

State Recreational Trails

The Recreational Trails Program was established by the General Assembly during the 1987 Legislative Session with the passage of HF 575 (Recreational Trails Act). The intent of the General Assembly was for the State to acquire and develop 2,000 miles of new recreational trails and complete the existing trail projects before the year 2000. As of FY 2008, the Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates the trail system to be approximately 1,455 miles. This includes developed multi-use recreational trails and off-road paths throughout the State.

The DOT administers three programs that provide funding for trails development and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers two. The programs managed by the DOT include the State Recreational Trails Program, the federal Transportation Enhancement Program, and the federal Recreational Trails Program. The DNR administers the Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund and the Recreation Grant Program. In addition, some funding for trails is available through the Community Attraction and Tourism Program, administered by the Department of Economic Development.

This *Fiscal Topic* focuses solely on the State Recreational Trails Program.

Funding of State Recreational Trails Fund

From FY 1989 to FY 1996, the State Recreational Trails Fund received a \$1.0 million standing appropriation annually from the Road Use Tax Fund. In FY 1997, the General Assembly eliminated the Road Use Tax Fund standing appropriation and began funding the Trails Program from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) through the annual appropriations

process. For FY 1998 and FY 1999, the appropriation was increased to \$2.0 million each year. In FY 2000 and FY 2001, the amount appropriated was \$2.25 million per year, with an earmark of \$250,000 for off-road motorized vehicle trails. Since FY 2002, funding has been from either the RIIF or restricted capital funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund.

In FY 2002, during a period of record declines in General Fund revenues, the State transferred \$5.5 million from the balance in the State Recreational Trails Fund to the General Fund, creating a shortfall in the State Recreational Trails Program. The subsequent appropriations from FY 2002 through FY 2008 have alleviated this shortfall; however in FY 2005 the State did not appropriate funds for the Program. For FY 2009, the appropriation from the RIIF is \$3.0 million. **Table 1** shows the funding amount and source of funds of the appropriation to the DOT for the State Recreational Trails Program from FY 2002 through FY 2009.

State Recreational Trails Program

Grants funded through the Recreational Trails Fund require a minimum local match of 25.0%. Trails that receive funding must be maintained for public use for a minimum of twenty years. Local governments and nonprofit organizations generally serve as individual project sponsors and provide matching funds required. The amount of local funds spent on trails is larger than the State and federal match because the entities spend funds outside of the grant programs.

Applications for funding from the Recreational Trails Program are considered twice per year and are approved by the Transportation

Commission. Project evaluation criteria are:

- Needs of population to be served and existing trails available.
- Compatibility with local, area-wide, regional, or Statewide plans.
- Benefits of multiple uses and recreational opportunities.
- Quality of the site.
- Economic benefits to the local area.
- Special facilities for handicapped users.

Trail Projects

Funding needs are always greater than available revenues. For the FY 2009 funding, the DOT received a total of 43 applications, requesting a total amount of \$16.1 million. Over the last several years, the General Assembly has directed a portion of the funding for specific projects. The percentage of the appropriation directed to specific projects has been increasing. In FY 2007, the earmark was

(over)

More Information

Department of Transportation Trails
<http://www.iowadot.gov/trails.html>

Department of Transportation's Office of
System Planning Recreational Trails
Program
http://www.sysplan.dot.state.ia.us/fedstate_rectrails.htm

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Iowa by
Trail
<http://www.inhf.org/iowatrails/index.htm>

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for one project of \$200,000, or 10.0% of the appropriation. In FY 2008, the earmark was \$415,000 for three projects, or 20.8% of the appropriation. In FY 2009, \$1.18 million of the \$3.0 million appropriated, or 39.3%, was earmarked for six projects. When projects receive earmarks, they bypass the normal application and approval process by the Transportation Commission. **Table 2**

shows the State grants for FY 2006 to FY 2009, including the earmarks.

Flooding Damage

The 2008 flooding caused extensive damage to the State's recreational trails. Preliminary estimates by DOT, DNR, and the Department of Economic Development for damages to the State's trail system are \$10.0 to \$15.0 million.

