



2021 Grants Workshop

Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Nonmotorized Trails Grants

Taylor Brown
Grants Unit Chief
taylor.brown@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-8601

Lindsey Brown
Recreational Trails Program
lindsey.brown@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-1779

Lauren Turner
Grants Specialist
lauren.turner@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-1030

What *IS* a Trail?

Federally stated purpose of RTP:

Recreational Trails Program supports the development of “recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.”

Purpose of RTP



RTP supports on the ground trail projects.

RTP provides funds for trail projects that could not otherwise be completed.

RTP seeks to improve outdoor recreational access in local communities across Georgia.

Typical RTP Projects



Trail Work

Water Trail Access

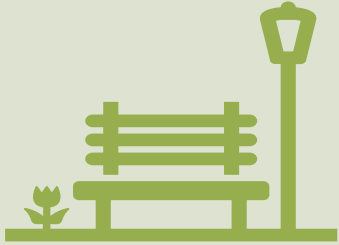


Trailheads

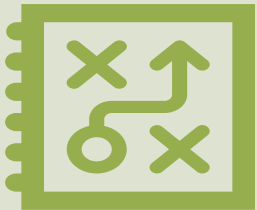
What is RTP not?



Not transportation funding.



Not general park improvement funding.



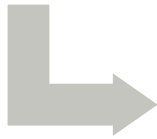
Not planning/design only funding.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- Georgia's Recreational Trails Program is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR).
- RTP funds are allocated to Georgia from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.
- Funds are collected on motor vehicle fuel excise taxes.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides essential support in financial and environmental matters.

RTP Application Timeline

Workshops
June 2021



Pre-application
September 1 –
November 1, 2021



Second-level
Application
February 1 –
March 31, 2022



Project Agreements
Summer-Fall 2022

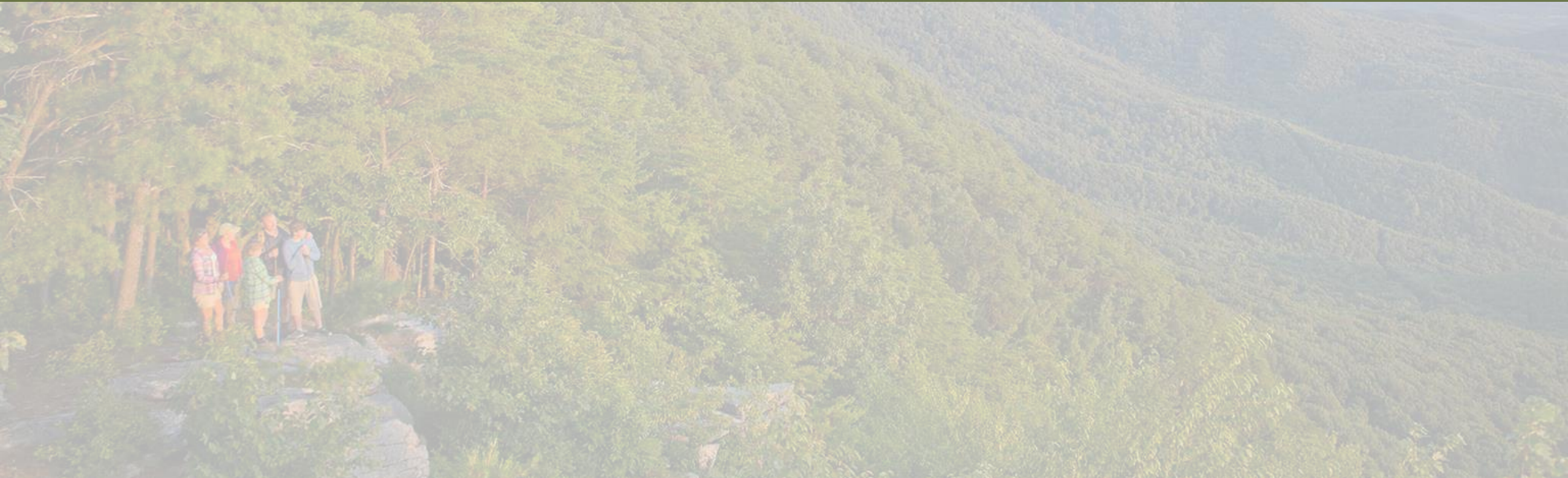
Application Cycle Notes

Applicants may only submit one RTP proposal per cycle.

