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Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Grant Program Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Thomas W. Peterson

Senate Sponsor:

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LONG TITLE

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General Description:

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This bill addresses provisions related to outdoor recreation infrastructure grants.

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Highlighted Provisions:

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This bill:

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▸ modifies terms;

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▸ clarifies that a recreational infrastructure project may include the restoration of a natural feature, like a waterbody, for greater public access to the state's outdoors; and

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▸ makes technical and conforming changes.

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Money Appropriated in this Bill:

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None

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Other Special Clauses:

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None

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Utah Code Sections Affected:

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AMENDS:

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51-9-902 (Effective 05/06/26) (Superseded 07/01/26), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 498

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79-8-102 (Effective 05/06/26), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapters 68, 274

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79-8-401 (Effective 05/06/26) (Repealed 01/01/28), as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 68

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

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Section 1. Section **51-9-902** is amended to read:

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51-9-902 (Effective 05/06/26) (Superseded 07/01/26). Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account.

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(1) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account."

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(2) The account shall consist of:

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- 31 (a) money deposited into the account under Subsection [~~59-12-103(15)~~] 59-12-103(14);
32 and
- 33 (b) interest and earnings on money in the account.
- 34 (3) Subject to appropriation from the Legislature, money from the account shall be used for:
- 35 (a) new construction of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 36 (b) upgrades of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 37 (c) the replacement of or structural improvements to outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 38 (d) the acquisition of land, a right-of-way, or easement used in relationship to outdoor
39 recreation infrastructure;
- 40 (e) providing access from state highways, as defined in Section 72-1-102, to outdoor
41 recreation infrastructure;
- 42 (f) the costs associated with bringing new construction or upgrades of outdoor
43 recreation infrastructure into environmental compliance;
- 44 (g) strategic planning related to the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 45 (h) facilitating avalanche safety forecasting to protect the public in relation to outdoor
46 recreation infrastructure; or
- 47 (i) clean up or security relating to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- 48 (4) For each fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the Division of Finance
49 shall, subject to appropriation by the Legislature, distribute money from the Outdoor
50 Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account as follows:
- 51 (a) at least 15% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of State Parks -
52 Capital, to be expended using the department's existing prioritization process for
53 capital projects in state parks described in Subsection (3);
- 54 (b) at least 22% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor
55 Recreation - Capital, to be expended for competitive Recreation Restoration
56 Infrastructure grants or Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure grants for outdoor
57 recreation capital projects and related maintenance expenses, where maintenance
58 expenses do not exceed 15% of the appropriation;
- 59 (c) at least 53% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor
60 Recreation - Capital, to be expended for larger outdoor recreation infrastructure
61 projects described in Subsection (3) as recommended to the Legislature by the
62 Outdoor Adventure Commission; and
- 63 (d) at least 10% to the Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District created in
64 Section 11-70-201 for the development and operation of the district.

65 (5) If the Legislature appropriates money to the Department of Transportation from the
 66 account, the Transportation Commission, created in Section 72-1-301, shall prioritize
 67 projects and determine funding levels in accordance with Subsection 72-1-303(1)(a)
 68 based on recommendations of the Department of Transportation.

69 Section 2. Section **79-8-102** is amended to read:

70 **79-8-102 (Effective 05/06/26). Definitions.**

71 As used in this chapter:

72 (1) "Accessible to the general public" in relation to the awarding of an infrastructure grant,
 73 means:

74 (a) the public may use the infrastructure in accordance with federal and state regulations;

75 and

76 (b) no community or group retains exclusive rights to access the infrastructure.

77 (2) "Advisory committee" means the Utah Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Advisory
 78 Committee created in Section 79-7-206.

79 (3) "Children," in relation to the awarding of a UCORE grant, means individuals who are
 80 six years old or older and 18 years old or younger.

81 (4) "Director" means the director of the Division of Outdoor Recreation.

82 (5) "Division" means the Division of Outdoor Recreation.

83 (6) "Executive director" means the executive director of the Department of Natural
 84 Resources.

85 (7) "Infrastructure grant" means an outdoor recreational infrastructure grant described in
 86 Section 79-8-401.

87 (8)(a) "Recreational infrastructure project" means an undertaking to build~~[-or]~~, improve,
 88 or restore an approved facility~~[-or]~~, installation, or natural feature needed for the
 89 public to access and enjoy the state's outdoors.

90 (b) "Recreational infrastructure project" may include the:

91 (i) establishment, construction, or renovation of a trail, trail infrastructure, or a trail
 92 facility;

93 (ii) construction of a project or restoration of a waterbody for a water-related outdoor
 94 recreational activity;

95 (iii) development of a project for a wildlife watching opportunity, including bird
 96 watching;

97 (iv) development of a project that provides a winter recreation amenity;

98 (v) construction or improvement of a community park that has an amenity for

- 99 outdoor recreation; and
- 100 (vi) construction or improvement of a naturalistic and accessible playground.
- 101 (9) "UCORE grant" means a children's outdoor recreation and education grant described in
- 102 Section 79-8-302.
- 103 (10)(a) "Underserved community" means a group of people, including a municipality,
- 104 county, or American Indian tribe, that is economically disadvantaged.
- 105 (b) "Underserved community" includes an economically disadvantaged community
- 106 where in relation to awarding a UCORE grant, the children of the community,
- 107 including children with disabilities, have limited access to outdoor recreation or
- 108 education programs.

109 Section 3. Section **79-8-401** is amended to read:

110 **79-8-401 (Effective 05/06/26) (Repealed 01/01/28). Creation and purpose of**

111 **infrastructure grant program.**

- 112 (1) There is created the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Grant Program administered by
- 113 the division.
- 114 (2) The division may seek to accomplish the following objectives in administering the
- 115 infrastructure grant program:
- 116 (a) build, maintain, and promote recreational infrastructure projects to provide greater
- 117 access to low-cost outdoor recreation for the state's citizens;
- 118 (b) encourage residents and nonresidents of the state to take advantage of the beauty of
- 119 Utah's outdoors;
- 120 (c) encourage individuals and businesses to relocate to the state;
- 121 (d) promote outdoor exercise; and
- 122 (e) provide outdoor recreational opportunities to an underserved community in the state.
- 123 (3) The advisory committee shall advise and make recommendations to the division
- 124 regarding infrastructure grants.

125 Section 4. **Effective Date.**

126 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.