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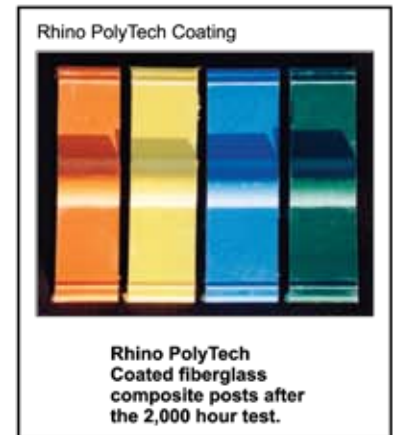
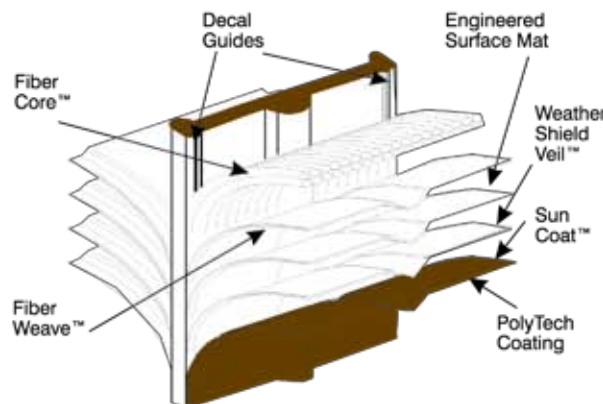
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American Trails Magazine

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Editor: Stuart H. Macdonald

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FROM THE EDITOR

America's youth, America's trails

YOUTH AND CONSERVATION CORPS have long been a great resource for the trails community. Now, with the economic turmoil and the slide in employment, ideas about service corps are in the news. At the same time, there is an ongoing focus on the health of America's young people. We decided it's time to devote an issue of the *American Trails Magazine* to youth in the outdoors, and to help trail managers and advocates learn more.

First, there is a lot of money going into AmeriCorps and other programs to put people to work. The recovery dollars are also funding work on every category of federal lands, including parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and recreation areas. States also have funding, through their Recreational Trails and Off-Highway Vehicle programs. See page 6 for more details.

Second, these programs are not just for kids. Much of the workforce consists of young adults in their mid 20s with job experience and an interest in the natural world. They are all looking for careers as well as adventure. The youth and conservation corps programs are gateways to a better future, whether teaching about the importance of our natural resources, or nurturing careers in land management as well as outdoor recreation.

Another point to consider is how the corps can work with other crews and organizations. Adding the expertise of a trail contractor may be the right ingredient for a complex project. We should look beyond the routine to make the best use of the wide range of resources available to us. See "Hybrid Contracting" on page 22.

For more details of corps in action, in cooperation with state trails programs, see the publication on page 34. I had a great time writing *Conservation Corps and Transportation: Making the Connection* for The Corps Network. I was simply amazed at the variety of projects these groups are working on across the country. We hope you'll take a look at the range of potential projects in your area, and learn how youth and conservation corps can work with you.

— Stuart Macdonald, Editor

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CONGRESS MOVES ON TRAIL ISSUES



■ New transportation bill gives hope for trail funding

The debate has started over what programs are essential and how our transportation system—including trails—will be funded. Looking at reauthorization of the federal transportation program in 2009, the American Trails Board thinks it is important to make our membership and the trails community aware of current debates on funding and policies. Here is a sampling of current news you will find on the American Trails “Supporting Trails” page:

- The “blueprint” for the new surface transportation bill released by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James L. Oberstar (Minn.) on June 18 includes programs for Recreational Trails, Enhancements, and Safe Routes to School. The next debate will be over funding levels for these programs.
- Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood asked lawmakers for an 18-month extension of current transportation programs, which would delay a decision on raising gas taxes or finding other ways to pay for roads, trails, and transit. The House bill’s Livability provisions go nicely with the Secretary’s “Livability Principles.”
- Even though the House may pass a bill out of committee this summer, an unnamed federal employee says “stay tuned, because the passage of the next transportation authorization bill will likely last longer than most TV series these days, may be more entertaining, and likely will be much more meaningful in the long run.”

For more information on the process of funding America’s transportation system, including trails, see the “Authorizing Federal Transportation Funding” page: www.AmericanTrails.org/reauth.html.

■ Support the Recreational Trails Program

As a member of the Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), American Trails urges organizations of every size and interest to become a supporter of the Recreational Trails Program. Letters will be sent on an ongoing basis to key Members of Congress and Administration officials. To date, over 200 organizations have signed on to this effort. CRT would like to have over 500 organizations sign-on as supporters. Every state and every trail activity benefits from the Recreational Trails Program, and we need your support! See our Support RTP page for a description of the RTP program and modifications recommended by the Coalition for Recreational Trails, and see concerns about the future of the Recreational Trails Program.

Please pass the word on through your networks. Visit the Recreational Trails Program page on the American Trails website to sign on to the letter supporting RTP. Please let us know as quickly as possible if we can add your organization’s name to the letter.

■ Recovery funding drives investment in trails and federal public lands

Funds are flowing to address maintenance backlogs and unfunded projects! There are endless job opportunities for trail builders! Youth will learn new skills! See current news on the ARRA and trail project funding on the American Trails “Supporting Trails” page.

Funding opportunities for park and recreation agencies include various competitive grant programs, federal budgets, and community development block grant programs. Recovery funds trickle down to trails and resource projects. Visit Recovery.gov to learn about projects on public lands near you and about job opportunities.

