

## **FACT SHEET and GUIDELINES FOR POTENTIAL OHV PROGRAM GRANT APPLICANTS**

Welcome to the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program! Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) administers the OHV Program with funds appropriated by the State Legislature. The program has three components: the OHV Grant Program, enforcement of OHV laws, and a Safety and Ethics Education Program. OHV Program funding derives from 1/8 of 1% of the Distributor's Gasoline License Tax, registration decal fees, dealer registration, and nonresident permit fees. The Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee (OHVAC) is a council that advises FWP on such things as OHV Program expenditures and a variety of related trails issues. OHV grant applicants (sponsors) can include federal, state, county or municipal agencies, private associations, and clubs. A sponsor is not required to have matching funds to apply for an OHV grant. However, applicants with matching funds may receive tie-breaking points for purposes of application scoring. After project completion, reimbursement of OHV funds will be approved for documented project expenditures.

The goal of Montana's OHV grant program is to distribute as much money as possible to as many eligible sponsors as possible in an effort to increase access to recreational motorized trails. However, the OHV Program may not be the right grant program in every case. That is why we have listed some of the more important technical and regulatory aspects of the program for your review and consideration. Please be sure you understand OHV grant rules and regulations **BEFORE** you begin the application process; it could save you considerable time and money.

### **Important Changes**

- The deadline for submission of grant applications is August 1, 2012. Completed applications must be submitted on time. No supplementary materials will be accepted after the August 1, 2012 deadline.
- Applications must be mailed in hard copy format this year. However, next year the OHV Program will be going “digital,” and OHV applications will be submitted through an online grant management system (see the current Montana ‘Recreational Trails Program’).
- Beginning this OHV grant cycle, federal agencies submitting OHV grant applications are strongly encouraged to have documented relationships and partnerships in place with local OHV clubs, interest

groups, etc. Current grant application scoring criteria reflect this emphasis.

- In recent years, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management have applied for projects in which federal personnel, called “Trail Rangers,” engage in level-one trail maintenance, rider contacts, ethics education, and safety education. Unfortunately, this term has been misinterpreted by many as a law-enforcement effort, which is not the case. Therefore, beginning with this application cycle, Trail-Ranger projects shall be titled “**Trail Steward**” projects. The new term (Trail Steward) is not so likely to be misconstrued as ‘law enforcement’ by interested parties.
- Where practical, federal agencies should seek out and form cross-jurisdictional or interagency Trail-Steward applications.
- Please note that Wildlife Review Forms, Fisheries Review Forms, and Noxious Weed Reports are no longer required in any case.

## Facts

1. Throughout these grant materials, the term, “grant sponsor,” may be used. The grant sponsor is the entity that applies for a grant, receives the grant, and then completes the grant project.
2. A prospective grant applicant is not required to have matching funds to apply for an OHV grant. However, applicants with matching funds may receive tie-breaking points for purposes of application scoring.
3. Once an OHV grant agreement is signed by both parties, small, non-profit organizations, such as local OHV clubs, may request a 75 percent advance on their grant awards. In most cases, the final 25 percent will not be awarded until the grant sponsor has submitted all financial billing documents. No other entities (federal agencies, state agencies, cities, counties, etc.) are eligible for a grant advance.
4. Once a grant sponsor has completed its grant project, it has 90 days to submit all project billing documents, including invoices, contracts, copies of canceled warrants, reimbursement cover sheet, final performance report, etc. If the sponsor fails to submit the required paperwork within this period of time, it risks losing its grant award altogether.
5. Trail Steward Projects are capped at \$16,000 per ranger per year. OHV Program funding will cover Trail Ranger salaries only. When practical, FWP encourages agencies to form cross-district Trail Rangers. Trail Ranger projects must be completed in one field season; reimbursement request for trail Ranger projects that span two field seasons will not be approved.

## Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Program Application Guidelines

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1. Please read all materials before making the first mark on the OHV grant application. This will help you develop a timeline for your application to ensure you don't miss a deadline.
2. Please provide the detailed descriptive information specifically applicable to the project for which you seek funding. Adequate documentation is very important, but be careful--more is not necessarily better--include only what you need and no more. Your application must convince FWP and the OHVAC that your project meets program criteria as identified in these OHV Program Guidelines, is well thought out and designed, and has considered all reasonable alternatives.
3. Any applicant with an OHV grant approved prior to FY 2010 that has not yet completed that grant is not eligible to apply for an FY 2013 grant.
4. Maps and photographs of the site should be high quality. Photos of the project area and clear general design plans should accompany your application. Maps should include an area map of the surrounding ten miles and a site map of the immediate project area.
5. All projects must satisfy the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) found in the Environmental Analysis. If a NEPA assessment for a project on federal property has already been made, please note that a NEPA categorical exclusion does not satisfy MEPA. Each application, with the exception of categories noted in item number six, must contain a completed Environmental Analysis. Project effects may be either negative or positive.
6. Only the following types of projects are exempt from completion of the Environmental Analysis: ethics or safety education; brochures; and portable exhibits and displays.
7. Project alternatives need to be discussed in the narrative section of the Environmental Analysis. Provide a good discussion of the preferred project alternative and the other reasonable alternatives considered, including the required "no action" alternative. At a minimum, the discussion must include the "no action" alternative and two additional alternatives.
8. A sponsor may submit only one application per year. An application may contain more than one project phase. If the application contains more than one distinct project phase, the applicant must prioritize those phases.
9. All projects seeking funding must comply with existing federal, state and jurisdictional laws, regulations and ordinances.
10. MFWP staff review and rank OHV applications with input from the OHV Advisory Committee. Final grant approval comes from Montana State Parks division of FWP. Successful applicants will receive a project agreement, which must be signed and returned by an appropriate official of the sponsor's organization.