



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

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November 29, 2012

In Reply Refer to: HFL-17

Federal Land Managers
Montana Department of Transportation
Regional, County & Local Governments
Tribal Governments

Greetings:

Request for Project Proposals
2013 Montana Federal Lands Access Program

The Montana Federal Lands Access Program is soliciting proposals for capital improvement construction and enhancement projects in FY 2013 through FY 2018. Project approvals will be contingent upon availability of funds. The proposals must be received by **February 8, 2013**.

What is the purpose of the Federal Lands Access Program?

The purpose of the Federal Lands Access Program is to provide safe and adequate transportation access to and through Federal Lands for visitors, recreationists, and resource users.

Where can projects be located?

Proposed projects must be located on a public highway, road, bridge, or trail system that is located on, is adjacent to, or provides access to Federal lands for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in a state, county, town, township, tribal, municipal, or local government.

Who may apply?

All proposals must be submitted jointly by the federal land management agency and the entity with title or maintenance responsibility. The entity with title or maintenance responsibility must be a state, county, town, township, tribal, municipal, or local government.

What types of proposals will be considered?

Project proposals will be accepted for both capital improvement projects and enhancement projects that are included in the activities listed below. Capital improvement projects include rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of roads and trails. This includes improvements such as, but not limited to, safety improvements, widening, realignments, surfacing, culverts, bridges, signing and associated roadway appurtenances. Enhancements are road and trail related improvements such as, but not limited to, interpretative signing, kiosks,

viewpoints, restrooms, provisions for pedestrians and bicycles, scenic easements, trailheads, and improvements that reduce vehicle-wildlife conflicts.

The following activities will be considered in this call:

- 1) Rehabilitation, restoration, construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities.
- 2) Adjacent vehicular parking areas.
- 3) Provisions for pedestrian and bicycles.
- 4) Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- 5) Environmental mitigation in or adjacent to Federal land to improve public safety and reduce vehicle-wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.
- 6) Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas, including sanitary and water facilities.

Proposed projects should also be consistent with a statewide, regional, county, local, or tribal transportation plan and a federal land management plan. Projects that are specifically identified in a transportation plan will receive additional consideration.

What size of project will be considered?

The Montana Federal Lands Access Program is currently estimated to receive about \$22.5 million annually. Projects in all funding amounts will be considered and evaluated. However, because of limited program funding amounts, projects will receive additional consideration when funding leveraged from other sources is also available.

Will matching funds be required?

The program requires matching funds of **13.42%** of the total project costs. The match will follow the current guidance requirements established by the Montana Department of Transportation for matching funds on Federal-Aid projects. This includes “soft matches” or “in-kind matches” such as donated materials, services, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation. Funds authorized under the Tribal Transportation Program and the Federal Lands Transportation Program as well as other Federal funds not authorized under Title 23 or 49 may also be used to satisfy the match.

How will the projects be evaluated?

A Project Selection Team will evaluate and prioritize the proposed projects according to following areas: Safety, Preservation, Recreation, Economic, Mobility, and Environmental (see enclosed Evaluation Criteria). In addition, preference shall be given to projects that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within high-use federal recreation sites or federal economic generators, as identified by the federal land management agency.

The Project Selection Team will include representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Association of Counties, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

How will a final decision be made on the proposals?

After the project proposals are evaluated and prioritized, the Program Decision Committee (Federal Highway Administration, Montana Department of Transportation, and Montana Association of Counties) will make a final decision on the project proposals. The Committee will

make these decisions while also considering such things as project support, project readiness, agency priorities, applicant's share of project costs, availability of funds, project development delivery schedules, previous federal investment specifically related to the project, and environmental and right-of-way time constraints. The Committee also will coordinate with the federal land management agencies prior to making a final decision. The final decision on the project proposals should be made by the fall of 2013.

How can I submit a proposal?

The best available data should be used in completing the project proposal forms. The information requested in the form should be concise and succinct. Maps and photos should be included to support the proposal. Letters of support from other entities that will not be signing the official application may also be included. Send an email with the completed proposal form and all required maps, signatures, and photos to:

WFL.CallForProjects@dot.gov

The proposal must be received by **February 8, 2013**. The total file size for the proposal form (including maps and photos) should not exceed 10 megabytes.

Copies of this letter, the Project Proposal form, evaluation criteria and Project Status list can also be downloaded from the following website.

<http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/mt/index.htm>

What about previously approved Forest Highway projects?

Enclosed is the Forest Highway Program and Federal Lands Access Program Project Status list. The list shows which projects have been approved for funding under either the Forest Highway Program or the Federal Lands Access Program.

Projects that are shown as "Funded" do not need to resubmit a project proposal.

Projects that are shown as "Not Funded" must submit a complete project proposal form for consideration under the Federal Lands Access Program.

Will there be calls for other types of projects?

There will be additional calls for preventive maintenance, transit, planning and research type projects. The transit, planning, and research calls should be announced the winter of 2013, and the preventive maintenance call should be announced the spring of 2013.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Should you have any questions, please contact George Fekaris or the Federal Lands Access Program coordinator for your agency:

Agency	Contact	Phone	Email Address
Federal Highway Administration	George Fekaris	(360) 619-7766	george.fekaris@dot.gov
Montana Department of Transportation	Wayne Noem	(406) 444-6105	wnoem@mt.gov
Montana Association of Counties	Harold Blattie	(406) 444-4360	hblattie@mtcounties.org
US Forest Service	Fred Bower	(406) 329-3354	fbower@fs.fed.us
National Park Service	Jayne Schaeffer	(303) 969-2581	jayne_schaeffer@nps.gov
Bureau of Land Management	Scott DeBock	(406) 896-5207	sdebock@blm.gov
US Fish & Wildlife Service	James Graves	(303) 236-4354	james_graves@fws.gov

Sincerely yours,



George Fekaris
Transportation Planner

Enclosures:

Program Status List

Project Proposal Form

Project Evaluation Criteria