



November 3, 2023

**Narrative Information Sheet**

1. Applicant Information: Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority  
116 N. Heber Street  
Beckley, WV 25801
2. Funding Requested:
  - a. Grant Type: Single Site Cleanup
  - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$2,000,000
3. Location:
  - a. City: Whitesville (closest incorporated community)
  - b. County: Raleigh
  - c. State: West Virginia
4. Property Information: Clear Fork Rail Trail  
Rt. 1 Clear Fork Road  
Whitesville, WV 25209
5. Contacts:
  - a. Project Director: Molly Williams  
304-254-8371  
Mwilliams@raleighcounty.com
  - b. Chief Executive: Molly Williams  
304-254-8371  
mwilliams@raleighcounty.com
6. Population: Whitesville: 351                      Raleigh County: 73,771
7. Other Factors Checklist:

## Other Factors Checklist

Clear Fork Rail Trail, Raleigh County, WV	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The proposed brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	1
Secured firm leveraging commitment ties directly to the project and will facilitate completion of the project/reuse; secured resource is identified in the Narrative and substantiated in the attached documentation.	
The proposed site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the proposed site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	1
The proposed site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the proposed site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures	
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	

Releasing Copies of Applications: Not Applicable

## PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### A. Target Area and Brownfields

#### i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area

The target area lies in the heart of the Appalachian region, nestled within the rolling hills of south-central West Virginia, in Raleigh County. As with most communities in southern West Virginia, this region's story is tightly bound to the ebb and flow of the coal industry. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Raleigh County was teeming with miners and their families. Coal mines dotted the landscape, and the promise of steady work and a better life drew people from across the country to this rugged region. Towns like Beckley, Lester, and Whitesville sprung up, each with its own unique character but all bound by the coal that ran through their veins.

Raleigh County thrived as a coal-producing powerhouse for decades. Its coal helped fuel the industrial revolution and powered the nation's growth. The county's towns and cities prospered as generations of miners descended into the earth, digging deep to extract the precious black gold. It was a tough and often dangerous way of life, but it was a way to put food on the table and send children to school.

However, as the years rolled on, the signs of decline in Raleigh County became increasingly evident. The coal industry faces challenges from all sides. Environmental concerns led to stricter regulations, impacting mining operations. The mechanization of mining further reduced the need for human labor. As coal seams have been exhausted, the easy-to-access coal became scarcer, and mines were forced to dig deeper and deeper, increasing production costs. Additionally, competition from alternative energy sources like natural gas and a shift toward cleaner, more sustainable energy solutions has further eroded the demand for coal.

Since the turn of the 21st century, Raleigh County has faced a crisis. Mines that once employed thousands have shut down, leaving communities in despair. Families who had relied on coal for generations face unemployment, economic hardship, and a sense of loss that runs deep in their heritage. The landscape is dominated by abandoned mine land, unused railroad tracks, and crumbling infrastructure that poses economic burdens and health and environmental risks to local communities.

While coal mining remains a prominent industry in Raleigh County, the county has been faced with the challenge of reinventing itself. Raleigh County strives to adapt and diversify its economy to find new sources of prosperity. Recreation is one of the pillars upon which the new economy is being constructed. While the region has enjoyed significant success, much of Raleigh County still struggles to pivot from the resource extraction economy. Especially in its more rural corners, local residents face deep poverty, poor health outcomes, and dwindling job prospects. Connecting these areas to the growing tourism economy will be critical for their future success.

#### ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

The specific site to be addressed is a 9.73-mile stretch of a former railroad bed located in northwestern Raleigh County, on the Boone County border next to the Town of Whitesville (population 351). This former rail corridor, situated along Clear Fork Creek and within a federally designated flood plain, was used exclusively to transport coal from nearby mine sites to market. The abandoned rail corridor transversus through multiple mine-scarred lands associated with previous underground and surface mining operations.

This 9.73-mile segment is referred to as Phase 2 of the Clear Fork Rail Trail Project. Phase 1 of the project is currently underway, with 4.87 miles of rail trail under construction. When completed, this project will create nearly 15 miles of recreational trail through the Clear Fork Valley. Environmental site assessment work has

been conducted along the entire corridor. Environmental concerns include heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons associated primarily with creosote from railroad ties, and from herbicides used to kill unwanted weeds and vegetive growth along the rail corridor.

