

# Recreational Trails Program

*Annual Report*

*Federal Fiscal Year 2016*

*Released November 2016*



Above: Paved Multi-Use Path construction at I-25/NM14 interchange in Santa Fe; project received RTP funding in FFY15 and was completed in November 2016.

## Table of Contents

Program and Annual Report Background .....	3
New Mexico's RTP in FFY16 .....	3
Table 1: New Mexico FFY16 RTP Funding Summary .....	3
FFY16 Baseline STIP and Obligation Performance .....	4
Table 2: FFY16 Baseline Program .....	5
Table 3: FFY16 Projects Obligated .....	6
Chart 1: FFY16 Baseline Projects Obligated .....	7
Chart 2: FFY16 Baseline Funding Obligated .....	7
Summary .....	8

## Program and Annual Report Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides federal funding for recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized trail uses such as hiking, bicycling, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use. Projects funded under the RTP must comply with all applicable federal requirements.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is the agency designated by the Governor to administer the RTP. Per federal regulations, New Mexico's Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB)—an independent advisory committee—meets at least once a year and provides recommendations to NMDOT regarding RTP projects and program administration.

This annual report, representing NMDOT's program for Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (FFY16), is intended to give the public and other interested parties basic information on: 1) the program's history and background with NMDOT, 2) the projects that were awarded RTP funds in FFY16, 3) NMDOT's performance with regard to program management, and 4) which projects ultimately were granted federal participation of RTP funding. Once construction projects are approved for federal participation, they are usually built within two years. For non-infrastructure projects, project sponsors generally begin their project within a few months.

## New Mexico's RTP in FFY16

NMDOT received, by federal formula, approximately \$1.4 million in annual RTP apportionment for FFY16. Per Federal requirements, the RTP apportionment must be awarded according to the following distribution: 30% of the funds must be used for non-motorized trails; 30% for motorized trails; and 40% for diverse-use trails, as detailed in **Table 1**.

Administration of the RTP moved from the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) to NMDOT at the beginning of calendar-year 2014. NMDOT's goal was to bring the RTP into alignment with NMDOT's existing funding timelines and cycles, and to run calls for projects concurrently with the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

<b>Table 1: New Mexico FFY16 RTP Funding Summary*</b>	
Total Annual RTP Apportionment	\$1,429,831
Non-Motorized Target	\$428,949
Motorized Target	\$428,949
Diverse-Use Target	\$571,933
*amounts do not include the State's obligation limitation of 94.9%	

The call for FFY16 and FFY17 funding was open during the first and second quarters of FFY15. Projects were selected for funding through the statewide, competitive process laid out in the FFY16-17 RTP Guide. No applications were received for the 30% motorized target during this application cycle, though NMDOT was able to award RTP funding for four motorized projects in FFY17 through a "special" call. The outcome of this special call, as well as the obligation of FFY17 RTP funds, will be detailed in the RTP Annual Report for FFY17.

The Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB) scored and ranked applications in March 2015 and NMDOT used these recommendations to award funding for projects in FFY16 and FFY17. One project was awarded to EMNRD with the support of the NMDOT Cabinet Secretary outside of the statewide,

competitive process. Projects that were awarded funding in FFY16 and programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are detailed in the following section.

During late winter and spring of 2016, NMDOT developed a new programs manual to be used by applicants seeking funding in FFY18 and FFY19 for both TAP and RTP. The combined guide is called the Active Transportation and Recreational Programs Guide. In addition to program eligibilities, application and selection procedures, and post-award requirements, the new guide features a user-focused format that includes a quick-reference funding guide and section headings that reflect a user's perspective. The call for FFY18 and FFY19 funding was opened in April 2016 with an application deadline of November 30, 2016. FFY18 and FFY19 projects will be selected through a statewide, competitive process and will be announced during the second quarter of FFY17.

## FFY16 Baseline STIP and Obligation Performance

The baseline STIP, active at the beginning of a FFY, provides a method for measuring performance in terms of delivering projects programmed in the STIP each FFY. In coordination with FHWA, NMDOT measures program performance by comparing baseline projects to those which are ultimately obligated.



Obligation refers to a commitment by the federal government to pay the federal share of a project's cost. An obligated project is one that has been authorized by FHWA and for which federal funds are committed.

For FFY16, the RTP baseline was set in September/October 2016 with the approval of the baseline 2016-2021 STIP (STIP-0). The eight projects in the RTP baseline for FFY16 are shown in **Table 2** below. All eight RTP projects from the FFY16 baseline were obligated, with no projects being cancelled or moved to other years. However, additional RTP funding was added to the Pueblo of Laguna's FFY16 RTP project in amendment three of the 2016-2021 STIP (STIP-3) due to a change in the project's termini. **Table 3** below shows the RTP projects that were obligated in FFY16 and reflects this additional funding.

