



Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP)

2021 Grant Application



Application Due Date: February 19, 2021

Please read the "2021 RTP Program Guide" in its entirety before submitting this application. It supersedes any prior guidance document provided through the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation. It includes federal program requirements with links to resources, and instructions for completing the application: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreational-trails-program>

Refer to the 2021 RTP Program Guide when you complete your grant application. Do not substitute forms or alter the format of this application.

Application Submission Requirements: Send (1) electronic set of all application materials (grant application and attachments) by February 19, 2021 to: sherry.winnie@vermont.gov

Send the electronic set of application materials with a subject title of "2021 RTP Grant Application". Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

2021 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) GRANT APPLICATION

Part I – Applicant Information

- 1.1 **Name & Address of Applicant/Sponsor (governmental or non-profit organization):**
Sponsor Type: [Municipality](#)
- 1.2 **Sponsor's Contact (Name & Title):** [Tad Nunez, Town Administrator](#)
- 1.3 **Telephone & Email:** [802-333-4363](tel:802-333-4363); townadministrator@fairleevt.org
- 1.4 **Applicant's Website:** fairleevt.org
- 1.5 **Project Coordinator/Contact Person/Title (if different from the applicant's contact):**
[Lynne Fitzhugh, volunteer project grant coordinator and Friends of Fairlee Forest \(FFF\) representative.](#)
- 1.6 **Project Contact's Telephone & Email:** [802-333-9881](tel:802-333-9881); ldfitzhugh@yahoo.com

Part II - Project Information/RTP Administrative Reporting

- 2.1 **Project Title/Trail Name:** [Fairlee Forest Trails Project, Phase One](#)
- 2.2 **Project Location (City/Town, Name(s) of Landowner(s) and other relevant interests held on properties):** [Fairlee town forest, here referred to as "Fairlee Forest," is owned by the Town of Fairlee, Vermont](#)
- 2.3 **Street Address of Trailhead or Public Access Area:** [None of the several access points have street addresses. The western terminus of Bald Top Rd. will be used for this project. The residential address immediately before Fairlee Forest entrance is #699 Bald Top Rd.](#)
- 2.4 **Driving Directions to Trailhead or Public Access Area:** [I-91 Exit 15; west on L. Morey Rd. W. ca. 8/10 mile to Left on Bald Top Rd. One mile up BTR bear Right at fork with "Bald Top Trails" sign. Parking is ca. ¼ mile into forest road at stream crossings.](#)
- 2.5 **Project Website (if there is a website for it):** www.fairleeforest.org/trailprojects.html. This is FFF's website. FFF is a citizens group active in forest education and advocacy since 2012.
- 2.6 **Purpose/Project Justification: Write a short description (30 words or less) of your proposed project to tell: (a) Why this project is needed/What makes it a priority?**
[Project "Phase One" will restore & stabilize badly eroded sections of main recreational forest access roads, an essential first step in the town's effort to fully develop the forest's recreational potential.](#)
- 2.7 **Is there any crisis, emergency, or safety issue? If yes, explain (30 words or less)**
[Increasing storm water discharge from these roads is contributing to sedimentation of L. Morey and compromising the safety and enjoyment of recreational use for any but enthusiasts of vehicular sports.](#)
- 2.8 **Identify (1) of the (5) priorities in the current SCORP Action Plan this project will**

address: Phase One addresses Priority 1, Objectives 1, 2, and 3.

2.9 Identify (1) area of the local Town Plan this project will address: “Recreation,” p. 52 ff.
Goal 1: “to maintain, enhance, expand recreational opportunities in Fairlee and encourage land use that maintains recreational activities.”

2.10 If the project is in a Town Forest identify (1) area of the Town Forest Management Plan this project will address: This project does not explicitly address any area of the current FMP, which reflects the Forest Board’s understanding that “The primary objectives for the Town Forest are sustainable forestry practices with a focus on wildlife habitat and timber regeneration with recreation pursuits of a trail system as a product of these efforts,” (Dan Ludwig, Chair, Fairlee Forest Board). FFF is advocating for a revision of the FMP to better address the primarily recreational terms of the HCRS grant and matching land donations accepted by the Town over forty years ago, as articulated in the 1980 Town Report: “The board shall at all times conduct the project as a system of public recreation.” These included a mandate to develop recreational trails. Except for the VAST and Cross Rivendell trails that traverse Fairlee Forest, and Echo Mountain Trail developed by lake residents, “trails” in Fairlee Forest consist of abandoned logging roads appropriated by the public for recreation. This project serves the donors’ original intent by developing a sustainable and intentional trail infrastructure for today’s diverse types of recreation, starting in 2021 and 2022 (Phase Two) with necessary remediation of erosion issues on existing roads and trails.

