



VOREC Community Grant Program

The VOREC Community Grant Program was established by the Vermont Legislature with the passage of Act 194 in 2018 and was created with the purpose of making grants available to help Vermont communities fully leverage their local outdoor recreation assets to become a true “outdoor recreation friendly community”—a concept envisioned by the VOREC steering committee and recommended to the Governor in late 2017.

These grants are intended to help Vermont communities grow their local economies by focusing on outdoor recreation through the five pillars of VOREC:

- Grow the outdoor recreation related business opportunities.
- Increase participation in outdoor recreation activities.
- Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources.
- Increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources.
- Promote the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation.

Grant funding can be used for a variety of purposes with the result being a community (or group of communities) that can show measurable success supporting and growing their local economies through leveraging outdoor recreation.

Grants are reviewed by a selection committee which includes members of the public and the VOREC steering committee as well as staff from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Selection criteria included existing assets and capacity, planning and environmental stewardship, community support, regional connectivity, economic and community need, and existing business networks. For more info on VOREC and the VOREC Communities Grant Program, visit www.fpr.vermont.gov/vorec.

2019 VOREC Community Grant Program

- The town of Randolph—in partnership with the Rochester-Randolph Area Sports Trail Alliance (RASTA for short)—was awarded \$65,000 to establish the Randolph region as a year-round, multi-use outdoor recreation destination. The Randolph Outdoor Recreation Development Project will establish a RASTA Outdoor HUB in downtown Randolph, will create marketing and signage materials, complete trail design and construction projects, foster new outdoor recreation events, and improve trailhead amenities.

- In addition, city of Newport has been awarded \$35,000 for trail construction to connect key recreational assets—Prouty Beach and Bluffside Farm—as a critical piece of a larger Waterfront Recreation Trail and Lake Access project.

This program continues to shine a light on the importance that well-stewarded outdoor recreation can have for Vermont economies. The increased funds this year (\$200,000) have also been leveraged with funds made available to the Northeast Kingdom through the Northern Forest Center and the NEK Collaborative. The seven VOREC communities around the state as well as all of the communities who applied continue to demonstrate the power of an outdoor recreation economy in our state.

The VOREC Grantees for 2020 are:

Brighton: \$62,500 (partial funding will be provided by the Northern Forest Center and the NEK Collaborative) The town will improve the Bluff Mountain Trailhead, and create maps to area recreational opportunities and assets, which will be available at their Welcome Center. The Town also wants to install a public bike repair facility as well as construct a dock in the Island Pond Lakeshore Park.

Craftsbury: \$26,750 As part of a town-wide effort to build on Craftsbury’s reputation as a winter-trails destination, these funds will be used to create an official Craftsbury Trails (CT) brand, maps, kiosks, and wayfinding signs.

Montpelier: \$25,400 Working with private landowners, the town will complete a 5-mile universally accessible loop connecting downtown Montpelier, U32 High School, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Caledonia Spirits, East Montpelier Trails, and the Cross Vermont Trail. The town and its team will also market existing trails by creating and distributing maps and installing signage and kiosks. Finally, the town is working with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to convene a regional outdoor recreation planning effort.

Poultney: \$20,874 As part of an area effort to attract visitors and residents to the town after the closing of Green Mountain College, Poultney will engage in a marketing effort to create information about its growing trail system including maps and brochures as well as a website portal, as well as a wayfinding and signage plan. Additionally, they will conduct an economic assessment of the trails in the area.

Rockingham (and Bellows Falls): \$19,000 The town, in partnership with local trail non-profits and the Village of Bellows Falls, will conduct planning activities for connectivity of their trail systems, marketing (maps and brochures), wayfinding in downtown and around the town and villages, create trail stewardship youth and volunteer programs, and build a pump track.

Springfield: \$19,250 The city and its team of volunteers will develop improved, up-to-date marketing materials and trail signage, rehabilitate existing kiosks and build new ones at trail head locations on the Toonerville Trail and Hartness Park, and build community engagement and stewardship of the Toonerville Trail and Connecticut River Byway through development of an inventory and action plan to track and control invasive (especially noxious) plant species.

St. Albans (in partnership with Enosburg Falls, Richford, Swanton and Sheldon): \$64,417 St. Albans City is partnering with the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council, Northwest Regional Planning Commission,

communities along the trail and other stakeholders to implement the newly developed Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Wayfinding Plan. This project will integrate the MVRT's new brand and install wayfinding signage along the 26.4-mile trail, an important piece of Northwest Vermont's regional outdoor recreation infrastructure

The grant selection committee included representatives from regional planning, health and business organizations, the VOREC steering committee, as well as staff from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Selection criteria included existing assets and capacity, planning and environmental stewardship, community support, regional connectivity, economic and community need, and existing business networks. For more info on VOREC and the VOREC Communities Grant Program, visit www.fpr.vermont.gov/vorec or contact Jessica Savage, Recreation Program Manager at jessica.savage@vermont.gov or 802-249-1230.