

Baker-Polito Administration Announces 2016 Recreational Trails Program Grants

\$1 Million in Grants Awarded to 30 Local Projects

AMHERST – Thursday, September 22, 2016 – Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the awarding of 30 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants for projects in local communities throughout the state totaling \$1,052,985. The RTP grants, ranging from \$500 to \$100,000 depending on the scope of the project, serve as an important funding source for municipalities and nonprofits seeking to improve all types of trails for the public to utilize, including hiking trails, bike trails, and recreational vehicle trails.

“Recreational Trails Program Grants ensure the proper maintenance and development of the state’s trails system throughout the Commonwealth so people can continue to experience quality outdoor recreational opportunities for years to come,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Importantly, when completed, these projects will promote a healthy, active lifestyle for the public to be able to incorporate within their daily lives.”

RTP grants are awarded for the construction and maintenance of a variety of trails that include hiking trails, bikeways, and snowmobile and off-road vehicle trails throughout the Commonwealth. The grants can be used to improve long-distance trails and rail trail development, ATV trail maintenance, as well as the creation or maintenance of municipally owned trails. Additionally, each recipient matches their grant with a minimum twenty percent in funding or in-kind services. This year’s matching funds totaled \$1,634,949.00.

“These grants provide critical funding towards making necessary trail improvements and implementing construction projects that will truly benefit the public,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Massachusetts has thousands of miles of trails within its borders, and by ensuring they are properly maintained and managed, people of all abilities will continue to be able to take full advantage of the state’s recreational resources and enjoy the natural world.”

“Increasing access to the great outdoors for the public remains a high priority of the Baker-Polito Administration, and RTP grants serve as an excellent example of a program helping to reach that objective,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “It is critical that we partner with communities and local organizations throughout the state to ensure outdoor recreational opportunities are continually made available for the public to utilize.”

Funding for the Recreational Trails Program Grants comes directly from the motor fuel excise tax on off-road vehicles including ATV’s and snowmobiles, and is provided by the US Department of Transportation and the Federal Surface Transportation Act, in coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). All RTP grant applications were reviewed by the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB), which is an independent volunteer board appointed by the DCR Commissioner.

“These RTP Grants will assist projects aimed at improving, managing, and constructing trails across the Commonwealth, which will ultimately afford the public with additional recreational opportunities,” **said Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Leo Roy**. “The Baker-Polito Administration remains steadfast to protecting, promoting, and enhancing the state’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all.”

“Access to recreational trails statewide is incredibly important for residents who wish to experience the natural resources the Commonwealth has to offer,” **said State Senator Jennifer Flanagan (D-Leominster)**. “These grants will create additional outdoor opportunities, ensure the safety of our residents participating in activities, and create a more enjoyable experience for all.”

“Congratulations to the Student Conservation Association in Ashby, the Town of Spencer, the East Quabbin Land Trust in New Braintree, as well as other area conservation organizations who were awarded grants,” **said Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)**. “The improvement of existing conservation land in concert with acquiring new conservation land, has made Massachusetts a leader in open space preservation.”

An organization may utilize a variety of methods to meet their obligation of funding at least twenty percent of a project’s total cost to receive a RTP grant, including in-kind labor and professional services, material donations, use of equipment, or a cash match. RTP allocates 30 percent of its funds for motorized use, 30 percent for non-motorized use, and 40 percent for diverse use projects. Funding is made available to registered non-profits and municipal, state, and federal agencies.

“I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration, as well as Secretary Matthew Beaton, and Commissioner Leo Roy, for selecting the Franklin Land Trust in Ashfield and the Conway Snowmobile Club in Conway, to receive these grant monies,”**said State Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington)**. “This investment will help ensure that our local organizations can continue to improve on the existing network of trails for the benefit of everyone throughout Franklin County and the Commonwealth.”

“Pittsfield State Forest is such an important asset for the City as well as the region as a whole,” **said State Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier (D-Pittsfield)**. “On top of ensuring that the trail system is improved and maintained year round for everyone to enjoy, this grant will also help to provide employment opportunities for seasonal workers in a beautiful part of the Commonwealth.”

This year’s awardees are:

Community: Adams

Applying Organization: Adams Sno-Drifters

Grant Award: \$5,212

This project will relocate a portion of an existing trail that has been impacted by beaver activity and is currently flooded. A bridge will be installed in an alternate location and rocks and stumps will be removed to create a new, alternate trail further upstream.

Community: Ashby

Applying Organization: The Student Conservation Association

Grant Award: \$19,340

This project will provide an SCA Youth Corps crew at Mt. Watatic to perform trail maintenance and upgrades on the Wapack Trail between the summit of Mt. Watatic and Nutting Hill. Project work will include rock waterbar construction and maintenance, rock step construction, trail corridor maintenance and brush clearing.

Community: Ashfield

Applying Organization: Franklin Land Trust

Grant Award: \$7,495

This project will complete the enhancement of a critical trail connection in the Ashfield trails network, connecting Sanderson Academy Elementary School ultimately to the Trustees of Reservations Bear Swamp Reservation. The project will also purchase an ATV for use by trail volunteers/builders who are in need of assistance in carrying loads of materials and equipment to project sites.