2.11 Total Project Cost/Value (Attach Budget Form with application): \$65,670

2.12 Grant Amount Requested: \$52,536

2.13 Matching Funds (20% of the Total Project Value): \$13, 134

2.14 Is this trail part of the Vermont Trail System? No

2.15 What other trail(s) or trail systems will this trail connect to? Trails in Phase One of the project connect to 17+ miles of upland trails in Fairlee Forest, as well as to those in adjacent Brushwood Community Forest and continuations of the Cross Rivendell and VAST trails that run through Fairlee Forest. Eventually, they will lead to the system of intentional trails envisioned for final phases of the Fairlee Trails Project.

2.16 Primary Recreational Trail Use once project is completed: Diverse Use: Primarily intended to benefit both motorized and non-motorized uses

2.17 Mark all trail uses below that apply:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hiking/Walking/Running | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Back- or Cross-Country Skiing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ATV/OHV |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowshoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Paddling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biking |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nature/Interpretive | <input type="checkbox"/> Universal Access |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equestrian | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Trucks and logging vehicles. | |

2.18 What is the primary activity of the project? (Check one):

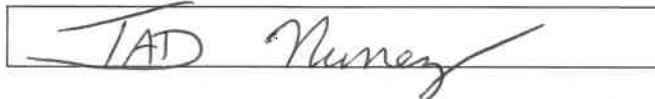
- Construction
- Maintenance
- Education – Trail-related, trail user, and trail safety education

2.19 Landowner Permission: To be eligible for RTP grants, all applicants must have written landowner agreements with affected landowners (privately-owned or public properties) giving permission for (1) all work in this application, (2) public access to the recreational trail improvements to be funded, and (3) public use of the trail upon completion of the work for use(s) intended, for a timeframe compatible to the public investment being made. FPR recommends a period of at least ten years (see RTP Guidebook).

Check the box below and sign to certify sufficient landowner(s) permission has been obtained for a sufficient term to meet the guidelines for this program and will be kept on file to make available to the State at any time if a grant is awarded.

I, Tad Nunez, Town Administrator, Town of Fairlee, VT (printed name of Applicant's authorized representative, title, and entity being represented) certify permission for the project as asked for in this application has been obtained.

Applicant's Signature:



Date:

2/22/2021

2.20 Projects on public property: Will any work associated with this project take place on public land (federal, state, municipal)? **Yes** If yes:

Check here and attach to this application written permission from the public landowner for all the work submitted in this application, and for future public trail use upon completion.

2.21 Projects on private property: Will any work associated with this project (construction, maintenance, bringing in equipment, supplies, laborers) be done on privately owned land? **No** If yes, check the box below and attach:

A copy of a public trail easement or other acceptable written landowner permission given to the applicant, for work to be done on their privately-owned property and for public access and public recreational trail use over their property for a sufficient timeframe upon completion.

2.22 Class IV Roads: Is any of the trail work proposed in this grant application to be done on any Vermont Class IV roads? **No** If yes, to be eligible, attach a completed "RTP Project Resolution of Commitment from Municipality" form to this grant application (see last page).