Two previously approved projects, the Mississippi River Trail Upper Scott County (Le Claire) for \$799,740 and the Big Sioux River Trail Bridge (Sioux City) for \$187,500 were not completed and the funding has reverted. The DOT will use the reverted funds to help cover the State match when local governments apply for FEMA funding for these damaged trails.

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Table 1
State Appropriations to the Department of Transportation for Recreational Trails Funding
FY 2002 to FY 2009

	Actual FY 2002	Actual FY 2003	Actual FY 2004	Actual FY 2005	Actual FY 2006	Actual FY 2007	Actual FY 2008
Recreational Trails Funding - State Source							
RIF - Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 2,000,000
RC2 - Endowment for Iowa's Health Restricted Capitals Fund	0	0	0	0	0	2,000,000	0
RCF - Restricted Capital Fund	1,000,000 ¹	2,000,000	1,000,000	0	0	0	0
Total	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000

¹ In FY 2002, the State appropriated \$1.0 million from the RCF for the Trails Program; however the \$5.5 million balance of the State Recreational Trails Fund was transferred to the State General Fund.

Table 2
State Recreational Trails Program Grants FY 2006 to FY 2009

State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2006	State Grant	State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2007	State Grant
Trestle to Trestle Trail - (Polk County)	\$ 346,739	4-Mile Creek Greenway Trail (Polk County, City of Ankeny)	\$ 690,000
Clear Creek Trail - Phase 4 (Coralville)	327,912	Alice's Road Greenbelt Trail (Clive)	402,405
Gypsum City OHV Park (Webster County)	250,000	Des Moines County Recreational Trail - Phase 1 (Des Moines County)	360,000
Crow Creek Trail, Phase 1 (Bettendorf)	218,870	18th Street to Riverview Trail (Waterloo)	252,187
Big Sioux River Trail Bridge (Sioux City)*	187,500	Trail Projects in Wapello County** (Wapello County)	200,000
Raccoon River Valley Rehabilitation (Guthrie County)	175,000	Cemar Trail - Phase 2 (Cedar Rapids)	150,000
Little Sioux Valley Trail (Woodbury County)	150,000	Coon Rapids Town Loop Trail (Coon Rapids)	106,875
Decorah Loop Trail, Segment #6 (Decorah)	150,000	Lakeview OHV Park Upgrades (Johnson County)	39,315
Winnebago River Trail Bridge (Mason City)	110,448	Total FY 2007	\$ 2,200,782
Ventura Cove Link (Cerro Gordo County)	50,000		
Total FY 2006	\$ 1,966,469		
		State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2009	State Grant
		Linn Creek Trail Connection with Iowa Hwy 330 Trail (Marshall County)	\$ 800,000
		Principal Riverwalk (City of Des Moines)**	750,000
		Garlock Slough Recreational Trail (West Okoboji and Dickinson County)	490,162
State Recreational Trails Program - FY 2008	State Grant	Mississippi River Trail - Liberty Avenue Connection (City of Clinton)	351,750
Mississippi River Trail Upper Scott County (Le Claire)*	\$ 799,740	Trout Run Trail (City of Decorah and Winneshiek County)	138,088
Ankeny to Woodward Trail Corridor (Boone County)	565,960	American Gothic Regional Trail (connecting Ottumwa and Fairfield)**	100,000
Jewell to Ellsworth Trail (Hamilton County)**	185,000	Maquoketa River Water Trail (Jones County)**	100,000
Heart of Iowa Nature Trail Phases VII and VIII (Story County)	100,000	Stone State Park Trail (Woodbury County)**	100,000
Maquoketa River Water Trail (Jones County)	69,300	Summerset Trail - (connecting Indianola, Carlisle, Des Moines)**	100,000
Lewis and Clark Trail Planning Study (Western Iowa)	50,000	Riverview Recreation Area expansion (Black Hawk County)	40,000
Crawford County Trail (Crawford County)**	30,000	Crawford County Trail (Crawford County)**	30,000
Fairfield Loop Trail (Fairfield)**	200,000		
Total FY 2008	\$ 2,000,000	Total FY 2009	\$ 3,000,000

*Project not completed and funding reverted

**Earmarked projects.