



Recreational Trails Program

Annual Report

Federal Fiscal Years 2014-2015

Released April 2016

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Program and Annual Report Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides federal funding for recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized trail uses such as hiking, bicycling, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use. Projects funded under the RTP must comply with all applicable federal requirements.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is the agency designated by the Governor to administer the RTP. Per federal regulations, New Mexico’s Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB)—an independent advisory committee—meets at least once a year and provides recommendations to NMDOT regarding RTP projects and program administration.

This annual report, representing NMDOT’s program for Federal Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 (FFY14, FFY15), is broadly intended to give the public and other interested parties basic information on: 1) the program’s history and background with NMDOT, 2) the projects that were awarded RTP funds, 3) NMDOT’s performance with regard to program management, and 4) which projects ultimately were granted federal participation of RTP funding. Once construction projects are approved for federal participation, they are usually built within two years. For non-infrastructure projects, project sponsors generally begin their project within a few months.

New Mexico’s RTP in FFY14

NMDOT received, by federal formula, approximately \$1.4 million in annual RTP apportionment for FFY14 and FFY15. Per Federal requirements, the RTP apportionment must be awarded according to the following distribution: 30% of the funds must be used for non-motorized trails; 30% for motorized trails; and 40% for diverse-use trails, as detailed in **Table 1**.

Prior to calendar-year 2014, the RTP was administered in New Mexico by the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD). At the Governor’s request, NMDOT and EMNRD entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in December 2013 whereby NMDOT would take over administration of the RTP on January 1, 2014 and EMNRD would close-out all projects that it administered prior to that date.

Total Annual RTP Apportionment	\$1,429,831
Non-Motorized Target	\$428,949
Motorized Target	\$428,949
Diverse-Use Target	\$571,933
*amounts do not include the State’s obligation limitation of 94.6%	

As part of this program transition, NMDOT and EMNRD agreed that NMDOT would “carry forward” eight previously-awarded projects to be completed by EMNRD at various state parks around New Mexico. During much of the remainder of FFY14, the two agencies worked collaboratively to develop another MOA detailing the terms under which these eight projects would be completed by EMNRD. This MOA was finalized and executed shortly after the beginning of FFY15 (November 2014).

No new RTP funds were programmed or obligated during FFY14, as the transition of the program from EMNRD to NMDOT was the primary administrative activity during this time. Thus, the balance of RTP funds apportioned to New Mexico in FFY14 remained available for future use.

New Mexico's RTP in FFY15

In the second quarter of FFY15, the eight “carry-forward” projects sponsored by EMNRD were programed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and obligated. EMNRD began work shortly thereafter. These projects are featured in **Table 2** below.

NMDOT's goal in administering the RTP going forward was to bring the program into alignment with NMDOT's existing timelines and funding cycles, and to run the next call for applications concurrently with the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). NMDOT developed a new RTP Guide during the summer and fall of 2014 to be used by applicants seeking funding for FFY16 and FFY17. The call for FFY16 and FFY17 funding was open during the first and second quarters of FFY15 and projects were selected for funding through a competitive process—the outcomes of this process and the obligation of FFY16 RTP funds will be detailed in the RTP Annual Report for FFY16.

Concurrently with the development of the new RTP Guide, NMDOT also ran a “special call” for projects in FFY15; NMDOT used the term “special” because the call for projects fell outside the two-year funding cycle NMDOT uses for TAP. The goal of the special call was to solicit projects that could move quickly through the agreement process (such as non-infrastructure and maintenance projects) and be obligated in FFY15 so as to avoid the loss of RTP funds set to lapse at the end of FFY15. In coordination with the RTAB, NMDOT selected seven projects to receive funding, which are featured in **Table 2** below. All seven projects were programed in the STIP, but three projects sponsored by various entities of the United States Forest Service (USFS) were later cancelled due to the inability of USFS and NMDOT to enter into project agreements within the timeframes required.

Also during FFY15, NMDOT needed additional funding to support pedestrian and bicycle improvements on its reconstruction of the interchange at I-25 and NM 14 in Santa Fe. The project entails a paved, multi-use path that includes an underpass through I-25. NMDOT was able to quickly act to further prevent the loss of funds set to lapse at the end of FFY15 by programming \$1.52 million in RTP funds toward the construction of this paved, multi-use path that provides critical connectivity for non-drivers through the interchange, as well as additional recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of the area. This project is featured in **Table 2** below.

FFY14/FFY15 Baseline STIPs and Obligation Performance

The baseline STIP, active at the beginning of a FFY, provides a method to measure performance in terms of delivering projects programmed in the STIP each FFY. In coordination with FHWA, NMDOT measures program performance by comparing baseline projects to those which are ultimately obligated. Obligation refers to a commitment by the federal government to pay the federal share of a project's cost. An obligated project is one that has been authorized by FHWA and for which federal funds are committed.