For another look at the opportunities, see “Shovels in the Ground for Recovery” on the next page.

Keep up to date on funding and legislation to support trails:
www.AmericanTrails.org/support.html

Tell us your opinion: take the survey!

American Trails, your national resource for trails and greenways would like your opinion. We have a survey dedicated to the trail USER and one dedicated to the trail PROFESSIONAL. If you fall under both categories, we invite you to take both surveys. Each anonymous survey will only take about 5-10 minutes of your time. Your responses will help guide us in better serving the needs of America’s trails community and ensuring a brighter future for trails and greenways.

To take the survey please visit www.AmericanTrails.org/survey.

If you know others who might be interested in completing the survey, please forward the magazine or this link to them along with your recommendation to participate. Thanks, and happy trails!

Shovels in the ground for recovery

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides major youth corps funding

*By Sarah Stankorb,
Communications and Marketing
Coordinator, The Corps Network*

UNDER THE CURRENT American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, public lands agencies have begun to receive funding for extensive backlogged work. Corps have made excellent partners for this funding because the purpose of the Recovery Act is both to restore America's infrastructure and employ its people. Partnering with Corps delivers both benefits, especially in locations where economic benefits to tourism and the recreation industry are stimulated by freshly-restored public lands. Including young Corpsmembers in this opportunity also builds a new generation of land management professionals. (And it doesn't hurt that young Corpsmembers are likely to stimulate the economy sooner rather than later by spending their paychecks promptly.)

The first group of Forest Service projects created by the Act add up to a total of \$98 million nationwide, and are likely to result in 1,500 jobs. The remaining projects, for \$1.052 billion, will provide an additional 23,500 jobs nationwide. In addition, the National Park Service will invest \$750 million of Recovery funds in nearly 800 projects. Initiatives will preserve and protect national icons and historic landscapes, improve energy efficiency and renewable energy use, and remediate abandoned mine lands. Similar funding opportunities are expected to be available through the other federal land management agencies in the near future.



Coconino Rural Environment Corps works in the Four Corners area

The action was slow to get started but is now under way. The California Conservation Corps claimed the honor of putting the first Forest Service shovel in the ground, as the CCC began projects in the San Bernardino National Forest addressing a tremendous backlog of trail needs, including maintenance, reconstruction, and survey work in all three of the Forest's ranger districts. Forest Supervisor Jeanne Wade Evans commented, "These conservation jobs will provide multiple land benefits for the citizens of southern California doing work on your national forest. In addition, the Forest Service will provide these young adults with opportunities to learn about and compete for long-term conservation careers."



Minnesota Conservation Corpsmember working on rock steps

Forest Service funding will also provide \$557,000 in a partnership with the Minnesota Conservation Corps to improve conditions on the Superior National Forest's extensive trail system, including hiking, portage, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ATV, and interpretive trails. Trail work will involve brushing, tread work, instal-

lation of water control structures, boardwalk reconstruction, and trail sign maintenance. Corpsmembers will receive professional certifications in wildfire suppression, chain-saw safety, and first aid, providing them not only with skills, but with portable evidence of their accomplishments and abilities.

Other Corps have been in conversation with Recovery Fund opportunities, but as of this writing had not solidified agreements. Dustin Woodman of the Coconino Rural Environment Corps reports discussions with Grand Canyon National Park about possible significant funding for recreational improvements. Projects could include trail work on the highly trafficked corridor trails in the canyon, restoration of some historical sites, and repair and rehabilitation of water pipe lines that service the south rim of the canyon.

In most regions with large areas of public land, many experienced land management professionals are entering retirement age, making a strong case for using these opportunities to let young men and women experience the rewards and hard work that come from maintaining, restoring, and improving the heritage represented by our national parks and forests.

Learn about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and its potential for funding trails on public lands at www.AmericanTrails.org/support.



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Maine Conservation Corps is a partner for all seasons

Crews are prepared to take on diverse projects whenever and wherever they arise

By Sarah Stankorb, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, The Corps Network

STATE AND LOCAL TRAILS organizations understand first-hand what an ongoing challenge proper maintenance and repair of a trail system can be. It is a rare and fortunate trails organization that can retain a full staff of horticulturists, builders, designers, stone movers, and work crews large enough to contend with the constant demands of pathways that erode, become overgrown and—if the trail is doing its job—is continually being trampled underfoot.

In Maine, local trails clubs and land trusts have discovered that partnerships with the local Conservation Corps can be a simple, effective means for getting all that work done. The Corps provides a trained work crew of young people who are seeking outdoors experience and job skills working on public lands. Through its service model and

community connections, the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) also provides its partners with a wide volunteer network and broad community support for its projects.

Consider the scope and scale of MCC's work. Taken as a sample set, these three projects illustrate the unique ability of Conservation Corps to take on difficult technical projects, bring expertise and volunteers into community efforts, and work to increase access to protected lands.

Appalachian Trail

The historic Appalachian Trail runs 281 miles through Maine, and its upkeep requires general trail maintenance and extremely technical stone work projects. Within the state and throughout the northeastern seaboard, MCC's field teams have developed a reputation as some of Maine's most effective, technically astute trail builders.

On portions of the trail that wend through White Cap,



Teamwork and safety, plus learning the right skills, add up to an effective trail crew.



Trail crew on the Appalachian Trail in Mount Katahdin area

Baldpate, and Gulf Hagas Mountains, MCC has partnered with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club to rehabilitate and preserve the trail. Corpsmembers did what they are best known for, completing 585 stone steps— plus rehabilitating existing trails and constructing ditches and drains. On Baldpate Mountain, Corpsmembers built ramps of rock and crushed rock— the sort of user-friendly, all-season surface that is becoming increasingly popular and sought after in trail systems nationwide.