Applicants may submit Pre-applications to both RTP and Outdoor Stewardship this year, but the projects cannot be dependent upon the one another.



RTP Project Types and Applicants



Types of Trails



Motorized

The diagram consists of two large, dark olive-green arrows pointing in opposite directions. The left arrow points left and contains the word 'Motorized'. The right arrow points right and contains the word 'Nonmotorized'. The two arrows are positioned such that they appear to be part of a single, continuous path or a comparison between two types of trails.

Nonmotorized

Types of Trails



Motorized



Types of Trails

Nonmotorized



Types of Trails



Single-use

Multi-use

Single-use Nonmotorized Trails

Equestrian

Mountain Bike

Single-use

Pedestrian-only
(hike, run, &/or walk; & wheelchair)

Water Trail

Multi-use Nonmotorized Trails

Equestrian & hiker
shared path

Shared
Pedestrian/Bike/Skate

Multi-use

Rails-to-trails

Greenways

Trails vs. Track



- Trail examples:
 - Hiking/biking trail in forested area
 - Walking trail through town or park
 - Equestrian trail



Not Trails



Examples:

- Track around fields and buildings
- Sidewalks



Water Trails



Providing public access to an established water trail for paddling (canoe/kayak).

Not simply a trail near or along a body of water.

Non-motorized, Single Use by federal definition.

Who Can Apply?

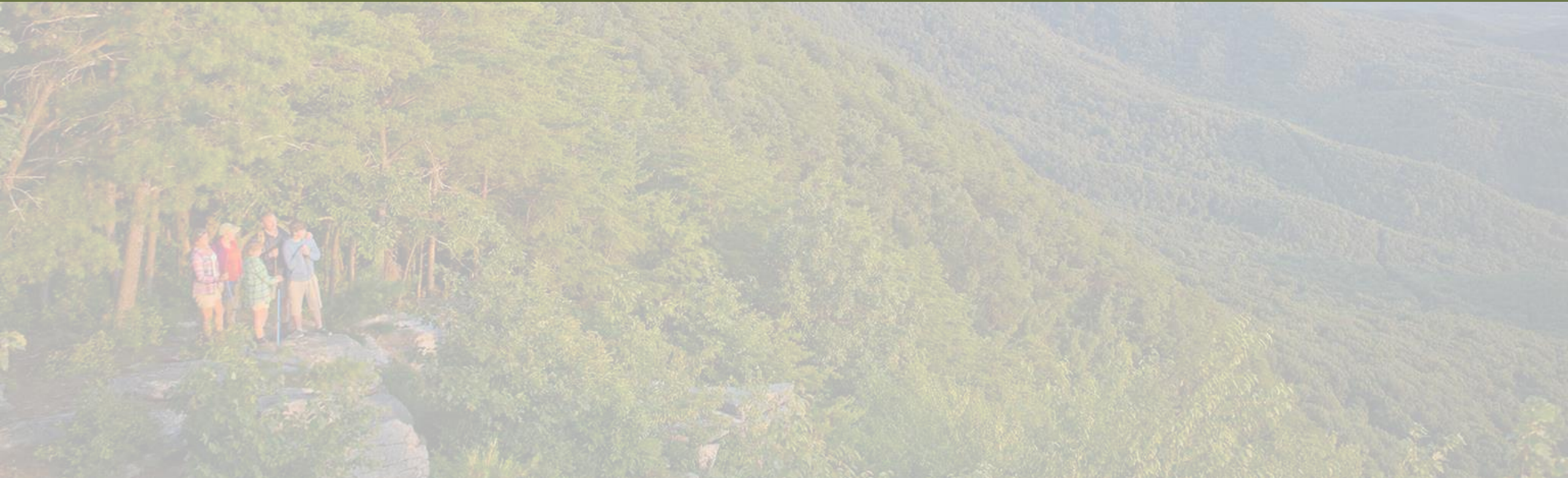
Qualified Local Governments
according to Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