FFY14

As previously noted, no new RTP funds were programmed or obligated during FFY14, as the transition of the program from EMNRD to NMDOT was the primary administrative activity during this time.

FFY15

For FFY15, the baseline was set in September/October 2014 at Amendment 6 (STIP-6) for the 2014-2019 STIP. FFY15 projects identified in **Table 2** were entered into the STIP in Amendment 7 (STIP-7), with the exception of the RTP funds used for the Paved Multi-Use Path as part of the I-25/NM14 Interchange project, which was added to the STIP in Amendment 6 (STIP-6). In order to reference metrics that are meaningful, NMDOT will consider RTP projects programmed as of STIP-7 to be the “baseline” metric for FFY15. The 13 projects that were obligated in FFY15, and the three that were cancelled, are detailed in **Table 3** and **Table 4** below, respectively.

Table 2: FFY15 Baseline Program			
County	Recipient	Project Name	Total RTP Award
Bernalillo	NM Dept. of Game and Fish	OHV Trail Maintenance Workshop	\$17,101
Colfax	EMNRD	Sugarite Canyon State Park Trail Construction and Maintenance	\$126,000
Colfax	Village of Angel Fire	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$2,501
Eddy	EMNRD	Living Desert State Park Trail Construction	\$150,000
Grant	EMNRD	City of Rocks State Park Trail Construction	\$80,656
Luna	EMNRD	Rock Hound State Park Trail Construction and Maintenance	\$52,400
McKinley	McKinley County	Purchase of Trail and Trailhead Amenities	\$18,500
San Miguel	EMNRD	Villanueva State Park Trail Rehabilitation	\$20,800
San Miguel	San Miguel County	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$40,000
Santa Fe	EMNRD	Cerrillos Hills State Park Trail Rehabilitation	\$52,625
Santa Fe	NMDOT	I-25/NM14 Interchange Paved Multi-Use Path	\$1,520,000
Union	EMNRD	Clayton Lake State Park Interpretive Trail Signage	\$60,000
Various	Cibola National Forest	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$40,500
Various	EMNRD	Trailhead Signs and Trail Markers at multiple State Parks	\$30,000
Various	Lincoln National Forest	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$35,000
Various	Santa Fe National Forest	Trail Maintenance	\$72,100
Total			\$2,318,183
*Equipment purchase is no longer an eligible activity for RTP funding in New Mexico.			

Table 3: FFY15 Projects Obligated			
County	Recipient	Project Name	Total RTP Award
Bernalillo	NM Dept. of Game and Fish	OHV Trail Maintenance Workshop	\$17,101
Colfax	EMNRD	Sugarite Canyon State Park Trail Construction and Maintenance	\$126,000
Colfax	Village of Angel Fire	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$2,501
Eddy	EMNRD	Living Desert State Park Trail Construction	\$150,000
Grant	EMNRD	City of Rocks State Park Trail Construction	\$80,656
Luna	EMNRD	Rock Hound State Park Trail Construction and Maintenance	\$52,400
McKinley	McKinley County	Purchase of Trail and Trailhead Amenities	\$18,500
San Miguel	EMNRD	Villanueva State Park Trail Rehabilitation	\$20,800
San Miguel	San Miguel County	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$40,000
Santa Fe	EMNRD	Cerrillos Hills State Park Trail Rehabilitation	\$52,625
Santa Fe	NMDOT	I-25/NM14 Interchange Paved Multi-Use Path	\$1,520,000
Union	EMNRD	Clayton Lake State Park Interpretive Trail Signage	\$60,000
Various	EMNRD	Trailhead Signs and Trail Markers at multiple State Parks	\$30,000
Total			\$2,170,583
*Equipment purchase is no longer an eligible activity for RTP funding in New Mexico.			

Table 4: FFY15 Projects Cancelled			
County	Recipient	Project Name	Total RTP Award
Various	Cibola National Forest	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$40,500
Various	Lincoln National Forest	Purchase of Trail Maintenance Equipment*	\$35,000
Various	Santa Fe National Forest	Trail Maintenance	\$72,100
Total			\$147,600
*Equipment purchase is no longer an eligible activity for RTP funding in New Mexico.			

Charts 1 and 2 below demonstrate the performance of RTP in FFY15, both in terms of the number of projects successfully obligated, and the amount of RTP funding successfully obligated, respectively.

