

Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program

Resource Guide

Program overview

Forestry and Parks established Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program in 2022 to enhance recreation management on public land by providing funding opportunities for recreation partners. These partnerships are important to establish a sustainable trail management system on public land. Recreational groups, non-profit organizations, municipalities and Indigenous communities can apply for funding for eligible projects that improve access, user experiences and safety on trails, and enhance recreation opportunities on public land trails.

Supporting recreation organizations helps build local capacity to maintain trails, improve user safety, promote healthy lifestyles, build ecological knowledge, and contribute to local tourism.

Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program

- enhances existing recreation opportunities
- develops safe and sustainable recreational experiences and trail systems
- operationalizes a new approach to managing recreation on public Land
- furthers the Alberta Crown Land Vision
- develops partner expertise and capacity

How to use this guide

This guide includes information about Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program requirements to assist you in preparing an application package to be considered for program funding, as well as to support grant recipients to deliver their projects. Program requirements are complex and volunteer organizations may not have the capacity to deliver all the requirements that apply to their projects. This document provides guidance to applicants regarding requirements for project authorizations/approvals, general reporting requirements and responsibilities of the grant recipient.

Grant applicants can connect with Forestry and Parks staff to gain understanding and expertise related to recreation project planning and delivery with the eventual aim of developing needed internal skills and capacity. The intention of the program is to assist grant recipients in meeting the requirements that apply to their project. Forestry and Parks staff will provide assistance to organizations in understanding and delivering recreation projects.

Prior to application, review all program information at [Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program](#) and contact Forestry and Parks staff to discuss grant application requirements. During this contact, you will have an opportunity to ask questions and will receive a grant application resource guide to help complete your application.

If your proposed project is in northern Alberta (north of Highway 16), contact:

Dave Hugelschaffer, Manager, Recreation, Education and Partnerships
Phone: 780-712-1910
Email: dave.hugelschaffer@gov.ab.ca

If your proposed project is in southern Alberta (south of Highway 16), contact:

Brad Jones, Manager, Recreation, Education and Partnerships
Phone: 403-355-4854
Email: brad.jones@gov.ab.ca

Motorized trail users with trail projects fall under the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association and/or the Alberta Snowmobile Association, who have received provincial grants to manage motorized trails.

Preparation

Project description, maps, photos and budget

The project proposal summarizes how the trail project will be planned, implemented, monitored and reported. Overall quality and completeness of the project proposal affects grant award success.

Ensure that project goals and objectives are communicated in a clear and concise manner. It is important that the Project Budget is realistic, detailed and includes a long-term funding plan. Project Description includes a detailed explanation of the project the organization intends to implement with the grant, including a detailed timeline.

While all eligible projects will be considered, projects that have other sources of funding in addition to the requested grant will be rated higher in the evaluation process. Ensure you list other funding sources.

Maps within the proposal should include, at a minimum, a scale bar, north arrow, map legend and [township/quarter sections](#) identified.

A few other suggestions for your grant proposal:

- Include an Implementation Strategy
- Ensure any aerial imagery/photos are high-resolution quality
- Do not hand draw maps
- Utilize mapping software such as GIS or Google Earth if available
- Ensure project meets the eligibility criteria

Planning

Checklist of approvals, authorizations and clearances required for partners conducting trail work on public land

General requirements

The following should be considered for all new construction, maintenance and watercourse crossing activities:

- Ensure alignment with any higher-level plans, if applicable.
- Ensure alignment with species recovery plans, if applicable.
- Identify if the activity will occur in a Natural Area or Heritage Rangeland. If yes, ensure requirements under the [WAERNAHR Act](#) are met.
- Generate a Landscape Analysis Tool (LAT) Report:
 - Identify any sensitive wildlife or wildlife features and implement any required timing restrictions or mitigation measures.
 - Identify if soil conservation mitigation measures are required.
 - Conduct a wildlife sweep, if required.

New construction (including trail re-routing and detours)

Brushing/vegetation clearing (mowing, mulching, stump removal)

- Identify timber salvage and waiver requirements and obtain necessary consents from FMA holder, if required.
- Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents.
- Identify nesting zone and nesting period under the federal [Migratory Birds Convention Act](#) and implement the associated timing restrictions for vegetation clearing.
- Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity.

Ground preparation (soil stripping, contouring, placing geotextiles)

- Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents.
- Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity, if not previously obtained.

Tread construction (repair/maintenance) - erosion control – installation of signage

- Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents.
- Identify source of imported fill material and refer to LAT report for contamination mitigation measures.
- Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity, if not previously obtained.

Installation/construction of associated infrastructure (garbage, washrooms, corrals, stairs, railings, etc.)

- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify timber salvage and waiver requirements and obtain necessary consents from FMA holder, if required.
- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents.
- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify nesting zone and nesting period under the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and implement the associated timing restrictions for vegetation clearing.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- ❑ Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity.

Installation/construction of watercourse crossings/diversions (culverts, bridges, boardwalks, etc.)

- ❑ Identify applicable requirements under the [Water Act](#) and make necessary application(s).
- ❑ Identify applicable requirements for application or notification under the Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings.
- ❑ Identify if the activity will occur within navigable waters. If so, obtain the appropriate federal authorization under the [Navigable Waters Act](#).
- ❑ If the watercourse is fish bearing, submit the project for review to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).
- ❑ Complete First Nations and/or Metis consultation for the activity using the [Government of Alberta's Proponent Guide to First Nations and Metis Settlements Consultation Procedures](#).
- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify timber salvage and waiver requirements and obtain necessary consents from FMA holder, if required.
- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.

- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents.
- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify nesting zone and nesting period under the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and implement the associated timing restrictions for vegetation clearing.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- ❑ Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity.

Weed management

- ❑ Identify conditions from the LAT report and implement the appropriate mitigation measures (i.e. weed spraying setbacks adjacent to waterbodies)

Wetland disturbance

Should any of the above activities take place within or adjacent to a wetland where there is the potential to impact the wetland, the appropriate wetland assessment and *Water Act* authorization will be required prior to commencement of disturbance.

Trail maintenance (includes activities under PLAR 207.1 and maintenance outside of the trail tread but within the 20 m trail corridor)

Brushing/vegetation clearing - mowing, removal of deadfall (no ground disturbance)

- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents (if not previously obtained).
- ❑ Identify nesting zone and nesting period under the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and implement the associated timing restrictions for vegetation clearing.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.

Re-contouring trail and repair or replacement of associated infrastructure (garbage cans, washrooms, corrals, stairs, railings, etc.)

- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify timber salvage and waiver requirements and obtain necessary consents from FMA holder, if required.
- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents (if not previously obtained).
- ❑ Should any associated vegetation clearing be conducted, identify nesting zone and nesting period under the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and implement the associated timing restrictions for vegetation clearing.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.
- ❑ Submit an application to Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women for clearance under the *Historical Resources Act* for the activity (if not previously obtained) – for Re-contouring of Trail Only.

Repair or replacement of signage

- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents (if not previously obtained).
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.

Maintenance of watercourse crossings

- ❑ Identify applicable requirements under the *Water Act* and make necessary application(s) or amendments.
- ❑ Identify applicable requirements for application or notification under the [Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings](#).
- ❑ Identify if the activity will occur within navigable waters. If so, obtain the appropriate federal authorization under the *Navigable Waters Act*.
- ❑ If the watercourse is fish bearing, submit the project for review to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

- ❑ Complete First Nations and/or Metis consultation for the activity using the using the Government of Alberta's Proponent Guide to First Nations and Metis Settlements Consultation Procedures.
- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents, if amendment is required or not previously obtained.
- ❑ Ensure compliance with the *Weed Control Act* and ensure activity minimizes spread of prohibited and noxious weeds.

Wetland disturbance

Should any of the above activities take place within or adjacent to a wetland where there is the potential to impact the wetland, the appropriate wetland assessment and *Water Act* authorization will be required prior to commencement of disturbance.

Access control (deadfall, blockages, signage)

- ❑ Identify timber salvage and waiver requirements and obtain necessary consents from FMA holder, if required.
- ❑ Identify any activities that will involve work being conducted in proximity to (within 30 m) or crossing a pipeline. If there is work within these parameters, obtain necessary pipeline crossing and proximity agreements with pipeline operators.
- ❑ Identify any overlapping dispositions or reservations and obtain necessary consents (if not previously obtained).

