

2021 Trail Access Grants Workshop

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Planning & Recreation Resources

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Agenda

- Trail Access Grants Overview
- Eligibility
- 2021 Schedule
- Project Administration
- Application Guidance
- Q&A

Webinar Information:

- Webinar is being recorded and posted to website.
- We will stop periodically for questions.
- Feel free to use chat box feature any time.



Trail Access Grants Overview



Purpose:

Increase access to *existing* land and water trails for people with disabilities

Funding:

Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund (tax check-off)

Grant Requests and Awards

~\$128,000 available

**\$20,000 - \$50,000 funding
request range**

Covers up to 100% of costs

3-5 awards expected

Potential Distribution:

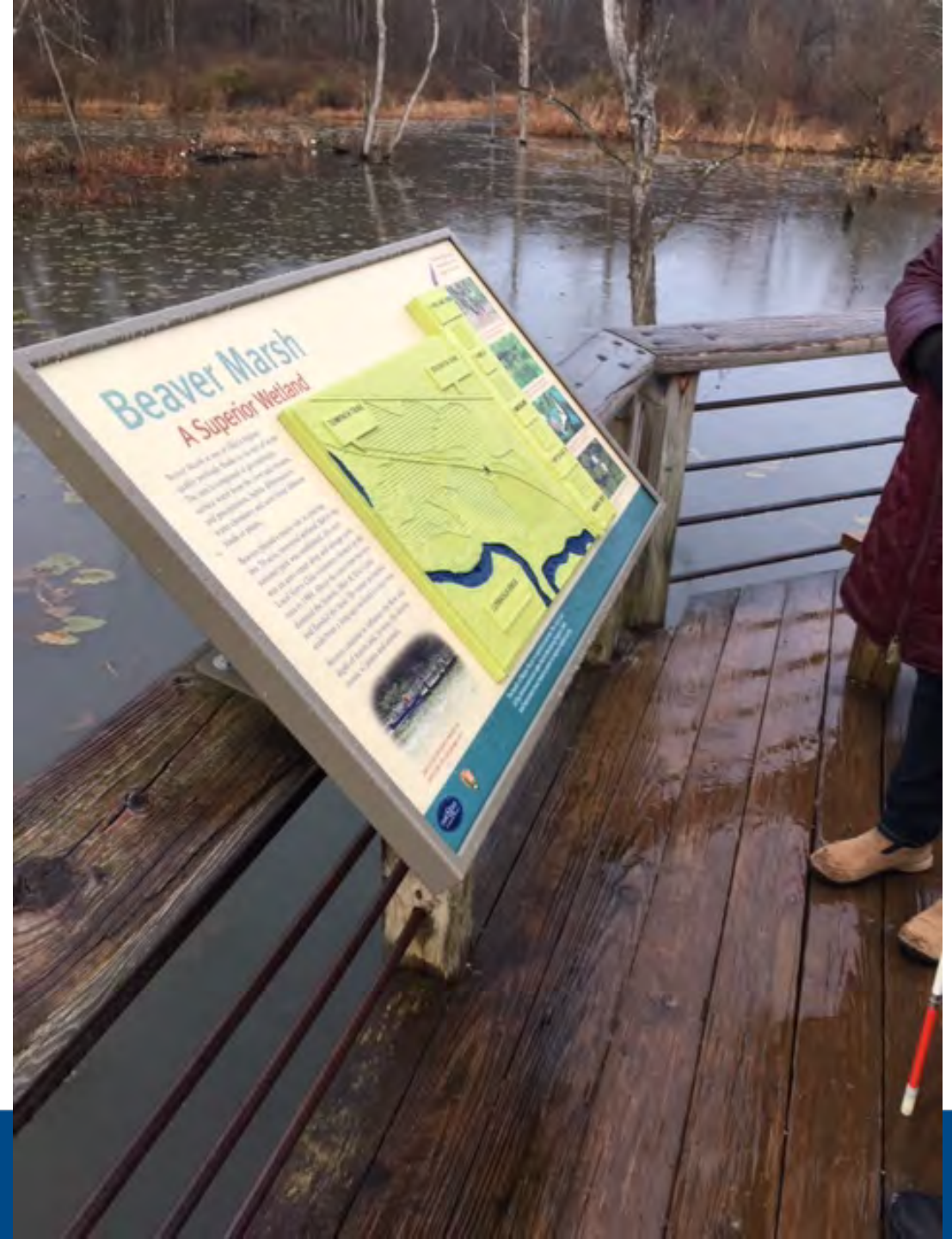
- Tactile signage and/or audio description
- Trailhead
- Water Trail
- Land Trail