State Agencies

Federal Agencies



RTP Funding



Funding

No minimum funding level

Maximum grant of \$200,000

Reimbursement grant

Retainage of not less than 25% held until closeout

Match

- Minimum grantee match is 20%, maximum grant 80%
- Applicants can commit to a larger match
- If using Federal funds for match, at least 5% of total project cost must be from non-Federal source
- 80/20 match example:
 - Total Project cost = \$250,000
 - Grant value (80%) = \$200,000
 - Minimum match (20%) = \$50,000

Examples of Reimbursable Costs

- Construction costs (new trail or rehab)
- Trailhead facilities & basic trail amenities
- Construction materials
- Equipment rental
- Land acquisition
- Design & Engineering
- Accessibility upgrades (ADA & better)

Common Sources of Match

Grantee cash

- D&E
- Construction costs
- Materials
- Equipment rental

In-kind donations

- Volunteers
- Professional Services
- Materials
- Land acquisition

Details of Note

- Design & Engineering costs are capped at 15% of grant value
\$200,000 grant = D&E costs of \$30,000 or less
- Costs incurred prior to Notice to Proceed cannot be reimbursed
- In two cases, pre-Agreement costs can be counted as match
 - 1) Design & Engineering
 - 2) Land Acquisition

Must have occurred within 18 months of Notice to Proceed to count as match

Buy America Act



Buy America Act applies

Any steel or iron permanently incorporated into the project must have been melted and manufactured in the U.S. if the total value of steel and iron exceeds \$2,500.

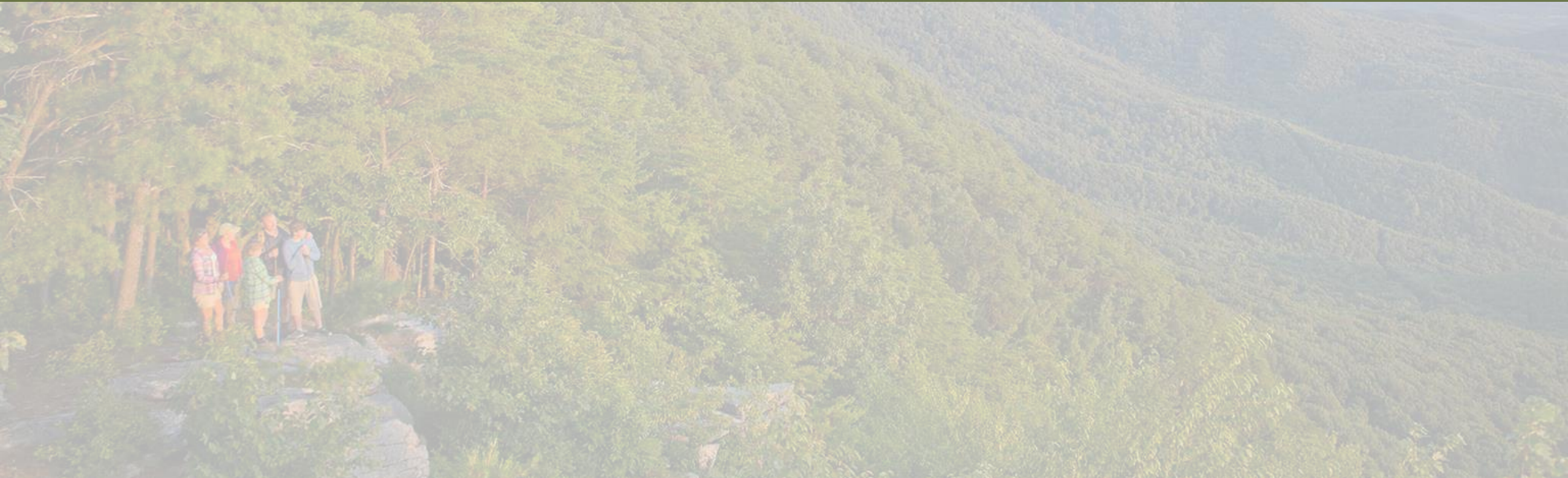
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/cqit/buyam.cfm> for more info