In doing this work, the Maine Conservation Corps proved to its partner that it can yield impressive results along a broad survey area, but also do specialized projects like stone work and basic rehabilitation projects.

Mowry Beach Boardwalk

At times, Corps partnerships operate much closer to the grass roots level. Local collaborations are at times the most effective means of drawing locals into volunteer efforts. In Washington County (one of the poorest counties in Maine), local volunteers were recruited by Quoddy Regional Land Trust and teachers from a regional school to build a beach boardwalk along Mowry Beach. After the partners organized locals to build over 160 eight-foot boardwalk deck sections, Maine Conservation Corps was called in to work with the community to lead in the construction of a high quality accessible boardwalk linking the Lubec Consolidated School to the shoreline.

The boardwalk immediately became an asset both to the school and the community as a whole— a real local feature into which community members invested their own sweat, splinters, and feeling of local service.

Marshall Island

Marshall Island, managed by Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), lies in Jericho Bay off the coast of Maine and is the largest uninhabited island on the nation's eastern seaboard. MCHT conserves and stewards Maine's coastal lands and islands for their renowned scenic beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, ecological diversity and working landscapes, and has protected more than 125,000 acres in Maine, including more than 250 entire coastal islands. Clearly, in order to find a workable partnership, MCHT requires a field team that possesses deep, practical conservation knowledge. Maine Conservation Corps offered this expertise, as well as a sense that creating the trail system was a step toward future preservation of the land.

Continued on page 12

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Partner with a Corps in five steps

Service and Conservation Corps easily fit with many organizations' mission

By Sally Prouty,
President and CEO,
The Corps Network

MORE THAN 75 years ago, President Roosevelt had a vision. During a time of deep economic depression, he saw an opportunity to give young men jobs and training, while building the infrastructure of America.

That vision was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Nearly 4 million men spent time building roads, improving parks, planting trees—and during that experience many men say it was the hardest job they ever loved. Today, during another period of economic downturn, we hear a lot about job training programs, the rebirth of the CCC, and building America's decaying infrastructure. There may not be a project like the CCC in existence today, but modern Service and Conservation Corps fill the same need—and have done so for 30 years or so.

Like the original CCC, Service and Conservation Corps engage young men and women in service projects, earning a small living stipend, and learning important job skills. Unlike the original CCC, modern Corps are based in state and local nonprofits and some state governments. The educational and youth development focus of Corps has expanded, as has the ability to partner with local, state, and federal government, as well as nonprofits and community-based organizations.

While Corps serve as a training ground for young men and women, the work completed by Corps is high-quality and can be basic or more complex. For example, invasive species removal can range from pulling weeds to identifying and felling infested trees. The same diversity of project work also applies to trail work—some Corps projects maintain existing trails, while others complete new trail construction, technical rock work, and GIS mapping. With

Benefits of partnering with a Corps

- Engage young people in a project that empowers the community in a new way;
- Make young people assets to their communities – not deficits;
- Corpsmembers are often the next generation of professionals in the field;
- Corpsmembers can act as ambassadors for the project in the community.

the growing popularity of hybrid contracting, the diversity of projects is expanding.

Service and Conservation Corps easily fit with many organizations' mission. So how can an organization partner with a Corps? We will detail this in five steps.

1 Find a Corps in your area by visiting: www.corpsnetwork.org. A map on the homepage makes it easy to click on your state and see all the Corps serving in your state with links to their websites. If a Corps doesn't currently operate in your area, contact The Corps Network to see if a Corps is in a start up phase or if a nearby Corps might be able to expand to your area. Some Corps will travel up to 800 miles to a project site, so don't assume a Corps can't work with your organization if one is not currently operating in your community.

2 Learn the basics about the Corps you hope to partner with. Each Corps specializes in providing certain types of service. For example, some Corps have expert chainsaw crews, while others have members highly skilled at training and leading volunteers, and some are expert at technical rock work. With the help of a Corps staff, often a Project Manager, identify the type of project the Corps may work with you to complete. Corps are entrepreneurial and may be interested in starting new types of work. In developing new projects, learn how Corps may respond to your changing needs.

3 Clearly define the task at hand, the costs, and other logistics. Corps typically have a set day or weekly rate for service, however this may vary if a project has special requirements. Most Corps also have a streamlined process for ensuring they provide quality service to the specifications of the partner. To meet these requirements, Corps may require a detailed project information sheet. Some Corps will need to know the exact location, topographical information, general project details, and basic area information like the nearest hospital and rest area. At this point in time, other logistics may also need to be settled. For example, which organization is providing the tools? Can Corpsmembers camp at the site? Will a project sponsor check on the site on a set schedule?

4 Nurture the give-give relationship. Corps have a complementary, dual mission—to provide cost-effective, valued service projects and to develop young people into highly employable, active citizens. Because of this, Corps may have unique needs as a partner. For example, most Corps build education time and team building into their work day. Corps may ask project sponsors to provide help in developing young people. Some Corps ask project sponsors to give presentation about how to prepare and join the sponsor's profession or information about the ecology of a work site. Corps strongly believe a positive, long-lasting Corpsmember experience improves the quality of work.

5 Keep the dialogue open. Corps will ask for partner feedback both formally and informally. At the end of each project, Corps staff typically request sponsors to evaluate project work in a standard questionnaire. Questions vary from general (i.e. Would you partner with the Corps again?) to specific (i.e. Rate the crew leaders' competency and effectiveness and share suggestions to improve the crew's performance.). Most Corps use these surveys as continuous improvement tools.

