Recreation Sites and Trails BC

ORV Trail Fund Policy

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Definitions

ATVBC – Quad Riders Association of British Columbia.

BCORMA – British Columbia Off-Road Motorcycle Association.

BCPSC – Back-Country Power Sports Coalition of BC – while not a legal entity, this is an affiliation of the primary stakeholders identified in this document – ATVBC, BCORMA and BCSF.

BCSF – British Columbia Snowmobile Federation.

Chapter 10 Recreation Manual – Refers to Chapter 10 of the Forest Recreation Manual – Recreation Trail Management – which is used by RSTBC to manage trails in combination with other technical trail maintenance and management documents.

Matching Contributions – Refers to the combination of monetary and In-Kind Contributions the applicant will be contributing to the project, separate from the ORV Trail Fund Request.

In-Kind Contributions – Means any combination of volunteer time, donated labour, equipment, services, and materials from other sources.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails – A trail used primarily by off-road vehicles, such as snowmobiles, off-road motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), including "quads" and "side-by-sides." Trails that are primarily used by ORVs, with or without a component of non-motorized use, qualify as ORV trails. Roads or trails designed for and used primarily by on-highway vehicles not registered as ORVs under the *ORV Act* are excluded from this definition.

ORV Member Organizations – Means the organizations (clubs) who hold membership in one of the BCPSC organizations.

RSTBC – Refers to Recreation Sites and Trails BC – a branch of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

Trails Strategy for BC – Provides the framework, principles and guidance necessary to develop a world-class trails system for BC. Overall, this framework establishes strategic direction for planning, developing, maintaining, managing, marketing and using an integrated network of trails in BC. While the *Trails Strategy for BC* has never been implemented, it provides an overall strategic framework for consideration of trails projects.

Introduction

This document, in combination with the application form, scoring criteria and other relevant documents, describes the eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, process for receiving applications, and funding award process for the BC Off-Road Vehicle Trail Fund (ORV Trail Fund). This fund was created as part of the British Columbia Off-Road Vehicle Strategy in consultation with the BC ORV community. Funds made available through the ORV Trail Fund come from registration fees for ORVs in BC. The *Off-Road Vehicle Act* and a consequential amendment to the *Special Account Appropriation and Control Act* are the legal mechanisms that allowed creation of the fund. Should a difference be noted between either of these Acts or any other Act and this document, those Acts will take precedence.

This policy sets the framework for describing the objectives of the fund, how project proponents can apply for funds, and how applications will be adjudicated. This policy also references and is dependent on other related documents including:

- **ORV Trail Fund Online Application (BC Government Common Hosted Form)** – This is the official online application form, accessed and submitted through the ORV Trail Fund webpage using BC's Common Hosted Forms platform.

- **ORV Trail Fund Scoring Criteria** – This document provides guidance in how applications are scored and summarizes scoring criteria for both applicants and proposal reviewers.

- **Example Applications** – These may be created and provided periodically to help applicants prepare strong submissions. Supports may also include sample budget templates, example project budgets, scheduled live demonstration sessions, and recorded training materials that guide applicants through completing the online form.

1. ORV Trail Fund Objectives

The objectives of the ORV Trail Fund are to expend funds for the following: (1) *construction and maintenance of ORV trails; and (2) support and promotion of the safe and responsible use of ORVs.* Eligible expenses directly or indirectly related to the above purposes are also included. These eligibility criteria will be interpreted broadly so as not to unnecessarily restrict potential applications to the fund.

2. Eligible Applicants

The organized ORV community – including local clubs and provincial advocacy groups – is expected to be the primary applicant for these funds, but the funding should not be restricted to those groups. If another organization's application is aligned with the objectives of the fund, then that organization is eligible. All applicants must be legal entities in the province of BC.

Eligible Applicants include any of the following:

- ORV member organizations
- BCPSC organizations
- Indigenous communities
- Non-profit organizations
- Local governments (e.g. municipalities and regional districts)
- Corporations (e.g., forest licensees, ORV manufacturers/distributors).

Applications from individual applicants will not be accepted.

3. Eligible Projects and Activities

There is a single category of funding available under the ORV Trail Fund. This single category encompasses three broad categories.

1) ORV trail construction and maintenance
2) Support and promotion of safe and responsible use of ORVs
3) Coordinated provincial safety programs.

Projects and activities that deliver on ORV Trail Fund objectives will be considered eligible. In addition, projects must demonstrate a clear benefit for public off-road vehicle recreation use.

Examples of potential projects are included below:

- Construction and maintenance of ORV trails:
  - Trail and riding area maintenance.
  - Planning and engineering of trails and trail infrastructure (including, but not limited to, signage, kiosks, toilets, trailheads, day-use shelters, etc.).
  - Trail spatial data collection and mapping.
  - Trail upgrades/improvements.
  - New trail construction.
  - Bridge and water crossing installation and upgrades.
  - Trail signage installation.
  - Trail rehabilitation/decommissioning.

