

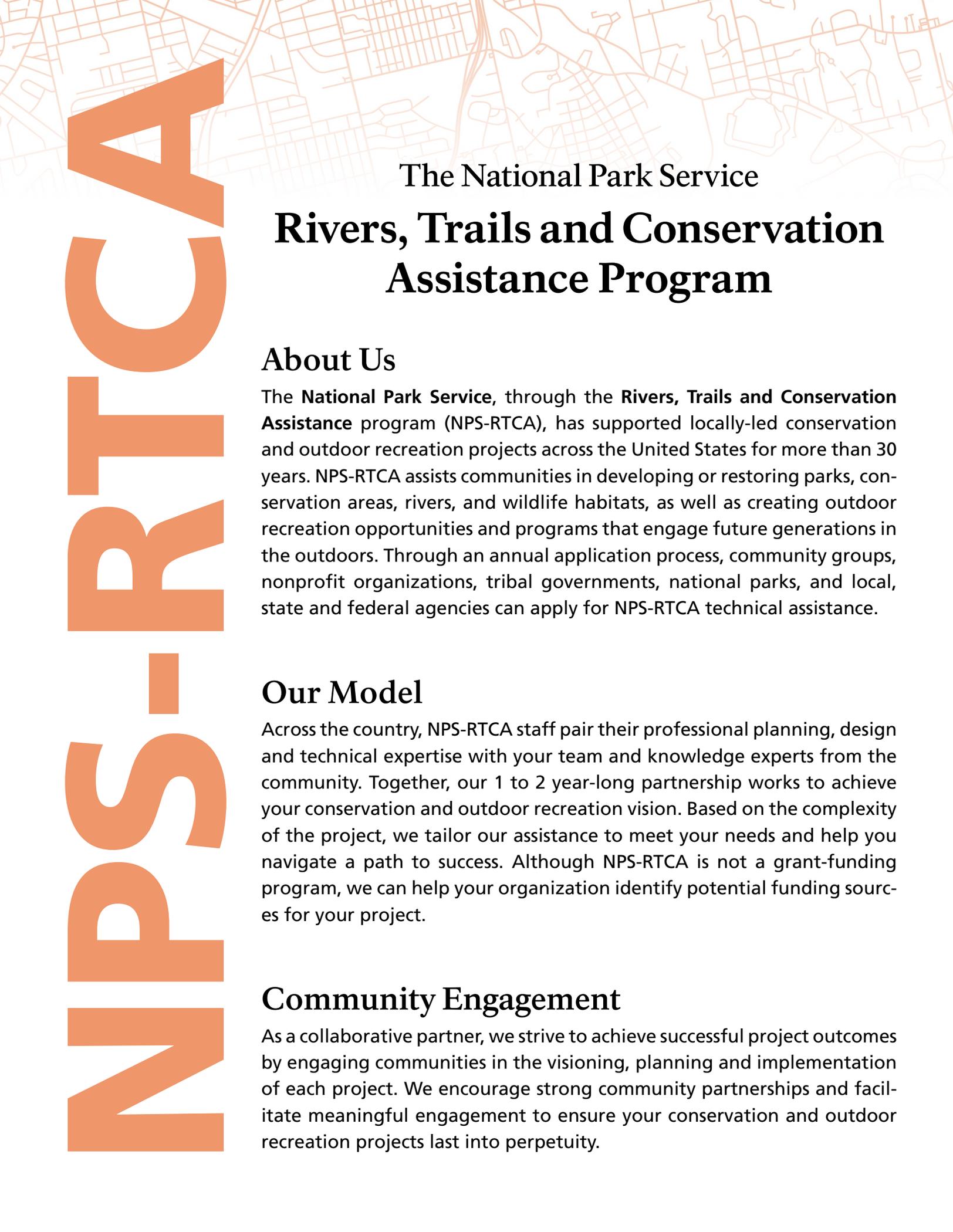


# Underutilized Spaces

Reimagining underutilized spaces for community use

The National Park Service works with local governments and nonprofits to repurpose vacant and abandoned lands as parks, community gardens and shared open spaces that help improve the quality of life of residents.





# NPS-RTCA

## The National Park Service **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program**

### **About Us**

The **National Park Service**, through the **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance** program (NPS-RTCA), has supported locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the United States for more than 30 years. NPS-RTCA assists communities in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors. Through an annual application process, community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, national parks, and local, state and federal agencies can apply for NPS-RTCA technical assistance.

