

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM- STATE OF NEBRASKA POLICIES

**(As set by the NE RTP Committee in accordance with FHWA regulations and NE
State Statute)**

May 2014

RTP Committee Membership

The membership of the RTP Committee consists of 9 voting members and 4 non-voting members. The voting members of the Committee must represent both motorized and non-motorized trail users. These members represent the following organizations: 1) Nebraska Off Highway Vehicle Association, 2) Nebraska Snowmobile Association, 3) Nebraska Horse Council, 4) US Army Corps of Engineers, 5) Natural Resources District (TPNRD), 6) Elkhorn Valley Trails Network, 7) Great Plains Trails Network, 8) Monument Valley Pathways representative (from Western Nebraska), and 9) National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council. The non-voting members consist of: 1) ADA Compatibility Expert, 2) Nebraska State Historical Society, 3) Nebraska Tourism Commission, 4) Federal Highway Administration, and 5) Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

It is up to the group that is represented to provide a person and an alternate to serve on the committee. Each group being represented shall supply an alternate to the committee in case the member cannot attend the meeting. The members shall supply NGPC with the contact information for the alternate and contact their alternate if they cannot be in attendance of the meeting. It is the committee member's responsibility to get the necessary grant applications to the alternate, if they cannot attend the November ranking meeting. All other paperwork is sent via email and all alternates receive that information.

The committee is required to meet at least once per FHWA fiscal year (October 1-September 30) to be considered eligible for RTP funding. Historically Nebraska's committee meets twice a year; once in the fall to rank the grants and once in the spring to review application and policy changes. If a committee member does not make one meeting within two years of serving on the committee, NGPC shall contact the group the person represents and ask them to assign someone else to the committee in a prompt manner. If no response is received, NGPC shall replace the group with another trail interest group, similar in nature.

Duties Include

- 1) Attend 2 meetings per year,
- 2) Provide input regarding any request from NGPC on any grant funded or other trail matters,
- 3) Rank trail grants.

Reimbursements

Committee members can be, at their request, reimbursed for their meals, mileage and lodging traveling to and from the required meetings. Committee members may also be

reimbursed for the same items when traveling to and from grand openings of any RTP funded trail and training opportunities. Committee members may be reimbursed 80% of trail conference costs as well.

Eligible Project Sponsors

FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) states that political subdivisions, non-profit organizations, and for-profit organizations are eligible to receive RTP funding. However, FHWA does affirm that a State may decide what project sponsors are eligible for this type of grant funding. In the State of Nebraska, NGPC has chosen to allow only political subdivisions and public agencies eligibility for RTP trail development funds. These political subdivisions include communities, counties, Indian tribes, school districts, sanitary improvement districts (SIDs), Natural Resources Districts, State agencies, Federal agencies and public agencies such as Public Power districts. This, by no means, excludes non-profit or for-profit organizations in becoming partners with the political subdivision; it only means that the applicant must be a political subdivision. The financial pass through needs to be the political subdivision sponsor as opposed to the non-profit organization or Foundation. The partner can be the one who supplies the matching funds for this grant.

Educational Grants- project sponsors may be political subdivisions or non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations must provide 501 (c)(3) status.

Minimum/Maximum Grant Requests

The RTP Committee has set the minimum amount a grant applicant can request at \$50,000 so the total of the project would be \$62,500 at an 80/20 split. The RTP Committee has set the maximum amount a grant applicant can request at \$250,000 per project, which would be an \$312,500 project at an 80/20 split. The RTP Committee reserves the right to waive the minimum or maximum grant amount request if the project is deemed to be of **major importance** to the state or region or if the political sponsor requested it within the application via letter form with sufficient justification on the need. It is not sufficient justification to state that because the total cost of the project is more than \$312,500, the need is there to receive additional funding beyond \$250,000.

Educational projects have a minimum request of \$2,500 and a maximum request of \$25,000. Other policies of the educational grant application can be found on page 7.