TABLE 1 TRAIL SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Legislation/regulation	Implications for trail development
Trails Act	The <i>Trails Act</i> establishes a system for trail management on public land by introducing trail planning to identify trails for designation, ensures trails are planned in consideration of other land-uses and values, defines designated trails as belonging to the Crown, and ensures trails are repaired if damaged by other land uses. It also authorizes the appointment of a trail manager, the entering into of agreements with partners to operate, manage and monitor trails.
Public Lands Act and Public Lands Administration Regulation	Trails do not have a Departmental Reservation (DRS) within the Public Land Use Zone. Approval of new builds and maintenance are done through Authorizations. Construction activities must comply with conditions specified within applicable Authorizations.
Species at Risk Act (SARA)	Where possible, trails should be routed to avoid the critical habitat of listed species including riparian habitat adjacent to waterbodies containing listed species.
Fisheries Act (Federal)	Trails must comply with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) “Measures to protect fish and fish habitat” or may be subject to a project review (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2019).
Migratory Birds Convention Act	The Act specifies that no disturbances to nests or nesting birds is allowed during breeding and nesting periods. If conducting activities during the nesting period, a qualified avian biologist or naturalist with experience with nest surveys should complete nest surveys for ground disturbance and tree clearing prior to trail construction.
Water Act	<p>The <i>Water Act</i> and Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings (the Code of Practice) classifies watercourses and applies regulations for crossings of these watercourses. The Code of Practice applies to “any works.” This includes placing, constructing, installing, maintaining, replacing or removing a watercourse crossing.</p> <p>Standards and conditions specified within the Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings must be met before undertaking a specified activity.</p>
Wetland Policy	<p>Wetlands are defined as “land saturated with water long enough to promote formation of water altered soils, growth of water tolerant vegetation, and biological activity that is adapted to the wet environment. They include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes and shallow open water.</p> <p>Where development activities have the potential to impact wetlands, the wetland policy promotes avoidance and minimization, as the preferred courses of action. Any proposed works within wetlands would necessitate a wetland assessment by a qualified professional and <i>Water Act</i> Approval.</p>
Wildlife Act	<p>Construction and maintenance activities are subject to the Wildlife Act. Before new construction, a wildlife survey should be conducted to identify any important wildlife sites, such as nest, dens, burrow, mineral licks, natural springs, etc. Any important sites should be avoided by reroutes and a minimum buffer distance of 100m.</p> <p>Applicable Wildlife Species Recovery, Management and Land Use Plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan • Limber and White Bark Pine Recovery Plans • 1993 Management Plan for Bighorn Sheep in Alberta • Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zone Guidelines • Mountain Goat and Bighorn Sheep Zone guidelines
Legislation/regulation	Implications for trail development
Weed Control Act and associated regulations	Trail operators should utilize construction and maintenance practices that will avoid or minimize the chances of introducing or spreading noxious and prohibited noxious weeds in accordance with the Act.
Historical Resources Act	<p>Collectively, historic resources are protected under the <i>Historical Resources Act</i>. Historical Resources Act approval is required prior to the initiation of any ground disturbing activities associated with new trail construction.</p> <p>Section 31 of the Act requires “A person who discovers an historic resource in the course of making an excavation for a purpose other than for the purpose of seeking historic resources shall forthwith notify the Minister of the discovery.”</p> <p>Any discoveries will be reported to FP, based on the procedures identified in Standard Requirements Under the <i>Historical Resources Act</i>.</p>

Expectations and reporting

On-site field inspections throughout the term of the trail project will occur in collaboration with Department staff (i.e., Grant Program Coordinator) and the organization.

Successful grant applicants will be required to submit one Interim Report and one Final Report in a timely manner during the grant term. Report templates will be provided by the Department to the applicant, with examples of Interim and Final Report Templates provided in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program - Grant Interim Report	
Organization:	Project Name:
Grant Agreement No.:	Date Submitted:
Grant Year:	
Contact Person:	Phone Number:
Activities Undertaken	
Project Budget	
Please complete the grant disbursements spreadsheet provided.	
Progress Report	
Work undertaken on the project and the grant outcomes achieved to date. Is the project proceeding as expected? If not please indicate what is occurring and what steps are being taken to correct the situation.	
Work Plan	
Please provide an updated work plan for the remainder of the project.	
Additional Comments	

FIGURE 1. INTERIM GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE.

Alberta's Public Land Trails Grant Program - Grant Final Report

Organization:	Project Name:
Grant Agreement No.:	Date Submitted:
Grant Expiry Date:	Project Completion Date:
Contact Person:	Phone Number:

Final Project Summary

Budget

Please complete the separate grant disbursements spreadsheet provided.

Project Goals

Describe the project goals and results achieved.

Where they achieved on time?

Project Outcomes

Describe how the realized outcomes of this project align with the Crown Land Vision for a sustainable trail management system.

Did the outcomes of the project achieve your organizations' goals and objectives?

Did you encounter any unexpected outcomes (positive or negative), challenges and/or delays in the completion of this project? If so, explain.

Work Plan

Was the project monitoring/work plan appropriate and workable to achieve the project goals? Explain.

Were there any risk factors identified during your project? If yes, please explain how they were successfully dealt with.

Please add any additional comments for program staff to consider in the future.

You are welcome to include pictures, new articles, social media posts etc., relating to the project.

Return completed report to outdoorrecreation@gov.ab.ca

I hereby certify that the information contained in this report and supporting documents is accurate and endorsed by the organization.

I understand that the information contained in this report may be used in whole or in part to promote the Public Land Trails Grant Program or to report on the program. Any information used, will be done in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FIGURE 2. FINAL GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE.

