



## Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Request for Proposals

The Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Committee welcomes proposals from public agencies and community organizations to participate in the development, maintenance, and improvement of the Humboldt Bay Trail.

The Humboldt Bay Trail Fund was established in April of 2017 to provide financial support for the maintenance and creation of multipurpose trails around Humboldt Bay for walking, running, biking and wheeling. The fund is administered by the Humboldt Area Foundation and is overseen by the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Committee. The seven-member Humboldt Bay Trail Committee is composed of four community members at large, representing trail stakeholders from a broad spectrum of the community, and three public agency representatives from the City of Arcata, the City of Eureka, and the Humboldt County Public Works Department. One of the four at-large members is a representative from the Humboldt Trails Council.

Projects or programs proposed to the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Committee for funding must demonstrate direct benefits to the Humboldt Bay Trail and should be consistent with funding priorities and do one or more of the following:

- Leverage investment, matching funds or contribute to fund development
- Enhance community visibility and engagement
- Broaden community involvement
- Enhance public safety and comfort on the trail

Proposals should address one or more of the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund priorities, listed in preferential order:

1. Maintenance and rehabilitation, with an emphasis on projects involving community volunteers
2. Emergency repair projects
3. Trail amenities (signs, benches, lighting, landscaping)
4. Cost-share to state or federal grant funds for project development (planning, engineering design, technical studies, permitting, and/or construction)

Grant awards generally range from \$500-\$10,000, although larger, compelling projects will be considered. Grantees must provide full accounting of how grant monies were spent, submit invoices consistent with the approved proposal, and agree to submit a brief, annual, narrative report summarizing the work completed, including before and after photographs, to highlight the benefits to the trail and trail users. Grant funds are paid on a reimbursable basis. Multiyear proposals are welcome. Proposals should specify the completion dates.

Applicants must use the attached grant application. Applicants are required to show proof of coordination with the local government where the project is being proposed. Applicants should be a public agency, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, or partner with a fiscal sponsor. For additional information on eligibility, please contact [info@hcaog.net](mailto:info@hcaog.net).

**Application Deadline:** **February 6, 2026, by 5 p.m.**  
Applications must be emailed or delivered to HCAOG by the due date.

Submit applications to: [info@hcaog.net](mailto:info@hcaog.net)  
Humboldt County Association of Governments  
611 I Street, Suite B  
Eureka, CA 95501



## GRANT APPLICATION

**Proposal Title:** Humboldt Trails Council – 4 projects

**Amount Requested:** \$17,063

**Organization Name:** Michael Proulx

Email: michaeltp47@aol.com

Phone: 707-616-2526

Mailing Address: PO Box 7164, Eureka, CA 95502

**Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Priority** met through proposal (check all that apply)

Priority #1 – Maintenance and rehabilitation, with an emphasis on projects involving community volunteers

Priority #2 – Emergency repair projects

Priority #3 – Trail amenities (signs, benches, lighting, landscaping)

Priority #4 – Cost-share to state or federal grant funds for project development (planning, engineering design, technical studies, permitting, and/or construction)

### **Proposal Summary (150-word limit)**

The Humboldt Trails Council (HTC) proposal includes four projects to enhance the HTC's ability to maintain the Humboldt Bay Trail, engage the community in Volunteer Trail Steward (VTS) activities and foster advocates for regional trail development. These projects include;

1. Support for a VTS coordinator
2. Ride-on mower for the cities of Arcata and
3. Mowing system for the city of Eureka,
4. Additional support for the Trails Summit in May of 2026.

As outlined in the budget provided, these requests leverage funds from private donors and agencies, focus on maintenance and rehabilitation through engagement of community volunteers, help foster support for regional trails and support trail amenities including signs and landscaping. The proposal builds on years of successful experience in community engagement, grant management and advocacy for trails in our region.

