



STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: March 12, 2025

Agenda Item: FWP AmeriCorps Program Letter of Support

Action Needed: Approval to provide a letter of support

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: Since its inception in 2012, the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks AmeriCorps Program has operated on a three-year federal grant program, with annual renewal processes, through the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS). Currently, the program is operating on Year 3 of a three-year grant cycle and intends to submit an application on April 17, 2025, for the next three-year cycle. This grant requires matching funds from the host agency, which is FWP. The grant application requires a letter of support for the program, which is the basis for this agenda item.

The grant proposal will request 15 AmeriCorps members to be placed in FWP parks, visitor centers, and educational outreach coordinator positions across the state. AmeriCorps members will improve the condition of state park lands, provide environmental stewardship educational opportunities, build volunteer capacity, and strengthen community outreach. At the end of the first program year, the 15 AmeriCorps members will be responsible for treating 26 miles of trail or river on park lands for trail restoration, treating 88 acres of park land for noxious weeds, and educating 9,000 participants in environmental stewardship practices. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage 375 volunteers who engage in larger projects across the state parks with a focus on public accessibility, as well as facilitate 25 new or existing community partnerships to increase stewardship for the natural and cultural heritage resources in the trust of FWP.

Public Involvement Process & Results: This specific item has not been sent out for public comment, and there are no plans to do so. After the grant application has been submitted to the GOCS there will be a grant review workgroup meeting on May 14, 2025, in Helena. This workgroup consists of a review panel selected by GOCS and will be open to the public. The workgroup will make recommendations to the GOCS Commission, which will make a final determination at their meeting on May 16, 2025. This meeting will include a public comment period.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division recommends the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Board approve and provide a letter of support for the FWP AmeriCorps Program because members significantly contribute to the agency's ability to provide educational opportunities in environmental stewardship to the public and capacity for land improvement projects related to trails and noxious weeds.

Proposed Motion: I move the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Board support the FWP AmeriCorps Program and write a letter of support to include in its upcoming grant application.