

Economic Recovery

Investing in Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Assets Outdoor Recreation Friendly Communities



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- **WHAT:** In his FY22 Recommended Budget, the Governor proposes to dramatically expand the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grant Program administered by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. By making available \$5 million in grants available to municipalities and their community partners, the Community Grant Program will support investment in dozens of local- and regional-scale projects – spurring economic recovery following the COVID pandemic.
 - **WHY:** The VOREC Community Grant Program was created to help Vermont communities leverage their local outdoor recreation assets (natural, built, and cultural) for greater economic vitality and many other co-benefits and can be used for a variety of purposes. These grants help Vermont communities grow their local economies by focusing on outdoor recreation through the five pillars of VOREC:
 1. Grow outdoor recreation-related businesses
 2. Increase participation in outdoor recreation activities among all demographics
 3. Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources
 4. Increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and environmental quality
 5. Promote and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation

This program is popular and impactful: in 2019 and 2020 a combined total of \$300,000 was invested in nine municipalities around the state; the total requested funds was nearly ten times the amount available. And the response from VOREC Community Grant recipients has been resoundingly enthusiastic and positive.

- **WHO:** Investing in community-based outdoor recreation assets provides many benefits to Vermonters and visitors alike: thousands of miles of trails maintained each year, hundreds of stakeholders engaged, and dozens of private for- and non-profit businesses supported.
- **HOW:** Funding will be distributed through the existing public VOREC Community Grant application process.
- **FUNDING:** The Governor proposes to make available \$5,000,000 to the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the VOREC Community Grant Program.

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