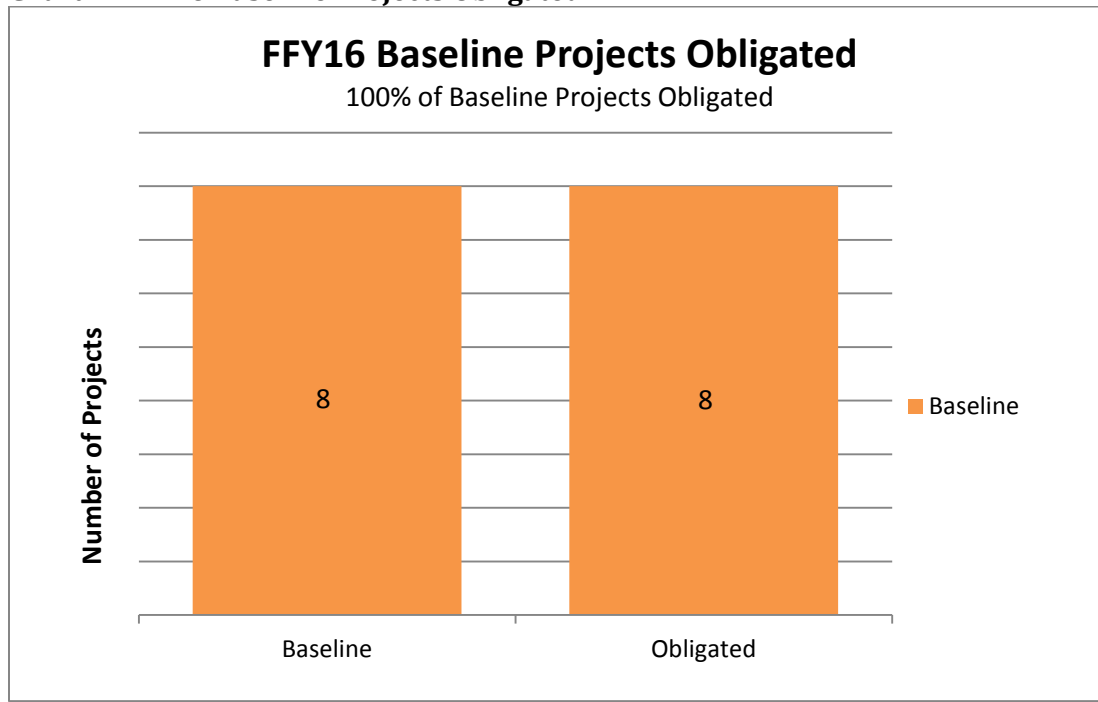
Left: Accessibility improvements to paved paths at Living Desert State Park near Carlsbad; project received RTP funding in FFY15 and was completed in July 2015.

<b>Table 2: FFY16 Baseline Program</b>					
<b>Recipient</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Total RTP Award</b>	<b>Total FFY16 Project Funds*</b>
City of Lovington	Lea	Lovington Multi-Use Trail	Design	\$140,301	\$164,209
Gila National Forest	Catron	North Zone Trail Maintenance	NA	\$98,175	\$146,560
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department	Statewide	Rio Grande Trail Master Plan and Alignment Study	NA	\$427,200	\$500,000
Pueblo of Laguna	Cibola	NM124 Multi-Use Trail	Construction	\$414, 233	\$484,823
Santa Fe National Forest	Santa Fe	Pecos Wilderness Trail Maintenance	NA	\$177,067	\$207,241
Santa Fe National Forest	Rio Arriba	Signage, Trailhead Improvements, and Supplies	NA	\$29,085	\$34,042
Town of Silver City	Grant	Continental Divide Trail Signage, Educational Materials, and Kiosk	NA	\$45,000	\$52,669
Village of Cuba	Sandoval	Saint Francis Park Trail	Design	\$42,180	\$49,368
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,373,241</b>	<b>\$1,638,912</b>
*Total project funds include federal funds, local match, local non-match and other funding sources					