Informal feedback is also important. Keep project managers and appropriate Corps staff up-to-date on successes and areas of concern regarding crews. If a project is planned to take four weeks and a problem arises in week one, it is best to address it immediately. Corps staff are experts at mediating issues and conflicts. Most Corps can easily adapt to best meet the needs of partners in a short period of time. Partners also often report the quality of work completed by crews is higher than expected and may want to use the Corps in a different capacity in the future.

The five steps necessary to partnering with Corps are similar to most partnerships. The business operations of most Corps runs as it should—like a business. The programming side of Corps is empowering and engaging for the young people and the communities they are serving in making collaborations with Corps different.

Staff at Corps caution partners that they are different from other partners. Specifically, a Project Manager might say, "Corps are not cheap labor. While Corps do provide cost-effective work projects, their missions are to provide high-quality work and develop young people. This may take extra education and training time."

Continued on page 12



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CONSERVATION CORPS ANSWERING THE CALL

Five steps continued from page 11

While many partners are deeply invested in the youth development focus of Corps, others are not. Some project managers will say it doesn't matter. As long as a project sponsor allows the necessary time for education, the Corps can take care of the rest. For project partners, the Corps needs to get the job done right. In the end, youth development and job training complement the project, while communities, young people, and project sponsors and partners benefit.

Through partnerships and other modifications, modern Corps have taken the best of the old CCC and improved it to meet new needs. But, like the old CCC, modern Corpsmembers still say their experience in the Corps was the best, and most challenging, time in their lives. Consider Linnea Heu of the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps (HYCC). She states, "Even now, two summers and many life experiences later, I consider my first seven weeks with HYCC to be the greatest summer of my life. I was pushed physically, with labor-intensive work, and mentally challenged to consider pressing environmental issues."

Learn more about opportunities with Corps nationwide at The Corps Network: www.corpsnetwork.org.

Maine continued from page 9

Establishing trails systems within a delicate ecosystem like Marshall Island is a balance between directing recreational use of the land in such a way that the integrity of the ecosystem is not impacted, but also recognizing that continued preservation and local interest in conservation requires better access to that very same land.

Working in partnership with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a three-year MCC project culminated on Marshall Island with the completion of a loop trail system on the island. During the 2008 season alone, the Field Team on Marshall Island cleared 11 miles of trail, built 56 feet of bog bridging, constructed one campsite, built 11 cairns, covered 552 feet of bog bridging with chicken wire for additional traction, and removed 28 bags of trash left on the island.

The construction of the trail and the complementary work taken on by the Conservation Corps flowed smoothly into the ongoing interests of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, created an environment with clearly defined recreational areas, and all the work was done with the dogged environmental sensitivity of a group of individuals taking part in conservation as a form of national service.

A Corps ready for diverse partnerships

This sampling of Maine Conservation Corps' partnerships does by no means exhaust the possibilities. The Corps works with local state parks, local towns and villages, and heritage land trusts. Thanks to a broad range of training programs—including their renowned Trail Training Academy—Maine Conservation Corps is prepared to take on diverse projects whenever and wherever they arise.

Learn more about Maine Conservation Corps at www.maine.gov/doc/parks/mcc/.



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Trails training opportunities

Corps provide training and career paths for young people

*By Sally Prouty, President and CEO,
The Corps Network*

THE VISIBLE BENEFITS OF SERVICE and conservation corps are their projects, and the work they accomplish. But corps also help young people become more confident, contributing members of society through training and work experience. While all Corps are different, the basic responsibility to youth development as well as the community is standard.

Typically Corps provide extensive training for crew leaders and Corpsmembers at the beginning of their term of services— sometimes lasting as long as six weeks. After that, education and training is built into the work schedule. For the project sponsor, technical training ensures Corpsmembers are prepared to complete high-quality, technical projects. For the Corpsmember, technical training can lead to jobs skills, potentially resulting in jobs for Corpsmembers.

While technical abilities are important, there are more basic “soft skills,” which also contribute to the quality of work completed on site. This training is geared to improve civic engagement, reinforce positive living, and reduce risk behaviors. Working on difficult projects also teaches first-hand about leadership, civic responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

The Montana Conservation Corps, for example, provides its PLACE training to empower young, active leaders. The Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in Steamboat Springs, CO uses a SEED curriculum to build environmental stewardship. The Nevada Conservation Corps, part of the Great Basin Institute, engages young adults in environmental field studies and a research associate program, with a naturalist service-learning program for school-aged students.



Montana Conservation Corps on the job



California Conservation Corps project at Lake Tahoe

Every February, the Maine Conservation Corps brings on six potential team leaders to participate in a 10-week trail training course. One goal is to encourage more females to become Team Leaders, by working on their confidence and leadership skills. The MCC Trail Training program offers a two week Wilderness First Responder certification course. Other classes include conflict resolution, team building, tree identification, sanitation and hygiene, tool maintenance, food planning and preparation, trail design and construction, and chainsaw use and safety.

Some trainings are provided in-house by Corps staff, while others may be led by project sponsors and partners such as state and federal land managers, local universities, and nonprofit organizations. The result is that Corpsmembers, with their new skills in hand, become ideal candidates for staff at partner agencies.

Learn more about The Corps Network at www.corpsnetwork.org. See the National Trails Training Partnership at www.TrailsTraining.net for trail-related training resources.

