

2027-2028 INFRASTRUCTURE TRAIL FUNDING GUIDE

Nova Scotia Off Highway Vehicle Infrastructure Fund

NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE
Recreational Trail Expansion



Introduction

We recognize that trails in Nova Scotia rely on the hard work and dedication of community trail groups across the province. The top priority outlined in the Shared Strategy for Trails in Nova Scotia is to align efforts and enhance support for these groups. To fulfill this commitment, the Off-Highway Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (OHVIF) committee and Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) have been collaborating to simplify the process for groups to apply for capital grants for trail development and improvements.

In the 2023–24 fiscal year, we introduced this streamlined approach and have continued to refine the process annually. Now, applicants can use the simplified method to apply to multiple funders using a single application. Project proposals will be reviewed by the OHVIF committee and/or CCTH, who will provide guidance and assistance throughout the application process. To begin, trail groups are asked to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form and follow the details and steps outlined in this document. This cooperative process is intended to unite us, reduce the administrative burden for trail groups, and lead strong, supported trail projects across the province!

If you have any questions or need assistance at any point in the process, please reach out to one of the following:

Off-Highway Vehicle Infrastructure Fund	Recreational Trail Expansion
80 Walker Street, Suite 1 Truro, NS B2N 4A7 **Email**: ohvif.application@novascotia.ca	80 Walker Street, Suite 1 Truro, NS B2N 4A7 **Email**: ccthtrailgrants@novascotia.ca

Process and Deadlines

September 1, 2026 – Expression of Interest Open

November 1, 2026, 11:59 pm – Expression of Interest Deadline

February 1, 2027, 11:59 pm – Application Deadline

April 1, 2027 – OHVIF Funding determined

Recreational Trail Expansion Funding to be determined after approval of the 2027-2028 provincial budget.

2027 – 2028 Infrastructure Trail Funding Process

STEP 1

READ AND REVIEW the Infrastructure Trail Funding Guide carefully. Pay close attention to the requirements outlined in each step and make sure to utilize the available tools and resources, including the checklist, in-kind rates, and budget templates. Refer to the program descriptions for the OHVIF on page 10 and the RTE program on page 11 to determine if your project is eligible for one or both programs. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

FALL WEBINAR SERIES

The CCTH Trails Team proudly hosts webinars annually, creating an inspiring platform for trail groups and the trail community. These sessions foster learning, encourage questions, and invite valuable feedback on trail processes, projects, and information. Below are the dates and descriptions of the webinars scheduled for September/January 2027. Click on the link to register.

September 14, 2026, at noon | Need Capital Funding for Your Trail?
Join us to learn how to apply for the Recreational Trail Expansional program and the Off-Highway Infrastructure Fund through a single application process. The CCTH Trails Team will guide you through the application process from start to finish, provide insights into scoring, and offer helpful tips on completing your applications.

Need Capital Funding for Your Trail?

September 24, 2026, at noon | In-Kind Log, How to use it!
Join Corey Robar for a practical and down-to-earth session on using the in-kind Excel logbook. Corey will walk groups through a real trail project example, show how to record volunteer time, equipment use, donated materials, and grant-paid expenses, and break down how the rates work.
Ever wondered how to accurately log a project that includes an unskilled volunteer driving an ATV with a dump trailer, donated crusher dust, and two volunteer chainsaw operators driving a truck with gas paid for by the grant funding? These are exactly the kinds of real-life situations Corey will help unpack. Come prepared with your questions and leave feeling more confident about tracking your project from start to finish.

In-Kind Log, How to use it!

October 1, 2026, at noon | Forms Made Easy & Get Your Questions Answered
Join Teresa McNutt from the CCTH Trails Team to learn how to complete, save, and send CCTH forms with confidence. Teresa will review how to use fillable forms, set up direct deposit, and add digital signatures.
You'll also have time to ask questions. Whether you're unsure how to complete a form, need help understanding what's required, or have general administrative questions, Teresa is here to guide you through the process and help you feel more confident using our documents.

Forms Made Easy & Get Your Questions Answered

November 9th, 2026, at noon | Stop Talking to a Wall: Social Media That Actually Grows Your Trail Group

Your problem probably isn't reach — it's keeping the members, volunteers, and donors who already found you. In this 45-minute session, Shaun Whynacht of Blue Cow Marketing shows trail volunteers where groups quietly lose people, and how to fix it using the three tools that matter most: Facebook, email, and your website. No tech skills needed. You'll leave knowing your group's biggest gap — and three things you can do the next day.