Community: Boxford

Applying Organization: Boxford Trails Association/Boxford Open Land Trust

Grant Award: \$23,720

This project will replace an unsafe and often impassable boardwalk across Lowe Pond in Boxford. The boardwalk will be upgraded to allow use by horseback riders, hikers and runners, enhancing the safety and enjoyment of the recreational trail users along this stretch, which is a part of the Bay Circuit Trail.

Community: Cheshire

Applying Organization: Department of Conservation and Recreation

Grant Award: \$11,418

This project will fund a seasonal Ridge Runner who will work exclusively on the National Scenic Appalachian Trail in Massachusetts. The AT Ridge Runner provides education and information for trail visitors and works closely with numerous volunteers that help maintain the trail and associated overnight facilities. The Ridge Runner also helps to monitor trail conditions, record trail use and respond to emergencies as needed.

Community: Conway

Applying Organization: Conway Snowmobile Club

Grant Award: \$67,688

This project will provide needed equipment for snowmobile trail grooming, matched with repairs and maintenance throughout the 120-mile trail system that the snowmobile club maintains and grooms in the winter. Trails in the system connect to four bordering towns and encompass the Conway State Forest, South River State Forest, town and private lands.

Community: Dedham

Applying Organization: Town of Dedham

Grant Award: \$50,000

The Dedham Heritage Rail Trail is a community effort to transform a 1.5 mile stretch of abandoned railway into a new linear park and cultural greenway. This project will convert the abandoned railway into a pedestrian and bike path, which will incorporate public art and community gardens, as well as connect adjacent neighborhoods to the three Dedham Public Schools, Dedham Square and a commuter rail station.

Community: Fitchburg

Applying Organization: City of Fitchburg

Grant Award: \$49,995

This project will construct the first half of a 1.4 mile shared-use, pedestrian/bicycle trail on a 50-foot wide strip of City land, connecting neighborhoods throughout West Fitchburg. The Waterline Connector Trail will also tie into a network of open spaces and trails which would provide for easier, safer and more scenic connections for recreationalists as well as commuters accessing the commuter rail in West Fitchburg.

Community: Gardner

Applying Organization: City of Gardner

Grant Award: \$22,109

This project will construct new trails, create and install trail signage, create and print trail maps and brochures and construct several trail bridges. The overall goals of this project seek to enhance the existing trail network for improved access and connections within and among Gardner's protected open space lands and increased wellness, recreational, educational, and conservation opportunities for the benefit of the public.

Community: Great Barrington

Applying Organization: Great Barrington Land Conservancy

Grant Award: \$7,496

This project will restore currently unsafe trails and trail structures at Pfeiffer Arboretum to excellent condition in order to continue to support community use of the trails while also protecting the rich natural resources found there.

Community: Holyoke

Applying Organization: City of Holyoke

Grant Award: \$15,889

This project involves construction of a 0.76-mile spur trail that will link West Holyoke to the New England National Scenic Trail (NET) and provide a convenient access point for local hikers. In addition, access to an existing scenic overlook area on East Mountain will be restored.

Community: Lee

Applying Organization: Department of Conservation and Recreation

Grant Award: \$73,828

This project will enhance recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding at the state forest, protect sensitive wetland resources and improve emergency access to both the OHV trail system and portions of the Appalachian Trail. The project will improve a one-mile section of Finerty Pond Trail to the intersection of Schoolhouse Trail through repairs of

the existing trail tread and trail drainage structures.

Community: Methuen

Applying Organization: Methuen Rail Trail Alliance

Grant Award: \$533

The mission of the Methuen Rail Trail Alliance is to enhance, beautify and promote the Methuen Rail Trail through advocacy and assistance with regular maintenance and trail upgrades when needed. For years this volunteer group has provided these services with their own, personal tools, but are now in need of equipment that is exclusively dedicated for the purpose of trail maintenance, which this grant funding can provide.

Community: Middleborough

Applying Organization: Town of Middleborough

Grant Award \$26,515

The Pratt Farm Accessible Trail will provide access for people of all abilities to the serene Pratt Farm which features trails, forests, a tree identification loop, a Healing Garden, and small ponds and streams. The project includes modifying the existing trail into a hard-packed surface, creating two viewing areas and an accessible overlook area, and constructing a tactile trail featuring sculptures of plants and signs with the plant names in English and Braille, so that individuals with visual impairments can fully benefit from the trail as well.

Community: Monterey

Applying Organization: Knox Trail Riders Association

Grant Award: \$3,980

This project will provide expedited and much-needed trail maintenance tasks throughout the OHV trail system at Beartown State Forest through the purchase and use of three ATV trailers for hauling equipment and materials into remote areas for trail improvement work. The club has and will continue to volunteer its time in completing these tasks as committed stewards of the state forest, ensuring safe and enjoyable recreational riding opportunities into the future.