Part III – RTP Established Scoring Criteria:

3.1 Ensuring Sustainability, Minimizing Environmental Impact, and Future Maintenance Commitment (15 points) & Stewardship Outreach

3.1.A. Ensuring Sustainability and Minimizing Environmental Impact:

1. *What set of acceptable trail standards, guidelines, or best practices in trail construction, trail maintenance and trail management will be used in this project to ensure sustainability, minimize environmental impact, and provide erosion control? For a list of suggested resources, click on "Recommended Trail Standards" at:*

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/partners-and-resources> *Include a website link to standards you will use if available.* SUSTAINABILITY & EROSION CONTROL: Because “Phase One” (this application) is primarily to repair and prevent erosion on the main arteries into the forest used both for logging and access to smaller recreational trails, it has been planned to meet or exceed the standards described in the “Vermont Water Quality” AMP Manual: https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Management/Library/FullDocument-7.29.pdf. When the Town proceeds with subsequent phases of the Trails Project involving restoration of steep branch trails for specific types of use (ATV/snowmobile/motor biking; mountain biking; back-country/X-country skiing; and hiking/snowshoeing), published standards and erosion prevention methods for each type will be applied and, if financially feasible, appropriate design professionals hired. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: Throughout the Project, Friends of Fairlee Forest members will monitor work areas for environmental impacts and intends to invite ANR and academic specialists to assist in updating, expanding, and mapping environmental inventories and assessments for FFF’s GIS map and for applicable State agencies and databases.)

2. *How will work be done? Describe measures to be taken when work will be done, and what hand tools &/or equipment will be brought in and out of the work site, that will*
 - *Not affect water quality.*
 - *Not disturb surrounding natural environment and ecosystems.*
 - *Preserve the natural aesthetics of the existing landscape.*

Phase One is focused on fixing problems that diminish water quality. Most of the work is on the treads and verges of existing truck roads and multi-use trails where new impacts on the natural environment or ecosystems are unlikely. Landscape aesthetics will not be impacted. WORK PLAN: Work includes excavation of waterbars, ditches, and settling basins, hardening of ditches where necessary, close-out stabilization measures, and installation of kiosks and signs at forest entry points. It will be done primarily with motorized equipment, including a one-ton truck, Backhoe 710D, Cat. 311 Excavator, and Mini-Excavator. These will be brought into the forest on Bald Top Rd., a residential Class IV road. Most prescribed settling basins can be excavated from the road surface. Settling basins farther downslope from the main track and erosion mitigation on several short sections of trail exceeding 30% grade will be done by volunteers using shovels, saws, grub hoes, and picks. Close-out and stabilization measures will be done by a combination of mechanized equipment and hand tools and include temporary amplification of waterbars or rolling dips to discourage traffic and trap and divert sediment-laden run-off; rip-rap ditches along steep tracks to slow water-flow before diversion into filtration areas; seeding & mulching of exposed soil, including with erosion mats on slopes as needed; and temporary “stewardship” signs at both ends of restored sections of trail. The permanent kiosks and signs to be installed as part of this project will have additional information about stewardship.

3. *How will you ensure best practices in construction or maintenance? Tell who will provide project oversight to oversee contractors, crews, volunteers, or what systems are in place to ensure all work minimizes environmental impact?* Insuring Best Practices is the responsibility of the Town. Oversight: DFPR AMP Forester Rick Dyer has agreed to review the work plan with Fairlee's Highway Department employees before and after each section of track is done. Highway Dept. personnel are well-versed in AMP guidelines and did this kind of restoration on about .5 miles of road in the forest last fall with funding from the Town. Volunteers: Members of the Fairlee Forest Board and Friends of Fairlee Forest will monitor progress and

assist as needed. Environmental Impacts: Friends of Fairlee Forest members will monitor environmental impacts, per guidance from DEC & DFW ecosystem management specialists. Damage to plants and wildlife in impacted verges, ditches, and settling basins is inevitable, but if any uncommon species are noted, every attempt will be made to avoid or move them. (Of special concern will be wood thrushes and ovenbirds occasionally found nesting along forest trails, and wood turtles and frogs that migrate across chronically wet areas.)

3.1.B. Future Maintenance Commitment:

1. *What is the applicant's commitment for continued operation and maintenance at this site once the project is completed?* Fairlee's governing body has recently renewed its commitment to upgrading and maintaining Fairlee's nearly 50-year-old town forest trail system, and to doing so in keeping with the primarily recreational objectives of its founders. This commitment is reflected in the 2020 Town Plan and reinforced by the increased interest in forest recreation expressed by residents in a 2019 survey (attached), the increased use of trails during the Covid pandemic, and increasing recognition of the potential impacts that a diverse and well-maintained trail system could have on the local economy. The maintenance commitment is also reinforced by current State laws and BMPs. Because maintenance of over 21 miles of trails in the steep forested terrain of a 1600-acre public forest is challenging, sustainability is a paramount objective in restoring old and planning new trails. Re-siting is not possible on Phase One tracks, therefore, in addition to restoration measures described in #2, above, a maintenance schedule will be established by the Town Highway Foreman for regular grading to refresh the tread, cleaning and restoration of diversion structures, and replacement of materials as needed. Volunteers will assist in monitoring and manual maintenance, and forest visitors can report trail issues in real time on FFF's website or facebook page. Ongoing maintenance of such a large trail system will also require increases in funds available for this work. See #3 below.

