

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
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Grants Awarded by Riley Expand Network of Trails in State

MONTGOMERY— In his first seven years in office Gov. Bob Riley awarded grants that resulted in the construction of 209 miles of recreational trails, the mileage equivalent of a stroll from Dothan to Birmingham. With new grants just announced, Alabamians will be able to cover even more ground.

Riley awarded Recreation Trail grants for projects that will extend the total number of trail miles a distance that is comparable to a hike from Birmingham to Huntsville.

The \$1.25 million in grants were awarded to 15 projects throughout the state to build new trails and extend or improve existing ones. When completed, the projects will add another 100 miles of trail in Alabama.

“These projects are as diverse as the topography of Alabama,” Riley said. “Our vast network of trails provides Alabamians with many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and improve their health and fitness.”

The new trails, as well as those previously constructed, cater to a wide range of recreation interests that include walking, hiking, backpacking, camping, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, canoe and kayak paddling, and driving all-terrain vehicles.

Doni Ingram, director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs which administers the grants, said the projects create benefits that sometimes are not recognized.

“Quality recreation programs provide an economic boost for communities throughout Alabama,” said Ingram. “Trails and outdoor events attract people from other states and regions and generate significant tourism dollars for local businesses.”

The grant amounts and trail projects are:

- **Auburn University Montgomery, \$78,000** – To construct a 4-mile all-purpose trail in a wooded area on campus.
- **Cheaha Trail Riders Association, \$450,000** – To continue construction of the Coosa River Storage Annex property, a former 2,836- acre World War II military site near Talladega, into a recreational complex. Initial phases will involve development of trails for all-terrain vehicles, parking and campsites.
- **Cheaha Trail Riders Association, \$28,000** – To continue an instruction and safety education program for off-road vehicles, including converting a trailer into a portable safety classroom. The program and trailers will also be used to promote off-road vehicle trails in Alabama.
- **Alabama Scenic River Trail, \$27,732** – To establish an access for canoe and kayak paddlers along Terrapin Creek in northeast Alabama.
- **Alabama Scenic River Trail, \$6,801** – To install about 50 signs indicating official campsites available for use along the Alabama Scenic Trail, a system of about 631 miles of navigable river and creeks throughout Alabama.
- **Shelby County Commission, \$94,250** – To construct an additional six miles of bicycle trail at Oak Mountain State Park in Pelham. The project is part of a comprehensive plan by local governments and private citizens to make the park’s bicycle trail system eligible to host national competitions.
- **University of West Alabama, \$87,000** – To build the .86-mile Black Belt Garden Recreational Trail linking the university campus with a Livingston city park. The trail will wind through a landscape of native plants.
- **DeSoto State Park, \$17,600** – To expand parking and make other improvements at several trailheads, including additional signage, within the park near Fort Payne.
- **Hodges (Town of), \$143,759** – To purchase 290 acres to build a 24-mile equestrian trail. (The town was also awarded a \$171,493 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant earlier this year.)
- **Orange Beach (City of), \$94,351** – To build a 1.1- mile addition to the 10-mile Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail.

- **Twin (Town of), \$43,884** – To construct a quarter-mile-long nature and walking trail in Twin Oaks Park.
- **Southern Off-Road Bicycling Association, \$150,000** – To build a 30 to 50-mile trail system for mountain bicycles at Forever Wild's Coldwater Mountain near Anniston.

Three additional grants of \$10,000 each were awarded to the Northeast Alabama Bicycle Club, CAWACO (Cahaba, Warrior and Coosa) R C & D Council and the Alabama Hiking Trail Society. Each group will use the funds to purchase tools and equipment needed to maintain or construct trails.

All of the grants were awarded from funds made available to the state by the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program.