Chart 1: FFY15 Baseline Projects Obligated

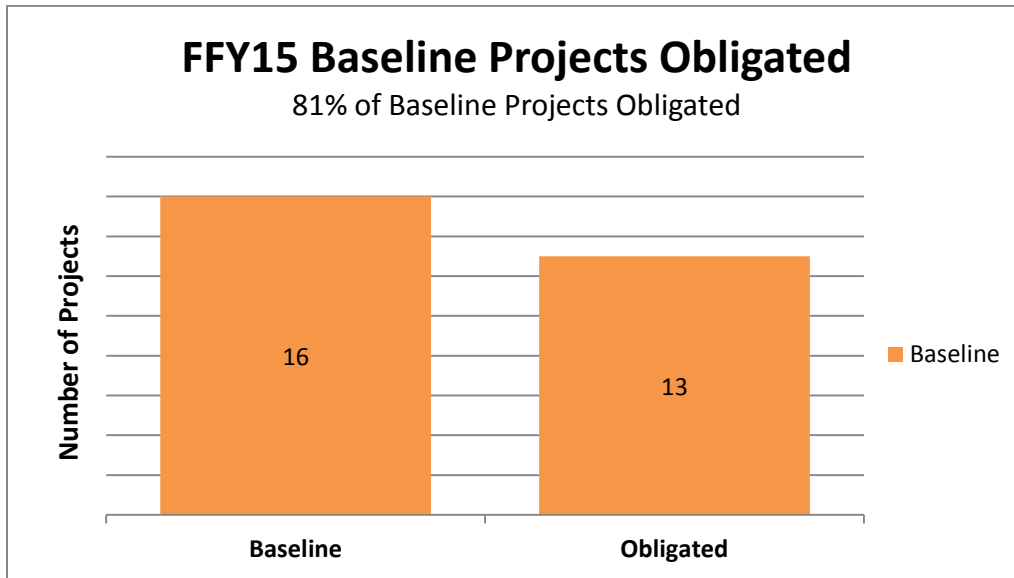
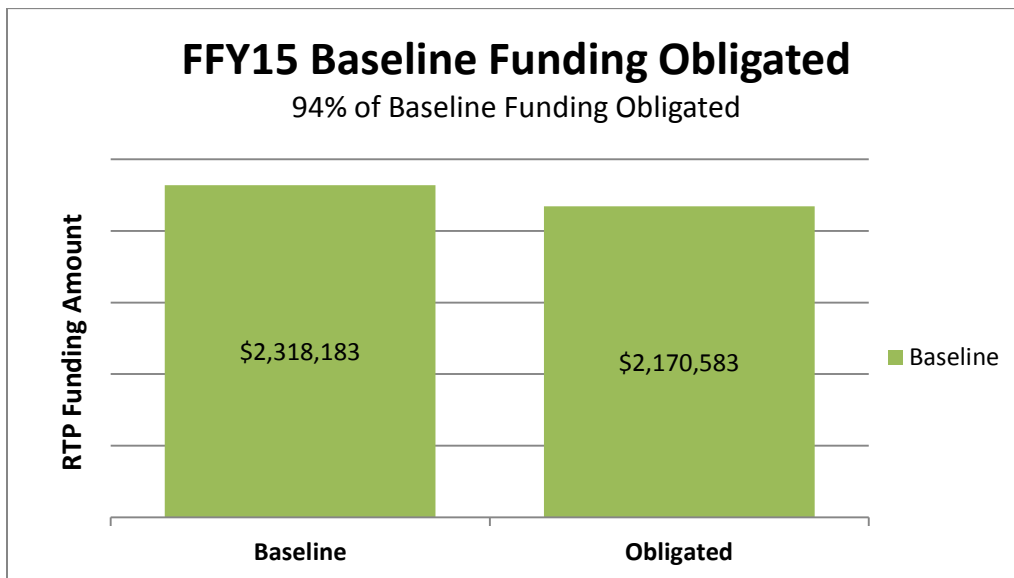


Chart 2: FFY15 Baseline Funding Obligated



Summary

During FFY14/15, NMDOT coordinated and worked closely with EMNRD to transition administration of the RTP over to NMDOT. Twelve projects were obligated in FFY15—ranging from the building and maintaining of hiking trails at various state parks to an educational program for OHV trail maintenance hosted by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish—for a total of \$650,583 in RTP funds. Additionally, through quickly programming funds for a paved, multi-use trail at the I-25/NM14 interchange and conducting a “special call” for projects in FFY15, NMDOT avoided the lapse of approximately \$1.6 million that would have otherwise left the state.

EMNRD completed work on its projects at Villanueva and Living Desert State Parks in the summer of 2015 and work on the remaining state park projects should be completed by the summer of 2017. The OHV Trail Maintenance Workshop, sponsored by the NM Department of Game and Fish, took place on May 5-7, 2015, and the remaining “special call” projects will be completed by October 1, 2016. Reconstruction of the I-25/NM14 interchange—including the RTP-funded paved, multi-use path—is currently underway and is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2016.