2.

If not the applicant, who will maintain the trail (s) for future use once the work is done?

The Town of Fairlee (applicant) will be responsible for maintaining recreational trails once restored. Work on truck roads will be done by the Town Highway Dept., Fairlee Forest Board, specialized subcontractors as needed, FFF and other volunteers where appropriate, and, in the case of roads impacted by logging operations, by the contract logger under supervision of the contract forester as authorized by the Forest Board and approved by the Selectboard.

1.

List financial, community & organizational support set aside for future trail maintenance/general upkeep to ensure the useful life of the trail. Attach written agreements or plans referencing agreed upon efforts approved by the landowner and/or trail managing entity. For a maintenance commitment by the Town (landowner) see attached letter. Sources of financing for trail maintenance have been limited by the original donors to income from restricted Forest Trust Funds in which proceeds from logging operations are deposited. The Selectboard has approved use of these funds for this Project until such time as they are reimbursed from the grant, if awarded, and to satisfy the matching requirement if needed. Community financial investment: To avoid depleting the Forest Trusts, FFF has established another fund with its fiscal sponsor, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, for donations in support of forest projects, including maintenance. A 'campaign' to build on the current \$2,500 fund balance will occur this spring. Local groups supportive of the trails project in principal will be invited to express their support in the form of financial donations. These groups include but

are not limited to The Lake Morey Foundation, Lake Morey Protective Association, Aloha Foundation, and Lake Morey Resort. (FFF is also exploring the potential of marketing carbon offsets as a way to finance future trail development and maintenance.) Community volunteer support: Rivendell Trails Association and VAST are good stewards of their sections of trail in Fairlee Forest, and members of the Lake Morey community help maintain some trails near the lake. Friends of Fairlee Forest maintains signs and blazes and has committed to helping monitor and refresh erosion mitigation structures to the extent possible with hand tools. Regular trail users keep trails clear of fallen trees and brush. Funding for restoration and creation of upland recreational trails desired by the community for later phases of the Project would come from grants and donations.

3.1.C. Educating Users and the Public about Stewardship:

- 1. What measures are in place to: (a) provide public awareness about trail stewardship and promote stewardship opportunities; and (b) provide information and trail maps to the public to relate allowable trail activities, user-responsibilities, safe trail use, resource protection, respect for landowners and other trail users?* Friends of Fairlee Forest (FFF) has, since its inception in 2012, been the main source of forest education in Fairlee. Its approach has been to foster appreciation for the forest environment and wildlife as a way to inspire attitudes of stewardship. Its initiatives include: planning a series of interactive Zoom presentations ("lightning talks") to be launched this spring for residents of the town as a way to share information and obtain public input on forest recreation, management, and the Trails Project for use of the Selectboard and Forest Board in updating the Forest Management Plan. The presentations will be made by members of FFF, Forest Board, and relevant experts on topics such as ecosystem management; wildlife and habitat values; carbon storage, sequestration, and offsets; the economic impacts of recreational use; sustainable logging; trail planning, maintenance, and stewardship; and volunteer opportunities, among others. Invitations to participate will be published on Town and FFF websites, social media platforms, and the local listserv. Previously, FFF has offered public presentations, guided hikes, and a day-long forest festival celebrating the forest environment. Its website, www.fairleeforest.org, first published in 2016, has extensive information on the forest, stewardship issues, resources, and the current trails project, as well as online trail maps, links to an interactive map where visitors can see elevation profiles and distances for any trail, and a Facebook page where they can report issues and post photos and comments. Maps: Since 2014 FFF has published two print editions of a trails map (with stewardship guidelines). About 100 of these are sold (@\$2) each year at the Town Office and the local general store to support FFF activities. Signage: FFF volunteers have blazed over 10 miles of mainly pedestrian/light vehicle trails and (with ATV transport help from a member of the Forest Board) installed posts and trail signs at 21 trail intersections. Signs and kiosks proposed in this application will include stewardship guidelines, the trail map, information about forest destinations and wildlife, and notices about current conditions, hunting schedules, trail closures, and other alerts.