New National Recreation Trails for 2009

Interior Secretary Salazar announces designation of 22 trails in 13 States

AMERICAN TRAILS IS PROUD to host the National Recreation Trails website and to help more people know about these great trails. In announcing the new designations, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said, "From coast to coast, the National Trails System helps connect American families with the wonders of the outdoors. These new National Recreation Trails, built through partnerships with local communities and stakeholders, will create new opportunities for fitness and stewardship, while creating a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren."



For 2009, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has designated the following 22 trails as National Recreation Trails:

ALABAMA

- **Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail**

This 7.5 mile multi-use, handicapped accessible asphalt and boardwalk trail winds through the pristine coastal forests within the City of Orange Beach and Alabama's Gulf State Park.

CALIFORNIA

- **San Jose Trail Network**

Three connecting trails—the Guadalupe River Trail, Highway 237 Bikeway, and Coyote Creek Trail North—provide 16.4 miles of recreation opportunity in San Jose.

ILLINOIS

- **Moraine Hills Trail System**

The four components of this trail system in Moraine Hills State Park total 10.2 miles for cycling, mountain biking, hiking, jogging, and cross-country skiing.

INDIANA

- **Rivergreenway**

This 23-mile linear park in Fort Wayne and New Haven is located along the banks of the St. Marys, St. Joseph, and Maumee Rivers.

KANSAS

- **Pioneer Nature Trail**

This 1.3-mile trail at Council Grove Lake is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Two trail loops feature upland woodlands, tallgrass prairie, and the remnants of buffalo wallows.

MASSACHUSETTS

- **Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk**

Volunteers built and maintain this half-mile of artfully crafted riverside walking trail and canoe access in downtown Great Barrington.



Learning about edible plants along the Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk

For more featured National Recreation Trails visit
www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails

NEBRASKA

- **Niobrara Scenic River, Ft. Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge Section**

This 5.6 mile river segment offers visitors a unique scenic recreational floating experience. The river cuts a deep canyon in the limestone rocks that underlie Nebraska's famed Sand Hills.



Niobrara Scenic River provides a scenic water trail

NEW JERSEY

- **Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck**

This pedestrian walkway and nature trail connects three parks and offers views of the river, cityscape, and mountains. Award-winning interpretive signs designed by local artist Richard Mills are found along its 3.5-mile length.

NEW YORK

- **Chenango Canal Towpath Trail**

This six-mile trail is ideal for walking, jogging, horseback riding, bicycling, and cross-country skiing along the placid waters of the historic Chenango Canal in and near the town of Madison.

- **Feeder Canal Towpath Trail**

This nine-mile linear park adjoins one of the last surviving in-use portions of the original New York Canal System, the Glens Falls Feeder Canal, joining Queensbury and Kingsbury.

- **Historic Champlain Canalway Trail**

This scenic 1.75-mile segment of the projected 58-mile long Canalway Trail corridor in Halfmoon appeals to bird watchers, history buffs, and health-conscious recreationists.

PENNSYLVANIA

- **Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails**

This four-mile multi-use rail trail in Hazleton forms the core of a future metro area-wide trail system. It features scenic views, rare plant communities, picnic areas, and interpretive signs. Numerous partners have provided park benches, bike racks, exercise stations, and flower beds.

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway – 6 to 10 Trail**

This 7.75-mile trail follows the remnants of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, an engineering landmark that lifted canal boats over the Allegheny Mountains in the mid-1800s.

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway – Juniata River Water Trail**

For 184 miles this water trail parallels the route of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal which operated primarily in the 1830s through 1850s.

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway – Lower Trail**

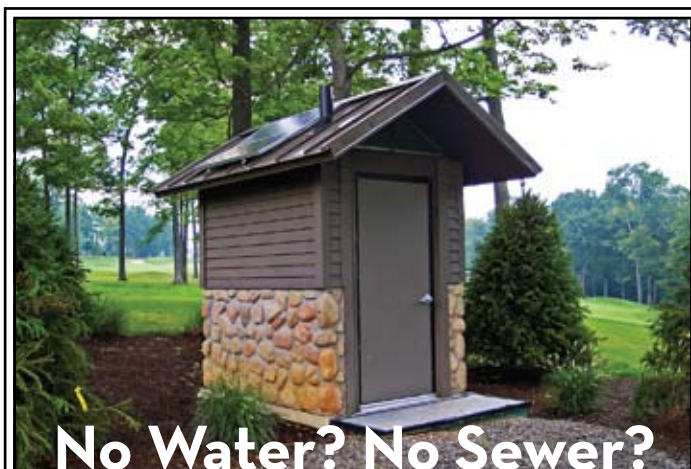
The 16.5 mile multi-use Lower Trail features many historic canal era remnants with interpretive signs telling the history of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. It is the center link in the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg NRT.

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal – Path of the Flood Trail**

This 6.5 mile trail follows the path of the Great Johnstown Flood of 1889. For part of its length, the trail joins the 2.5-mile Staple Bend Tunnel Trail which follows the remnants of the Allegheny Portage Railroad to the first railroad tunnel built in the U.S., the 901-foot long Staple Bend Tunnel.

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway – Roaring Run Trail**

Following the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal along the Kiskiminetas River, this four-mile trail is rich in historic transportation themes and recreational opportunities.



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New Recreation trails *continued*

PENNSYLVANIA

- **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway – West Penn Trail**

The 12-mile West Penn Trail offers many scenic, natural, and historic assets, including 100-year old stone arch railroad bridges and parts of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. Forty interpretive signs enrich this trail experience.