Stop Talking to a Wall: Social Media That Actually Grows Your Trail Group

December 10th, 2026, at noon | Fire Smarting Trails
Join David Rockwood, EMO Provincial Fire Coordinator, for a practical session on Fire Smarting Trails! David will walk trail groups through simple things to look for on their trails that can help reduce fire risk, support response efforts during a forest fire event, and keep trails safer for everyone. You'll leave with easy, useful tips your group can put into action, and there will be plenty of time to ask questions.

Fire Smarting Trails

January 14, 2027, at noon | Beavers, Birds, and Turtles, Oh My!
The dedicated team from the Department of Natural Resources will be on hand, ready to share invaluable insights about the wonders of wildlife. They will provide essential guidelines, share expert tips, practical wisdom, and answer your questions.

Beavers, Birds, and Turtles, Oh My!

Helpful Tip: The Webinars are designed as choose-your-own-adventure events; feel free to participate in the sessions that will benefit your group. Please also share these opportunities with your organization.

STEP 2

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST by providing an overview of your project on the form

- **Submit your complete EOI to one of the email addresses below: ccthtrailgrants@novascotia.ca or ohvif.application@novascotia.ca**
- You will receive confirmation of your submission within 2 business days.

COMPLETE EOI MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59 pm ON NOVEMBER 1, 2026, TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE 2027-28 FISCAL.

STEP 3

ONE-ON-ONE INTAKE MEETING will be set up with each group

- A member of the OHVIF committee or CCTH Trails Team will contact you to set up a phone, online or in-person meeting to complete the Intake Form and review project details to ensure they meet the funding guidelines.
- This meeting allows you to discuss the details of your project, ask questions and receive direction if needed.
- If the project is eligible, you will be sent an application form.

Helpful Tip: The Intake Form is an internal document that enables us to gather essential information about the trail project through meaningful, one-on-one conversations. This is your opportunity to share comprehensive details about the project and pose any questions you may have. By doing this, we aim to lighten the administrative load on the trail group, allowing the OHVIF Committee or the CCTH Trails Team to take charge of recording this valuable information. The Intake document will be added to the group's file and play a key role in evaluating their application.

STEP 4

SUBMIT APPLICATION PACKAGE upon the approval of your expression of interest.

- The applicant is responsible for completing the application **in full**. We will confirm receipt of your submission via email within 2 business days.
- **Submit your complete application to one of the below emails ccthtrailgrants@novascotia.ca or ohvif.application@novascotia.ca**
  OR
  by mail 80 Walker Street, Suite 1, Truro, NS B2N 4A7
  (please email to indicate that package has been sent via mail)

- **Please review the checklist on page 9.**

NOTE: Applicants must submit a complete application with all supporting documents and signed by two authorized signing officers by 11:59 pm on February 1st, 2027. Applications and supporting documents received after this time will not be accepted.



Helpful Tip: Applicants should review the checklist and start gathering the required items in the fall. This will help ensure the group has all required documents before the February 1st deadline.

STEP 5

NOTIFICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The OHVIF Committee will announce funding in April, while CCTH will make its funding announcements after the provincial budget is approved. Groups will be informed about funding decisions via email. If a group is not awarded funding, they are encouraged to contact the CCTH Trail Consultant or the CCTH Trails & OHV Program Officer for insight into the decision.



Helpful Tip: The OHVIF and the Recreational Trail Expansion Program have streamlined the application process to reduce the administrative burden on groups. Once a group submits its application on February 1, 2027, the process will no longer be a joint effort; the OHVIF's process and decision-making will operate separately from the CCTH Recreational Trail Expansion. As a result, the group will receive two separate notifications regarding funding decisions. If the group is successful, it will also be required to submit separate final report documents.

STEP 6

COMPLETE PROJECT

Once applicants receive funding approval, they may begin their projects. Please keep the following in mind when planning or completing your capital project:

- Funding is usually announced in the spring or early summer, so groups are encouraged to plan project start dates between mid-summer and fall. We understand this timing may create challenges, but we are here to support you and work with you throughout the project.
- Your project may experience delays due to contractor availability, material shortages, weather, natural disasters, or other factors. If changes arise, please

email us so we can update your file and work with you to keep the project moving forward.