Ineligible Items (Reimbursement or Match)

- Sidewalks
- Tracks
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Playgrounds
- Campsites
- Picnic Pavilions
- Admin costs
- Cart Paths
- Roads
- Maintenance (regular or deferred)
- Sports Fields/Courts
- Food or beverage
- Travel
- Indirect costs
- Ponds
- Purchase of Equipment or Tools
- Design and/or Planning only projects
- Amphitheaters



The RTP Pre-application



A Question for You

Who will your main contact be throughout the full grant process (up to 36 months)?

- This seems very specific but knowing this will make the process smoother for you throughout.
- May or may not be the person writing the application.

The Pre-application:

Competitive stage of the application.

Uses weighted ranking criteria.

Basis for advancing toward approval.

Pre-Application



You won't be able to satisfy every criterion.



The criteria were crafted to broaden the spectrum of eligible projects.



We want you to be successful! Our goal is to maximize RTP's impact **every cycle**.



Maximizing your point potential

Understand & address each question.
Use facts, not fluff.

Required Uploads

- Authorization Letter
- Cost Estimate & Proposed Timeline
- Georgia DNR Accessibility Form
- Site Plan
- Location Map
- Site Photos & Photo Key
- Legal Documents for the Site (deed, lease, plat, etc.)

Cost Estimate

Match percentage should be the same throughout application



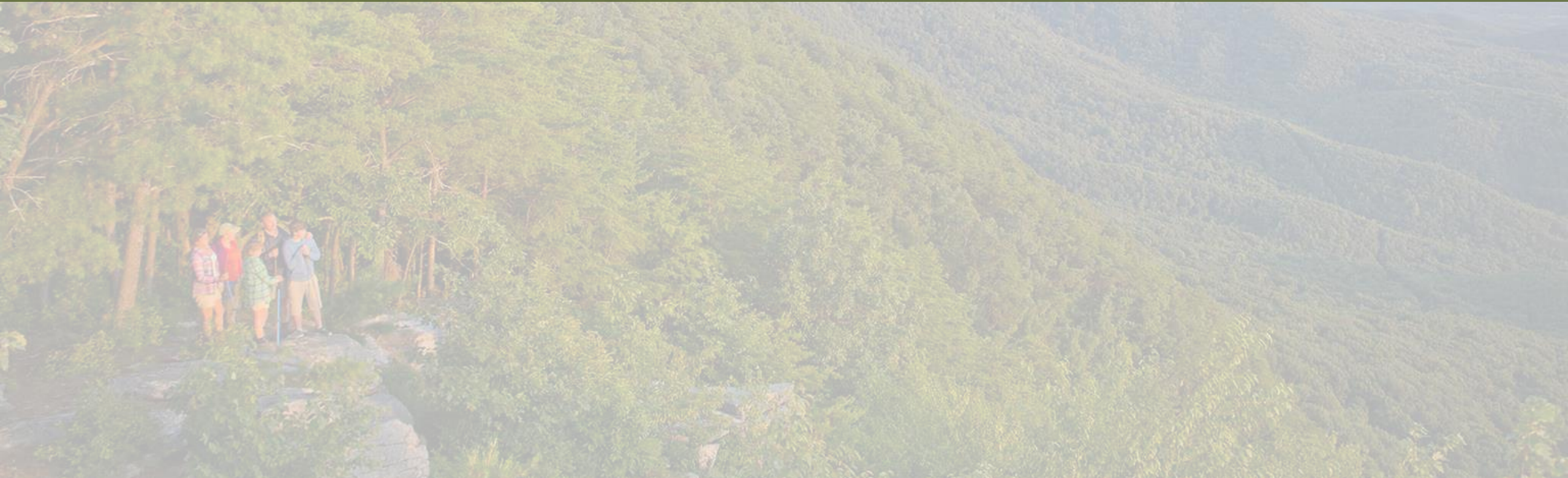
Donations are in-kind match; your expenses are cash match



