



STATE OF WASHINGTON

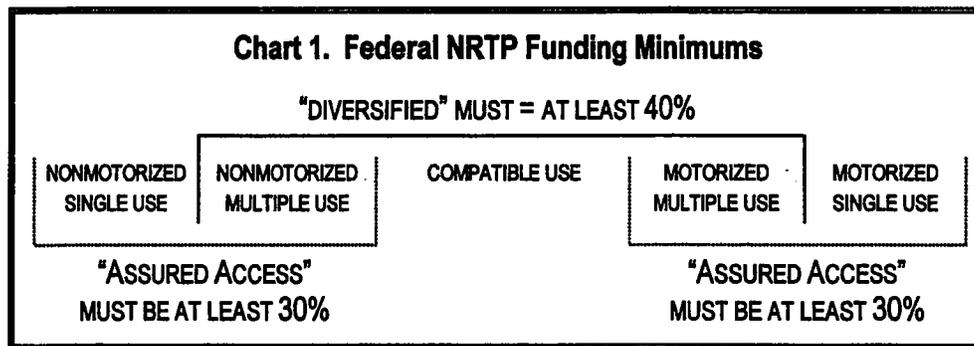
OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
1111 Washington Street SE
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

March 29, 2006

TO: IAC Members & Designees
FROM: Laura E. Johnson, Director 
PREPARED BY: Greg Lovelady, Manager, Applied Planning Section
SUBJECT: National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) Grant Ceilings
Notebook Item #4

Summary. At its February 3, 2006 meeting, the IAC Board asked staff to provide recommendations that address whether or not the maximum National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) grant should be increased from the current \$50,000. To respond, staff surveyed people interested in the program and analyzed the implications of changing the grants ceiling. Based on this, staff recommends a modest increase in the ceiling of both the motorized and nonmotorized general NRTP categories.

Background. By Federal law, NRTP is set up to fund both motorized and non-motorized projects. Chart 1 shows the required distribution approved by Congress.



For individual projects, NRTP legislation does not establish minimum or maximum grant amounts. A State may establish its own minimum or maximum grant amounts. In the past few years, the majority of NRTP projects funded by IAC have been near the Board's established limit, in the \$40,001 - \$50,000 range.



On February 24, staff sent an invitation to participate in an on-line questionnaire (Appendix B) to 1,237 people who had previously asked to be placed on IAC's "Interested in NRTP" e-mail list. The purpose of the questionnaire was to discover their views on raising the maximum grant reimbursement to either \$75,000 or \$100,000. 83 people (7 percent) responded.

The same basic questionnaire was also made available at IAC's 2006 Grants Workshops. Four workshop attendees returned the one page questionnaire. These results are included in this analysis.

40 out of the 87 respondents indicate they are primarily "government employees."

Results. Because of budget and time limitations, this survey's results are from a self-selected, not random, population. Thus, we don't know if the outcome represents what the majority of persons interested in NRTP think. All we can say is that the results probably are the views of those who took the opportunity to respond.

Results of the survey's raw data make it clear that most respondents would like to see the NRTP funding limit increased for the motorized category of the program. 35% of respondents indicate that the ceiling should remain at \$50,000. Meanwhile, 65% said that it should be increased to either \$75,000 or \$100,000.

Regarding grants to the nonmotorized trail recreation category of the NRTP, 45% of respondents say the ceiling should be kept at \$50,000 while 55% say that it should be increased to either \$75,000 or \$100,000.

The questionnaire also asked why respondents prefer one funding ceiling over another. This question is asked for both the motorized and nonmotorized ceiling.

In the data provided by respondents to support why one ceiling was selected over another, 24 replies (27.6 percent) appear to be based on faulty logic. Most of these replies advocated increasing the ceiling based on the view that it would increase the number of non-motorized applications funded each year. Increasing the grant ceiling, however, likely would have the opposite effect. That is, some individual projects would receive more funding than in the past, leaving fewer dollars for other applicants. Thus, increasing the grants ceiling would leave more projects unfunded.

Analysis. One way to determine the future NRTP grant ceiling would be to use the raw data as a direct guide. In this case, both the motorized and nonmotorized ceilings would be raised above the current \$50,000.

Due to the anomaly noted in responses, we tried to look a little deeper by "scrubbing" the data by eliminating replies that seem to be based on faulty logic. If the 24 "unusual" responses are eliminated, the result for the motorized grants ceiling does not

change significantly and an increase still appears to be preferred. However, omitting the "unusual" responses does change the ceiling preferences for the nonmotorized category. Scrubbed data shows respondents seem to prefer leaving the nonmotorized cap at \$50,000. We cannot determine which statistic is more reliable, or whether the difference is material.

Before deciding on recommendations, staff considered several other options, including weighting responses, changing funding limits in some categories and not others, and raising funding limits on several grants per cycle. Our conclusion is that none of the alternatives to the recommendation below presented any compelling advantages.

Recommendations. Based on the above information, and as proposed in the attached Resolution 2006-14, staff recommends that the General Category ¹ NRTP grant ceilings be raised from \$50,000 to \$75,000. We also recommend that the grant ceiling for "Education" category projects remain at \$10,000.

