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The Rivers and Trails Conse...

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THE RIVERS AND TRAILS CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM





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THE RIVERS AND TRAILS CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program was established in response to increased public demand to conserve rivers and provide trail opportunities for all Americans. In landmark legislation,* Congress recognized the need for the Federal government to cooperate in State and local efforts to protect rivers and to establish trails on lands outside of national parks and forests.



Photo by Maria Stenzel

The National Park Service (NPS) has planners, landscape architects, communication specialists, and some of the country's top river and trail experts who work with government agencies and citizen groups on projects to conserve and manage river and trail corridors.

*The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program is authorized by Section 11 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, as amended), Section 8 of the National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543, as amended), and Section 2(d) of the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1963 (Public Law 88-29).



Photo by Maria Stenzel

Working Together for Success

The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program is based on the principle of partnerships. By working together, government agencies, private organizations, and landowners can more effectively meet the challenges of river and trail conservation. The NPS works with these groups to set goals, tackle difficult issues, and develop ways to reach a consensus for the future use and protection of important land and water resources.



Photo by Christopher N. Brown



Photo by Christopher N. Brown

Types of Assistance

The Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program provides specific types of assistance:

Corridor Conservation Plans

The NPS works with communities to find the best way to develop and implement plans to conserve their rivers and trails. Resources, issues, goals, alternatives, and actions are identified through a process which emphasizes citizen participation and constituency building. The process results in a plan to fulfill a community's objectives for the conservation of a river or trail corridor.



Photo courtesy of Blaine County Recreation District

Examples:

Santa Ana River Trail — The NPS and the Santa Ana River Coordinating Council worked together to create a recreation use plan for a 70-mile corridor traversing Orange, San Bernadino, and Riverside Counties in southern California. The NPS and the San Bernadino Regional Park Department took the lead in building cooperation and support among cities and counties along the river. Sixteen jurisdictions have committed funds to complete and implement a master plan for the trail. The trail will be accessible to over 15 million people and will protect a variety of wildlife and plant habitats.



National Park Service photo



National Park Service photo

Wood-Pawcatuck Rivers — The NPS assisted in the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers Study in Rhode Island which brought government agencies and concerned citizens together to develop a joint action plan for the river system. Following the study, the State of Rhode Island passed a bond issue which included \$1 million to protect land along the rivers. A new citizen group, the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, is implementing the plan's recommendations by sponsoring river clean-ups and promoting public awareness of the rivers' valuable resources.

Statewide Assessments

The NPS helps States inventory and evaluate their significant river and trail corridors. Through an assessment of natural, cultural, and recreational resources, information is obtained which can serve as a basis for making wise decisions about the future of the State's rivers or trails. An assessment often includes economic values as well, to provide for a balanced approach to development and conservation. Each assessment is tailored to the specific needs and conditions of the particular State.



Photo by Christopher N. Brown

Examples:

South Carolina — The South Carolina Water Resources Commission completed an innovative statewide rivers assessment with planning assistance from the NPS. The assessment, a thorough inventory and analysis of approximately 1,400 river segments, addressed values ranging from fisheries and recreation to water supply and forestry. The assessment is being used for planning and decision-making at both the State and local levels to balance economic development, tourism, and conservation.



Photo courtesy of Connecticut River Watershed Council

Vermont — In Vermont, a NPS-assisted statewide rivers study resulted in legislation to address the State's most critical rivers issue: gravel extraction. The legislation resulted in a limitation on gravel removal from certain streams, and a State designation of "Outstanding Resource Waters" was established. The NPS followed the study with a series of meetings to record issues of concern to the public. A written summary of these meetings is being used by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to recommend future actions for the conservation of rivers in the State.



Photo by Maria Stenzel



National Park Service photo



Photo by Christopher N. Brown

Conservation Workshops and Consultations

The NPS provides training and advice on river and trail conservation methods including ways to identify the resources, define issues, set goals, and select actions to be taken. We offer guidance on planning options, building public consensus, developing publications, and fundraising.



Photo by Christopher N. Brown

Information Exchange

In addition to offering workshops and consultations, the NPS puts people in touch with professionals and citizen groups with practical experience in such areas as recreational access, trail design, landowner liability, and the economic benefits of conservation. We have information in our Washington and regional offices on a variety of subjects related to river and trail conservation.



Photo courtesy of Blaine County Recreation District

Getting Assistance



Photo courtesy of National Audubon Society

State and local governments and citizen groups are encouraged as project sponsors to request assistance from the NPS through the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program.