Design & Engineering cannot exceed 15% of grant value



Criteria



Statewide Trail Needs



MORE PUBLIC
ACCESS TO
WATER TRAILS



NEW TRAILS



RESTORATION
OF TRAILS



QUALITY
SIGNAGE

Stronger Responses - Statewide Trail Needs

Quality Signage

- An entrance sign counts
- Multifaceted kiosk is more helpful
- Safety and directional signage throughout is stronger



Accessibility

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the minimum.

What does real accessibility look like for your trail?


- Trail construction
- Trailhead facilities
- Information provided at trailhead and pre-visit



Maintenance

Trail maintenance is crucial for guaranteeing public access to the trail for at least 25 years.

What plans do you have in place to properly maintain the proposed trail?

A light green downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the first question to the second.

Who will maintain the trail?

A light green downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the second question to the third.

How will maintenance be funded?

Stronger Responses – Trail Maintenance

- Formal, detailed trail maintenance plan
- Dedicated, long-term funding
- Staff, detailed
- Volunteers, detailed



Outside Financial Support



What documentation of financial commitment do you have from outside of your agency?



This can include commitments of cash, volunteer hours, and donations of materials and/or professional services.

Regional/Local Issues and Community Support



Is this trail expressly identified in a local or regional planning document?



What evidence of local support can you provide?

Stronger Responses - Community Support

What evidence of local support can you provide?

- Statements from adjacent landowners
- Documentation of public process
- Identified trail users



Economic Development

- We know that trail-related trip expenditures can provide substantial economic value to local economies.
- Specifically, how will this proposed trail positively benefit the economy of your community?



Stronger Response - Economic Development

- Not just state/national data or documents
- Trail-specific local economic development research
- Commitments from local employers, concessionaires
- Local business input



Environmental Considerations

- Clean Air

- RTP projects are subject to Clean Air Act
- A number of exemptions, but Grantee must check

- Clean Water

- Runoff concerns during construction and long-term
- Permitting requirements apply
- Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces earn additional points

Youth Service and Conservation Corps

- Under the legislation authorizing RTP, the use of Youth Service and Conservation Corps is encouraged.
- Additional points will be given to applications committing to the use of a Qualified Corps.
- Qualified Corps can be found at <https://corpsnetwork.org/members-by-state/>.

