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Recreational trails to receive \$2 million in federal funding

Kansas' recreational trails program will receive \$2 million under the federal transportation bill passed by Congress this summer.

"One of our highest priorities is to enhance ecotourism in Kansas, which includes developing a good trail system," said Robin Jennison, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT), which manages the trails program. "This level of funding will allow us to make great strides in the number and quality of trails across our state."

Federal transportation dollars go to the Kansas Department of Transportation, which then transfers an allocation to KDWPT for the trails program. The federal transportation bill – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21 – had specified \$1.3 million for the trails program, but a decision was made to increase the allocation in accordance with new flexibility provisions in MAP-21.

"KDOT and KDWPT worked to come up with a way to prioritize the amount of money that should be applied to recreational trails and determined that \$2 million is the appropriate level," said Transportation Secretary Mike King.

"This will help move ecotourism forward in Kansas."

Kansas has more than 650 trails totaling more than 2,100 miles in length. KDWPT directly manages trails located on state park, wildlife area or state fishing lake

properties. The others are managed by local governments or non-governmental organizations. To locate trails, visit

<http://maps.kansasgis.org/recfinder/public/index.cfm>.

Earlier this month, Kansas exercised a provision in the federal transportation bill to “opt out” of the recreational trails program. Exercising that provision simply gave the state maximum flexibility to prioritize the funding. It didn’t eliminate state support for the recreational trails program, which has received about \$1.3 million annually in recent years. To have that flexibility option, the state had to “opt out” by Sept. 1.

Kansas will receive \$366 million in federal transportation funding for the 2012 federal fiscal year, which is down from the \$399 million it received in 2011.

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