

Trails Across America Marker Grants Frequently Asked Questions

Rails to Trails Conservancy is partnering with the William G. Pomeroy Foundation on the Trails Across America national grant program to celebrate and preserve history along America's multiuse trails.

RTC and the foundation are excited to collaborate with communities across the nation to select, develop and install premium cast-aluminum historical markers featuring unique places, people and history along greenways, canal towpaths and rail-trails—linking communities while honoring their pasts.

Learn more about the program and apply at railstotrails.org/grants/#marker.

Download our helpful hints at rtc.li/trails-across-america-helpful-hints.

Sept. 10, 2025, Trails Across America Webinar: RTC and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation presented a webinar in September 2025 to provide more information about elevating trailside history and our Trails Across America marker grant program.

A downloadable PDF of our presentation, as well as a full recording of the webinar, are available at: rtc.li/trails-across-america-2025.

For more information about the Trails Across America grant program, email Amy Kapp, Editorial Director for RTC, at amy@railstotrails.org.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Who administers and funds this grant program?

This is a passthrough grant program partnership and collaboration by RTC and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, whereby RTC oversees administration of the application, development and ordering processes. Marker research vetting, as well as all material costs for the physical markers (including shipping), are supported by the Pomeroy Foundation.

Are there specific eligibility requirements for this program, such as type of entity/individual or local match?

All organizations and entities who are managing or operating a trail, or who are working in partnership with a trail manager, are eligible to submit an idea for this program. Ideal applicants include municipalities/cities, counties or state offices that manage trails; and historical societies or other nonprofits (in the trails, walking and bicycling or community

engagement/community development fields) working in partnership with a local trail manager or operator.

Note that the final marker must be installed on a rail-trail, multiuse trail, greenway or canal towpath; before a marker application receives final approval from the Pomeroy Foundation, a [very brief] permission letter from the formal landowner will need to be submitted to RTC. A letter template will be provided to approved applicants; see more about the process information on our “[Helpful Hints](#)” document.

Can markers be put along a natural trail (not paved)?

Yes—any multiuse trail or greenway (and in some cases, singletrack trails when applicable) will be considered.

How can I find more information about, and how to apply for, the marker program?

You can find detailed information, a “[Helpful Hints](#)” document and the [online submission form](#) for our Trails Across America marker grant program at railstotrails.org/grants/#marker.

What is the application deadline?

Applications are accepted quarterly on a rolling basis for 2025/26. Learn more at railstotrails.org/grants/#marker.

What is the process for the applications?

RTC will collaboratively guide the applicant on this process and oversee the administration. The applicant is responsible for applying, providing available sources (if any) and developing/confirming proposed marker text.

The application process takes the form of several easy steps, including: 1) idea submission (by the applicant); 2) a collaborative planning session to determine available sources/research and proposed marker text; 3) submission (by RTC) of a formal LOI to the Pomeroy Foundation; 4) approval by the foundation; 5) final application submission (by RTC); 6) supplemental story development; 7) order, receipt of sign and installation.

Is the cost of installation borne by the local organization, or is that included in the program?

The development and creation of the marker (with a pole, if desired) is fully funded and will be shipped to a specified contact/address of the applicant’s choice; however, the applicant is responsible for the physical installation of the marker and the costs associated with installation.

Can a community/organization propose a series of several markers that highlight different aspects of the history of an area, to create a new trail?

The Trails Across America program is applicable for physical trails (rail-trails, multiuse trails, greenways, canal towpaths) that are either in development or are complete. Unfortunately, we are not able to grant markers for non-physical trails.

Can I apply for more than one marker?

Yes, you are welcome to apply for more than one marker; all ideas will be considered. However, we do ask that you submit a new request for each idea on our [online submission form](https://railstotrails.org/grants/#marker), which is available at railstotrails.org/grants/#marker.

SIGN FORMAT/TOPICS

What are the signs made of? What's the format?

The markers take the form of cast-aluminum, double-sided engraved signs. They come with a pole, if desired by the applicant.

What are considered applicable topics for trailside markers?

The historical significance for the marker should be on or before 1956. Trailside structures (depots, buildings, factories, mills, homesteads) can apply, as well as places and people, and events.

TRAILS ACROSS AMERICA

Trailside Historical Subject Matter

Criteria: Age (On or Before 1956), Historical Significance, Integrity

- **People—Tied to an Event and Location Along the Trail, Building or Place:** What was their contribution—locally, regionally or nationally?
- **Events—Tied to a Location Along the Trail, Building or Place:** What extremely unique or well-known event happened to mark that place?
- **Buildings and Structures—Historically Significant Design or Contribution/Involvement in Shaping the Community or Nation**
- **Geological or Geographic Features:** Thinking Outside the Box (rtc.li/geological-unconformity)



Photo credits: Clockwise, from left: Edward Day Cohota | Courtesy Cape Ann Museum; Historical Nelson Story Mill | Courtesy Trust for Public Land; Geological Unconformity | Courtesy Ohio Geological Survey



Does the sign template have character limits?

Yes, the signs are limited to a title, five lines (27 characters each), as well as the name of the trail and the foundation.

An example is as follows:

GATEWAY TO WEST
IN 1863, THIS AREA DESIGNATED
BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN AS EASTERN
END OF FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL
RAILROAD. UNION PACIFIC BUILT
RAILROAD WEST TO UTAH.
FIRST AVE TRAIL
WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION 2023

May I view examples of completed trailside markers?



You can view other finished examples of markers created through our 2023-24 partnership with the Pomeroy Foundation here at rtc.li/grt-markers. Note that these markers were created to help elevate history along the Great American Rail-Trail® and contain that branding; Trails Across America markers will vary slightly.

Does the Pomeroy Foundation sponsor markers for locations that are not trail related?

Yes, the Pomeroy Foundation has a number of different marker programs, including for non-trail-related focuses. These programs are not run through RTC.

Learn more at wgpfoundation.org.

Does applying for an RTC marker through the Pomeroy Foundation impact a 501c3's approval chances on non RTC projects? For example, if we submit a Legends and Lore marker application, will our chances of receiving an RTC marker be impacted?

Note that generally the same marker topic would not be awarded through two separate Pomeroy programs; however, different topics through different programs are applicable. For questions about the Pomeroy Foundation and applicability for more than one program, please email Susan Hughes at info@wgpfoundation.org.