3.2 Project Readiness (20 points)

3.2.A. Project Readiness:

What is the status of this project? How far in the planning process are you with this project? Provide a timeline of major activities/deliverables to get the project underway and

completed.

Planning for Project Phase One is complete. Clearance to begin work awaits permit clearances from Julie Follensbee (Wetlands) and Scott Dillon (DHP). A site visit by Follensbee, Dyer, Paganelli, Ross and others to several wetland crossings earmarked for Phase Two is scheduled for April 16. At that time a determination will be made as to whether any portion of a seep wetland is in the Phase One project area (as opposed to an adjacent ¼ mile strip of private land outside the project area). If it is, it will be moved to Phase Two of the Project. Also in April, senior archaeologist Dr. William Fitzhugh will survey the Phase One trails for possible archaeological evidence and complete the ARA for clearance by DHP. If a grant is approved, work can begin as soon as these permits or exemptions have been received and cleared by the RTP Grant Administrator. Work will continue throughout the summer and fall, conditions permitting, and resume the following spring if necessary. Since we had planned for a one-year grant, we don't expect work on Phase One to take longer and hope to be able to apply to the RTP and other agencies next fall for Phase Two of Fairlee's multi-year Trail Project.

Status of Permits: Check the box applicable below:

- All needed permits for this project have been obtained and verification is attached with this application.
- No permits were needed, all permit specialists checked off on the PRS were contacted and [Supporting documentation is attached with this application.](#)
- Still in process of finalizing all potential permits for the project ([DHP and Wetland responses are pending](#)).

3.3 Public Recreation Benefits (30 points)

3.3.A Improved Linkages/Livability (10 points):

1. *How does this project create or strengthen linkages & connections to other existing trails or fill critical gaps within an existing trail/trailsystem? This project is on existing woods roads so will strengthen and improve rather than create linkages to all other internally and externally linked trails.*
2. *How will trail users have enhanced linkage to any natural, scenic, historic & agricultural destination areas, parks, forests, recreation areas, schools, jobs, developed growth centers, or designated downtown areas? Fairlee Forest trails are within: 2.7 miles of the Connecticut River and the bridge to New Hampshire; 2 miles of the designated Village Center and cultural events at the historic Town Hall Auditorium and on the Town Common; 1 mile from Exit 15 on I-91; and .5 miles from the Lake Morey resort/golf course/skating trail and various summer and winter tournaments on the lake. Fairlee Forest is a link in the 35-mile Cross Rivendell Trail—a project of the Rivendell Interstate School District—which runs through the various RISD school communities between Vershire, Vt. and Orford, NH, and connects with the Appalachian Trail at Mt. Cube. The new Morey Mountain Trail and existing Palisades Trails on the east side of the lake are now linked in a continuous loop. Completion of Fairlee's "Main Street to Morey" Better Connections project with murals to be painted in the underpass of I-91 (which for 50 years has split Fairlee in half) will provide visual links between the commercial/residential Village Center*

half and the recreational half of lakes, camps, and trails. This connection and historical points along the route will be promoted in signage and print/digital publications. There are three points of entry to Fairlee Forest trails from the west side of the lake, including from the Aloha camps, Hulbert Outdoor Center, and public boat landing. The numerous destinations within Fairlee Forest are all accessible by the existing trail system, among them stunning views from 1776' high Bald Top Mountain and 800' high "Eagles Bluff" overlooking Lake Morey and the Connecticut River Valley; the 80' cascade of Glen Falls; the "Great Fairlee Wetland;" several vernal pools; the experimental hybrid American Chestnut plantings in a 2016 logging patch cut; and two early 19th century cellar hole sites on Cross Mountain Trail.