- **Susquehanna River Water Trail – North Branch Section**

Paddlers along the 181 miles of the North Branch of the Susquehanna River enjoy mountain views, river towns, and historic structures, as well as birds and other wildlife, fish, and camping at 17 river campsites.

TEXAS

- **Cameron Park Trails**

This 20-mile system of trails in Waco features handcrafted bridges, views of the Brazos and Bosque Rivers from 100-foot cliffs, and cedar groves. Trail events and tourism bring over \$1 million per year to the local economy.

VIRGINIA

- **Occoquan Water Trail**

The 40 miles of the Occoquan Water Trail offer an unparalleled opportunity for boating adventure and exploration only 20 miles southwest of Washington, DC. Visitors are invited to discover ancient hemlock groves, granite cliffs, Civil War sites, relic structures, the historic port Town of Occoquan, remnant settlements, and wildlife sanctuaries.

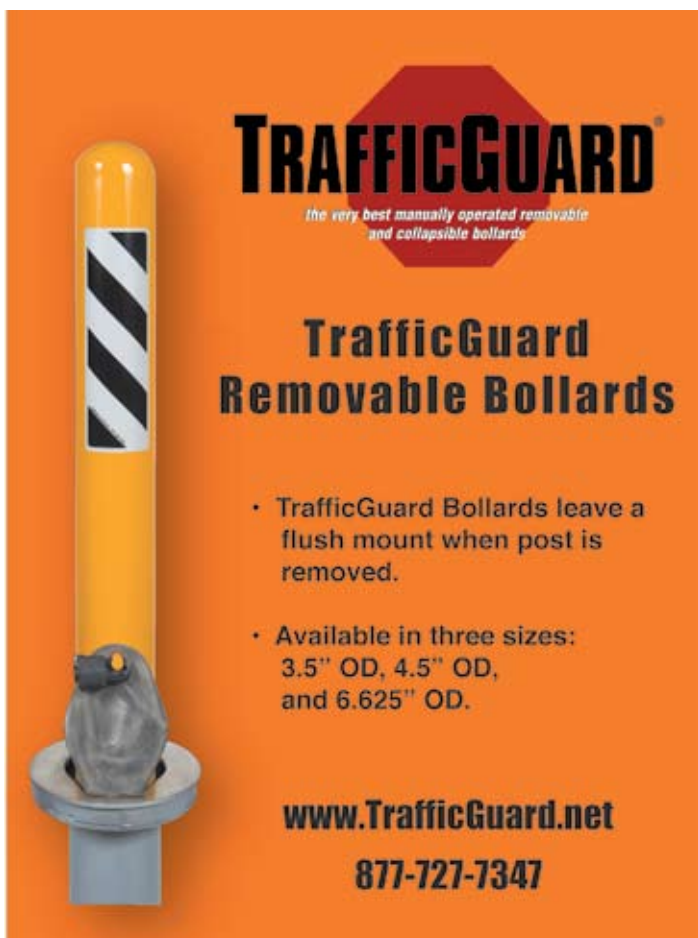
WISCONSIN

- **Kohl Park Hiking Trail**

The Milwaukee Conservation Leadership Corps constructed this two-mile long trail. Partnerships with local scout troops have improved the trail. Local residents volunteer to keep it litter free. It connects people to green space in densely populated Milwaukee County.

The next deadline for nominating new National Recreation Trails is November 1, 2009. For more about the new designations and details of many featured trails, please visit: www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.

**See the NRT Database and photo contest winners at
www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails**



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Initiatives proposed for youth in the outdoors

Promoting more physical activity and environmental awareness in youth

Doctors' group promotes benefits of physical activity among children

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS released a policy statement on June 1 titled *The Built Environment: Designing Communities to Promote Physical Activity in Children*. In its review of the policy, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation noted that "The health benefits of physical activity among children have long been recognized... When schools are well-located, with safe sidewalks and pedestrian-friendly street crossings, children are more likely to walk to school. When communities build safe and accessible parks, children are more likely to play outside."

The AAP policy discusses recommendations for doctors as well as for government, and includes:

- Ask patients and families about opportunities for recreational and incidental physical activity in nearby parks, playgrounds, or open spaces. Identify barriers that could be preventing children from using community locations.
- Encourage families who are considering a move of residence to consider the opportunities for physical activity at the new location.
- Become involved in local community planning processes to encourage cities and local governments to prioritize space for parks.
- Funding should also be prioritized to support specific evidence-based goals, such as building sidewalks in new and existing neighborhoods to create safe corridors to schools and neighborhood parks.
- Serve as a model for communities. Whenever possible, new government buildings should be sited within walking distance of public transportation, walking trails, and residential areas to promote active living.

To read the full policy statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics on childrens' health and physical activity, visit www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/health.

Interior proposes 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps initiative

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT'S 2010 BUDGET includes \$70 million for youth programs. This includes a \$50 million increase for the 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps initiative and \$20 million in existing base programs.

The goal of the youth initiative is to develop new ways to engage youth in nature and help them achieve an environmental awareness and respect for resources. The initiative builds upon existing youth education programs in BLM, USGS, FWS, and NPS to instill in youth a life-long interest in public lands and help prepare the next generation of natural resource professionals.

"President-elect Obama has a bold vision for youth programs across America, which I share. I created the Youth in Natural Resources program to educate... young people about Colorado's natural resources. I saw firsthand what a difference it made in their lives."