Deadline of Grant Request

The RTP Committee has placed the deadline of the RTP grants to be the same as the start of the Fiscal Year for FHWA. The deadline for RTP grants in Nebraska is the first Friday of September for the next fiscal year. For example, if an application was received September 5, 2014, it will be considered for Fiscal Year 2015 funding. For FY15 funding, we will accept grants up to September 5, 2014. The review process of applications takes approximately one month and a meeting with the Committee will take place in November. A final decision is made in January of the following year when the NE Game and Parks Board of Commissioners approve the ranking of the grants. Notification to project sponsors shall take place in early February of the following year.

If a project is not funded in the previous funding cycle, they can use the same application the following year; or they can make refinements to the existing application and submit it. It is encouraged that grant applicants who did not receive funding try again the following year.

Non-Federal Match (20%)

The RTP applicant must provide 20% of the overall costs of the project. Of the 20% match, at least 5% of the match needs to be in cash form. Communities should get local trail and advocacy groups involved in the trail project. It should also be noted that sponsors that include numerous volunteer groups into their project may receive additional points for that. A project applicant also receives more points for the amount of match they have on hand.

Proof of Match Requirements

It is important to provide documentation and proof of the match that is on hand. The match cannot be raised after the grant is approved. The RTP applicant must provide 20% of the overall costs of the project. This 20% may be a cash match via donation, taxes or political subdivision funds. Proof of cash is required by a letter from the financial officer of the political subdivision for the political subdivision funds. A letter from entities providing any donations is also required. If using labor, donated or political subdivision, estimate hours will need to be provided in the application. Timesheets shall be required for forced account labor and forms for volunteers must be filled out tracking their hours. More information will be provided in administrative trainings with the project applicant. If proof during construction does not add up to estimate value, the political subdivision must provide cash to come up with the remaining match.

For equipment usage, the **sponsor** will contact their NDOR district office to determine the **FHWA** rental rates of each piece of equipment the sponsor plans to use, as well as the approximate number of hours each piece of equipment will be used. A copy of the information received from NDOR should be forwarded to NGPC with the application as proof that the numbers are FHWA's approved rates. If the community has questions regarding this they should contact NGPC and the staff will assist them.

Match requirements

The following are acceptable as eligible matching items:

- Cash (donations, taxes, budget)
- Pre-construction costs (preliminary/design engineering, cultural surveys, wetland delineations, wetland mitigation plans, appraisals, and other environmental costs) no further than 18 months out from FHWA obligation date. It should be noted that if using engineering costs as part of the match, services for engineering must be procured by state procedures.
- Forced Account Labor of Political Subdivision employees (must provide wage schedule including benefits, but no indirect costs allowed along with estimate hours that will be worked. Timesheets of the employees will be required and on

the timesheet it must specifically indicate what is being worked on in regards to the trail.)

- Equipment Usage of Political Subdivision (FHWA rental rate may be requested to NDOR to secure rate)
- Volunteer labor (must be in accordance with RTP guidelines. See page 13 for more information)
- Value of Land (with the proper appraisal process)
- RTP shall not be used to match Transportation Alternative Projects

Federal Projects

Federal applicants may use other federal funds to match the project, but 5% of the match must be given by a partner of the project (i.e. non-profit organization, community or county), as required by FHWA regulations. Only certain other federal funds may be allowed to be used as a match in funding. Contact NGPC if more information is needed.

NOTE: This is a reimbursable grant so sponsors must have costs paid and proof provided to NGPC prior to reimbursement. Proof includes invoices of bills and copies of cancelled checks (front and back). Billing reimbursement paperwork is on-line and will be discussed at grant training.