## **Humboldt Trails Council 2026 4-Project Proposal Description**

The Humboldt Trails Council (HTC) proposal enhances the HTC's ability to help maintain the Humboldt Bay Trail through effective community volunteer engagement, much needed trail maintenance equipment, and advocacy for regional trail development.

### **Goal #1: Enhance the effectiveness of the Volunteer Trail Stewards (VTS) by increasing the number of hours of the VTS Coordinator**

The VTS coordinator helps ensure that the VTS program runs smoothly, volunteers have what they need and hours are tracked and reported. HTC is requesting grant funds to partially cover the cost of this contractor's salary. The position requires a minimum of 10 hours weekly and is contracted through an agreement with HCAOG. HTC provides matching funds of \$3000+ annually to pay a portion of the VTS Coordinator salary that is deemed non-HBTF activity.

The VTS Coordinator position is requiring more hours as more trails are added to the VTS program (Bay Trail South, McKinleyville Community Forest). Also, the complexity of the position has increased as the VTS Coordinator addresses issues that have been ongoing concerns but were **not fully confronted** (homeless encampments, equipment storage, turnover of Trail Crew Leaders). We propose to increase the VTS Coordinator to 11-12 hours/week. The VTS program will provide trail development and maintenance as it has been doing for the past 15+ years.

In addition to routine maintenance and trail rehabilitation, the VTS program often contributes to trail amenities along the various trails, thereby addressing HBTF priority #3. HTC has participated in development of signage along some of the Eureka and Arcata trails while VTS routinely provide aesthetic enhancement to trails by planting and caring for plant starts of native species.

### **Goal #2: Broaden community support for and involvement with local trails through our eNewsletter (with approximately 1300 subscribers), through ongoing trail maintenance activities on 12 trails in Humboldt County, and by our sponsorship of the annual Trails Summit.**

All these activities help to inform trail users, involve them in trail-related activities including trail maintenance, and build their support for future trail development and development of trail amenities.

### **Goal #3: Support improved trail management through the purchase of appropriate mowing equipment, essential for trail management, for the cities of Eureka and Arcata.**

As described below, mowers for both the cities of Arcata and Eureka are needed to help facilitate trail maintenance.

#### **Consistency with HBTF funding criteria:**

The HTC Funding proposal meets several of the HBTF's funding criteria:

#### **Leverages investment, includes matching funds or contributes to fund development**

Matching in-kind services: The VTS program provides ongoing trail maintenance by a team of over 200 volunteers on 12 trails in Humboldt County. The value (to the community, County of Humboldt, City of Arcata, and City of Eureka) can be measured by multiplying the number of hours of volunteer effort contributed by local trail enthusiasts by the hourly

rate of labor for volunteers established by the Independent Sector. During calendar year 2025, the data for the VTS program show:

- 1) More than 8000 hours of volunteer labor on the VTS system of trails
- 2) Independent Sector established rate of \$34.79/hour
- 3) Total value of VTS contribution = 8192 hours x \$34.79/hour = \$285,000

### **Enhances community visibility and engagement**

Trails Summit: The 2026 Trails Summit presents an opportunity for the community to learn of trail projects and be involved in the discussion about trails locally. This is a vital part of the process: involving community members in trail development decisions and having the public engage with local policy-makers about these critical trail decisions.

Also, the Summit planning committee is comprised of representatives of several trail-related organizations so that a broad range of perspectives is utilized to develop the theme, structure and content of the Trails Summit.

The VTS program is constantly seeking to involve the community in trail workdays. The VTS Coordinator routinely reports on upcoming workdays to inform people who may be interested in volunteering for trailwork. She also routinely posts pictures of recent trail workdays in local media as well as on our website. These are good recruitment strategies as we constantly look for more volunteers for the VTS program as new trails are developed.

Also, the VTS program is routinely posting articles with photographs in local media to inform Humboldt residents of the VTS program, the need for continual trail maintenance, and the importance of volunteerism for local non-profit organizations. These articles raise HTC's profile in the community mindset and contribute to our ability to recruit volunteers for VTS operations, committee assignments, and board positions.