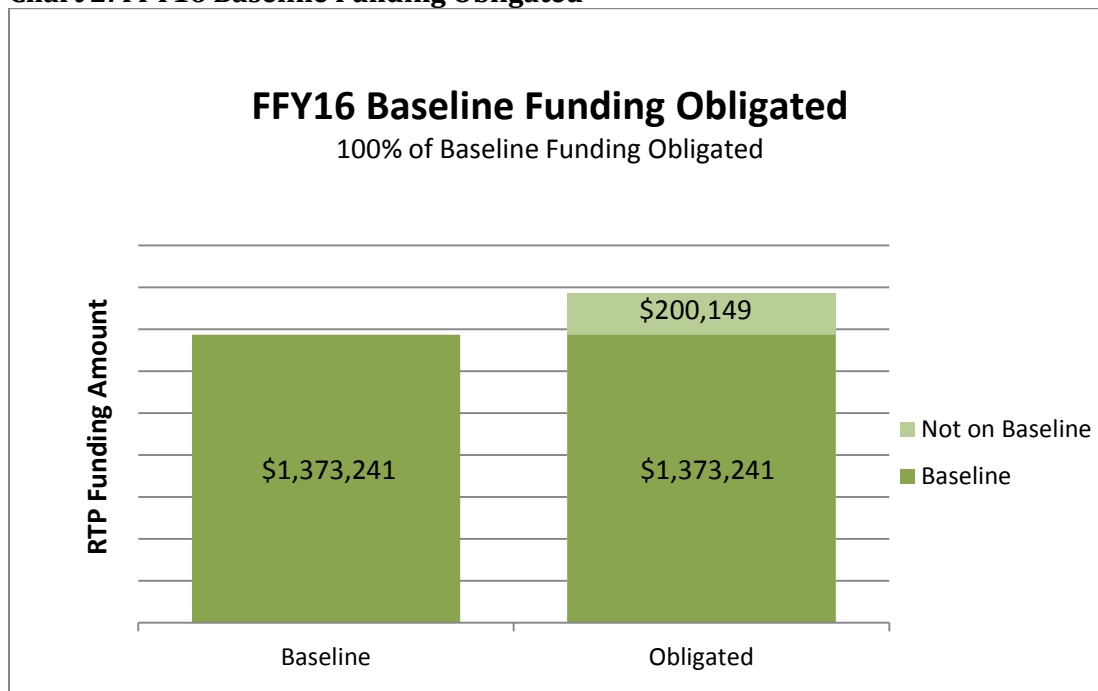
<b>Table 3: FFY16 Projects Obligated</b>					
<b>Recipient</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Total RTP Award</b>	<b>Total FFY16 Project Funds*</b>
City of Lovington	Lea	Lovington Multi-Use Trail	Design	\$140,301	\$164,209
Gila National Forest	Catron	North Zone Trail Maintenance	NA	\$98,175	\$146,560
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department	Statewide	Rio Grande Trail Master Plan and Alignment Study	NA	\$427,200	\$500,000
Pueblo of Laguna	Cibola	NM124 Multi-Use Trail	Construction	\$614,382	\$719,080
Santa Fe National Forest	Santa Fe	Pecos Wilderness Trail Maintenance	NA	\$177,067	\$207,241
Santa Fe National Forest	Rio Arriba	Signage, Trailhead Improvements, and Supplies	NA	\$29,085	\$34,042
Town of Silver City	Grant	Continental Divide Trail Signage, Educational Materials, and Kiosk	NA	\$45,000	\$52,669
Village of Cuba	Sandoval	Saint Francis Park Trail	Design	\$42,180	\$49,368
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,573,390</b>	<b>\$1,873,169</b>
*Total project funds include federal funds, local match, local non-match and other funding sources					

**Chart 1** and **Chart 2** below demonstrate the performance of the RTP in FFY16, both in terms of the number of projects successfully obligated, and the amount of RTP funding successfully obligated, respectively.

**Chart 1: FFY16 Baseline Projects Obligated**



**Chart 2: FFY16 Baseline Funding Obligated**



## Summary

During FFY16, NMDOT coordinated closely with RTP grantees and NMDOT Districts around the state to ensure that 100% of FFY16 baseline projects were obligated. The eight projects obligated in FFY16 range from designing and constructing paved, multi-use trails in municipal and tribal communities around the state to the maintenance of natural surface trails in wilderness areas managed by the Forest Service, for a total of \$1,573,390 in RTP funds.

Additionally, NMDOT developed a new, user-focused program guide for both TAP and RTP and opened the call for applications for FFY18-19 RTP funds. The Active Transportation and Recreational Programs Guide serves as a resource for agencies interested in applying for TAP and/or RTP funding in FFY18-19, as well as a reference for stakeholders and members of the public interested in learning more about these programs and how they are administered in New Mexico.



Above: Trail maintenance on the El Cerro Trail at Villanueva State Park; project received RTP funding in FFY15 and was completed in May 2015.