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Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's 2019 Doppelt Fund Invests Over \$130,000 in Projects to Connect, Strengthen Trail Systems

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) today announced the recipients of its 2019 Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund grants, with an emphasis on strategic investments that provide necessary financial support for regional and community trail-development goals. The organization invested \$132,500 in 10 regional and community trail projects across the country.

“So much enthusiasm exists to connect and improve trail systems in communities nationwide,” said Ryan Chao, president of RTC. “However, some of these projects struggle to get the resources they need to build, maintain and promote their trails. These grants endow projects that might be overlooked in traditional funding streams, adding resource capacity and power to strengthen the trail systems that connect the country.”

The 2019 Doppelt Fund grant recipients emphasize investments in projects with the potential to strengthen or connect trails in 10 communities nationwide, many of which are part of growing trail systems. The recipients include:

- **Greater Arkansas River Nature Association** (Colo.), receiving \$5,000 for marketing and project coordination activities, including map and audio tour development, for the Stage & Rail Trail, a planned 70-mile trail between Leadville and Salida.
- **Putnam Blueways & Trails Citizen Support Organization** (Fla.), receiving \$5,000 for maintenance along three rail-trails extending 28 miles through Putnam County.
- **City of Union Point** (Ga.), receiving \$15,000 to help meet the match for a state grant received to construct one of three “model miles” for the Firefly Trail, a developing 39-mile rail-trail that will eventually connect Athens with Union Point.
- **City of Farragut** (Iowa), receiving \$15,000 to close the final fundraising gap for the restoration of three bridges and paving of a former rail corridor for the Admiral Trail, which will eventually connect to the Wabash Trace Nature Trail.
- **Friends of the Bourne Rail Trail** (Mass.), receiving \$15,000 for design of the Bourne Rail Trail, a future rail-with-trail that will be a critical link in a developing trail network on Cape Cod.
- **TART Trails** (Mich.), receiving \$5,000 for development of a brand marketing plan and fundraising feasibility study for the Traverse City-Charlevoix Trail, a 46-mile gap in a nearly 325-mile trail network.
- **Midtown Greenway Coalition** (Minn.), receiving \$10,000 to organize neighborhoods and citizens to advocate for a rail-with-trail extension of the Midtown Greenway over the Mississippi River via an existing rail bridge.

- **Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest - Butte Ranger District** (Mont.), receiving \$27,500 for the installation of solar lighting in a former railroad tunnel along the Milwaukee Road Rail-Trail, part of the Great American Rail-Trail.
- **Mountain Heritage, Inc.** (Va.), receiving \$25,000 for the restoration of a former railroad trestle with an innovative shipping container technique, enabling the extension of the Mendota Trail.
- **Cascade Bicycle Club** (Wash.), receiving \$10,000 for efforts to raise community awareness and engagement of the 42-mile Eastside Rail Corridor Trail, which will eventually connect much of King County.

The Doppelt Fund supports trail projects that provide critical value yet are often not competitive for traditional public funding sources due to their size or the focus of the investment. The grants provide funding to support trail maintenance, trail building and community engagement projects nationwide. RTC received over \$4.7 million in application requests for the 2019 grant cycle, demonstrating the national reality of unmet trail funding needs.

“The projects we supported this year will deliver a lasting impact within their communities, while contributing to RTC’s grand vision of a nation connected by trails,” said Jeff Doppelt, a philanthropist from Great Neck, New York. “It is an honor to provide this much-needed investment in our country’s trails, but the need for additional and large-scale investment is clear. That is why we’ll be announcing a second round of grantees later this year. We want to emphasize how important these projects are and how deep the need is for sustained funding sources.”

Established in 2015, the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund strengthens critical regional trail projects. The 2019 grant program was bolstered by a \$20,000 gift from an anonymous donor. A listing of all Doppelt Fund grant recipients can be found at www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants.

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.