Additional Points



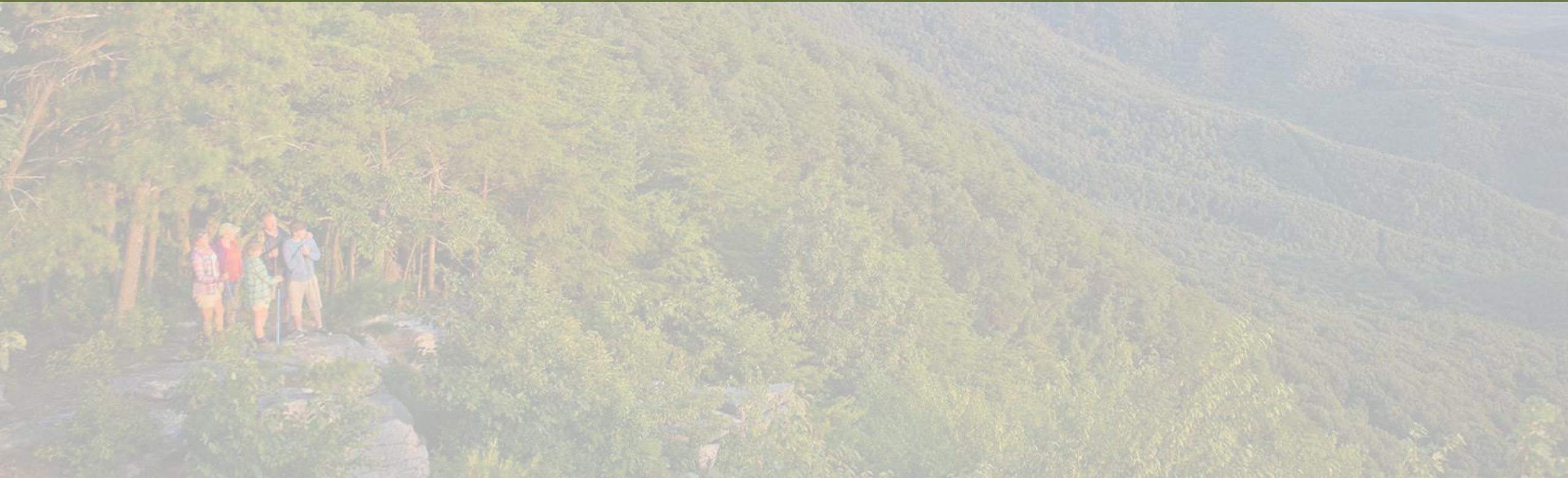
All grantees must provide at least 20% of total project cost as their minimum match; however, additional points will be awarded for match commitments above 20%.



Additional points will be awarded to Applicants who have not received an RTP in the past ten years.



The RTP Second-Level Application



Awaiting Formal Approval

Work cannot begin on the trail until there is a signed Project Agreement.



GADNR issues a Notice to Proceed.



Starting work before the Notice to Proceed will invalidate the grant.

The Second-Level Application



Responses to all Second-Level evaluation criteria



Resolution from the City Council, County Commission, etc.



Detailed Cost Estimate/Project Budget



Project Description and Plans – All plans must be submitted in .pdf format



Project Implementation Schedule

Project Budget – All Applicants

- Include everything in your budget. Only include eligible items.
- Should be **DETAILED** in the Second-Level Application
- You must adhere to your budget. All project items must be completed to successfully close out at the end of your project and receive final reimbursement

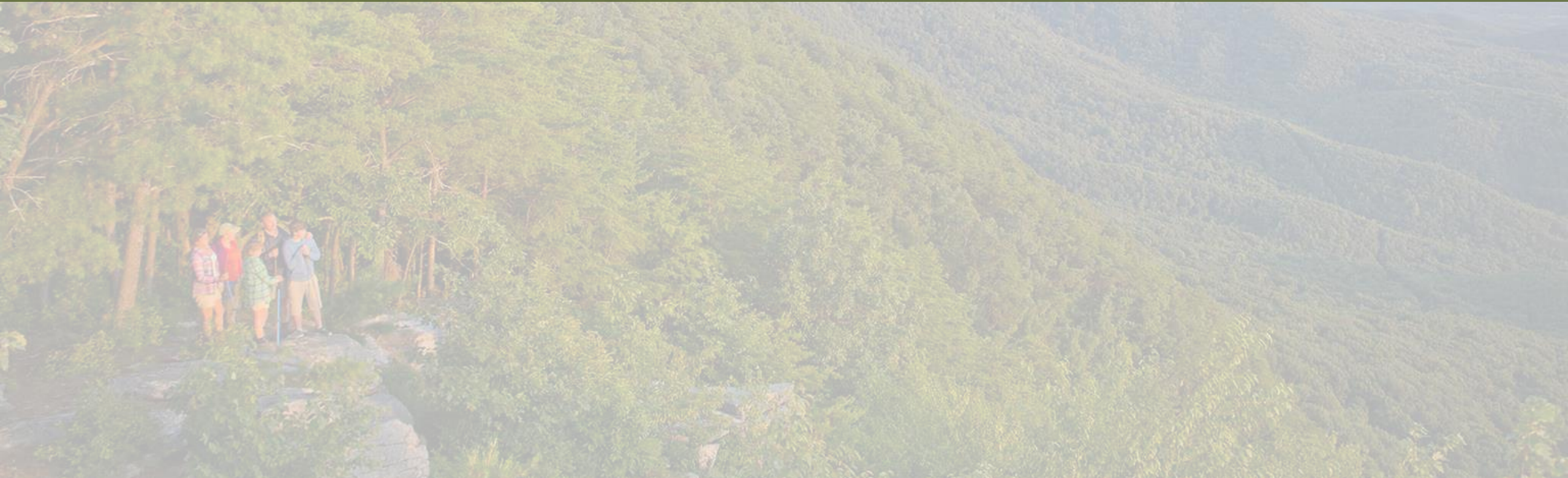
Budget changes may require a formal amendment request or completion of a new application - budget amendments cannot be guaranteed so be very conscious of this when considering changes.