This increase would more than correct for the inflation that has occurred since the current policy was adopted.² It also maintains the understanding that this is a relatively small grant program³ that does not focus on high cost land acquisitions and developments. The increase also acknowledges that, in the last few years, the majority of all types of projects funded have been in the \$40,001 - \$50,000 range.

¹ Includes both motorized and nonmotorized projects.

² IAC adopted NRTP grant limits: 1994-1996 = none; 1997-1998 = \$40,000; 1999-present = \$50,000.

³ About \$1.1 million distributed each year

RESOLUTION #2006-14
NRTP Grants Ceiling Increase

April 18, 2006

WHEREAS, the General Category National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) grants ceiling of \$50,000 has been in place since 1999; and

WHEREAS, it is known that in recent years most NRTP grants have been funded at or near this ceiling; and

WHEREAS, a recent survey of persons interested in this program shows that many would like to see the ceiling increased; and

WHEREAS, the Board of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation has asked its staff to review this policy and provide recommendations regarding any changes that may be needed; and

WHEREAS, staff has studied the issue and written a report that makes recommendations for increases;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that based on the aforementioned report, the NRTP General Category grants ceiling is hereby increased to \$75,000 and staff is directed to take appropriate steps to ensure that information regarding this new amount is made available to all interested parties.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted / Defeated / Deferred (underline)

E-mail request and web link

Fri 2/24/2006 8:13 AM

To those interested in the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation's (IAC) National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP):

By IAC policy, the highest reimbursement allowed for a NRTP project is \$50,000. This is the grant ceiling for maintenance and development proposals.

It has been proposed that increasing the limit might address two problems. First, it could help ensure all funds in the "Motorized" categories are awarded every year, so funds wouldn't need to be carried over to the next year. Second, it would enable applicants to address larger and more expensive trail projects.

Should IAC raise the NRTP grants ceiling? Before March 17, 2006, please take five minutes to visit this web site and express your opinion: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=822061813893> [Please complete the questionnaire just once. It will also be distributed at IAC's Grants Workshops, February 27 - March 3, 2006.]

To help you decide, here are some facts and a web site you may visit for more information:

#1: Each year, IAC is asked to distribute about \$1.1 million in NRTP grants for motorized and nonmotorized trail activities. By IAC policy, NRTP focuses on maintenance of trails and development of trailheads or connector trails.

#2: Federal law requires that 30 percent of NRTP funds go to the motorized categories and 30 percent to the nonmotorized categories.

#3: In the non-motorized category (hiking, equestrian, and bicycle trails), grant requests always exceed the 30 percent. As a result, IAC must leave more than a dozen applications unfunded each year. For motorized category grants (snowmobile and motorcycle trails, etc.), requests usually fall short of this percentage, requiring IAC to carry over funds to the following year.

#4: Raising the grants ceiling could change NRTP's dynamics, from supporting smaller maintenance and development projects to a program that addresses fewer but larger projects.

For more NRTP information: <<http://www.iac.wa.gov/iac/grants/nrtp.htm>>

Greg Lovelady
Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
1111 Washington Street SE
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



Should IAC raise the grant ceiling in NRTP in 2006?

By IAC policy, the highest reimbursement allowed for a National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) project is \$50,000. This is the grant ceiling for maintenance and development proposals.

It has been proposed that increasing the limit might address two problems. *First*, it could help ensure all funds in the "Motorized" categories are awarded every year, so funds wouldn't need to be carried over to the next year. *Second*, it would enable applicants to address larger and more expensive trail projects.

Should IAC raise the NRTP grants ceiling? To help us decide, please complete the following questionnaire.

* = Response required

1. *Motorized: In your opinion, what should be the maximum motorized category NRTP grant? [PICK ONE]
 - a. \$50,000 (that is, make no change)
 - b. \$75,000
 - c. \$100,000
 - d. Other _____

2. *Motorized: Why did you pick the above answer? [ANSWER ALL THAT APPLY]
 - a. To help reduce the amount of "motorized" money carried over to the next year
 - b. Some projects require more money
 - c. Projects do OK within the current limit
 - d. Other _____

3. *Nonmotorized: In your opinion, what should be the maximum nonmotorized category NRTP grant? [PICK ONE]
 - a. \$50,000 (that is, make no change)
 - b. \$75,000
 - c. \$100,000
 - d. Other _____

4. *Nonmotorized: Why did you pick the above answer? [ANSWER ALL THAT APPLY]
 - a. Too many "nonmotorized" applications are already left unfunded each year.
 - b. Some projects require more money
 - c. Projects do OK within the current limit
 - d. Other _____
5. *With which activity/organization are you most associated? [PICK ONE]
 - a. Government employee
 - b. Motorized trail recreation
 - c. Nonmotorized trail recreation
 - d. None – N/A
 - e. Other (please specify)
6. What else would you like to tell us? [FEEL FREE TO USE THIS SPACE TO CLARIFY ANY OF YOUR ABOVE ANSWERS.]

Thank you for helping with this important policy decision!

Done >>