Key Provisions

- Payments made on **reimbursement** basis
 - Must be able to fund project fully with reimbursement upon project completion
- State and local **environmental review and permitting** requirements must be followed
- Post installation **site inspection** required
- **12 month** agreement length (from signature to reimbursement processing)

Applicant Eligibility

- Local Governments and Recreation Departments (town, city, county)
- Tribal Governments
- Recreation Authorities



Eligible Projects

- Must be on an existing, fee-free, land or water trail open to the public
- Right of way must be controlled by the applicant (through easement, lease, or ownership)
- Shovel or purchase-ready improvement or addition **that provides greater access to the trail experience for people with disabilities**
- Must result in an on-the-ground (or water) usable feature or upgrade

Eligible Project Examples

- Tactile wayfinding or interpretive signage,
- Waysides with audio description, or an audio described tour
- Accessible watercraft launches,
- Trailhead information signs that include trail conditions and access information,
- Accessibility improvements to trailhead restrooms, parking, and picnic areas,
- Removing tread obstacles and reducing surface slope,
- Creating firm and stable tread surfaces.

Ineligible Projects and Expenses

- Projects on sections of trails currently being built
- Replacement of existing accessible features necessary due to lack of adequate maintenance or because feature has reached the end of useable lifespan
- Costs to return a feature back to its condition at the time of construction or installation
 - Example: repairing deteriorated areas of existing asphalt trail
- Administrative, engineering, and in-house labor costs

Accessibility Resources

- Page 5 of Trail Access Grants Manual
- Includes links to online resources ranging from ADA and ABA Standards to guidelines and best practices for trail elements



2021 Schedule

- **April 1** – Applications opened
- **June 30** – Applications due via email by 4pm
- **July** – Applications reviewed by DCR Recreation Grants staff
- **Late July – August** – DCR scoring committee review
- **Late August** – Applicants of projects recommended for funding are contacted
- **September** – Preparing award/contract documents
- **October** – Project authorizations and grant agreements

Project Administration

Project Agreement

- Projects recommended for funding will be contacted and asked to indicate their willingness to proceed
- A project agreement between the entity and DCR will be signed by both parties.
- The agreement will outline the scope of work, the maximum reimbursement amount, reporting obligations, and other grant requirements.
 - **Do NOT incur reimbursable expenses before agreement is signed**
 - Project period will be for 12 months from date of signature

Environmental Review and Permitting

- Can be completed before agreement is signed
- You must follow your local requirements
 - Contact your local permitting office
- Plus applicable state requirements since funded by DCR (instructions in manual):
 - DCR Division of Natural Heritage review
 - If there are potential impacts to wetlands or state waters, local wetlands board and joint permit application to Virginia Marine Resource Commission
- Must be completed, submitted, and reviewed by DCR prior to purchase/ incurring reimbursable expenses

Reimbursement Procedures

- Once scope of work is complete, submit request to DCR for site inspection
 - Site inspection will be scheduled
- Can also submit reimbursement documentation at this time
 - Signed summary of work and reimbursement request
 - W-9
 - Proof of purchase/ expenditure
 - Payment verification



Site Inspection

- Does the as-built or installed product meet the scope outlined in the agreement?
- Does the product meet the applicable standards?
- Does the surrounding site/ access routes meet the applicable standards?
- If the answer is **no**, entity will have opportunity to correct deficiencies.
 - DCR will make maximum of two site inspections. If project does not pass second site inspection, no reimbursement will be paid and funds will be redistributed to other grant opportunities.

