Washingtonians are an active population. A 2006 survey revealed that 11 percent of Washingtonians ventures into the backcountry annually to recreate.

People are hiking, biking, riding horses, cross-country skiing, and using off-road vehicles and snowmobiles.

To accommodate these sports, the national Recreational Trails Program provides federal funding to maintain trails and facilities that offer a backcountry experience.

This funding is vital to keeping trails open to the public. As public agencies face funding shortages, maintenance often is delayed or eliminated. This grant program is one of the few for maintaining backcountry trails.

Maintenance and rerouting of trails, development of trail-side and trail head facilities, and operation of environmental education and trail safety programs are all eligible projects.

Outdoors Recreation Improves Economy, Health

Use of trails provides many economic and health benefits to Washington. A recent report by the Washington Trails Association showed that Olympic National Park visitors add $90 million to the local area and generate 1,900 jobs. Backcountry campers to one national park in Washington contributed $985,000 in 2000 on food in restaurants and bars, groceries, gas and oil, local transportation, and admission fees.

In addition to providing money for jobs, hiking lowers the risk of health care costs. Many people spend time in the outdoors to relieve stress, a major contributor to illnesses, and studies have shown outdoor experiences decrease attention deficit disorder, obesity, and depression among children.

Ensuring the Best Projects are Funded

The grant process is open and competitive to ensure the best projects receive funding. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board accepts applications in even years. Staff and citizen committees, which are made of recreational trail users, score the applications using criteria established by the board and submit a ranked list to the board for consideration. The board approves the list and forwards it to the Federal Highway Administration for review and final approval.
Grant Recipients (1994-2011)

Anacortes
Apple Country Snowmobile Club
Backcountry Horsemens of Washington
Benton County
Bremerton Cruisers Motorcycle
Butte Busters Snowmobile Club
Chinook Trail Association
Clallam County
Clark County
Coal Mines Trail Commission
Corps of Engineers-Clarkston
EarthCorps
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
Friends of the Trail
Grays Harbor County
Hi-Country Snowmobile Club
High Country Cruisers
Hurricane Ridge Education Foundation
Issaquah
Issaquah Alps Trail Club
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe
Jones Creek Trail Riders Association
Junco Snowmobile Club
King County
Kitsap Land Trust
Lake Cle Elum Ridge Ryders
Lake Wenatchee Recreation Club
Loup Loup Ski Education
Methow Valley Snowmobile Association
Methow Valley Sport Trail Association
Montesano
Mount Tahoma Trails Association
Mountain Trails Grooming Association
Mountaineers
Mountains to Sound Greenway
Nooksack Nordic Ski Club
Northwest Glacier Cruisers
Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Palisades
Peninsula Trails Coalition
Sky Riders Snowmobile Club
Snohomish County
Spokane County
Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation
Spokane Winter Knights
Trout Unlimited Grays Harbor
Vancouver Snobusters

The Mount Tahoma Trails Association used a $49,000 grant to buy equipment and groom cross-country ski trails in Lewis County.

Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
Washington State Snowmobile Association
Washington Trails Association
Washington Water Trails Association
Washington Wilderness Coalition
Whatcom County
Winter Knights Snowmobile
Yakima Greenway Foundation

Federal Agencies

National Park Service
- Olympic National Park
U.S. Forest Service
- Colville National Forest
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest
- Idaho Panhandle National Forest
- Mount Baker National Forest
- Okanogan National Forest
- Umatilla National Forest
- Wenatchee National Forest

State Agencies

Department of Natural Resources
State Parks and Recreation Commission