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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
BUREAU of TRAILS

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September 26, 2022

The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court

and

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Executive Council

State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Trails requests authorization to accept and expend American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) in the amount of \$4,000,000 for the purpose of trail groomer replacement and the development of a comprehensive state-wide interactive online GIS based mapping tool for all motorized and non-motorized trails in New Hampshire, effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council approvals through June 30, 2023. This is an allowable use of ARPA SFRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. 100% Federal Funds.

Funds are to be budgeted in the following account: 03-35-35-351510-XXXXXX¹ - ARPA Trail Projects

Class-Account	Class Description	FY23 Current Adjusted Authorized	Requested Action	Revised FY23 Adjusted Authorized
000-400338-16	Federal Funds		\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
	Total Revenue	\$0	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
020-500200	Current Expenses		\$25,000	\$25,000
020-500224	Mainframe Comp Supplies		\$43,421	\$43,421
020-500235	Vehicle Maintenance		\$100,000	\$100,000
030-500311	Equipment New Replacement		\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
030-500320	Motor Vehicle Replacement		\$80,000	\$80,000
030-500302	Educ. Scient. Recreational Equipment		\$60,000	\$60,000
037-500173	PC Desktop Hardware		\$25,000	\$25,000
038-500175	Desktop Software		\$80,000	\$80,000
038-500177	Software License/Maintenance		\$100,000	\$100,000
040-500800	Indirect Costs		\$10,000	\$10,000
041-500801	Audit Fund Set Aside		\$4,000	\$4,000
050-500109	Part Time Salaries		\$86,000	\$86,000

¹ All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH3504A and B and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH3504Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

060-500601	Benefits		\$6,579	\$6,579
103-502507	Program Contracts		\$260,000	\$260,000
103-502664	Contracts for Operational Services		\$120,000	\$120,000
	Total Expenses	\$0	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000

EXPLANATION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, snowmobile sales and registrations were up approximately 27% in New Hampshire and in our neighboring states. Snowmobiling generates over \$500 million in revenue each year to the New Hampshire economy. Snowmobilers from other states who trailer their machines or rent them have a choice when it comes to where they want to ride which includes other northern New England states. To support, bolster, and keep attractive this type of tourism and recreation in New Hampshire, we offer groomed trails. Due to the increased outdoor recreation demands COVID-19 has caused, groomer replacement funding is critically needed to upgrade our aging fleet and continue to provide safe and adequate snowmobile trail grooming on the state's trail network.

In addition, funding would be used to develop a comprehensive state-wide interactive online GIS based mapping tool for administrative use and land use planning that details all motorized and non-motorized trails in New Hampshire. Motorized registrations of Off Highway Recreational Vehicles and snowmobiles alone are at an all-time high in recent years, averaging approximately 45,000 and 48,000 registrations per year, respectively. An overall spike in outdoor recreation and increased use of the statewide trail system during the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced this need.

Snowmobile Grooming:

New Hampshire's snowmobile grooming fleet is made up of state owned and snowmobile club owned grooming equipment which is used to maintain and groom our extensive 7,500-mile network of snowmobile trails and corridors throughout the state. According to best practices, large groomer fleets are most effectively managed when the average groomer stays in the range of being about 5 years old with 2,500 hours of use. In no case should individual groomers generally be allowed to exceed 10 years of age or 5,000 hours of use."

Approximately 85% of New Hampshire's snowmobile grooming fleet is 10 years old or older (273 units out of 323 total groomers), and half of those units are 20 years old or older. With these funds, 8 to 10 new snowmobile trail groomers (Class 5) would be purchased to help replace our oldest and most worn-out groomers.

Due to the increase in snowmobile registrations and snowmobile trail use that has occurred during the pandemic (approximately 48,000 registrations for '20/'21 winter season), the groomer replacement funding is essential to meet the needs of the public and provide safe and adequate snowmobile trail grooming on the state's trail system. Also, it should be noted that new grooming equipment would help to support the many volunteer clubs that perform much of the trail grooming in the state and are critically important to the success of creating a high quality, safe riding experience in New Hampshire. DNCR Trails Bureau would also develop a program that provides a no cost lease for the remaining groomers to the various clubs that are in the most need of new equipment.

New grooming equipment will provide for improved trail grooming and maintenance of the state's 7,500 miles of snowmobile trails which will equate to a safer, more user-friendly experience for riders. Also, improved trail grooming will assist other state agencies responsible for public safety and enforcement, such as the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department.

Mapping:

The Trails Bureau works with landowners around the state to promote, maintain and construct safe and interconnected recreational trails. These landowners include private, state, federal, and municipal partners. A large volunteer base assists with trail maintenance which includes Off Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRV) and snowmobile clubs, hiking and bicycle groups, and various other non-motorized groups and volunteers.

New Hampshire currently has 7,500 miles of snowmobile trails, over 1,000 miles of OHRV trails and 300 miles of rail trails across the state. This mapping tool would include important trail information, such as spatial location, ownership, trail manager identification and maintenance efforts, Right-of-way (ROW) widths, access points, infrastructure locations, and more. A comprehensive mapping tool will also assist in the long term and ongoing maintenance and improvements of the statewide trails system by highlighting where trail maintenance is most needed and when improvements were completed.

The trail mapping tool would assist in overall land use planning and improved trail information for landowners, land managers, law enforcement and state agencies such as: Safety, Transportation, Fish & Game, Environmental Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Business & Economic Affairs, as well as county and local municipalities. There may also be opportunities to create other public benefits.

Currently, there is no centralized warehouse of trail information on a statewide level that is available to the public or to all of the above-mentioned agencies and organizations. DNCR Trails Bureau will develop the mapping tool and the Bureau will contract the services of a professional GIS based consultant to assist in its creation and online maintenance requirements.

The following appropriation authorities are being requested:

Class 020 – Current Expenses – supplies purchased to support project implementation including printers and storage devices, and for groomer maintenance needed to support the fleet

Class 030 – Equipment – Expenditures for purchasing new grooming equipment, 2 motor vehicle replacements to support field surveys and for recreational field equipment needed to implement the program including GPS units and tablets

Class 037 – PC hardware needed for statewide trail mapping technology. Existing Bureau of Trails PC hardware unable to run all GIS based applications and software

Class 038 – GIS based software license and maintenance needed for statewide trail mapping technology

Class 040 – Indirect Costs – SWCAP

Class 041 – Audit Fund Set Aside – at a rate of .001

Class 050 – Part time staff for program implementation and operations

Class 060- Cost of benefits for Part Time staff

Class 103 – Contracts needed to implement and operationally support statewide trail mapping

In the event Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support these expenditures.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sarah L. Stewart
Commissioner