**Tips for Project Sponsors**

Potential project sponsors should contact the State to find out the program requirements and criteria for project selection. A project sponsor should:

* Prepare a project development plan. What aspects need to be addressed? Identify issues and steps which are critical to the project development process.
* Develop a workable project. What are the trail needs? What can be done realistically?
* Get public support for the project. How does the project benefit the community? Are there other potential project sponsors?
* Find other funding sources. The normal Federal share is limited to 80 percent. Some State or local governments may provide some matching funds, but usually the project sponsor has to provide most or all of the match.
* Consider donations of materials and services, including volunteer labor.
* Consider how to involve youth conservation or service corps in the project.
* Develop a good project design.
* Consider the natural environment in which the project is located.
* Consider community benefits.
* Consider user needs, including use by people with disabilities.
* Consider potential problems:
  + Environmental impacts - these must be minimized and mitigated, and may require some documentation.
  + Permits - various permits may be needed prior to submitting the project proposal.
  + Possible opposition - some people may oppose a project for various reasons, including concerns about property rights, liability, safety, historic or archaeological impacts, or environmental impacts.
* Complete the project application.
* Work with the State to answer any questions about the application. Do not begin work until you receive official authorization to proceed. Work performed prior to Federal project approval cannot be reimbursed.
* After the project receives Federal approval, project sponsor(s) should initiate the project as soon as possible. States may withdraw project approval if a sponsor does not show evidence of project progress within a reasonable time frame.