3.3.B User-ability, universal accessibility, multiple uses, and user benefits (20 points):

- 1. How does this project contribute to engaging new and underserved audiences in outdoor recreation activities, and users having safe, affordable access for recreation and enjoyment?* While the terrain is unsuitable for 'universal access' except via ATV, the current project will make ca. 2.7 miles of main forest roads safer and more enjoyable for all moderately able forest visitors while providing access to the other more physically challenging trails in the system. The proposed kiosks and signage will make the forest more welcoming to members of the public for whom the forest may have seemed inhospitable, and the maps will help with orientation. Realizing the recreational potential of the upland network of often excessively steep, and inevitably wet and badly eroded former skid roads that today make up most of the recreational trails in Fairlee Forest will be a subject of the virtual public input sessions planned for later this year and, hopefully, for a third phase of the Fairlee Forest Trails Project. It is here where we could engage new recreational visitors by creating trails specifically for skiers and mountain bikers, two groups that, like snowmobilers, are known to benefit small towns economically. Having a dedicated, well-sited, and hardened trail loop for ATVs--another idea to be discussed by the community--would make the views and destinations in Fairlee Forest, as well as the mental and physical benefits of being in a forest environment, accessible to mobility-challenged people of all ages--without infringing on the enjoyment of pedestrian visitors and the integrity of hiking trails, as current multi-use routes do. Improved trails also make it easier for students, educators, and citizen scientists interested in forest ecology to participate in ongoing educational and monitoring projects. Teachers from the Rivendell Integrated School System, Aloha summer camps, and the Hulbert Outdoor Center who offer nature-based educational programs in Fairlee Forest will find it easier to access more remote "outdoor classrooms" once trails have been improved, and organizations offering guided nature hikes will be able to expand their range and include less experienced and physically fit hikers in their groups.
- 2. How does this project enhance opportunities for community health and wellness?* Phase One would not, in itself, measurably add to the considerable benefits these forest trails already provide members of our community for physical and mental wellness. But it will make these opportunities easier and more pleasant to access.

List and provide references (i.e., weblinks) to any economic, health, or educational benefits known for users. MULTI- and ECONOMIC BENEFITS of trails: Recreational trails--especially those that attract long-distance and overnight visitors like mountain bikers, x-country skiers, and snowmobilers--purchase supplies, repair services, meals, gasoline, and lodging in towns where such specialized trails exist. This helps towns attract and sustain these enterprises, which in turn bring jobs and tax revenues to the Town. Having a recreational trail system within a short drive and walk

of residential neighborhoods attracts new homeowners (especially young active families), helps retain existing homeowners, and expands the tax base. See: 1) "Trails Make Economic Sense," <https://www.americantrails.org/economic-benefits>; 2) "Economic Benefits of Trails" <https://conservationtools.org/guides/97-economic-benefits-of-trails>; 3) "Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis of the Vermont Trails and Greenway Council Member Organizations" https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Recreation/Learn_More/Library/Final%20Report-%20Impact%20Analysis%20-%20VT%20Trails%20and%20Greenways.pdf; 4) Resource Systems Group, Inc., Economic and Policy Resources, Inc., and Local Motion. 2012, "Economic Impact of Bicycling and Walking in Vermont. Prepared for the Vermont Agency of Transportation," <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/VDTM-Research-2012EconomicImpactBikingWalkingFullReport.pdf>; 5) Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative Public Input Survey, https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Recreation/Learn_More/Library/Survey%20Chart%20Data.pdf;

HEALTH BENEFITS of trails: As the huge increase in visitors to Fairlee Forest during Covid 19 has illustrated, outdoor recreation, being in a natural environment, and the challenges of hiking and biking on steep, rugged terrain provide a level of physical exercise and fresh air that people otherwise confined to their homes realize is essential for mental and physical health during stressful times. But these well-known benefits of outdoor recreation are true even in normal times. See: 1) "Mental Health Benefits" <https://www.americantrails.org/mental-health-benefits>; 2) "Health Benefits of Trails," <https://www.americantrails.org/health-benefits>;

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS of trail recreation are at once obvious and difficult to document. Forest environments make excellent science laboratories; trail challenges teach volumes about self-reliance, determination, and outdoor skills. But perhaps the most valuable thing one can learn from walking in a wild environment is a sense of wonder, curiosity, perspective, and reverence. Scientific studies on nature-based learning can be accessed from this link at Frontiers in Psychology website: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00305/full>