Eligible Projects

- A. Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- B. Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails
- C. Purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment
- D. Construction of new recreational trails
- E. Acquisition of easements and fee simple title property for recreational trails or for recreational trail corridors
- F. Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance
- G. Educational projects
- H. Administration of program

Trail Design Standards

30/30/40% Minimums for Trail Projects

NGPC is required to fund specific types of projects within its program. 30% of all funding shall be used for single use non-motorized trails, 30% of all funding shall be used for single use motorized trails, and 40% of all funding shall be used for diversified use; including non-motorized diversified use (i.e. walking, biking, cross country skiing) and motorized diversified use (i.e. ATVs, motorcycles and Sand rails) or diversified use with both motorized and non-motorized uses such as snowmobile and equestrian use.

Types of Trails

NGPC encourages different types of trails; including motorized, non-motorized trails and motorized and non-motorized water trails. The most important thing to note is that this fund is for trails that are **recreational in nature**. Trails along streets may not rank as

high as trails that appear to be more aesthetically pleasing and meander in their route as opposed to a straight line.

“Looped” trails are an eligible type of trail for RTP funding and are encouraged. This would include trails within park facilities or around water bodies as opposed to trails within the community. These types of trails are not “transportation” oriented as much as they are “recreation” oriented, and are eligible for funding under RTP in Nebraska.

Non-Motorized Trails

It is required within urban areas (defined as a Metropolitan Class Cities and First Class Cities) to provide at minimum, a ten-foot wide trail for non-motorized projects (pedestrian, bicycling...etc). It is strongly encouraged that within larger metropolitan areas, non-motorized trails be twelve feet in width in built up areas. It is required within rural areas (defined as Second Class Cities and Villages) that the trail be eight feet in width at a minimum for non-motorized projects. Trails may be on public property (such as lakes or parks), within Railroad ROW, on levees, and if necessary, next to public streets or within public right-of-way ... etc. “Sidewalk” trails, also known as “Side paths” (usually are wider than 6 feet) for non-motorized use are acceptable only when the “side path” is a “connector” linking two larger trails together.

Non-motorized trails shall be designed and certified by a licensed engineer or landscape architect of Nebraska. All structures shall be designed and certified by a licensed engineer of Nebraska. When using concrete, it is suggested that the design be 5” thick and 8 to 10 feet wide. If using asphalt, it is suggested that the design be 6” thick and 8 to 10 feet wide. If using limestone, it is suggested that the design be 6” thick and 8 to 10 feet wide and use quarter inch screenings. When dealing with a federal agency sponsor, the plans/specifications must come from a registered, professional engineer of the agency who is sponsoring the project.

Trails must meet AASHTO (American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials; www.transportation.org) guidelines.

Non-Motorized Water Trails

Most non-motorized water trail projects shall include some type of development of access to the water. The access point shall be ADA compliant as well as any other amenities that are built with RTP (such as parking, restroom, access from parking to water).

Interpretive signage must be applied for through the educational grant process.

Regulatory signage is eligible for funds. Non-motorized water trails include canoe/kayak opportunities.

Non-motorized trails include:

- Hiking
- Biking
- Equestrian
- Rollerblading
- Canoe/Kayak

Motorized Trails

Motorized Water Trails can be defined as any body of water that has been previously designated by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as a water trail, any navigable river within the state, any impoundment that is over 1,000 acres in size or any series of lakes that would be officially designated as motorized water trails by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and identified on their water trails website and printed information.

Motorized trails should be designed in such a manner that they are sustainable and sensitive to the environment. A sponsor cannot buy land and open it for riding with no design. There are qualified firms and organizations that are able to come up with a design for a trail system.

Motorized trail design should be done by a professional trail designer who has the adequate and appropriate experience in designing these types of trails. The trailbuilder does not necessarily have to be a resident/business of Nebraska. All structures such as restrooms, trailheads, shelters, bridges...etc. shall be designed and certified by a licensed engineer of Nebraska. When dealing with a federal agency sponsor, the plans/specifications must come from a licensed, professional engineer of the agency who is sponsoring the project.

