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CONTACT: Patricia Brooks, patricia@matchmapmedia.com, 202.351.1757

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Invests Over \$300,000 to Support Community-Driven Efforts to Connect People and Places by Trail

Funding supports 45 grants across 16 states, with a focus on projects that engage communities and establish equitable access to trails

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) today announced that it has awarded a combined \$308,500 in grant funding to 45 projects across 16 states, with a goal of investing in community-led efforts to create more opportunities for people to connect with trails in their neighborhoods—either through activities and events, or through improved, connected trail infrastructure.

“At RTC, we believe that trails have the power to transform communities and create joyful, vibrant public spaces that are equitable and inclusive,” said Liz Thorstensen, RTC’s vice president of trail development. “These grants are an intentional investment in the partners and people who are working on the ground—in their neighborhoods and in their states—to establish the programming and the infrastructure necessary to invite everyone living in a community to enjoy their trails. Our partners are leading the way to a future where trails connect everyone, everywhere.”

RTC’s Trail Grant Program emphasizes strategic investments that support significant regional and community trail development goals—often providing funding for projects that are small in scope and scale and can be hard to finance within traditional funding streams. These projects are essential to building, maintaining and managing the trails that communities rely upon for recreation, transportation and economic vitality.

The current grant cycle prioritized investment in RTC’s flagship initiatives. The grants fund projects and partners who are working to advance trail network development as part of RTC’s TrailNation™ portfolio, which is designed to establish model trail networks across the country to prove what is possible when you equitably connect people and places by trail. Grants also fund those working to connect the Great American Rail-Trail™, the nation’s first entirely bikeable cross-country trail, which will one day link Washington, D.C., and Washington State.

“Across the country, demand for safe places to walk, bike and be active has surged these past few years. We need to bring intention and focus to ensure that investments are being made in ways that are responsive to demand while also dismantling inequities in access to the outdoors,” said Thorstensen. “These grants are a commitment to the importance that RTC places on working with local partners to connect residents to the benefits that trails deliver.”

RTC's most recent grant investments underscore the power of building strong coalitions to engage communities, activate trails so that people who live in a community feel welcome in the space, and foster the collaboration needed to advance trail-network development efforts that increase access to safe places to walk, bike and be active nationwide.

Investments, listed below by regional trail network project, include:

- **Baltimore Greenway Trails Network**: \$41,000 to support nine partners in designing programming and events that inspire neighborhoods to connect with each other and enjoy the benefits of trails, walking and biking throughout the city.
- **Bay Area Trails Collaborative**: \$25,000 to support three organizations in increasing community awareness of, and engagement with, the 2,700-mile developing trail network connecting the region's diverse attractions, recreational options and communities.
- **Capital Trails Coalition**: \$22,500 for four local organizations across the D.C. region activating and empowering people to enjoy the benefits of walking, biking and trails through local events and activities designed to show how connected trails can impact communities.
- **Caracara Trails**: \$20,000 to support programming led by The University of Texas School of Public Health and Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta! that encourages families and communities across the Lower Rio Grande Valley region in south Texas to be active outside.
- **Circuit Trails**: \$25,000 to increase awareness of and neighborhood engagement around the developing Richmond Industrial Trail, which will provide a new connection to the 800-mile regional Circuit Trails network in greater Philadelphia.
- **Great American Rail-Trail**: \$50,000 in support of eight projects to advance trail development for the 3,700-mile route that will connect across 12 states and Washington, D.C.
- **Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition**: \$25,000 to two organizations working to connect critical trail gaps in Ohio and West Virginia on a 1,500-mile interstate trail network that centers around Pittsburgh.
- **Miami Loop**: \$20,000 to seven local groups who are connecting communities and tourist attractions to unlock the benefits of the region's trails for residents.
- **New England Rail-Trail Network**: \$45,000 to advance interstate trail connections between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, enhancing regional economic and tourism opportunities.
- **Route of the Badger**: \$35,000 to support community-based organizations working in the Milwaukee area to address the diverse needs of communities and unlock the benefits that access to trails and the outdoors can deliver.

Since 2008, RTC has distributed \$2,373,320 in trail development grants. For a list of all grant recipients, visit railstotrails.org/grants. To learn more about TrailNation, visit railstotrails.org/trailnation. To learn more about the Great American Rail-Trail, visit railstotrails.org/greatamericanrailtrail.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).