## **B. Revitalization of the Target Area**

### i. Overall Plan for Revitalization

The establishment of a multi-use, non-motorized rail trail will complement efforts of the nearby New River Gorge National Park and Preserve to attract visitors to southern West Virginia. The Clear Fork Rail Trail will provide additional recreation opportunities and serve as an interpretive trail showcasing the prolific coal mining history of the area. Combined with the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve and the regional Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, the largest motorized trail system in the eastern U.S., the Clear Fork Rail Trail has the potential to attract additional tourism interest to the local economy. As stated above, the proposed project will result in approximately fifteen miles of non-motorized trail and appurtenances available for public access.

In the late 1990s, Raleigh County compiled a Comprehensive Plan outlining tourism and outdoor recreation development as a critical industry for the county's future growth. The vision, created over twenty-five years ago, is still a primary focus of the county. Development of parks and green spaces for local residents and visitor use were of high importance, with emphasis on the "enhancement of any and all recreational potentials within the County" (Raleigh County Comprehensive Plan, 1997). This emphasis on tourism has been a boon to the county, with the development of the Tamarack Marketplace, a center of West Virginia arts and culture, and the nearby Summit Bechtel National Scout Reserve, home of the Boy Scout Jamboree which draws tens of thousands of visitors to Raleigh County every few years. The Clear Fork Rail Trail will build upon the success of previous growth and bring development to this overlooked part of the county.

### ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Overall Plan for Revitalization

Since the designation of the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, America's newest national park, visitors to the Raleigh-Fayette County area have exploded in number. According to the Charleston Gazette-Mail, West Virginia's largest newspaper, visitors to the park increased from 9,000 in February of 2020 to 80,000 just a year later. Visitors experiencing the 70,000-acre National Park along fifty-three miles of the New River can enjoy activities including white water rafting, fishing, hiking, climbing, biking, and camping. Coupled with numerous State Parks in the region and multiuse trails throughout southern West Virginia, the area is positioning to be a tourism magnet. New developments will be accompanied by new lodging and food service businesses, as well as expansion of safe public water and other services. Infrastructure built around tourism growth benefits both visitors and residents and will attract new workers and their families to the area.

In particular, the Clear Fork Rail Trail will draw cycling enthusiasts. The National Coal Heritage Authority noted in their West Virginia Report that sixty million Americans over 18 years of age bicycle each year. Bicycling contributes \$133 billion to the U.S. economy, supports 1.1 million jobs a year, and produces \$46.9 billion in bicycling trip related sales. Attracting cyclists will bring high-value business to rural Raleigh County and provide jobs for the underemployed and trainable workforce.

Furthermore, cleanup efforts will contribute to climate mitigation strategies in several ways. First, the Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority will be purchasing capping materials from local sources, which will not only benefit the economy but also minimize the fuel consumption needed to transport materials to the site.

Additionally, revegetation will occur as needed for soil erosion control with a priority for native species. Cleaning up the rail corridor will create a cleaner and safer ecosystem for local wildlife and will create a transportation alternative to driving for residents, potentially reducing gas expenditures and fuel consumption. Each of these steps are outlined in EPA’s “Climate Smart Brownfields Manual” for supporting climate resiliency through brownfield redevelopment. Finally, through the mitigation of environmental contaminants and creation of new recreational space, this project will have a significant positive impact on public health outcomes, facilitating healthier lifestyles overall.

Once the railbed is capped, pollutants will no longer be able to be mobilized and washed into the local stream. Stormwater management measures will employ engineered drainage swales that intercept and move runoff away from the cap and allow it to percolate through uncontaminated soils. Consequently, sediments and nutrients will be captured and assimilated by a variety of native plants, functioning similarly as a natural system. Additionally, by preserving open green space, this linear strip of conservation will ensure that a large area of the watershed remains intact and hydrologically connected, thus affording a significant measure of environmental resiliency.

### C. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

#### i. Resources needed for Site Reuse

Funding for Phase I of the Clear Fork Rail Trail (4.87 miles) has already been secured with the bulk of the cost being paid for by a WV Department of Environmental Protection Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization Grant totaling \$2.25 million. Additional support includes funding from the Raleigh County Commission and the National Coal Heritage Authority for a grand total of \$2,539,360.

Phase II of the project is approximately 9.73 miles and stretches from the Ameagle community to McDowell Hollow in the Clear Creek Crossing community. This phase is expected to cost more than \$14 million. Funding for Phase II will be leveraged from multiple sources including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the WV Department of Environmental Protection Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization program.

#### ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

The project does not require extensive infrastructure component improvements. The local road network is in good condition for the expected increase in traffic to the area. Water, three-phase electrical service, and natural gas are accessible throughout the area. Efforts by the State are currently underway for this rural region to have access to broadband internet service and by Raleigh County to extend sewer collection. The rail trail project includes renovation of two existing trestle structures to accommodate foot and bicycle traffic along the trail.

## 2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### A. Community Need

#### i. The Community’s Need for Funding

The future Clear Fork Rail Trail is located in the northwestern corner of Raleigh County, in census block groups 12003 and 12004. This is a very rural area, comprised primarily of small, unincorporated villages which were formed as coal camps during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The decline of the coal industry has hollowed out these communities, causing deep poverty, poor health outcomes, and population decline. From 2013 to 2021, this area experienced a 30% population loss. Among residents, **39% live in poverty**, with a per capita income of just

\$16,660. American Communities Survey data estimates that the Clear Fork area has just a **37% labor force participation rate** – compared to 55% statewide – due largely to the lack of job opportunities and the high incidence of disabilities making residents unable to work.

Census Tract 12 has been recognized by several federal agencies for its vulnerabilities. It is considered a distressed area within a vulnerable county by the Appalachian Regional Commission and one of the top priority coal-impacted regions in the United States by the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities. Despite their outsized role in producing energy for the rest of the country, these small communities have seen very little investment over their histories, and they lack the resources to address their brownfield-related challenges.

## ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

### ***(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations***

The most prominent sensitive population in the Clear Fork area is disabled people. Block Groups 12003 and 12004 are in the **99<sup>th</sup> percentile nationwide for disability prevalence**, with *over 51% of residents having at least one disability*, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s PLACES local health database. Of these, the most common type of disability in the area is mobility disabilities, such as difficulty walking or using fine motor skills. These disabilities impact more than 28% of adults in census tract 12.

Disability accounts for a significant portion of the area’s low labor force participation rate and has major impacts on individuals’ ability to pursue long-term employment and achieve economic stability. American Communities Survey data indicates that among individuals without disabilities, 33% hold full-time, year-round positions. Conversely, only 3% of individuals with disabilities hold the same. Additionally, *80% of people with a disability did not work at all in the past 12 months* – this accounts for 566 residents, or 40% of the local population. Poverty often coincides with disability, causing compounding vulnerabilities for these residents. Given the need for healthy lifestyle options outlined below, a rail trail accessible to those with limited mobility will be a critical public health resource in the Clear Fork area.

### ***(2) Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions***

EJ Screen health indicators show concerning health outcomes for the population in the Clear Fork area. These block groups score in the **96<sup>th</sup> percentile for asthma, 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for low life expectancy, and 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for heart disease**. These data persist despite relatively good healthcare access, including two hospitals in Raleigh County and a below-national percentage of uninsured individuals. Poor health outcomes are likely attributable to other factors: the high level of poverty, exposure to environmental pollution, and unhealthy lifestyles. Beckley ARH Hospital has identified *mental health, obesity, and healthy lifestyles* as three of the top four priority needs in its 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, highlighting the threat that lack of access to healthy recreational opportunities pose to public health. The abandoned railroad tracks also pose a major threat, as many carcinogens, including heavy metals, asbestos, PAHs, and coal ash are commonly found near railroads. Cleaning up the tracks to create a rail trail will not only alleviate the environmental health hazards but create a safe, low-cost, and convenient option for outdoor recreation, which will be impactful for all three of Beckley ARH’s identified priorities.

### ***(3) Environmental Justice***

i. Identification of Environmental Justice Issues – The Clear Fork area is the very definition of an environmental sacrifice zone. Raleigh County has long been at the epicenter of coal production in West Virginia: it is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest coal-producing county in the state overall, with the highest tonnage of surface mined coal and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest number of coal jobs in the entire state. This level of coal production comes with more than its fair share of disasters, including the 2010 Upper Big Branch mine explosion in Montcoal – also in Census Tract 12 – which *killed 29 miners*.