Appraisals for Acquisition

- All appraisals must be completed to UASFLA standards. (Uniform Appraisal Standards of the Federal Land Acquisitions, i.e. Yellow Book).
- This includes acquisitions for match or reimbursement.
- Costs for the independent appraiser are the responsibility of the Applicant and are eligible for RTP Match if so budgeted.
- Subject to independent review.



Managing an RTP Grant



After Your Application is Complete



All applicants must attend a mandatory financial workshop prior to receiving a Project Agreement from GADNR.



The reimbursement process will be covered in depth during the Financial Workshop.



Grantees have up 24 months to complete their project. Trail Completion Date will be set in Project Agreement.

Quarterly Progress Reports

Serves as a regular progress report and includes:

- Quarter to date and project to date financial updates
- Address delays, potential changes, and/or cost overruns
- Consider including supporting photos
- This is an official document signed by your Main Contact

Request for Reimbursement

- Project costs are eligible for reimbursement only if the cost is incurred **after the signed Project Agreement date and before the Trail Completion Date.**
- Submit reimbursements often.
- Include invoice(s) and proof of payment with each reimbursement.
- Reimbursement request must include documentation of match commitment.
- GADNR must sometimes request additional documentation.

Close out

Close out must occur within 30 days of project completion

Inform us that the project is complete and open to the public

Complete a final quarterly report and final reimbursement request, marking both as “Final”

Include photos of the completed work

Close out

GADNR audit of all documents and reimbursement requests and payments

Audit of Match totals

GADNR Final Inspection Completed

Appropriate publicity on site (signage) & on your web page

Long-term Obligations for Grantees

All documents must be retained for at least 5 years.

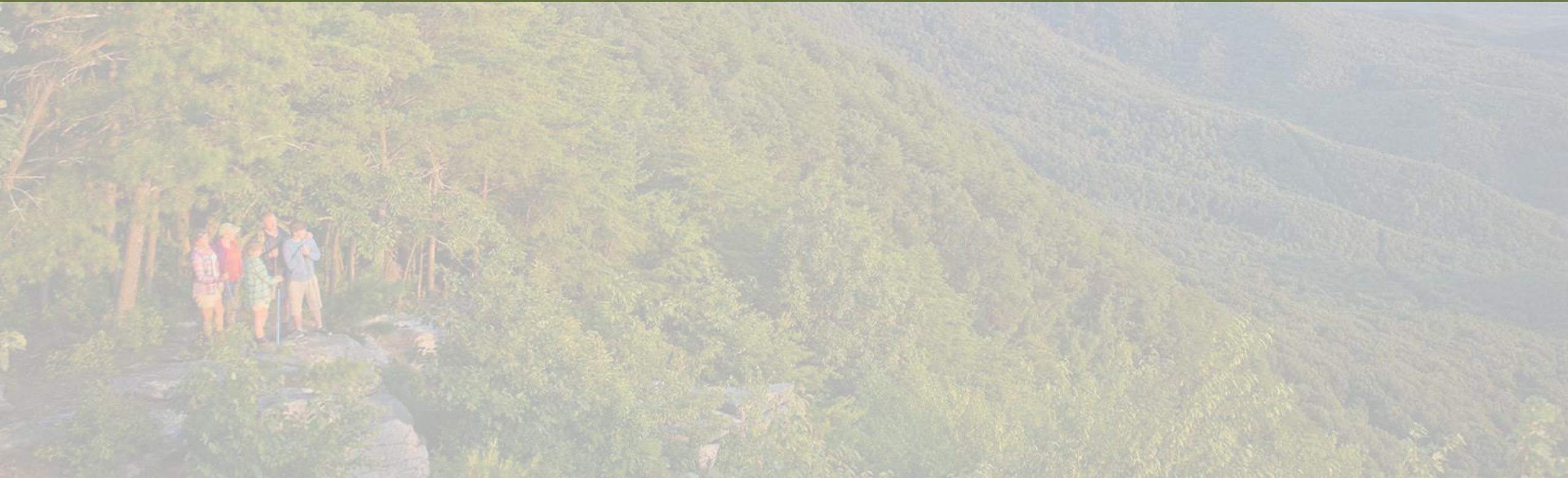
Grantee must provide public access to the trail for at least 25 years.