### **Broadens community involvement**

HTC seeks to broaden community support for and involvement with local trails through our eNewsletter (with approximately 1300 subscribers), through our website ([humtrails.org](http://humtrails.org)), through ongoing trail maintenance activities on 12 trails in Humboldt County, and by our sponsorship of the Trails Summit. All these activities help to inform trail users, involve them in trail-related activities including trail maintenance, and build their support for future trail development and development of trail amenities.

### **Enhances public safety and comfort on the trail**

The trailwork that VTS provides at each trail location and at each workday event contributes to the safety and comfort of the public on local trails. The work performed by the trail volunteers is specifically oriented to making trails cleaner, safer, better-defined, less encumbered by debris, etc. Often, trail workdays include development of new trail sections or rerouting of trails to make them more comfortable and/or safer for trail users.

### **Responsibility for Work Outlined in the Proposal**

The VTS program will be coordinated by Maureen McGarry, VTS Coordinator, with oversight from HTC board members. Maureen has addressed numerous issues since becoming the VTS Coordinator last year: homeless encampments, sharps, relations with CSET, storage of tools/equipment, opening of two new trails, turnover of several Trail Crew Leaders (TCLs). She

is currently preparing for the annual meeting of all Trail Crew Leaders to provide training, discuss individual trail site issues and recognize the TCLs for their dedication.

The HTC has extensive grant management experience and relationships with trail management agencies and has already received grants through the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund in past years and has:

- successfully completed the outcomes as described in the grant applications;
- provided documentation of all expenditures of grant funds;
- provided written and verbal communication to HCAOG staff and the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Committee regarding fulfillment of the grant requirements.

### **Agency Coordination**

The VTS program will continue to collaborate with various trails entities including County of Humboldt (Hank Seemann), City of Eureka (Miles Slattery), City of Arcata (Emily Sinkhorn), McKinleyville Community Services District (Patrick Kaspari), McKinleyville Land Trust (Vicki Ozaki, Julie Neander), Northcoast Regional Land Trust (Riley Martel-Philips), Redwood Invasive Plant Eradicators (RIPE)(Carl Klarner), Redwood Region Audubon Society (Susan Penn, Hal Genger), Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association.

**Budget and Timeline:**

Year funds will be expended	Task	Description of Items Needed to complete tasks	Requested from Fund	Secured Cash or Value of In-kind Donation	Total Project Budget
March – December 2026	VTS Coordinator Additional Salary year 1	Additional salary for VTS Coordinator	\$3698	\$1849	\$5547
January – December 2026	VTS Coordinator Mileage reimbursement year 1	Mileage reimbursement for VTS Coordinator	\$ 1600	\$800	\$2400
January – June 2027	VTS Coordinator Additional Salary Year 2	Additional salary for VTS Coordinator	\$ 2465	\$1233	\$3698
January – June 2027	VTS Coordinator Mileage Reimbursement year 2	Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 800	\$400	\$1200
2026	Arcata Trail maintenance	Purchase of ride-on lawn mower	\$5000	\$3000 City of Arcata, \$5000 Private Donation	\$13,000
2026	Eureka Trail maintenance	Purchase of equipment for Eureka	\$2000	\$2000 Private donation	\$4,000
2026	VTS Mower Safety	Purchase of safety equipment for volunteers operating lawnmowing systems		\$1500 HTC	\$1500
May 2026	Trails Summit	Additional costs for event (beyond the grant provided in 2025)	\$500	\$500 HTC	\$1000
	<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$ 17,063</b>	<b>\$17,282</b>	<b>\$34,345</b>

**Explanation for requested funds for listed items:**

Wages for the VTS Coordinator were requested and approved in the 2025 grant cycle for a 2-year period. Since that time, the position is requiring more hours due to an increase in the number of trails (Bay Trail South, McKinleyville Community Forest) and the requirements of

special projects such as developing storage of VTS tools and equipment, searching for new Trail Crew Leaders (as there has been much turnover this year), and researching equipment acquisitions. Additional wages are being requested for the time period from March 2026 through June 2027.

