lead(s) (max. 100 words)

Park has designated lead staff person(s) who has/have experience working collaboratively with partner organizations, trail-related activities and outdoor recreation.

8. New Project Partner(s) (max 300 words)

Identify your new community partner(s) who will participate in the project and describe reasons for selection. (Name, city, state)

9. Expanding Current Partnership(s) (if applicable) (max 300 words)

Identify existing partner(s) and how working together on this project will help expand or strengthen your partnership. (Name, city, state)

10. Evaluation partner

Identify the partner organization best suited to work with the evaluator to administer a survey to a portion of your participants.

11. Are there any “leveraging” opportunities? (max 300 words)

Describe opportunities to leverage funds, in-kind donations, outreach, expertise, research, partnerships, etc.

12. Other

What else do you wish to tell us about your project, if anything?

13. Will you run the program if you do not get this grant? Please explain.

14. Project Budget

Please identify the total amount requested from NPF. Each grantee will be awarded up to \$25,000.

Please provide a preliminary draft budget for the project. You can attach an Excel or Word document in the attachments section. *We understand the need to supplement costs for staffing, but if you have included more than 50% for staff costs, please explain how you will meet all other program costs. And, please describe any matching funds/in-kind that you are aware of.*

CHECKLIST

Prior to submitting your online application, please use the following checklist to ensure that you have completed all elements of the proposal requirements:

- Optional:** I have participated in the conference call on **Wed, September 28, 2015 at 3:00pm Eastern time** to discuss the application process and RFP and get answered any questions I may have.
- I have read the qualification and selection criteria and reviewed the grant requirements, and I am confident that our park and partners are prepared to effectively participate in the program.
- I have formulated answers to all of the questions in the RFP prior to beginning the online application.
- I understand it is in my best interest to submit the online application at least 2-3 days prior to the deadline.
- I have prepared the following attachments for the application:
 - Budget (if not included in application itself)
 - Timeline (if not included in application itself)
 - A letter of support from Park Superintendent or the Executive Director of the site.
 - A letter of support from Chief of Interpretation/Education or Site Manager.
 - A letter of support from project partner(s).
- I have contacted Carolyn Hill at 202-796-3162, chill@nationalparks.org or Farah Anwar, fanwar@nationalparks.org, 202-796-3161, with questions about this RFP or any other questions regarding this program.

An electronic copy of this RFP will be posted at www.nationalparks.org