Even apart from such headline events as the 2010 explosion, local residents constantly live with environmental injustices which threaten their health and wellbeing. According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), tract 12 is **disadvantaged** in the areas of *climate change, energy, health, legacy pollution, and transportation*. EPA’s EJ Screen Supplemental Demographic Index – a composite score of populations which are low-income, unemployed, have less than high school education, limited English speaking, and low life expectancy – places this area in the **90<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally for vulnerable populations**. Further EJ Screen supplemental indices show sensitivity in the areas of superfund proximity, the Air Toxics Respiratory Health Index, and lead paint. Census Tract 12 also scores in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for wastewater discharge. The Clear Fork area has long provided coal to power the nation, but it has been left devastated by the extraction of its health and natural resources.

ii. Advancing Environmental Justice – It will take much more than a rail trail to bring environmental justice to Clear Fork, but the proposed project is a step in the right direction. Cleaning up the abandoned railroad tracks will alleviate a major health risk which exposes residents to carcinogens and other toxins, potentially reducing the risk of cancer. By repurposing the land into a rail trail, residents will have a low-cost and accessible outdoor recreational resource to promote physical activity. This project will result in an overall healthier environment for local residents. Proximity to the New River Gorge National Park will also allow the trail to stimulate economic growth. The trail is projected to attract 2,000 new visitors per year, allowing the area to tap into the ecotourism industry, which is currently booming in the region, and bringing new financial investment to rural Raleigh County.

**B. Community Engagement**

i. Project Involvement; & ii. Project Roles

<b>Project Partner</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Project Responsibility</b>
Whitesville Volunteer Fire Department	Matt Lively, Chief (304) 854-1197 <a href="mailto:mattlively@whitesvillefire.com">mattlively@whitesvillefire.com</a>	Safety input, community engagement
Colcord Presbyterian Church	Gary Anderson, Assistant Pastor (304) 854-0411	Community engagement, local meeting space
Mountain State Trail Alliance	Andrew Davis <a href="mailto:adavis@nrgrda.org">adavis@nrgrda.org</a>	Site reuse input
Coal River Group	Bill Currey, Chairman [REDACTED]	Environmental input, site reuse input, community engagement
WV Brownfields Assistance Center	George Carico, Director (304) 696-5456	Technical assistance, community engagement

iii. Incorporating Community Input

Due to the small and dispersed population of the Clear Fork area, county officials will use several methods to communicate with local residents. Public notices of meetings and updates will be published in the local newspaper, the Register-Herald, online at the Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority website, and through appropriate county-run social media channels. Project updates will be given quarterly at the Parks and Recreation Board Meeting, which will include virtual options and publicly available agendas and minutes published for residents who cannot attend in-person. Local community members will be invited to ask questions and provide feedback at all meetings. If an immediate response is not possible, follow-up will occur at the next public meeting.

Officials will also rely on the existing community engagement efforts of local organizations such as the Whitesville Volunteer Fire Department and Colcord Presbyterian Church to connect with the places community Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority: Clear Fork Rail Trail II Narrative

members already gather. Additional meetings will be held as needed at the fire station or in the Church’s fellowship hall and will also include virtual options. Residents are also invited to become involved in the rail trail project by joining the volunteer list to participate in cleanup and development of the trail once capping has been completed. Use of National Council of the Boy Scouts of America from the local Boy Scouts Summit Bechtel Reserve, local trail groups, local university students, school groups, and AmeriCorps Vista volunteers will be encouraged.

**3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATE, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

**A. Proposed Cleanup Plan**

The cleanup plan includes capping the former rail corridor with materials suitable for future use as a recreational walking trail while ensuring the cover is adequate to prevent exposure from residual subsurface soil contamination. This plan also coincides with requirements for final reporting and obtaining a Certificate-of-Completion in the WVDEP’s Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP). Capping of the former rail corridor has been approved by the WVDEP as an allowable method of restricting exposure of remaining residual contaminants in corridor soils to humans. The site has already been entered into the VRP program and planned remediation activities will complete VRP requirements. The project is projected to be conducted over a 3-year period. Requested funds will be utilized to cover as much of the 9.73-mile section of the rail corridor as possible.

Labor, equipment, and material costs with this application are solely for the purpose of preparing the rail corridor for capping, and actual capping costs. Ancillary costs for rail trail development (signage, engineering design, culvert placement for storm water management, etc.) are not included in this budget estimate and will be paid for using separate funding sources.

