



MONTANA **FWP**

**MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

Meeting Date: December 19, 2018
Agenda Item: Montana Trails Coalition Proposed Legislation
Action Needed: Informational
Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background:

The Montana Trails Coalition includes a diverse group of public land trail users, including Bike Walk Montana, Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association, Montana Snowmobile Association, Backcountry Horsemen of Montana and the Montana Wilderness Association.

The Coalition believes a new state trails grant program will streamline the application process and make it easier for smaller communities to apply for grants. That would also make the program more attractive to those seeking funding for smaller projects. It could then fund projects based purely on merit rather than confining funding to the 30/30/40 percent funding breakdown of RTP grants.

Issues of trail maintenance are not just limited to backcountry areas, but also include front country trails across the public land system. The demand for public land trails far exceeds the funding that is currently available.

Sen. Terry Gauthier, R-Helena will sponsor bill drafts of potential funding mechanisms which include raising light vehicle registration fees by \$3. SB 24 increases the optional amount residents pay on their light vehicle registration (LVR) from \$6 to \$9. The change is expected to increase state special revenue by approximately \$1.2 million in the 2019 biennium. The proposed distribution of the \$9 is as follows: \$1.38 (15.3%) to the trails grant program (new), \$6.74 (74.9%) to state parks, \$0.50 (5.6%) to the fishing access site program, and \$0.38 (4.2%) to the operations of the Montana Heritage Commission sites at Virginia City/Nevada City.