

Mendota Trail Awarded Grant

Mountain Heritage, Inc. and the City of Bristol, VA
team together to earn federal grant

Bristol, TN/VA (January 28, 2019)

The Mendota Trail is excited to share the announcement of a significant grant award administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). RTP is an 80-20, matching reimbursement program established for the purpose of providing and maintaining recreational trails. It is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Mountain Heritage, Inc. (MHI), a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in St. Paul, VA serves in a project management capacity for the development of the 12.5 mile recreational trail linking Bristol to Mendota. It submitted the grant application last July with Bristol, VA acting as a sponsor. This followed a supportive recommendation from the City Council in late June and an enthusiastic endorsement from community members who attended a subsequent information session related to the project.

The award entails a two-step process. Upon successful completion of all requirements in the preliminary engineering agreement, the project will be eligible for construction funding. FHWA has earmarked funds for the first phase in the amount of \$25,092; the total potential award will be \$346,678. Bristol, VA will provide in-kind engineering services in support of the project, but no cash dollars will be utilized. Distribution of the allocated funds requires a 20% match from MHI.

The grant will be used to develop a trailhead adjacent to Island Road, just inside of the Bristol, VA city limits. The area will include parking, restroom facilities, and picnic areas as well as a safe access ramp to the start of the trail. The trailhead and initial $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the trail will be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

Significant progress has occurred in developing the trail since it was acquired by Mountain Heritage in 2016. The first mile of the trail was opened on the Mendota end in 2017 and the first trestle was totally rehabilitated in 2018. In December, the property for the future trailhead was secured. MHI hopes to open trail sections leading out of Bristol later this year.

Bob Mueller, a volunteer with the Mendota Trail Project, is grateful that the trail was recognized as being worthy of receiving this award. He stated, "It is humbling that we were selected as a designated recipient. We know we were one among many other very worthy projects. The fact that we were chosen legitimizes the hard work our volunteers have dedicated to the effort and the contributions provided by our generous donors."

He added, “We are extremely grateful for the support of Bristol, VA in our application for this grant. It has been a pleasure to work with members of their knowledgeable and dedicated staff. We couldn’t have made the submission without their assistance as well as having the sponsorship of a governmental entity. The City’s willingness to provide in-kind services and their unique engineering experience with parks and recreation type facilities will be invaluable to this project.”

For more information about the Mendota Trail, please visit their website at: www.MendotaTrail.org
Volunteer help and monetary contributions in support of the trail effort are sincerely appreciated.

About Mountain Heritage, Inc.

Established in 2000, Mountain Heritage, Inc. is “Dedicated to the improvement of education, health and natural resource conservation in the Appalachian Mountains”. Beneficiaries of their leadership include the establishment of multiple miles of public recreational trails and the cleaning up of several waterways in the region. They were instrumental in the creation of the Channels Natural Area Preserve, among a long list of other projects they have completed or promoted.

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