In regards to motorized trail widths, the width will be regulated by the recommendations that are listed in George Fogg's book, entitled, "Park Guidelines for OHVs," or other recommendations from proven experiences. Publications such as "Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines" of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources or "Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation" by Tom Crimmins should be consulted when making determinations on design. The last two publications are on the web. Contact the NGPC staff for standards.

Management & Operation Plan

Motorized trails shall be required to have a management and operations plan that is approved by NGPC and FHWA in place prior to opening for business. The Management and Operation plan will need to include, but is not limited to:

- Hours of operation
- Users of trails
- Fee structure, if applicable (must be reasonable for users and approved by NGPC & FHWA)
- General Rules and Regulations
 - Users
 - Equipment
 - Gear
 - Additional rules for minors
- Maintenance of trails
- Liability release, if required
- Inventory of trails, including map
- Site inventory

- Direction of trails
- Signage

Motorized trails include trails for:

- ATV
- Motorbike
- Sandrails/Dune Buggies
- Jeeps/4x4/Trucks
- Snowmobile
- UTVs
- Motorboats/Airboats

Diversified Trails

When designing diversified trails keep in mind all users and make sure design meets standards for the multiple uses. Diversified trails can be all non-motorized in nature, all motorized in nature or both non-motorized and motorized in nature. A sponsor will need to meet the above guidelines outlined in non-motorized and motorized categories above. Contact NGPC for additional information.

Surfaces of Trails

NGPC does not recommend the type of surfacing a trail is required to have. The sponsor of the project should be aware of the freeze-thaw cycle in Nebraska and the costs to maintain the surface due to the freeze-thaw cycle. Acceptable surface types for non-motorized projects include but are not limited to wood chips, limestone, asphalt, concrete, and recyclable materials. Acceptable surface types for motorized trails include but are not limited to dirt, limestone or wood chips.

Educational Grants

The minimum request that a political subdivision may request will be \$5,000 and the maximum request will be \$25,000. A political subdivision or non-profit organization may request a waiver on the minimum or maximum level with justification within their application. Applications shall be due on October 1 and be reviewed at the November RTP Committee meeting. If an application comes in at another time and it is time-sensitive, the RTP Committee will receive an electronic copy of the application and will vote via email to approve or deny the application. This shall require 6 yes votes to approve the application.

State Administrative Costs/Educational Costs

Each State is eligible to take 7% off of the top of RTP funding and utilize it for administration of the program. Nebraska has chosen to do this and uses the funds to pay for administrative meetings, printing costs and other items that are eligible for the 7%. Each state is eligible to also take an additional 5% of the funds and use them for educational and safety projects. Nebraska looks at this on a yearly basis and determines if there is a need for the funds or if there are still funds remaining from previous years to use. These funds must follow the 30/30/40 split of the program.

Land Acquisition

If obtaining land for a project, it must follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act). Call NGPC for additional assistance. If land was bought after 1996, it must have followed the Uniform Act to develop a trail on it.

Acquisition will need to follow the Right-of-Way Acquisition Guide for Local Public Agencies from the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR). The manual can be found at on the NDOR website. This shall require a federal appraisal and a federal appraisal review (Chapters 8 & 9 in the manual). The land will need to be developed as soon as feasibly possible after acquisition. Guidance will be given by NGPC staff on all acquisition projects. It should be noted that these projects can take significantly longer to complete due to the additional regulations that must be followed for acquiring land.

No land acquisition costs will be reimbursed when land is acquired via eminent domain.

Fee-Simple Title

This is the optimum way to have land for trail development. It must follow the above guidelines if obtaining ownership. If already in ownership, provide deed with application work.