- Support and promotion of safe and responsible ORV use:
  - Trail use education projects.
  - Development of best management practices or other ORV trail-related management documents.
  - Promotion and education related to sustainable ORV trail construction and maintenance.

- Promotion of wildfire-safe activities related to ORV use.
- Promotion of preparedness and safe riding.
- Promotion of local ORV club membership.
- Programs to improve compliance with specific trail use.
- Ride safe campaigns.
- Promotion of "pack it in, pack it out" programs and initiatives.
- Promotion of responsible environmental activities and respect for the environment.
- Promotion of respecting the rules of the land, trails and roads.
- Development and promotion of programs that contribute to cooperation between user groups.
- Development of coordinated provincial safety programs for each of the three sectors (motorcycle, ATV/SxS, Snowmobile).

➢ Coordinated Provincial Safety Programs:
- In order to meet the objectives of the ORV Trail Fund, funds may be allocated to provincial organizations who submit workplans which are approved by RSTBC. BCSF, BCORMA and ATVBC can apply to the fund each year for ORV Trail Fund support to develop coordinated provincial safety programs. Workplans submitted are reviewed and awarded at the sole discretion of RSTBC.
- These projects will be scored separately from other applications submitted to the fund. Evaluation criteria is described in this policy, the ORV Trail Fund application form, the ORV Trail Fund Scoring Criteria and the discretion of RSTBC.
- Each member of the BCPSC will submit an annual workplan to RSTBC before the end of the application period each year.
- Activities listed in the plan must be specific, measurable, and achievable.
- Projects described in the work plan must include projects and activities which are included in the spirit and intent of the promotion of safe and responsible use of ORV Trails.
- Applications must meet the matching funding requirements for the ORV Trail Fund.
- The workplan submitted must include a detailed budget.

4. Eligible Lands

There are a variety of land jurisdictions in the province where project proposals may be considered for the ORV Trail Fund. Clear proof of authorization for the proposal from the land manager or landowner must accompany each application. A list of potential authorization requirements is provided in this policy. For a proposal to be considered for funding, the lands on which the project is proposed must be available for use by the general public and proof of public access may be required. Projects on private land will only be considered where written, legal public access is in place (e.g., an easement for the purposes of ORV recreation).

Other jurisdictions may be considered on a case-by-case basis but must demonstrate both the required authorizations and a public access guarantee as described above.

5. Maximum Available Funds

Approved applications will be funded to a maximum of $25,000 for all project proposals. Funding requests must not exceed the maximum amount. If funding requests exceed the maximum, the application may be rejected. The actual amount of funding awarded may be less than the requested amount depending on available funding and the number of proposals under consideration. Discretion may be used during the adjudication process to fund projects up to a limited amount or fund only portions of a proposal.

Projects requesting less than $5,000 will not be considered for the ORV Trail Fund.

RSTBC and the Back-Country Power Sports Coalition of BC (ATVBC, BCORMA, BCSF) will review available funds and allocations each year to ensure that an appropriate amount of funding is retained in the ORV Trail Fund to support applications in future years.

6. Application Content

The online ORV Trail Fund Application form must be used by proponents applying for funding. Each application will be assessed based on the following information.

6.1 Mandatory Requirements

Omission of any of the mandatory information will make the application ineligible for funding.

6.1.1 Proponent Contact Information and Project Title

- Proponent name (name of legal entity applying), address, phone number, email, mailing address, contact name.
- Project title.
- Where authorization for works is required as part of a project application, that authorization must be provided with the funding application.

6.1.2 Matching Contribution Requirements

- Matching Contributions are comprised of a monetary and an In-Kind Contribution to the project on behalf of the applicant.

- Specific matching funding requirements are defined in the ORV Trail Fund application form, which may be updated annually.

6.1.3 Project Budget

A project budget must be submitted with the application for funding. At a minimum, the budget must describe the following:

- Total cost of the project.
- Total ORV Fund Request.
- Total Matching Contributions (monetary and In-Kind Contributions from the applicant and/or partners).

6.1.4 Required Authorizations

Any required authorizations for proposed works associated with projects submitted to the ORV Trail Fund must be signed-off and included in the application. **It is the responsibility of the project proponent to ensure that all required authorizations are provided**. Projects which propose works and do not provide authorizations for those works may not be approved.