- As your project progresses, keep a record of your group's in-kind hours and equipment use, as this information will be required for your final report. We will provide a log that can be used for both OHVIF and/or RTE, or you may use your own. Signatures are no longer required on the log; the signature on the final report confirms that the information is accurate.

STEP 7

FINAL REPORT

Yay, your project is complete! Thank you for all the time, effort, and care you put into supporting trails across Nova Scotia.

We know the final report can feel like one of the bigger steps in the process, but it does not have to be overwhelming. A little planning at the start of your project can make final reporting much easier. We encourage groups to set up a simple way to track expenses, in-kind contributions, donations, and project communications as the work moves forward.

Here are a few friendly reminders and helpful tips:

- If you received funding from **both** OHVIF and RTE, you will need to complete two separate final report documents.
- When completing your final report, please include the full value of your project, not just the funding you received. This includes other funding sources, in-kind contributions, and donations. Sharing the full picture helps show the true scope and value of your project.
- Think of the final report as a chance to celebrate your project. Tell the story, share what it took to complete the work, and send along photos so we can see the great progress you made.
- We will provide a log to help track in-kind hours and equipment use. You are welcome to use our log or create your own. The same log can be used for both OHVIF and RTE, so there is no need to prepare two separate logs.
- When setting up project communications within your group, it is helpful to have at least two people who are familiar with the project details. That way, if one person needs to step away, someone else can help keep things moving.
- OHVIF and RTE have different final reporting requirements. OHVIF requires groups to submit all invoices and proof of payment. For RTE, you only need to

record this information in the final report; you do not need to submit invoices or proof of payment.

- If you have questions while completing your final report, please email us. We are happy to help.
- We have included a couple examples of final reports for you to reference.



Helpful Tip: If you have additional information related to your project that can add value to your file, please attach it to the application. Every detail you share contributes to our review process and helps us see your vision more clearly.

PACKAGE ATTACHMENTS

The package includes:

- Expression of Interest Application
- Final Report Template
- In-kind and Equipment log
- In-kind and equipment donation rates
- Quick Guide for Trail Grant Programs

OHVIF & RTE APPLICATION CHECK LIST - please review carefully	
✓	**Items should be included in your application or as supporting documents**
OHVIF Required Documents; if not submitted at the time of application the file will be considered incomplete and **NOT** eligible for funding in the 2027-28 fiscal year.	
	▪ Evidence of landowner permissions; private, municipal, or crown land (for Crown LOA first page showing LOA number and last page showing map)
	▪ If the trail project is located on crown land, you must have proof of project approval. Written authorization (email or letter) for the specific project must be provided by either: Department of Environment and Climate Change, Public Works OR Department of Natural Resources
	▪ Letter of endorsement from the associated Provincial OHV/Trail organization (SANS, ATVANS, NSORRA, NS Trails). Demonstrating support for the project, member of good standing and covered by association insurance policy (min $5,000,000). If you wish to be considered for funding greater than $50,000 and/or 50% of the costs due to high overall cash outlay
	▪ Proof of liability insurance for a minimum of $5,000,000, if not included in the endorsement letter
	▪ Project Budget including detailed cost breakdown, projected revenues and sources and all in-kind contributions
	▪ Where applicable, architectural and/or engineering drawings if not included in the contractors' quote
	▪ Two quotes
	▪ Map of appropriate scale showing regional trail network. Identify location of work
RTE Required Documents; if not submitted at the time of application the file will be considered incomplete and **NOT** eligible for funding in the 2027-28 fiscal year.	
	▪ A letter/email from Municipal staff acknowledging awareness of the applicant, the project, and details of any Municipal involvement regarding funding and/or contribution assistance and how this project connects to municipal priorities.
	▪ Evidence of landowner permissions; private, municipal, or crown land (for Crown LOA first page showing LOA number and last page showing map)
	▪ If the trail project is located on crown land, you must have proof of project approval. Written authorization (email or letter) for the specific project must be provided by either: Department of Environment and Climate Change, Public Works OR Department of Natural Resources
	▪ Project Budget including detailed cost breakdown, projected revenues and sources and all in-kind contributions
	▪ Where applicable, architectural and/or engineering drawings if not included in the contractors' quote
	▪ Two quotes
	▪ Map of the trail, identify the work location
OHVIF & RTE if the following supporting documents are provided the group may receive additional points during scoring	
	▪ Before photos showing the specific work location and existing conditions
	▪ If applicable, proof of approval by regulatory bodies and compliance with local by-laws, building codes, trail and riding area construction guidelines. Regulatory bodies may include; Local Municipal Unit, NS Department of Public Works, NS Department of Agriculture, NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Navigable Waters - Coast Guard, NS Power
	▪ Any other supplemental details