Real Property or conservation easements acquired with RTP funds shall remain protected as conservation lands.

Grant recipients may charge reasonable user fees.



Tips for Submitting a Successful Pre-Application



#1 – Check Your Eligibility at the Start

- Make sure your organization and project are eligible ***before*** you start work on your Pre-application.
- Verify that you can fulfill the match requirement.
- Do you have the support of the authorizing official or officials who must sign off on each stage of this grant process? More input and more insight will yield stronger results.
- Does your project meet the purposes of the grant for which you want to apply? You don't want to invest this much time on an application that cannot be considered for funding.

2 - Be Prepared

- Understand the amount of work it will take to complete the application **before** you begin. Sample applications can be viewed on our website prior to the application start date.
- About half of applicants surveyed following the 2019 GOSP/RTP grant cycle reported spending between **40 - 80 hours** preparing documents for and submitting a Pre-application.
- Applying can be challenging, but managing a successful grant is even more difficult. Does your organization have the ability to see this grant through to a successful and timely completion? Managing these grants requires a lot of upfront costs, regular progress reporting, and detailed recordkeeping.

#3 – Follow the Directions

- The manual is your guide to filling out the application. We know it's lengthy, but it contains all the instructions for successfully completing each section of the application.
- Carefully read all criteria questions so you understand exactly what the reviewer is looking for. Each question explains exactly what the reviewer is looking for.
- Lots of questions require the applicant to upload documentation to receive credit and you don't want to miss out on those points.

#4 – Keep the Reviewers in Mind

- Make the assumption the reviewers have never been to your city or county and have never heard of your project. Maps, photos and planning documents help the reviewer understand the overall vision of your project.
- Pay attention to the word count and focus on answering the questions that are asked. Use clear and direct language.
- Reviewers get excited about Georgia's outdoor resources; tell them your story in a way that they get excited about your project.

#5 - Focus on the Narrative

- The narrative and budget help the reviewer understand how you'll spend the funds. Don't just tell us *why* you need the funding, tell us *what you need the funding for*.
- Focus on the tangible project and impact. Use other criteria to tell us about the economic, environmental value, etc.

#6 – Work with Partners

- All DNR grants prioritize projects that have strong partnerships. Collaboration shows the reviewers others are invested in this project.
- Remember, a letter of support is not the same as a financial partner.

#7 - Ask for Help

- Our Grants Specialists are here to help answer your questions. They can also give contact information for other DNR employees who can help with wildlife, historical, recreation or environmental questions.
- If you've recently submitted a GOSP or RTP application that was not funded, contact a Grants Specialist to set up a meeting to review or update your application.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

A copy of this presentation is available at
www.gadnr.org/grants

Questions?

Lindsey Brown

lindsey.brown@dnr.ga.gov

404-463-1779

Lauren Turner

lauren.turner@dnr.ga.gov

404-463-1030