Leases/Easements

The RTP Committee has placed the stipulation that if a political subdivision does not own the land that the trail is to be placed upon, the political subdivision must secure a lease or an easement for a minimum of 25 years for non-motorized trails and facilities. Leases and easements for motorized trails and facilities must be a minimum of 10 years. Leases usually occur when the political subdivision is dealing with another public agency, such as a federal agency. Leases are not eligible as a reimbursable item under RTP guidelines, but can be the way the applicant obtains the land to develop the trail. If lease is in place, provide paperwork with application. Easements occur when the political subdivision is dealing with a private landowner or public agency (such as NDOR).

All easements must be acquired according to federal guidelines. This means if the easement was obtained after 1996, it must follow federal procedures. There are four different situations regarding easements that should be addressed within the application.

1. If an easement is required in the project but the sponsor is not requesting reimbursement for the easement or using the “value of the land” as part of their local match, the easement paperwork **MUST** be included in the application. Land ownership is one item that can slow a project down. It is more beneficial to have the sponsor have the easement already in place so the project can meet the two-year deadline for completion.

2. If the easement is a donation, the sponsor must supply forms indicating that the owner of the land was advised of their right to receive just compensation. It would be beneficial to have this in place prior to the application. If it isn't, a letter from the landowner is recommended that they are willing to consider donating the property for an easement. An email is also acceptable. Contact NGPC staff for guidance on this.

3. If an easement is required in the project and the sponsor is using the “value of the land” as part of the local match, a federal appraisal and federal appraisal review that meets federal regulations **MUST** be completed prior to federal approval. The “value” for the match will need to be estimated by the sponsor in the application and the appraisal shall take place after NGPC Commission approval. The costs of the federal appraisal and review shall be the responsibility of the project sponsor and cannot be reimbursed, but can be used as part of the match.

4. If an easement is required in the project and is being requested for reimbursement, the sponsor **MUST** provide a Letter of Intent from the landowner for the land in question. The paperwork and federal appraisal may be completed after the NGPC Board of Commissioners approves the project. The sponsor shall also be responsible for obtaining a review of the federal appraisal at their cost that can be used as match but cannot be reimbursed. If an applicant is unsure of how to proceed in this or has questions, they are encouraged to contact NGPC staff.

Any appraisal or appraisal review must be done by an individual who is on the approved list by NDOR. Procurement of these services must be in accordance with State Statute. The list may be found on the NDOR website.

Railroad Issues

A grant applicant must include within their application proof that the sponsor has contacted the Railroad and the Railroad has acknowledged the contact. It is important that a project receiving funding has this concern dealt with in a timely manner so the trail can be built within the two-year completion requirement. If the railroad has not been informed or involved in discussions about the trail prior to the application, NGPC shall inform the sponsor to come back the next funding cycle after they have addressed these issues.

Design Engineering

Design engineering may be reimbursed as long as it meets regulations and has been authorized and obligated by FHWA. Procurement of an Engineer for design and construction must adhere to the State Statutes that outline the procedures for local political subdivisions. When procuring an Engineer, the political sponsor must write a letter to NGPC stating that they have followed all state guidelines when procuring their engineer and provide proof on the procurement procedure. For those projects that Sponsors believe the engineering will be under \$65,000 (for total of design and construction), the Sponsor may solicit proposals under the Small Purchase guidelines. If it will be over \$65,000, the sponsor must proceed with a Request for Proposals (RFP) process that is outlined in the State Statutes.

If using design/preliminary engineering as part of the match, the sponsor **still must go** through state procedures. Most projects will fall under the 3 proposals guidelines because of the sizes of projects RTP is able to fund in Nebraska. Engineering fees must be reasonable in scope of the project. If fees are unreasonable by the review of NGPC,

the remaining engineering fees may need to be covered at the expense of the political sponsor and may not be considered part of the local match. Contact NGPC for guidance if necessary.

