WHAT IS THE TRAIL ENHANCEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM?

The aim of the program is to enhance recreation opportunities in the Basin.

In 2020, the Trust renewed its strategic plan, which includes six strategic priorities that focus its efforts into 2023. Trail Enhancement Grants provide flexible and proactive support that helps communities achieve their unique aspirations when it comes to trails. This program aligns with the objectives and desired outcomes of the “community well-being” strategic priority.

PROGRAM UPDATES

- Capital purchases are limited to requests less than $10,000.
- Priority will be given to projects that have low financial barriers to participate.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible applicants include registered non-profits, local governments and First Nations communities in the Columbia Basin Trust region (ourtrust.org/map).

Your project must benefit a region or broad group of people in the Basin. The primary beneficiary cannot be the applicant or solely the members of a membership-based organization.

To be eligible, applicants operating outside the Basin must partner with community-based organizations in the Basin and show that the project takes place in the Basin.

WHEN IS THE APPLICATION DEADLINE?

For projects starting in 2023, applications must be received by:

**October 26, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. PT/3:00 p.m. MT.**
WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS AND COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

The following projects and costs are eligible:

1. Development of trails to:
   • expand and accommodate accessible standards for people with disabilities, mobility issues or adaptive equipment;
   • are short sections that link other trails together (connector trails); and
   • mitigate identified environmental issues or incorporate climate resilience considerations.

2. Rehabilitation of trails that:
   • are damaged due to large or catastrophic weather events; and
   • have identified environmental issues that need to be mitigated.

3. Construction of complementary trail infrastructure that will enhance the user experience, such as:
   • trailside and trailhead recreation facilities (e.g. signs/kiosks, washrooms, picnic tables, benches, gazebos, garbage cans and huts);
   • trail infrastructure (e.g. culverts, boardwalks and bridges) added to existing trails or built to replace aging or unsafe infrastructure; also eligible are the associated design and engineering costs; and
   • elements that contribute to the awareness of Indigenous heritage or that of other cultures.

4. New in 2022: Capital expenses for equipment that directly supports your project or mandate may be considered if requests are under $10,000 and for items such as:
   • trail counters; and
   • equipment (e.g. shovels, rakes, brush hogs, chainsaws, packers/compactors, wheelbarrows and storage units).

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS OR COSTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE?

Ineligible projects or costs include:

• retroactive costs (costs incurred before the grant’s Contribution Agreement is signed)
• wages associated with regular, routine and ongoing maintenance
• costs associated with land use planning or project development that’s outside the scope of the specific project (e.g. larger-scale land use planning)
• projects that take place outside the Basin
• projects that relieve any level of government of its obligations
• projects done for political parties, advocacy or lobby groups or organizations that are exclusive or discriminative in nature.
HOW MUCH WILL THE TRUST FUND?

There is no maximum amount for grant requests. However, the Trust anticipates that many successful grants will be in the range of $10,000 to $60,000.

You may request up to a maximum of 80 per cent of the project costs.

The program prioritizes applications that have other confirmed sources of cash revenue. However, in-kind contributions may be considered as part of the applicant’s contribution if the organization:

- is primarily run by volunteers
- has a limited operating budget
- demonstrates that the project will be sustainable into the future
- meets all other eligibility criteria
- is making reasonable efforts to raise additional funds.

If you’re requesting a larger amount of funding, your project should demonstrate significant regional impact, long-term sustainability, community-wide collaboration and confirmed funding from sources other than the Trust. You must provide letters of support from partners and other organizations (e.g. non-profits, governments, businesses) that are familiar with your organization or your project.

HOW DOES THE TRUST SELECT PROJECTS FOR FUNDING?

An internal evaluation committee reviews applications. It uses the following criteria to prioritize funding requests:

- The request aligns with the eligible project types and costs.
- The project demonstrates community support, indicated by activities like stakeholder engagement and support, fundraising, financial commitments and partnerships, where appropriate.
- The project demonstrates readiness and can move forward within the stated timelines.
- The organization coordinating the project demonstrates an understanding of the need for long-term maintenance.
- The application shows that required permits and approvals are in place.
- The project demonstrates the trail use will have low financial barriers to participate.

The evaluation committee may give additional consideration to projects that incorporate:

- Indigenous perspectives or partnerships with Indigenous peoples
- climate resilience considerations.

Also, the Trust tries to disburse funds fairly throughout the geographic regions of the Basin.
WHEN WILL I HEAR THE RESULTS?

The review process usually takes up to eight weeks. Prior to approving any projects, Trust staff may contact you during the evaluation phase to request additional information.

To let you know if your project has been approved or not, the Trust will contact you by email at the address on your application form. If the project is approved, it will let you know whether there are conditions you will need to address. The Trust will then send a Contribution Agreement for signature; you will receive the funding after both parties sign this.

WHAT ELSE DO I HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND?

Even if a project meets the eligibility criteria, the Trust may not select it for funding; high demand for the program often means that the Trust doesn’t have enough funds to meet all requests. The Trust will decide if projects are eligible and the amount of funding it will allocate to each project. It may offer all, or only part, of the funding you request.

Depending on the nature of your project, you may have to obtain specific permits and approvals before receiving Trust funds.

You can only start the project and incur costs once the Contribution Agreement has been signed.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The Trust will begin accepting applications on August 18, 2022. Check back for links to the online application form.