**B. Description of Tasks / Activities and Outputs**

Tasks to be conducted include the following details:

<b>Task / Activity 1: Project Management</b>	
i. <b>Project Implementation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EPA Funded Tasks / Activities:</b> Project management, cooperative agreement completion, and all required reporting will be conducted by Raleigh County Parks &amp; Recreation Authority (RCPRA) staff, assisted by WV Region 1 Planning &amp; Development Council (Region 1 PDC). A WV Licensed Remediation Specialist (LRS), required for WV properties entering the VRP, will be hired through a competitive bid and State-approved process to oversee project activities. The LRS hired will be experienced in EPA Brownfields cleanup projects. This task also includes finalization of the Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and WVDEP involvement for VRP guidance and approvals. An environmental consultant will be hired to complete the environmental assessment update, review, and reporting, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) will be conducted as site activities progress. One person designated by RCPRA will attend at least two brownfields conference events. Public meetings will be held throughout the 3-year project timeframe on a quarterly basis (every 3 months) to update the public on project efforts, discuss any issues or concerns, and provide a means for the public to provide project input.</li> <li>• <b>Non-EPA Grant Resources Needed to Carry Out Tasks / Activities:</b> In the event administrative costs exceed the budgeted amount, RCPRA will provide funding from its operating resources or other funding sources for personnel to complete any work related to administrative and meeting activities.</li> </ul>



ii. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Year 1, Month 1 through Year 3, Month 36
iii. <b>Task / Activity Lead:</b> Molly Williams, RCPRA (with support from Region 1 PDC and LRS as needed)
iv. <b>Outputs:</b> Procure LRS, 8 quarterly reports, 8 financial status reports, 8 quarterly meetings, finalized ABCA, attend 2 brownfields conferences. Environmental consultant will complete environmental assessment, review, and reporting.
<b>Task / Activity 2: Remediation Activities</b>
i. <b>Project Implementation:</b> The LRS will oversee completion of required VRP reports, including a Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP). Field Activities will include capping the former rail corridor with suitable materials approved by WVDEP, field supervision and project documentation under direction of the LRS. Two capping options have been tentatively approved. Option 1 includes appropriate base materials with a fine-grained gravel surface layer; Option 2 includes a coarse gravel base layer with an asphalt surface layer. The final option will be determined at the time of project startup, based on total costs (equipment costs, material costs, transport costs, placement costs). The option that provides the most rail corridor coverage for the lowest cost will be selected.
ii. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Year 1, Month 4 through Year 2, Month 6
iii. <b>Task / Activity Leads:</b> LRS
iv. <b>Outputs:</b> 1 VRP Site Assessment Report, 1 Risk Assessment Report.
<b>Task / Activity 3: VRP Completion</b>
i. <b>Project Implementation:</b> The LRS will Submit a VRP final report and Certificate of Completion details to WVDEP for approval, provide report revisions if required) and associated closeout project information.
ii. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Year 2 / Month 6 through Year 2 / Month 12
iii. <b>Task / Activity Leads:</b> LRS, with support from RCPRA
iv. <b>Outputs:</b> VRP-required Land Use Covenant document, Final VRP Report, VRP Certificate of Completion, Remediation of a section of an abandoned rail corridor for rail trail use.

### C. Cost Estimates

The table and information below provides cost estimates and details of each task / activity to be conducted. Cost estimates have been compiled using information from experienced LRS's and WVDEP personnel, and after reviewing the "EPA Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance Guidelines." More than 97% of requested costs are for construction activities (capping of the rail corridor).

Budget Categories		1-Project Management	2-Remediation Activities	3-VRP Completion	Total
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$32,640			\$32,640
	Fringe Benefits				
	Travel	\$2,500			\$2,500
	Equipment				
	Supplies				
	Contractual	\$55,500	\$30,000	\$19,500	\$105,000
	Construction		\$1,849,360		\$1,849,360
	Other			\$10,500	\$10,500
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>		<b>\$90,640</b>	<b>\$1,879,360</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>

Indirect Costs				
<b>Total Budget</b>	\$90,640	\$1,879,360	\$30,000	\$2,000,000

Travel (1 travel to 2 Brownfields Conference Events)

**TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT:**

Personnel Costs: 16 hours per month, 24 months, 384 hours total at \$85.00/hr. = **\$32,640**

RCpra personnel will be responsible for project supervision, quarterly reporting, and all financial reporting required (and will be assisted by WV Region 1 PDC)

Travel Costs: Project representative attending 2 Brownfields Conference event (2 events, \$1,250 average cost per event) = **\$2,500**

Construction: LRS labor for finalization of ABCA document and ACRES updates (12 hours), public meeting involvement, 3 hours per meeting, at \$150 per hour, 70 hours, = **\$10,500**. Environmental consultant will complete environmental assessment, review, and reporting, at \$150 per hour, 300 hours, = **\$45,000**

**TOTAL TASK 1 = \$90,640**

**TASK 2: REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES:**

Construction Costs: LRS labor to complete RAWP, field supervision, 200 hours total at \$150.00/hr. = **\$30,000**; Capping of rail corridor costs (includes site preparation equipment and labor costs, borrow material costs for leveling and minor repairs of corridor surface, base aggregate materials cost, final surface materials cost, base and final material placement costs, base and final material transport costs), **\$1,849,360**.