Project Closeout

- Once site inspection is passed and reimbursement documents are received, reimbursement will be processed.
- Reimbursements can be sent via check or direct deposit.
- DCR will request photos of completed project



(unless the weather cooperates and lets us take nice photos during the site inspection 😊)

Application

Application File

- Application is a fillable .pdf. Download free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader at: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- Add requested attachments by using “insert pages” function
- The boxes will auto-size text to fit. There are word limits for most questions. Please do not exceed.
- Contact Recreation Grants staff to obtain an alternative format if you are unable to access or use the fillable .pdf file

Application Sections

- Applicant Information
- Project Details
- Project Need
- Standards and Design
- Installation, Maintenance, and Upkeep
- Commitment to Inclusion
- Certification



Section A: Applicant Information

- **Entity** must be name of eligible applicant
- Please list **contact person** who will be the main coordinator for the project
- **Mailing address** may be used to send paper notification of award, agreements, etc., but we will primarily use email for all grant correspondence
- So, please list **email** of contact person who all project communication should go through

Section B: Project Details

- **Project Title:** Doesn't have to be anything fancy!
- **Right of Way:** There is no scoring preference for ownership versus easement, but it is expected that the funded element be available to the public through its usable lifespan
- **Property Address:** Address DCR staff could use to visit the site
- **Lat and Long:** Exact location for our mapping purposes
- **Trail Amenities:** We want to understand what is currently available on the trail. Is there parking, restroom/s, interpretive signage, a scenic overlook? What is the current experience like for users? This will help us understand how your project increases access to these amenities.

Section C: Project Need

- **Statement of Need:** This might be the most important question!
- **Service Area Population:** Describe the community that the trail serves, could include demographic information, health data, number of users, etc.
- **Public involvement:** Was the public involved in identifying the need for or planning this project?
 - Have you received feedback, complaints, survey responses, or other public input calling for this project?
 - Has the public been involved in the planning and design/ product selection process in any way?

Section D: Standards and Design

- **ADA Standards, ABA Outdoor Developed Areas Standards, and/or other Best Practices:** Your project must follow the minimum applicable requirements. The standards may not apply to some scope items.
 - Of course you can exceed the minimums and/or follow the standards even if they don't apply! If so, please tell us how.
 - What other methods and design criteria that are guiding your project?
- Please identify and describe all elements of your project. The project will score lower if you only discuss the “most accessible” elements and leave out other details.

Standards and Design, continued

- **Plans, specifications, or cut sheets:** as detailed as possible.
- **Entry to Exit Experience:** Describe the visitor experience relating to trail amenities. If you have plans to make future upgrades or accessibility improvements to these amenities, please state that and describe.
 - Again, please describe all elements of the experience. The project will score lower if you omit elements- it is better to describe how some elements aren't accessible yet than not to describe them.

Section E:

Installation, Maintenance, and Upkeep

- **Map:** Can be a simple GoogleMaps screenshot or similar with pin on location.
- **Installation/ Construction description:** Basically, show that the entity is prepared and capable of doing this work.
 - The entity must acquire all required permits.
- **Maintenance and Upkeep:** Describe how the funded element will remain in good working order through its usable lifespan.

Section F: Commitment to Inclusion

- This is also a highly scored item
 - How does this project fit into your entities overall plans?
 - Commitment, achievements, and long-term plans will each be scored separately, so even if this is your first project like this, you can still receive a high score if you demonstrate a strong commitment and solid long-term plans.



Section G: Certification Statement

- If awarded, must complete all required **environmental review and permitting**
- If awarded, must pass **post installation site inspection** before being reimbursed
- **Official with signatory rights for your entity:** town manager, mayor, recreation director, etc.
- Submit via email to recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov

Evaluation and Scoring

- All applications are reviewed by DCR Recreation Grants staff for eligibility and completeness
- All eligible and complete applications will be scored by a panel of 3-5 DCR staff members
- Scoring criteria guidelines are included at the end of manual posted on website





Application and Evaluation Questions?

Trail Access Grants Summary

- Downloadable application and manual on website, due June 30, 2021
- Projects recommended for funding will be contacted in August
- 12 month agreement

We are excited to hear about your potential projects!



Other DCR Grant Opportunities:

- **Recreational Trails Program**, *open now* closes June 30, 2021
 - 80/20 match reimbursement for building and rehabilitation non-motorized, motorized, and multi-use trails and trail facilities
 - Recording of webinar held on 4/28 will be posted to website
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**, planned for fall 2021
 - Development *and* acquisition this year
 - 50/50 match reimbursement
- **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF)**, next round open in Summer 2021
 - Fund protection of open spaces and parklands, lands of historic or cultural significance, farmlands and forests, and natural areas
 - Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, at suzan.bulbulkaya@dcr.virginia.gov or 804-371-5218.

Contact Information

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