Environmental Costs

FHWA (Nebraska Office) states that the NEPA checklist must be done prior to authorization from FHWA. Therefore, if there are any findings that need to be explored by the community, these costs must be incurred by the community and should be used as part of the community's local match. Wetland delineation and/or mitigation plans, appraisals, Cultural Surveys and other additional documentation necessary are eligible to be used as part of the local match if incurred within 18 months of project authorization by FHWA. NGPC strongly recommends that the sponsor contact NGPC for questions regarding these types of costs and matching items before filling out the application.

Construction Engineering

Construction engineering must be procured by state procedures, just like design engineering. Design and construction engineering can be dealt with at the same time if under the \$65,000 threshold combined. FHWA requirements state you shall follow state procurement procedures. There are no state stipulations that require an applicant to use two different engineering firms for design and construction.

Assessing Competition for Bids

RTP requires sponsors to go through a competitive bid process for projects. Nebraska requires each project to obtain 3 bids. If only one bid is received and is at or below the engineer's estimate, it would be justifiable to accept the bid as long as adequate advertisement is shown. If only two bids are received and the low bid does not exceed 110% of the engineer's estimate and adequate advertisement is shown, the project sponsor may accept the low bid of the two. It is noted that NGPC does encourage sponsors to consider re-advertisement if the sponsor receives less than 3 bids. The sponsor will be responsible to inform NGPC of how many firms take out a set of plans.

Project Deadline for Construction

From the date of FHWA authorization, the project sponsor shall have two years to complete the project. Extension(s) may be granted, **if requested**, 30 days prior to the deadline set in the contract. The extension request must be in writing and must provide justification as to why it is needed. If the sponsor does not request an extension and they do not complete the project by the deadline set, a reduction in funding shall occur and potentially all funding could be pulled if the sponsor does not address the issue with NGPC. Projects should look to be completed within two years from the start of design.

Signage

Regulatory signage and other traffic control devices must conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Standard Highway Signs regulations of the State for non-motorized trails and regulatory signage for motorized trails must meet the United State Forest Service's December 2005 EM 7100-15, Sign and Poster Guide for the U.S. Forest Service (Chapters 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, & 12). Contact NGPC staff

for guidance for regulatory signs. Regulatory signage is the **only type** of signage the RTP Committee will reimburse for this process. All interpretive signing must be paid for by the political subdivision or applied for under RTP's educational grant process. In the narrative of the application, a description of the signage including the number, the type of regulatory signs and why they are necessary to the project should be addressed. Certain trails may necessitate numerous regulatory signs, but this must be shown in the application for reimbursement purposes as well as for the Committee's knowledge and understanding of the project. It is important for engineers to note that if possible, they need to combine messaging on the signs so the number can be decreased, if necessary, to a reasonable number. A sign shall be required to recognize the federal funding source at the trail site. This is a requirement and can be reimbursed if it is included in the cost estimate. A template for the sign will be provided to projects receiving funds.

User Fees

It is the opinion of FHWA that user fees may be used on any trail project funded by RTP. The RTP Committee deems user fees as an acceptable practice, only when fees are used for the maintenance, development and operation of the specific trail project as required by FHWA. The Committee supports mandatory user fees that are reasonable in the cases of motorized trails. If a non-motorized trail chooses to charge a fee, the Committee recommends a voluntary fee. If a fee is part of the proposed project, NGPC shall negotiate with the sponsor what that fee will be for any trail. All fees collected must be reasonable and must go directly back into the project. Fees cannot be used to make a profit on the facility. Fees may be used for insurance, operation, expansion, renovation and maintenance for the project. The project sponsor shall provide proof each year of the life of the project that the fees charged went back into the project as required.

Ranking Form for Project Applicants

The RTP Committee assisted NGPC in the creating of a ranking/scoring form that is used to rank the priorities of the Committee. This ranking form is a part of the overall policies of the Recreational Trails Program in Nebraska and is included on the website (www.outdoor.ne.gov/trails/programs/RTP.asp) the knowledge of all grant applicants. Contact NGPC for a copy if access to the web is not available. It is recommended that applicants review the ranking information prior to writing the application to review how committee members will rank grants.