**TOTAL TASK 2 = \$1,879,360**

(Note: Base materials, final surface materials and associated transport and placement costs will be determined after cost comparisons at time of project scheduling.)

**TASK 3: VRP COMPLETION:**

Construction Costs: Land Use Covenant Agreement, Final Vrp Report and Certificate of Completion, LRS Report Labor, 130 hours at \$150 per hour, = **\$19,500**

Other: WVDEP costs for Vrp-related report reviews/approvals, Land Use Covenant reviews/approval, and Certificate-of-Completion reviews/approvals, 60 hours at \$175/hour, = **\$10,500**

**TOTAL TASK 3 = \$30,000**

**D. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results**

RCpra will include an agenda item at each quarterly public meeting to review project progress and take corrective actions when necessary to ensure the project is completed and brownfields funding expended within the projected 2-year project timeframe. Quarterly meetings, utilizing both virtual and in-person options, will include reviewing community priorities and addressing any community concerns. Quarterly Reports, MBE/DBE and financial reporting will be submitted in a timely manner to EPA throughout the project timeframe, detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project. Site information will be updated as field activities progress in the ACRES database. Outputs to be tracked include the number of public meetings conducted, number of required Vrp reports completed, and site cleanup completion. Outcomes to be tracked include level of community participation (number of attendees, response and interaction levels, etc.), acreage/linear feet of Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority: Clear Fork Rail Trail II Narrative

land remediated for reuse, redevelopment and related project funding leveraged, and tracking of leveraged funds.

#### **4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

##### **a. Programmatic Capability**

##### **i. Organizational Structure, ii. Description of Key Staff**

The Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority (RCPRA) was created by the Raleigh County Commission on March 11, 1982, to establish, operate, and manage recreational facilities for the benefit of the citizens of Raleigh County. The Raleigh County Recreation Authority maintains a skilled and experienced management team. The management team oversees all RCPRA activities, ensures compliance with local, state, and federal guidelines, develops, and manages the organization's annual budget and financial resources, and works to ensure the RCPRA maintains the functional and operational capacities to meet the ever-growing recreational needs of the area. Currently the Raleigh County Recreation Authority manages six parks ranging in size from 2,300 to ten acres composed of forest, lakes, and fields.

The Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority staff consisting of a total of six permanent, full-time employees and approximately seventy seasonal employees led by Executive Director Molly Williams and overseen by its Board that meets monthly. Ms. Williams, the certifying officer for this project, has been Executive Director for five years and has over fifteen years in recreational tourism management and holds a Masters in Parks and Resource Management from Slippery Rock University, a BS Degree in Biology and minor in Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh, a Leadership Beckley Graduate, and National Recreation and Parks Association Directors School Graduate.

Ms. Williams will be assisted on the project by the local Region I Planning and Development Council (PDC) to administer funds, manage the project, maintain project records, ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, and coordinate with project team members and funders for a timely completion of projects to the greatest extent possible. Mr. Eric Combs, Project Manager/GIS Specialist of Region I PDC will be the main point of contact for this project and oversee all project activities. Mr. Combs has approximately sixteen years of experience in infrastructure project management and has a BS in Biology and a BA in Geography with Emphasis in Cartography and Geographic Information Systems from Concord University. Presently, Mr. Combs manages fifty-four multi-year infrastructure projects from planning through construction stages, secured and manages approximately 72.5 million grant and 19.9 million in loan dollars to date, works with over twenty federal, state, and local funding agencies with multiple funding programs, serving twenty-four units of local government. Mr. Combs will be assisted by Mrs. Lori Shrewsbury Financial Manager, Mr. Tyler Myers Financial Assistant, and Mrs. Kim Odle Administrative Assistant. This team has the experience needed to complete the project within the 3-year timeframe.

