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MADE X MTNS Announces Second Round Awardees of the Building Outdoor Communities Planning and Capacity Building Grants

Funding supports six outdoor community and economic development projects to catalyze rural development across Western North Carolina.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA (February 13, 2024) – The MADE X MTNS (Made By Mountains) Partnership is thrilled to announce the second round of grant recipients in its [Building Outdoor Communities Program](#). The six grantees awarded in round two of funding include projects that demonstrate their high impact, connectivity, regional potential, and sustainability benefit to enhance outdoor community and economic development.

Participation in outdoor recreation has consistently demonstrated positive effects on job creation and business growth, contributing to the economic vitality of Western North Carolina communities. These funded projects contribute to supporting and growing those impacts, creating corridors that lead to commerce, and increasing public health and prosperity in WNC, underscoring the inherent connection between a thriving outdoor culture and robust economic well-being.

The second round of grantees and projects include:

- **Watauga County:** Arts in the Outdoors Strategic Master Plan
- **Madison County:** Bailey Mountain Preserve - Otis Duck Greenway Connector Feasibility Study
- **Cherokee County:** Valley River Heritage Trail Greenway/Blueway Master Plan
- **Clay County:** Hiwassee River Greenway Project Scoping and Feasibility Study
- **Avery County:** Banner Elk Greenway Master Plan
- **Caldwell County:** Trail Feasibility Study

“These projects have been carefully selected for their capacity to contribute significantly to the well-being of our communities and natural spaces, while bolstering our regions outdoor recreation economy,” says MADE X MTNS Partnership Director, Amy Allison. “We are thrilled to extend our support to these outstanding initiatives, and we eagerly anticipate the positive and transformative outcomes that will result from these collaborative efforts, both locally and regionally.”

The goal of the Building Outdoor Communities Program is to support Western North Carolina’s community leaders to better leverage their natural assets and collaborate to advance their outdoor community and economic development goals, centered around healthy people and places. The program supports communities to align key stakeholders, identify priorities, and develop implementation guidance to advance the work at the county and regional scale.

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“The Clay County Chamber of Commerce was awarded a grant to study the feasibility of the Hiwassee Greenway, and I am so excited about this opportunity for our community,” says Executive Director, Jim Rich. “The Clay County Outdoor Initiative has worked towards this goal for almost a year, with representatives from Historic Hayesville, Clay County Revitalization Association, Mountain True, Moss Memorial Library, and the Town of Hayesville. The committee has worked very hard towards this award, and I am blessed to be part of it.”

[Two rounds of planning and capacity building grants](#) have been made possible through \$250,000 in funding from the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) and the [Dogwood Health Trust](#). This funding is part of the three-year “Accelerating Outdoors Grant” awarded to the MADE X MTNS Partnership. The engagement in this grant affirms the enthusiasm around the Building Outdoor Communities process, that there are many exciting projects and possibilities brewing across WNC's outdoor recreation corridors, and that there is a great motivation around increasing outdoor recreation access and economic opportunities across the region.

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About MADE X MTNS Partnership

The MADE X MTNS (Made By Mountains) Partnership is working to expand the outdoor industry and economy across North Carolina's Appalachian region and catalyze rural development by building vibrant outdoor communities, growing outdoor businesses, and amplifying outdoor culture. For more information, visit madexmtns.com or [@madexmtns](https://www.instagram.com/madexmtns)