Community: New Braintree

Applying Organization: East Quabbin Land Trust

Grant Award: \$100,000

This project will assist in funding the acquisition of a section of the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Barre to allow for further development of the envisioned multi-use trail corridor that would stretch from western Massachusetts to Boston.

Community: Otis

Applying Organization: Knox Trail Sno-Riders

Grant Award: \$71,250

This project will upgrade existing grooming equipment that is deteriorating with new parts and attachments to enable the club to continue to maintain recreational trails in Tolland and Otis State Forest in the winter months. Improved reliability and efficiency of the equipment will allow for less impact on the environment and more groomed trails for all winter recreationalists.

Community: Pittsfield

Applying Organization: Department of Conservation and Recreation

Grant Award: \$49,880

This project will provide funding for a seasonal DCR West Region Trail Crew to work throughout the trail season to improve and rehabilitate the OHV trail system on DCR properties in the West Region that allow recreation motorized use.

Community: Princeton

Applying Organization: Mass Audubon – Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary

Grant Award: \$50,000

Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary is creating several all-persons trails to open in three popular areas of the sanctuary for visitors of all abilities. This project will create the Wildlife Pond Trail, beginning at a sheep paddock and barn area and ultimately leading to the Wildlife Pond near the entrance of the sanctuary.

Community: Revere

Applying Organization: Bike to the Sea

Grant Award: \$49,787

This project will upgrade and improve sections of the Northern Strand Community Trail in Revere and Saugus. Tasks will include updates to trail entrance gateways, trail shoulder improvements and tree work, installation of signage and park benches and training and utilization of community youth corps and volunteers for trail clean-up events, maintenance and plantings.

Community: Rockland

Applying Organization: Town of Rockland

Grant Award: \$50,000

This project will significantly improve a section of the Rockland Rail Trail in an area with the potential for many new users, once the work has been completed. The project includes paving and providing accessible trail surface to connect the town's Senior Center, three schools and the Town Center.

Community: Royalston

Applying Organization: Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Grant Award \$48,816

This project will construct two new trail systems on a recently protected parcel of conservation land, to provide access for the purpose of nature appreciation, hiking, walking, birding, angling and paddling. One accessible trail loop and one natural surface trail and bridge will be constructed as part of this project. Benches, kiosks, boardwalks, one bird blind, and a kayak and canoe launch will be included as components and amenities of the new trail system.

Community: Salem

Applying Organization: City of Salem

Grant Award: \$50,000

The Forest River Conservation Area is Salem's most pristine riverine ecosystem and is enjoyed by a variety of users. This project will upgrade the rugged and informal trail infrastructure, including construction of a primary trunk trail that will be usable throughout the year and accessible to people with limited mobility.

Community: Sandisfield

Applying Organization: Sandisfield Snowmobile Club

Grant Award: \$16,196

This project includes the purchase of an ATV, along with plows, blades and tracks as attachments which will enable the club to maintain approximately 30 miles of trails, including grooming in the winter months. This work will encourage more use of the trail system in Sandisfield and, in turn, attract more visitors to the town for recreational trail opportunities including snowmobiling, snowshoeing and skiing.

Community: Savoy

Applying Organization: Savoy Canary Kats Snowmobile Club

Grant Award: \$13,006

This project will purchase parts to repair and upgrade a club-owned tracked snowmobile trail groomer, to allow for continued grooming of snowmobile trails throughout Savoy, Hawley, Plainfield and Windsor.

Community: Spencer

Applying Organization: Town of Spencer

Grant Award: \$50,000

This project will resurface the entire 1.9-mile rail trail to accessibility standards. In addition, trailhead kiosks, maps and information panels, benches and gates will be installed along the trail system as amenities and to govern motorized use

of the trail.

Community: South Hadley

Applying Organization: Town of South Hadley

Grant Award: \$49,854

This project will provide unique access to the Connecticut River through the construction of an accessible, scenic loop trail near the river's edge. The project will provide scenic views of the CT River and Bachelor Brook in South Hadley, year-round parking, and benches.

Community: Townsend

Applying Organization: Squanacook Greenways

Grant Award: \$6,100

This project will fund necessary steps including permitting fees and the purchase of signage to educate the public on habitat adjacent to the planned Squanacook River Rail Trail. Once completed, the Rail Trail will traverse 3.7 miles in Townsend and Groton.

Community: West Boylston

Applying Organization: Wachusett Greenways

Grant Award: \$50,000

This project will construct a 900-foot extension of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) from the Thomas Street trailhead through the Route 140 intersection in West Boylston. This project focusses on the initial construction phase of the planned MCRT extension along the Route 140/Beaman Street causeway which is a critical piece in facilitating a connection between West Boylston and Sterling in the years to come

Community: Wrentham

Applying Organization: Department of Conservation and Recreation

Grant Award: \$12,878

This project will build upon work currently planned in Wrentham State Forest by DCR staff to initiate numerous trail improvements including the installation of new signage and trail blazing throughout the property. This project will work to protect wetland and soil resources, repair poor trail conditions, enhance the OHV user experience as well as the experience of all recreational trail users in the state forest.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and

parkways. Led by Commissioner Leo Roy, the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

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