Falsifying Grant Application

If the project sponsor falsifies information in the grant application and it is funded, the project shall be subject to reduced funding or potentially all funding could be pulled from the project. Examples of falsifying an application include, but are not limited to match not being on hand, inaccurate environmental information or land ownership issues not completely disclosed. If project sponsor falsifies application and it is discovered prior to ranking the project, it shall be deemed ineligible for funds.

Requirements of Sponsor

There are several requirements of the project sponsor if they receive funding from RTP. The following items will be required:

- Sponsors are required to attend training on grant administration (see below).
- Sponsors must have adequate cost estimate (see below).
- Sponsors must sign contract with NGPC regarding project.
- Sponsors must provide all paperwork in a timely fashion for all requests from NGPC (less than 30 days).
- Sponsors **MUST** provide quarterly reports as outlined in agreement with NGPC (see below).
- Sponsors are responsible to keep project progressing in a timely fashion.
- Sponsors must complete NEPA compliance.
- Sponsors must seek NGPC's approval on most all steps of the process and when in doubt, should contact NGPC for the steps of the process.

Training of Sponsors

Once NGPC notifies the recipient that they received funding, it shall be the responsibility of the sponsor to attend grant training on the project. NGPC allows more than one person to attend if there are different people taking care of different parts of the project. NGPC encourages just one point of contact throughout the grant process even if there is more than one person involved. If the person who is the contact for the project but is not the person in charge of the funds, it is encouraged that both attend the session. The sponsor must send an employee of the political subdivision. Regarding educational project sponsors, the awardee will have an officer/board member of the non-profit organization or an employee of the political subdivision attend.

Cost Estimates

All estimates must be adhered to after receiving the grant. If quantities change of material, NGPC must approve this prior to going to bid. It is recommended that the sponsor ensure that they have the most accurate estimate possible at application time because this estimate is provided to FHWA. NGPC understands that engineers may state it's difficult to come up with an exact estimate without surveying the land. However, the engineers should be able to look at historic data from past projects as well as actual costs. Every engineer should be well versed in construction methods and equipment and be able to provide an estimate that reflects all necessary costs. While the quantities may change, the items needed to construct the trail should not. If an engineer is unsure if an item is needed, it is better to put it in the cost estimate so it can be reimbursed because additional funding IS NOT available for projects and the sponsor may have to incur those costs. The estimate for the application will be within 10 percent of the low bid.

Progress Reports

NGPC requires that each sponsor submit a quarterly report every four months once contracts have been signed to keep track of the progress of the project. It will be the responsibility of the sponsor to supply this to NGPC without NGPC contacting them to request it. NGPC shall, once the sponsor has received authorization to move forward with the project supply the sponsor with estimated due dates of the reports. The date of the signed contract between NGPC and the sponsor shall dictate the due dates of the quarterly reports and be listed in the contract. The quarterly report form is a part of the application and can be downloaded from the web at

www.outdoor.ne.gov/trails/programs/RTP.asp. If a sponsor misses more than two reports in a row, they shall be subject to reduced funding or potentially lose all funding for the project. This issue will be covered in the required individual training given to each sponsor.

Volunteer Requirements

If an applicant determines it is necessary to use volunteer labor to construct the trail, this is permissible. It is not permitted to use volunteer labor for the administration of the grant. The following items shall be required of project sponsor to deal with volunteers:

- Sponsor must complete forms for volunteer labor to track hours.
- Sponsors must contact NGPC to determine proper wage rate for volunteers' work.
- Sponsors must have liability releases for all volunteers signed prior to working.
- Sponsors must have paid staff person supervising all volunteer work being done and sign off on their volunteer labor tracking forms.
- Sponsors must provide written proof on what volunteers will be doing for trail construction.
- Sponsors shall provide names, addresses, and organization the volunteer is affiliated with, if any, to NGPC.