- A current partnership agreement with RSTBC is considered authorization for the purposes of the ORV Trail Fund where the agreement clearly authorizes the works described in the proposal and the works are proposed within the agreement area. Evidence must be provided that confirms the District Recreation Officer supports the proposal. An approved annual operating plan may be considered authorization for partnership agreement groups. Preference may be given to trails and trail networks legally established under FRPA and managed under partnership agreements with RSTBC.
- Proposals may require authorization under Section 57 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), or other acts in specific circumstances.
- Any required authorizations under the *Land Act* to undertake the proposed works must accompany the application.
- Where required, authorizations under the *Water Sustainability Act* must also be included with the application.
- On private lands, the proposal must contain a letter of support from the landowner to be eligible to apply for funding from the ORV Trail Fund. Legal charges on title such as an easement may be required.
- For proposals located on Indian Reserves, a clear indication of support from the Chief and Council must be included in the application.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

6.2.1 Budget Details

- Details required in the project budget are summarized in the application form for the ORV Trail Fund.

6.2.2 Project Description

- Details required in the project description are summarized in the application form for the ORV Trail Fund.

6.2.3 Other Scoring Criteria

- Other scoring criteria may be changed from year to year and are described in the ORV Trail Fund application form.

7. Application Process

7.1 Advertisements and Timing

Advertisements announcing the opening of the ORV Trail Fund intake will be issued in advance of the application period through the ORV Trail Fund webpage and other appropriate communication channels. The application window will be open each intake cycle from December 15th to February 17th, providing proponents with approximately nine weeks to prepare and submit their applications using the online application form available through the BC Government's Common Hosted Forms platform.

Once the application period closes, all submissions will be reviewed and adjudicated in accordance with the timelines established for that intake cycle. The review and scoring process is typically completed within four to six weeks following the close of the application window. All proponents will be notified of the results at the conclusion of adjudication.

Applications must be submitted electronically through the online application system before the published deadline. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. All compliant submissions will be reviewed after the application window has closed; the order in which applications are received has no impact on adjudication outcomes.

7.2 Additional Submission Guidance - A single application may include work on multiple trails within a network. Only one application per applicant will be accepted each intake cycle; if more than one is submitted, only the latest submission will be reviewed.

7.3 Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Each application will first be screened for compliance with the mandatory criteria. Applications that have achieved compliance with the mandatory criteria will then be scored and ranked relative to the other compliant applications.

Applications will be scored using objective measures. Scoring is described in this policy and in the ORV Trail Fund Application form and Scoring criteria. Applicants are encouraged to provide sufficient detail for each information requirement.

- Mandatory Requirements
  - Applications that do not include mandatory information will not be assessed.
  - **This is a pass/fail criterion.**

- Back-Country Power Sports Coalition of BC Scoring
  - **Points defined in application form and scoring evaluation.**

- RSTBC Scoring
  - **Points defined in application form and scoring evaluation.**

7.4 Distribution of Funds

The intention is to distribute funding equally (33%) among the three ORV user sectors – ATVs (including side-by-sides), off-road motorcycles, and snowmobiles. Applications will be accepted from qualified applicants provided they meet the objectives and requirements of the ORV Fund and clearly identify the anticipated primary use of the trail proposal (i.e., ATVs, off-road motorcycles, snowmobiles).

If any user sector is undersubscribed and does not use its entire allocation for a funding cycle, the remaining funds may be allocated to other sectors or carried forward to the next year as determined through consultations with the stakeholders and at the discretion of the joint adjudicators (RSTBC and BCPSC).

Multi-sector proposals will be accepted provided the primary use of the trail project is identified.

Provincial federations are eligible to apply for the Coordinated Provincial Safety Programs stream each year. This will be evaluated independently by RSTBC. RSTBC will review the applications from each organization against the goals and objectives of the fund and the scoring criteria. Workplans may be adjusted based on the review by mutual agreement between the applicant and RSTBC. These applications are separate from the club-based promotion of safe and responsible use applications. The maximum and minimum project values described in this policy apply to these applications.

7.5 Adjudication

Each application to the ORV Trail Fund will be assigned a project number and proponents will be notified to confirm their application has been received. As fund administrator, RSTBC will oversee the review process and ensure that funding is allocated equitably and fairly, according to the advertised scoring criteria. The BCPSC will participate in project reviews and scoring.

Prior to forwarding proposals to the BCPSC for adjudication, RSTBC will ensure that projects meet all mandatory requirements. The BCPSC and RSTBC will independently score all compliant applications. The application scores are then shared and ranked based on the combined total score. Upon request, application scores will be made available to all proponents after the review process is complete.

Depending on the number of applications, total monetary requests, available funding, and the quality of the applications, RSTBC may set a minimum score of 50% of the total achievable points. The awarding of funds will be distributed according to determined application rankings, funding distributions as described in this policy, and the amount of funds available. If too many applications fall below the 50% minimum score, the applications may be scored on a normal distribution curve. Applications of sufficiently poor quality will not be funded at the discretion of RSTBC.