##### **iii. Acquiring Additional Resources**

Additional resources are not anticipated for this project. Should the need to contract additional necessary expertise arise, RCPRA will contract such professionals via standard procurement procedures that meet all state and federal guidelines, including the Competitive Procurement Standards 40 CFR Part 31.36, 2 CFR 200, and WV Code 5G. Support from the WV Brownfields Assistance Center is also available if needed.

**b. Past Performance and Accomplishments**

ii. Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority has not received an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant or received other federal assistance agreements. Region I PDC, assisting and administering this grant, has managed numerous federal, state, and local grant funds including Clear Fork Rail Trail Phase I Project via the Raleigh County Commission. The Clear Fork Rail Trail Phase I Project is currently in the last quarter of construction and was funded by a West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization Grant of \$2,250,000, a National Coal Heritage Grant of \$25,000, and a Raleigh County Commission contribution of \$264,360.

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

**Region I Planning & Development Council: Previous Grant Management Experience Samples**

Date of Award	Awarding Agency	Amount	Accomplishments	Specific Outputs or Outcomes
2014	Appalachian Regional Commission	\$1,578,112	Construction of Sewer Project No. 2011S-1303, WV-17702	Expansion of sewer lines (5,000 feet) and replacement of wastewater treatment plant serving 87 customers in Summers County
2017	WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC)	\$736,250 Grant, \$2,038,206 Loan	Construction of Water Project No. 2013W-1432	Expansion of drinking waterlines (75,900 feet) serving 143 customers in Mercer County
2018	WV Department of Environmental Protection Abandoned Mine Lands & Reclamation	\$1,277,410	Construction of Water Line Project No. 2016W-1667 AMLR EY18	Expansion of drinking waterlines (45,380 feet) serving 71 customers in Wyoming County

Additionally, Region I PDC manages projects valuing a total of over \$395,677,663 from 2020-2023.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

Region I Planning and Development Council has met all requirements and conditions of the grant funding described above for its communities, including constant and open communication with the granting agencies project managers, completing the projects according to the work plans and schedules, and achieving and reporting the expected results, and submitting all required documents in a timely manner.

## Threshold Criteria for Cleanup Grants

1. Applicant Eligibility – The Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority (RCPRA) is an agency of the government of Raleigh County, West Virginia, under the direction of the Raleigh County Commission. This designation makes RCPRA eligible for federal funding.
2. Previously Awarded Cleanup Grants – RCPRA affirms that the site has not had a previously awarded EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant.
3. Expenditure of Existing Multipurpose Grant Funds – Not applicable; RCPRA affirms it does not have an open EPA Brownfields grant.
4. Site Ownership – RCPRA took ownership of the property from CSX Transportation, Inc. on June 7, 2022.
5. Basic Site Information:
  - Site Name: Clear Fork Rail Trail
  - Site Address: Raleigh County/Boone County Line, Beginning at Railroad Valuation Station 574+00 and Ending at Railroad Valuation Station 444+50 (Phase I & II)  
General Phase II Start 37.955206, -81.46451, and end at 37.915144, -81.350015  
USGS 7.5-Minute Topographic Quadrangles: Whitesville, Dorothy, Pax
  - Tax Parcel: 41-02-0002-0060-0000
6. Status and History of Contamination at the Site – The 9.73 miles that comprise Phase II of the 15-mile Clear Fork Rail Trail were used as a railroad bed by CSX Transportation, Inc. The line primarily hauled coal and related materials into and out of Raleigh County, historically one of the largest coal producing counties in the state of West Virginia. The downturn of the coal industry saw the line closed and the property has remained unutilized since then. Contaminants of concern include arsenic heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [Benzo(a)anthracene, Benzo(a)pyrene, Benzo(b)fluoranthene, Dibenz(a,h)anthracene, and Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene] associated with creosote and herbicides used for railroad maintenance. These contaminants were found at various locations and at various concentrations along the former rail corridor.
7. Brownfield Site Definition – RCPRA affirms that “the site is not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List; is not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and is not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government.”