3. *Tell how this project will improve accessibility or capacity for people of various ages (young children – older citizens) with various abilities to use the trail. See answers to #1.*
4. *Tell whether any of the work in this proposal meets any universal accessibility standards. If not, list rationale why not. This project does not meet the criteria, either regulatory or practical, for application of the universal accessibility standards described in FSORAG and FSTAG for these reasons: This is not federal land; trails are not presently pedestrian-only; and the terrain in question is too steep and rough to allow for pedestrian access by most physically challenged individuals. However, wherever possible elements of these guidelines will be incorporated into trails, such as the proposed ATV trail included in future projects.*

3.4 Demonstrated Local Support, Citizen & Community Involvement: (30 points)

3.4.A Local Support, Citizen & Community Involvement:

1. *Describe and attach documentation of local support, public engagement efforts, and local community member involvement for the project in this application; (i.e., outreach efforts, public meeting minutes, surveys used to gather public input) Attach up to 3 letters of support, but do NOT include letters from contractors or organizations who will do work. Attached: 1) 2019 resident forest survey conducted for the 2020 Town Plan;*

- 2) letters of support from TRORC, Friends of Fairlee Forest, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Lake Morey Protective Association and others; 3) Minutes of Selectboard meetings relating to the Project, including a link to a presentation about the Project given at the February 8 meeting. Results of 2021 public outreach efforts will be available by year's end.
2. *What commitments of money, labor, or materials have been made by public and private sectors to support this project?* Before anyone knew of the RTP grants, members of FFF and other volunteers had begun donating hundreds of hours surveying, recording, and mapping trail issues for the Selectboard, as well as researching and documenting town forest history and legal obligations indicating the recreational intention of founding land donors. This research inspired the Town to commit money from the Forest Trusts to restore about a mile of forest trail in 2020 and enabled it to submit a Preliminary Application to the RTP for 2.7 additional miles of trail in December. These volunteers are and will continue refining trail assessments and maps, preparing grant applications, communicating with permit specialists and ANR personnel, and planning public outreach and fundraising for the Project. A resident professional archaeologist has agreed to conduct the required Archaeological Resource Assessment (ARA) at no cost. Representatives of DFPR and DEC have donated time to site visits and consultations with Town officers and volunteers. A representative of the VAST organization has agreed to donate 15-20 30' steel beams required for 4 culvert-replacing bridges at major stream crossings in Phase Two. Town officers, the Town Administrator, and Forest Board members have devoted many hours to virtual meetings and site visits related to the Project.

3.5 Project Identification / Plans in Place (15 points)

3.5.a Detailed Work Plan/Deliverables (specific tasks to be accomplished):

Restoration work will be done on seven sections of trail (ca. 2.7 miles total) and one former log landing. These are coded A-G on the attached Project Work Plan and Project Map. The work proposed for these sections includes: excavation of up to 150 waterbars, restoration and hardening of 10 ditches, excavation of up to 20 settling basins, grading of road surfaces, and seeding/mulching/stabilization of exposed ground following work (as per best judgements of the Town Highway Dept. and Foreman during implementation). Signage plans include one large kiosk, 4 small kiosks, and 4 permanent signs at entrances to Fairlee Forest, and 14 temporary signs on both ends of each repaired trail section. These will explain the project, acknowledge donors, and ask visitors to respect the new work during recovery. Work on the Project will begin as soon as cleared by the RTP administrator and continue until freeze up in the fall or June 2022 if necessary.

DO NOT GENERALIZE. Work plans should provide enough of a description to understand what work needs to be done where and should be clear/concise.

- Use the RTP Application Guidebook to help you.
- On your map, show work plan components.