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND GUIDELINES

Goals of the OHV Infrastructure Fund (Trails) are:

- to provide funding for OHV trail and riding area development
- to support the planning and design associated with these facilities.
- to provide funding to help maintain OHV accessible infrastructure.

Principles

Principles that guide the OHV Infrastructure Fund (Trails):

- Safe, quality, and environmentally responsible infrastructure that meets the provincial guidelines as outlined in *Developing Recreational Trails in Nova Scotia - available from* www.novascotiatrails.com
- optimizing the use of existing trail infrastructure, to reduce the need for new trail development.
- shared use and management
- avoidance of vulnerable and high conservation value areas and contribution to environmental protection
- encouraging community participation
- value landowner concerns
- partnerships between not-for-profits, governments, landowners, private sector
- sustainability (i.e. maintenance plan, etc.)
- reasonable public access
- to reduce land use conflicts and inappropriate OHV use by establishing approved OHV trails

Eligibility

The following are eligible for OHV Infrastructure Fund (Trails) assistance:

- Not-for-profit groups registered under the *Societies Act* (or equivalent) and in good standing. Not-for-profit groups must be members of either SANS (Snowmobiler's Association of NS, ATVANS (All-Terrain Vehicle Association of NS), NSORRA (NS Off-Road Riders Association or NS Trails (NS Trails Federation and operating under the policies and principles of that organization
- Landowners through a not-for-profit organization
- Municipalities

Funding

Applicants may be eligible for funding over more than one year if a multi-year development plan is submitted.

- projects approved for funding are eligible to receive up to 50% of the total project cost, usually not to exceed $50,000 in one fiscal year.
- Exceptional funding requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis for funding greater than $50,000 and/or more than 50% of the costs due to high overall cash outlay.
- funding to support design, planning, and engineering may be available through the OHV Infrastructure Fund.
- projects involving fittings, buildings, and equipment essential to making the trail and riding area operational are eligible.
- Maintenance work is eligible.
- Groups are eligible to claim in-kind admin for a maximum 10% of requested OHVIF funding to a maximum of $5,000.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL EXPANSION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE
Recreational
Trail Expansion

Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH), offers the **Recreational Trail Expansion (RTE) Program** to assist municipalities and not-for-profit organizations in developing new recreational trails, expanding recreational trails, and making capital upgrades to existing infrastructure and connectivity in order to increase opportunities for Nova Scotians to recreate in the outdoors, connect with nature and to get moving which respond to the goals of the *Shared Strategy for Trails in Nova Scotia*.

Eligible Applicants

- Registered community associations and non-profit societies with active status including clubs and associations.
- Mi'kmaq Band Councils, Municipalities and Villages.

Eligible and Ineligible Initiatives

- Projects eligible to apply for up to 2/3 of total capital costs to a maximum of $150,000.
- Trails must be open to the public.
- Funding received from other provincial government departments can affect the amount of the grant awarded by CCTH. Provincial government funding cannot exceed 75% of the project's total cost.
- Large equipment purchases and buildings are ineligible.
- The cost of purchasing land is ineligible.

Grant Details

- Groups will be informed of the status of their application following the review process.
- A *Terms and Conditions Grant Agreement* will be sent to each successful applicant.
- A grant installment/ payment will be made once the grant agreement is signed and returned.
- CCTH will provide the successful applicant with final reporting documents including a financial statement template and logs for recording donated labour, equipment, and materials.
- If the grant recipient uses donated materials, equipment, and/or labour as part of their contribution, detailed records will be required at the time of final reporting. Samples of logbooks are available.
- Approval of the final report by CCTH enables final grant payment to be made, if applicable.
- Projects must be completed within the indicated fiscal year(s) specified in the Terms and Conditions document.
- *Please Note: supporting documents may be requested at any time throughout the project and for up to seven (7) years after project completion.*