The level of NPS involvement in a conservation project depends on the:

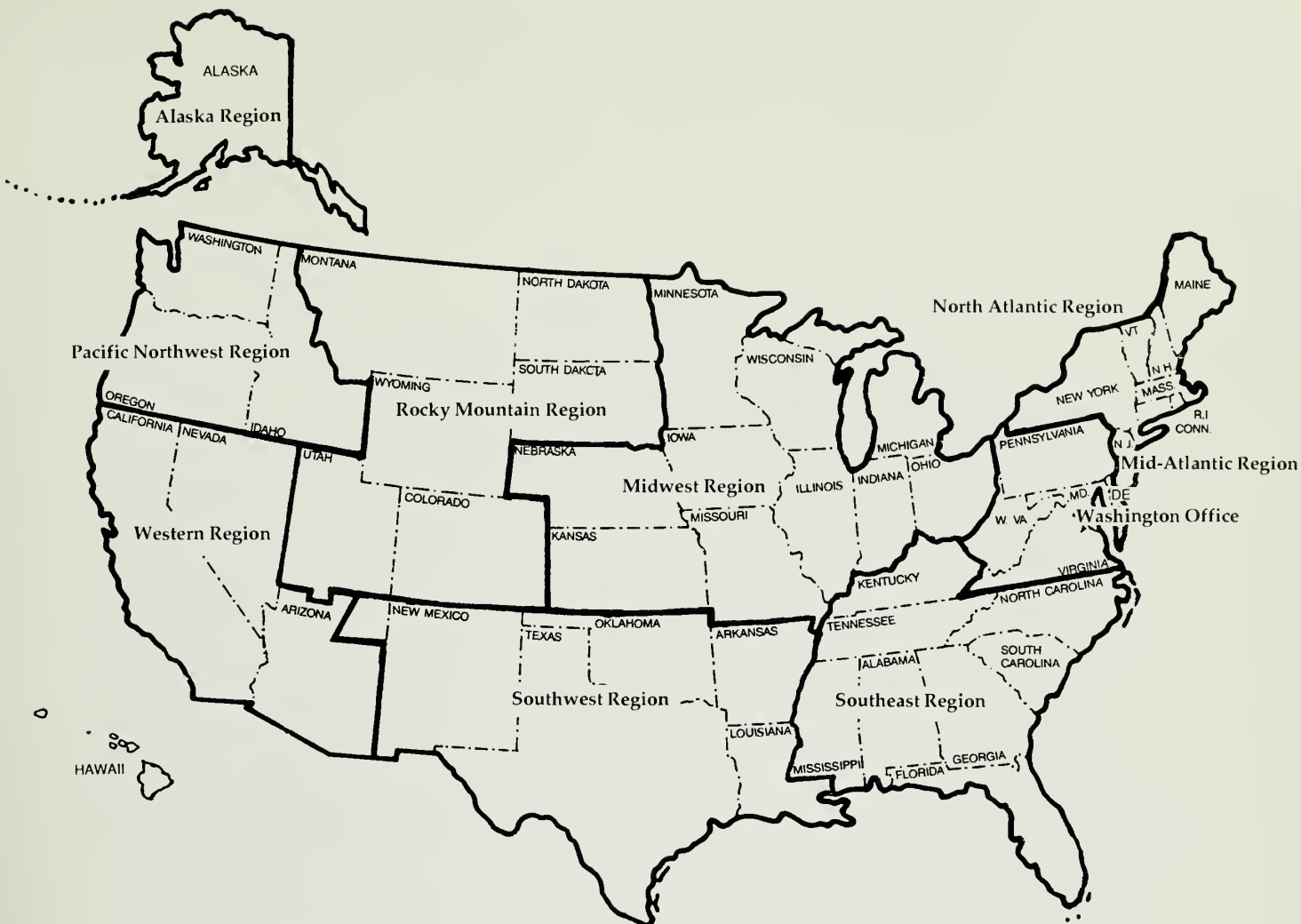
- significance of the resources to be protected
- needs of the project sponsor
- likelihood that tangible results will be achieved
- amount of cost-sharing and/or in-kind contributions by the project sponsor
- degree of public involvement

Priorities for assistance include projects which are combined river and trail "greenways," "rail-to-trail" conversions of abandoned rail lines, or have an innovative approach to conserving resources.

Applications for assistance should indicate a State or local government sponsor, broad support for the project, and clear objectives. For more information on the program and procedures for requesting assistance, contact the nearest NPS regional office or the Washington Office.



Photo by Maria Stenzel



National Park Service Regional Offices

Alaska Region

Planning Division
2525 Gambel Street, Room 107
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
(907) 257-2655

Mid-Atlantic Region

143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Rivers:

Park & Resource Planning Division
(215) 597-7386

Trails:

Environmental & Recreation Resources
Assistance Division
(215) 597-2785

Midwest Region

Planning & Environmental
Quality Division
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102
(402) 221-3481

North Atlantic Region

Planning & Design Division
15 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109
(617) 223-5132

Pacific Northwest Region

Recreation Programs Division
83 South King Street, Suite 212
Seattle, Washington 98104
(206) 442-5366

Rocky Mountain Region

Recreation Grants & Assistance
Division (PL)
P. O. Box 25287
Lakewood, Colorado 80225
(303) 969-2850

Southeast Region

Planning & Federal Programs Division
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 331-5838

Southwest Region

P. O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Rivers:

Planning & Design Division
(505) 988-6881

Trails:

Recreation Programs Division
(505) 988-6388

Western Region

Planning, Grants, & Environmental
Quality Division
450 Golden Gate Avenue
P. O. Box 36063
San Francisco, California 94102
(415) 556-6481

Washington Office

Recreation Resources
Assistance Division
Rivers & Trails Conservation
Assistance Program
P. O. Box 37127
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November 1989