Coordinated provincial safety program applications are reviewed solely by RSTBC. These applications are submitted in the form of annual work plans and are reviewed against the objectives of the fund and the criteria for scoring.

Successful and unsuccessful proponents will be notified at the conclusion of the adjudication process. Where requested, RSTBC and BCPSC will make efforts to provide feedback to help improve future success.

8. Eligible Project Costs

Eligible expenses include the following. Only those expenses incurred after the approval of the application to the ORV Fund are eligible for reimbursement.

- Project plan development:
  - comprehensive plans
  - construction drawings
  - environmental assessments
  - trail master plans
  - planning processes
  - engineering and technical trail assessments.

- Trail construction:
  - construction of access roads in certain circumstances
  - parking areas
  - trail and trailhead construction
  - development and installation of route and interpretation signs.

- Trail maintenance:
  - clearing
  - brushing
  - minor trail reroutes
  - bridge replacements
  - installation of culverts, ditches, and other water management structures
  - resurfacing of trails with natural surfacing or aggregate
  - minor realignments of trails and trail features.

- Development of brochures, maps, signage, web sites, or other media.
- Development of sustainable trail plans and educational programs for ORV trails in specific riding areas.
- Development of broad education programs for ORV trails on a regional or provincial scale.
- Hiring of professionals to develop best management practices for soil disturbance, wildlife interactions, or other environmental concerns.
- Costs associated with inventorying a riding area, network or trail as preparation to improve management or maintenance.
- Development or promotion of best practices for ORV users in areas associated with wildfire risk.
- Costs related to signage development promoting safe and responsible use, including "pack it in, pack it out," "safe riding campaigns," "promotion of membership with ORV clubs and associations" and "rules on ORV registration;".
- Development of programs that contribute to cooperation between user groups.
- Development of coordinated provincial promotion of safe and responsible use programs.
- Coordinated Provincial Safety Programs.

8.1 In-Kind Contributions

The valuation of volunteerism and donations is based on:

- Donated materials at verified fair market value (blue book to be used as a baseline).
- Donated accredited professional services at verified fair market value.
- General labour (e.g., administrative support, trail maintenance work): $20.00/hour.
- Skilled labour (e.g., marketing, communications, Internet support): $25.00/hour.

Complete records of all volunteered hours and donated services or materials must be retained as part of the organization's ORV Trail Fund records.

9. Fund Award and Transfer

Upon award of funding, 10% of the total value may be held back until a substantial completion certificate is signed by the land manager and the proponent files a project completion report.

10. Reporting

All recipients of the ORV Trail Fund are required to submit a completion report within two months of the planned completion date stated in their original application.

A completion report must include at minimum the following:

1. Financial information
2. Photos or copies of materials
3. Justification for any changes to the project plan.

Where projects are not concluded by the planned completion date stated on their application, RSTBC may require recipients to provide interim reporting.

Reports must be submitted to the ORV Trail Fund at: ORVFundApplications@gov.bc.ca. Copies of the completion report must also be sent to the applicable sector of the BCPSC (ATVBC, BCORMA, BCSF).

Recipients that do not provide required reports or do not complete project deliverables described in the project plan may be disqualified from future funding opportunities or funds may withhold future award until reporting requirement have been met.

Photos and reports may be used for promotional purposes in public communications.

11. Evaluation

A review of the advertisement, acceptance, adjudication, and award processes associated with the ORV Trail Fund will be completed annually (if possible) by RSTBC in consultation with the stakeholders. Where specific changes to ORV Trail Fund application processes are required, they will be incorporated into the policy documents for future use.

Specific information that will help guide or inform reviews of the application processes will come from the following sources:

- ORV member organization feedback.
- Trail usage statistics by type (e.g., ATVs, off-road motorcycles, snowmobiles).

- Trail revenue sources (ORV registration, riding permit areas under the *ORV Act*, donations, other).
- Trail user experiences, needs and recommendations, including residents and non-residents.
- RSTBC and user group perspectives on the effectiveness of the ORV Trail Fund, and recommended modifications for improvements.

12. Audits and Site Visits

RSTBC staff or other government staff may require audits or site visits to the project. These audits and site visits are meant to ensure that project deliverables and timelines are being met.

Other audits or site visits by RSTBC staff or other officials may also be required.

13. Freedom of Information

Applications submitted to the ORV Trail Fund are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The information collected is for the purpose of administering the program and will be used to evaluate eligibility under the program.

14. Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality

All documents received by the ORV Trail Fund will be treated as confidential. RSTBC staff will uphold the standards for conflict of interest and confidentiality required by all BC public service employees.

15. Application Support

If you have a question that is not addressed in this ORV Trail Fund Application Guidelines document, support is available from ORVFundApplications@gov.bc.ca or from ORV sector stakeholders (ATVBC, BCORMA, BCSF).