Transportation - there has never been a transportation allocation for the VTS Coordinator but the time has come to rectify this situation. This is included and calculated at the current IRS rate of \$.70 per mile

Trails Summit – The costs for a Trails Summit (to be presented in May 2026) were included in the 2025 grant (and approved). Due to increased costs anticipated, this grant application requests an additional \$500 towards the cost of the event. The main cost increase is for the facility (Sequoia Conference Center) which now rents on a full-day basis only. The itemized costs for the Trails Summit include \$1190 for the facility, \$1000 for hospitality, \$1000 for video production, \$100 for printing, and \$100 for software. The total expected expense is \$3500 of which \$2500 was budgeted in the 2025 grant, leaving an additional expense of \$1000 as shown in the 2026 grant application (of which \$500 is requested from the HBTF and the remaining \$500 will be covered by HTC).

#### **Equipment (City of Arcata) -**

City of Arcata devoted much staff time to researching the various options for safe and efficient lawnmowing systems. While gas-powered lawnmowers are less expensive, they present some negatives (noise level, contribution to carbon footprint, lack of availability in California). We explored several electric lawnmowers and found difficulties with the need to replace the batteries every ½ - 1 hour plus difficulty with turning radius (this posed a safety concern).

The decision was to rely upon a safer diesel lawnmower which did not have many of the aforementioned negatives. However, it is substantially more expensive (\$13,000). We are requesting \$5000 from the HBTF grant to be matched with \$5000 from a private donation and \$3000 which the City of Arcata is allocating to the equipment purchase.

Equipment (Eureka) – Since City of Eureka has arranged for storage of VTS tools and equipment, the VTS program can now expand its inventory to better maintain the waterfront trails of Hikshari', Wig, Wharf and Waterfront North. The greatest need is for a lawnmower which is essential for maintaining several areas along the waterfront.

While gas-powered lawnmowers are less expensive, they present some negatives (noise level, contribution to carbon footprint, lack of availability in California). We explored several electric lawnmowers and found difficulties with the need to replace the batteries every ½ - 1 hour plus difficulty with turning radius (this posed a safety concern).

A final decision on gas versus electric is still pending but HTC has included a high estimate of the proposed cost of the lawnmowing system which will ultimately be chosen. The tentative funding of the equipment purchase is, as follows: HTC requests \$2000 (maximum) from the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund to be matched with \$2000 from a private donation to the HTC. If a lesser amount of funds is needed from the HBTF for the equipment purchase, then HTC will request only the funds necessary for this item.

This equipment acquisition, along with the new storage arrangement with the City of Eureka, will greatly enhance the ability of the VTS program to maintain the trails along the Eureka waterfront.

Equipment (ancillary) – HTC is also proposing to fund (without additional funds from the HBTF) such ancillary purchases to the equipment purchase as ear protection, helmets, visors, and vests for VTS volunteers operating this equipment. We have budgeted \$1500 for these purchases.

\*\*\*\*\*

Addendum: attached to the 2025 Humboldt Bay Trail Fund application was a request for the committee to assist Humboldt Trails Council to solve the storage problems that have been presented by the VTS equipment and tools. I am pleased to report that City of Eureka has taken the initiative on this difficult operational problem and has developed a solution. City of Eureka has hired a part-time staff person who will caretake the equipment for the waterfront trails (Hikshari', Wigi Wetlands, Wharf, and Waterfront North) in the Wharfinger building. This staff person will deliver all requested tools and equipment to each trail workday, remain onsite during the workday, then collect all materials to return to the Wharfinger building. This staff person will help to build a stronger collaboration between City of Eureka and the VTS program, Trail Crew Leaders and VTS Coordinator. We thank City of Eureka for its commitment to the VTS program and developing a solution to an ongoing problem in collaboration with our Trail Crew Leaders and VTS Coordinator.