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CONTACT:

Andrea Holliday, aholliday@railstotrails.org, 202-974-5130

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grant Provides Critical Funding for Nebraska's Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail

On the heels of its announcement as one of twelve "gateways" in the Great American Rail-Trail, \$65,000 RTC grant will match state funds for the trail's development

WASHINGTON—Today, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) announced a \$65,000 grant to be shared between two non-profit organizations—Cowboy Trail West and Northwest Nebraska Trails Association (NNTA)—working to move the Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail (Cowboy Trail) closer to completion.

The trail, totaling 321 miles when complete, is one of the longest rail-trail conversions in the nation, spanning much of the state of Nebraska. RTC's grant provides critical matching funds necessary for the two organizations to secure \$700,000 in Recreational Trails Program funds offered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission—funding that is necessary to advance the trail's development.

"It's an exciting time for Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, as we unveil our long-held vision for the Great American Rail-Trail and take bold action toward its development," said Liz Thorstensen, vice president of trail development at RTC. "The success of the Great American Rail-Trail hinges on the success of the many trails it comprises—including the Cowboy Trail. That's what makes this \$65,000 grant so important—paired with local funds raised, it has the potential to unlock hundreds of thousands of dollars in state funding that will help complete one of the oldest and longest rail-trails in the country."

"This grant and the promise it holds for completing the Cowboy Trail are examples of the momentum the Great American Rail-Trail will deliver to trail development along its route as this vision becomes reality," said Thorstensen.

The donation comes just days following RTC's announcement of its commitment to complete the Great American Rail-Trail—a nearly 4,000-mile multiuse trail spanning 12 states nationwide from Washington, D.C., to Washington State. The Cowboy Trail is one of 12 gateway trails announced by RTC—those trails that make the vision of the Great American Rail-Trail possible in each state. RTC plans to reveal the complete route of the Great American Rail-Trail in the spring.

In September 2018, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission offered Cowboy Trail West and NNTA \$350,000 each to further develop western portions of the Trail, contingent upon raising 20 percent in matching funds (\$175,000) by March 1, 2019. RTC's grant provided the remaining funds necessary to satisfy this requirement.

Learn more about RTC, the Great American Rail-Trail, and the Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail at www.greatamericanrailtrail.org.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).