— Interior Secretary Ken Salazar

The initiative includes:

- **Environmental Education** involving students and teachers and provides outdoor laboratories
- **Recreation programs**, such as hiking, fishing, wildlife observation, and hunting on public lands
- **Youth Conservation Corps** providing opportunities for young adults to work on conservation projects
- **Volunteer and Community Service Programs** for parks, refuges, and other public lands
- **Student Career Experience Program**, established to support equal employment opportunity objectives, provide exposure to public service, and promote education
- **Student Temporary Employment Program**, designed to combine academic study with on-the-job work experience in parks, refuges, and other public lands

Read more details on "Creating a 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps" at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/kids.



Save The Dates

20th National Trails Symposium
November 14-17, 2010
Chattanooga, TN

www.chattanooga.com

NEW RESOURCES

A sampling of recent articles, studies, and opinions at www.AmericanTrails.org

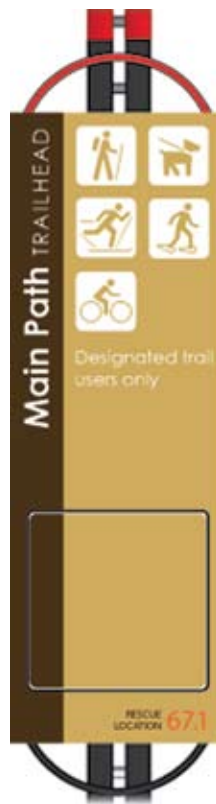
Finding your way at 8,000 feet

VISITORS TO MAMMOTH LAKES, CA, will find new signs to help navigate the hundreds of miles of recreational trails that wind in and around this area in the eastern Sierras. The project is guided by the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation, which works with the Town and the Forest Service with support from Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

Michigan-based Corbin Design was hired to develop a wayfinding system in coordination with Alta Planning + Design, which was working on the Trail System Master Plan update.

The result is a family of 11 sign types, including vehicular and pedestrian guides, park and trail portal identification markers, trail information kiosks, trail guides, and interpretive kiosks. The signs display the types of use that a trail is designed for—hiking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, dog walking, etc.—along with the location or trail name. Information signs also display maps of the area, and signs in more remote locations include a special rescue location number that emergency personnel can use to pinpoint the location of a hurt or stranded person.

For the full article on wayfinding in Mammoth Lakes, visit the Resources & Library area at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/ManageMaintain.



Sharing Our Trails: A Guide to Trail Safety and Enjoyment

A GROUP OF NATIONAL AND STATE trail advocacy organizations representing equestrian, OHV, and bicycle interests recently completed a collaborative effort to develop a new guide called “Sharing Our Trails: A Guide to Trail Safety and Enjoyment.” The guide is intended to be used in trail brochures, magazine articles, trailhead signs, and trail education programs of all types.

The goal is to improve safety and enhance the experience of all users on multiple-use trails. To quote the document itself, “In many parts of the country trails are open to and shared by equestrians, OHV riders, bicycle riders, runners, and hikers. Trail sharing can and does work when people respect each other and work cooperatively to keep each other safe.”

For the full article and text of the “Sharing Our Trails” guide, visit the American Trails Resources & Library area at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/ManageMaintain.

New website area for “Horses and Equestrian Trails”

RIDING HORSES ON TRAILS is a traditional activity that is part of our trail heritage. A new American Trails website area covers planning, design, maintenance, and management of equestrian trails. Advocacy and stewardship for horse trails, along with environmental issues, are also included.

We encourage anyone interested in equestrian trails to let us know about other materials and websites that should be included in the “Horses and Equestrian Trails” area. We’re also interested in potential articles for the *American Trails Magazine* as well as publishing on the website. Other opportunities for equestrians include the annual American Trails Website Contest and the Photo Contest for National Recreation Trails. In addition, the Coalition for Recreational Trails recognizes equestrian projects with its Annual Achievement Awards (see page 35).

See a wide variety of articles, studies, and information on equestrian trails in the Resources & Library area at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/horse.





The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail runs through many miles of multiple land ownership

Complete America's Great Trails Act would encourage trail easements

THE AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY urges you to contact your Representative and encourage them to support HR 1912, the "Complete America's Great Trails Act," a bill introduced by Rep. Connolly (D-VA), Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR), and Rep. Lummis (R-WY) designed to protect some of the most special trails in America.

America's longest and most protected trails, like the Appalachian, Pacific Crest, Continental Divide, and brand-new Arizona National Scenic Trail, all cross private lands. Many landholders graciously allow hikers to cross their lands—but each acre of private land represents a potential break in the continuity of these great trails.

The Complete America's Great Trails Act would provide a tax credit to private landowners who grant conservation easements to National Scenic Trails. Private landowners would have a new incentive to allow trail users to pass through their property, and establish a guaranteed corridor that protects the continuity of the trails.

During these challenging financial times, it is important to mention that HR 1912 requires no direct spending from the federal government, provides a significant tax break to land owners, and helps ensure that America continues to benefit from our incredible trail resources.

For more information see the American Hiking Society page at www.americanhiking.org/GreatTrailsAct.aspx

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Trail grade: delight vs. drudgery

Optimizing trail grade is essential to good design

By Randy Martin, President, Trailscape, Inc.

Designing trails that maximize the user's delight while minimizing the drudgery may be the trail building community's best way to help energize local economies. The purpose of this article is to encourage designers and land managers to consider the benefits of lengthening trails to lower the average grade, while at the same time encouraging the building of short sections with a specific grade (5-10 feet of vertical) to be as steep as conditions will allow. For the sake of simplicity, let's call this "Minimize/Maximize Design."