### **Our Model**

Across the country, NPS-RTCA staff pair their professional planning, design and technical expertise with your team and knowledge experts from the community. Together, our 1 to 2 year-long partnership works to achieve your conservation and outdoor recreation vision. Based on the complexity of the project, we tailor our assistance to meet your needs and help you navigate a path to success. Although NPS-RTCA is not a grant-funding program, we can help your organization identify potential funding sources for your project.

### **Community Engagement**

As a collaborative partner, we strive to achieve successful project outcomes by engaging communities in the visioning, planning and implementation of each project. We encourage strong community partnerships and facilitate meaningful engagement to ensure your conservation and outdoor recreation projects last into perpetuity.

Massachusetts

## From Blighted Lands to Community Parks and Trails



Abandoned mill sites and pollution caused public disinterest which led to the degradation of the Spicket River, its waters and surrounding lands that were once part of a flourishing textile industry in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In the decades after the mills closed, the city experienced high rates of poverty, unemployment and foreclosure.

In 2000, Groundwork Lawrence, the first nonprofit that NPS-RTCA helped establish with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, facilitated a community planning effort that became the Spicket River Greenway. Today, the Spicket River Greenway consists of 3.5 miles of new and restored parks and trails that connect multiple neighborhoods, schools and community centers. Groundwork Lawrence continues to work on strategies to restore the river and create public access.

The partnership between Groundwork and the City of Lawrence resulted in neighborhood revitalization and access to outdoor recreation opportunities. The success of the Spicket River Greenway is a living testament to the power of shared vision and collaborative leadership between community partners.

Oregon

## Transforming a Neighborhood Park

From a filled-in swimming pool in the 1960s, to a revitalized park, Oregon's DC Latourette Park has been transformed into a valued community space.

In 2016, Girl Scouts of Troop 45064 hosted an event at the park to learn about how the neighborhood wanted to improve the blighted property which consisted of an asphalt area with a chain-link fence. The event led to the formation of the DC Latourette Park Core Team, who alongside the City of Oregon City and McLoughlin Neighborhood Association requested assistance from NPS-RTCA.

To further scope how the community wanted to revitalize the area, NPS-RTCA conducted online surveys, facilitated stakeholder meetings and coordinated an open house for the general public. This public input led to the creation of the DC Latourette Park Revitalization Plan which included modern play concepts like swings and slides combined with rocks, logs and wood chips to encourage children to get more in touch with the natural heritage of the area.

With the revitalization plan in hand, the community was able to rip out the asphalt and transform the area into a neighborhood resource. Today, the newly renovated park features a rain garden which helps with local flooding and has something for all ages to enjoy.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who are we?

The **National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA)** assists communities, public land managers and nonprofit organizations with conservation and outdoor recreation projects. NPS-RTCA provides professional planning, design and technical expertise to help achieve your conservation and outdoor recreation vision.

## Does NPS-RTCA provide funding?

No. NPS-RTCA is not a grant-funding program, but we can help you identify potential funding sources for your project.

## What kind of projects does NPS-RTCA support?

Our program staff support locally-led projects that develop or restore parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as create outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

## Are NPS-RTCA staff contractors?

The NPS-RTCA model is to combine the skills of our staff with those of your organization. It's a partnership – we work alongside your team and local knowledge experts to assist with the work that you are leading.

## How much time do NPS-RTCA staff spend on each project?

Typically, NPS-RTCA staff collaborate with communities for 1 to 2 years on conservation and outdoor recreation projects. Depending on the complexity of the project and our staffing capacity, the time frame may be extended.

## Who can apply for assistance from NPS-RTCA?

NPS-RTCA provides services to established community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, national parks, and local, state and federal agencies.

## How can you apply for assistance from NPS-RTCA?

NPS-RTCA support is provided when we are invited to assist you on a conservation or outdoor recreation project. We encourage you to contact us to discuss your project before applying. The application is available on our website: [www.nps.gov/RTCA](http://www.nps.gov/RTCA)

 [nps.gov/RTCA](http://nps.gov/RTCA)

 [NPS\\_RTCA@nps.gov](mailto:NPS_RTCA@nps.gov)

 [facebook.com/RTCANPS](https://facebook.com/RTCANPS)

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