8. Environmental Assessment – Phase II Environmental Assessments and associated activities have been completed on the entire rail corridor. A Phase II ESA was completed in January of 2020. The VRP Work Plan was completed in August of 2020, and the VRP-required Health & Ecological Risk Assessment and Remedial Action Work Plan were completed and approved in August of 2023.
9. Site Characterization – section b applies –Attached is a letter from our West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection affirming the site has been enrolled in the State VRP.
10. Enforcement or Other Actions – There are no known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement or other actions related to the site.
11. Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination – RCPRA affirms that the site does not need a Property-Specific Determination.
12. Threshold Criteria Related to CERCLA /Petroleum Liability; Hazardous Substance Sites – RCPRA took sole ownership of the property on June 7, 2022, after completion of All Appropriate Inquiries, occurring within 180 days prior to property transfer. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was compiled by Cardno (now Stantec) on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, following ASTM E1527-21 guidelines. These actions qualify RCPRA for “**Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser Liability Protection,**” and qualify the site for use of EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant funds. RCPRA affirms that all contamination occurred prior to taking control of the site, and it is not affiliated with those responsible for contamination or otherwise liable for contamination of the property. There are no known ongoing releases of hazardous substances on the site. RCPRA confirms its commitment to: comply with any land use restrictions and not impede the effectiveness or integrity of any institutional controls; assist and cooperate with those performing the cleanup and provide access to the property; comply with all information requests and administrative subpoenas that have or may be issued in connection with the property; and provide all legally required notices.
13. Cleanup Authority and Oversight Structure – The Clear Fork Rail Trail property has been entered into the State VRP program to ensure the cleanup meets the appropriate standard for human health and the environment with oversight from a WV certified Licensed Remediation Specialist (LRS). All site remediation activities will occur within the property boundaries and will not affect any adjacent or neighboring properties.
14. Community Notification – A public notice was placed in the local newspaper (*The Register-Herald*) on October 5, 2023, and October 12, 2023. A copy of the ad is provided with this application and included required information on plans to submit an

EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant. A draft application narrative and draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) were made available (ABCA included with this application submittal). A public meeting to discuss this application was held on October 17, 2023. A sign-in sheet was provided at this meeting for all persons attending (publicly and via virtual Zoom Video Conference Call). No comments or questions were received from the public.

15. Contractors and Named Subrecipients – RCPRRA procurement of the contracts for Clear Fork Rail Trail Phase II is to be conducted in accordance with Chapter 5G, Article 1: Procurement of Architect-Engineer Services of the West Virginia State Code. This process is also to follow compliance with the fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500. Contractors have not been hired at this time.



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west virginia department of environmental protection

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Office of Environmental Remediation  
601 57th Street SE  
Charleston, WV 25304  
Phone: 304-926-0499

Harold D. Ward, Cabinet Secretary  
dep.wv.gov

November 2, 2023

Ms. Molly Williams, Executive Director  
Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority  
116 N. Heber Street  
Beckley, WV 25801

RE: State Environmental Authority Acknowledgement Letter  
FY24 U.S. EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant Application  
EPA-I-OLEM-OBLR-23-15

Dear Ms. Williams,

Thank you for your continued efforts to further enhance the state's environment, economy, and quality of life by applying for an FY24 U.S. EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant. The WVDEP acknowledges that the Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority plans to conduct cleanup of the Clear Fork Rail Trail brownfield site located in Raleigh County, WV.

The WVDEP affirms that the Clear Fork Rail Trail:

- i. Is eligible to be enrolled in the WVDEP Voluntary Remediation Program;
- ii. Is currently enrolled in the WVDEP Voluntary Remediation Program; and,
- iii. Has a sufficient level of site characterization from the environmental site assessments performed to date for the remediation work to begin on the site. Note that remediation work can begin on sites that have enrolled in WVDEP's Voluntary Remediation Program at any time provided that WVDEP is notified in writing.

This grant will provide vital funding to ensure cleanup of the Clear Fork Rail Trail project. The past site use was a former CSX railroad, and the site has various contaminants, including heavy metals and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons in the surface and near-surface rail corridor soils. By cleaning up the property, the Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority can redevelop the site and expand the recreation space for Raleigh County.

Additionally, should assessment needs arise in the future, funding may be available through WVDEP's current CWAGST Brownfields Assessment Grant to fund the additional site characterization. Also, should the site receive the Brownfields Cleanup Grant and if all funding is expended but additional remediation remains, funding may be available through WVDEP's Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant to fund the additional remediation.



As you prepare your application for this funding, the WVDEP Office of Environmental Remediation is in full support of your efforts. We are committed to assist you throughout the remediation process at the Clear Fork Rail Trail site and look forward to future redevelopment.

Should you have any questions or needs, please do not hesitate to contact me at 304-951-7527.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackson Porter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jackson Porter  
Brownfields Specialist