

# A Different Perspective

Imagine that your Recreational Trails Program (RTP) application package is like a three-dimensional picture. You want it to flow, be consistent, and clear to the reader. The reader may or may not have outdoor trail experience, and more than likely has never been to the project site. As such, it is vital that all portions of the picture are focused and vivid to the reader.

The Application form is the preface of the story. It provides a total project overview for the reader that explains the scope of the project; the intention of the grant request. The primary focus of the application page is to gain information as to what the grant funds will be used for, and how much funding is needed.

The Cost Estimate provides the financial story of your grant proposal by outlining funding sources to be used for project completion, as well as specific cost items in relation to the scope.

The topographic map, site plan, location map, trail log, reconnaissance notes/ construction plans, and photos illustrate the grant proposal visually. These visuals tell the story of the project layout by depicting elements of sustainable design, points of interest, and location of the site. A trail that follows natural contours, gently curving and bending around obstacles, and that disturbs the site as little as possible, is aesthetically pleasing and requires minimal maintenance.

CEQA/NEPA provides the environmental story. This portion of the grant application package should encompass at least the entire scope of the project, consistent with the entirety of the application. In addition, this document should be able to be used for the actual project construction.

Project Proposal (Criteria) is a kin to the main plot. This portion allows the reader to ascertain the need for your project. At times, it can be difficult for the reader to capture pertinent information from the proposal responses when extraneous information is included outside the actual project scope. Here's your chance to shine. Demonstrate your project's applicability to the intent of the RTP by responding concisely to each criterion. Since this is the main plot, ensure that you remember your audience by focusing on the project to be funded by the grant plus required match.

Lastly, a well-prepared grant application package uses all of the basic publication techniques found in many novels or textbooks. Documents follow the order provided in the application checklist. Criteria responses are listed in the order shown in the procedural guide, and are double-spaced. Page numbers, tabs, and a Table of Contents enable the reader to navigate easily from the first page to the last page. In summary, a well-prepared grant application package engages the reader and leads him or her to say "Wow!"