3.5.b Performance Measures (and outcomes):

Number (no.) of miles of new trail construction (include relocation segments): **None**

No. of miles of new universally accessible trail construction: **None**

No. of miles improving, restoring, maintaining existing trails: **3.5**

No. of trailhead facilities or amenities to be constructed or restored: **None**

No. of trail bridges to be constructed or restored: **None**

No. of new culverts to be installed: **None**

No. of new universally accessible trail or trailside/features: **None, except kiosks and signs**

No. of new trailhead parking areas to be constructed: **None**

No. of existing trailhead parking areas to be improved: **None (relevant area graded and ditched 11/2020)**

No. of new trail signs to be installed: **4 permanent, 14 temporary signs concerning new trail restoration work.**

No. of new kiosks to be installed: **1 large, 4 small**

3.5.c Map Showing Location of Proposed Project

Attach a topographical map to the application. Maps are to be easily comprehensible. Include a map legend or key. A **map legend or key** is a visual explanation of the symbols used on the **map**. Use the checklist below to ensure each map element listed is included in your map:

- Trail(s) and its name(s) and location (city/town) are shown on the map.
- Project area (what parts of the trail will be worked on) is clearly and accurately shown.
- Work components to be done along the trail (from your work plan) are shown on the map.
- Roads (by name) and public access area(s)/trailhead parking areas are accurately shown;
- Parcel boundaries and names of landowner(s) where trail(s) exist are shown on the map;
- Names of city/town, rivers, lakes, are shown on the map.
- Streams and Wetlands are marked on the map; map key shows stream/wetland crossings;
- Work area along a Class IV road is accurately shown on the map, with its Class IV road name. Map includes a North arrow.
- Map shows/distinguishes existing trails vs. proposed new trails.
- Any separate roads, trails or access areas using to get materials to the project site is shown;
- Reviewers can look at the map and easily know how to get to the project site, and know what will be done at certain points along the trail. It serves as a pictorial of your work plan.

3.5.d Attachments (Photos, Site Assessments, Design Plans)

Attach any of the following very useful items to help reviewers in their review process:

- Pre-project site photos
- Professional site assessments
- Design plans for new structures (i.e., bridges, signs, kiosks, or other trailhead/trailside facilities)

- Landowner commitment letter
- FFF commitment letter
- Permit specialist responses
- Project Timeline
- Public Meeting Minutes
- Project Review Sheet
- Community Support Letters
- Budget Form

3.5.e. Budget (reflects cost of work in the work plan): Attach a budget form with the grant application, available on-line with instructions: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreational-trails-program> The budget is an estimate of eligible costs associated with this project. Check what costs are eligible and follow instructions before finalizing. In match summary, tell where 20% match is coming from. Be thorough, detailed, and accurate. Keep written price quotes and explain below your basis used to formulate estimates for listed expenses.

Labor, Equipment, and Materials costs for trail restoration were supplied by the Fairlee Highway Dept. Foreman based on his estimate of requirements to complete work described in the Project Work Plan. Costs for kiosks and signs were derived from the supplier's websites and websites for suppliers of custom signs. The costs per hour of professional work are based either on going rates (in the case of the archaeologist) or by dividing the individual's salary into daily rates (in the case of the Town Administrator). In the case of two other professionals (ANR employees), we guessed that the hourly rate would be close to that of the road foreman. The rate of \$11.75/hr. was used for volunteer labor. The amount of time it would take the archaeologist to survey 2.7 miles of trail verges and settling basins where no archaeological sites are known or likely to have existed was based on an average daily survey of ca. 6/10 mile plus record keeping. We estimated other professional time based on 5 site visits lasting 4 hours each, and volunteer labor at 10 person hours/week for 20 weeks.

Required Certifying Signature

By signing below, I hereby certify that the information in this 2021 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) RTP guidance materials found online regarding eligibility and a subrecipient's use of federal grant funds awarded, found online @: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/

It is understood that in the event this project will be funded, a grant agreement with FPR must first be fully executed by FPR, and the entity submitting this grant application, with its full execution indicating the grant request in this application's full approval.

I understand RTP is a reimbursement program, and any grant funds awarded for this project will be requested as a reimbursement of eligible costs incurred during the grant term for work specified in the agreement, in accordance with its federal and state provisions.

I have full authority on behalf of [the Town of Fairlee](#) (Name of the Applicant) to submit this

grant application to the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) for the work proposed in this application.

X *TAD Nunez*
Authorized Signature of the Applicant

Tad Nunez, Town Administrator, February 18, 2021

Printed Name of the Signature Above (Authorized Official of the Applicant), Title and Date