Delight vs. drudgery

Too often, trails are designed in a manner that causes the user to experience unnecessary drudgery with too little delight, thus discouraging repeated use of the trail. Tourists do not travel to Disneyland to ride the parking tram; they go for the Matterhorn. In many areas, tourism is the life-blood of the community, so if the goal is to increase tourism by creating trails, we must keep in mind that a person considering whether or not to travel and use a trail is forgoing a long list of other interesting options. As trail builders and designers, we must seek to make our trails attractive.

Average grade

The key to an enjoyable average tread grade is to keep it as low as reasonable while fulfilling the objectives of the trail. It may be that an objective is to get to the summit, a pass,

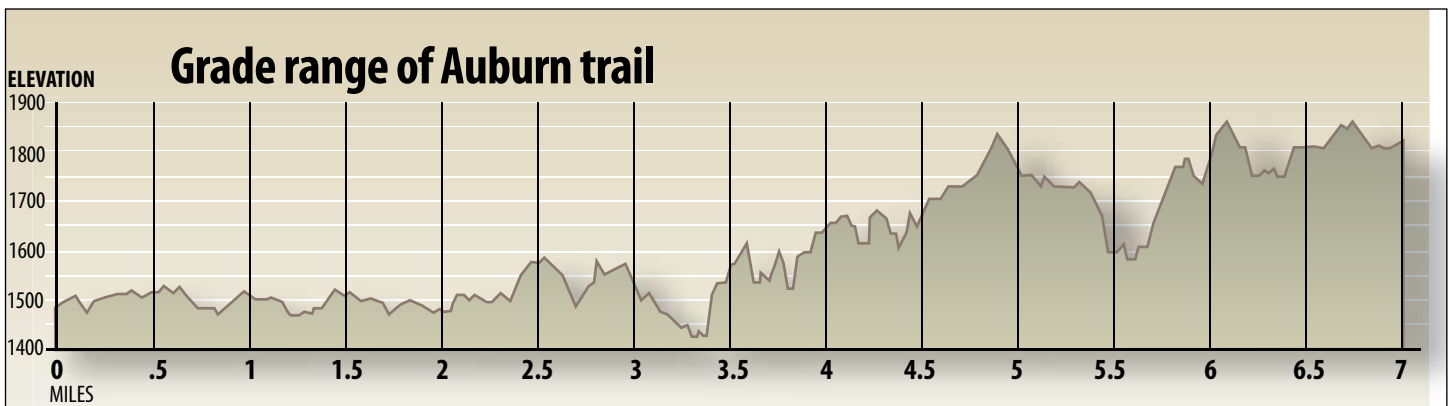
or to a vista. Most designers I have worked with tend to set the grade at 10% and grind it out. Minimize/Maximize Design lowers the average grade to 4-6% and doubles the length of the trail in a series of grade adjustments.

The optimal average grade will allow higher speed going uphill and releasing earned elevation slowly rewards the user with a nice, long downhill. It is discouraging to spend 40 minutes grinding up a hill only to use it all up in 2-3 minutes. As a friend of mine says, "You want to consume that ice cream cone one lick at a time."

Although it takes some energy to place one foot in front of the other or roll on the flats the key heart demand is based on how much elevation is being gained or lost. Depending on what shape we are in will determine how many feet of elevation per minute can be accomplished.

I like to think of elevation in terms of flights of stairs per minute (10 feet/flight). Let's say a runner is in pretty good shape and can run eight miles per hour while gaining 10 feet of elevation each minute (one flight of stairs). That same runner would slow to about 1-2 miles per hour if the sustained grade is 16% (eight flights of stairs per minute). The climbing rates for a bicyclist is similar. Who wants to ride a bike or run under 2 miles per hour? Not me!

The downhill direction is a different experience. The designed grade dictates if the experience is a delightful payoff for the work done to get to the top or just a leg pounding, break burning trail grinding experience. If the tread



Auburn, California trail where the average grade from top to bottom over seven miles is only 1.4% while the specific grade ranges from -20% to +22%. The lack of a need to summit freed this design to promote plenty of undulating fun in both directions.



Minimize/Maximize Design lowers the average grade to 4-6% and doubles the length of the trail

grade is 10% or more a cyclist will often be on the brakes which is not much fun and can be hard on the trail. The runner will be in small step braking mode, as are horses and hikers. At 4% the cyclist can pedal downhill or coast without much braking and a runner can flow effortlessly down the hill with minimum pounding. As a runner it is pure delight to be able to run fast downhill without the associated pounding from braking with every step.

Challenges

- While designing to minimize average grade, if the trail is climbing up a limited corridor the legs of a switchback can be very close together; this might promote cutting a trail from leg to leg. To counter this, try steepening the trail near the turns to gain an immediate separation, or using foliage or other means to block the view from trail to trail.
- Balancing efficiency with healthy undulation and meander: turning and undulating the trail should have some reason, for instance a tree or a boulder, otherwise it may seem contrived and frustrating, especially to the hiker.
- A trail with a lower grade will have to be longer to get to a summit. The benefits of minimized trail grade must be balanced with available resources.

User groups this trail design serves:

- Wide range of mountain bicyclists, not beginners
- Wide range of runners
- Wide range of equestrians; not extreme, not beginner
- Low to mid range hikers; not the super fit

The full article is online at www.AmericanTrails.org. Randy Martin can be reached through his website at www.Trailscape.net or email Randy@trailscape.net. Footage taken on the Susanville Ranch Park trail can be seen at www.youtube.com/trailscape.



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Trails training opportunities

www.TrailsTraining.net

Hybrid contracting blends training with trail project work

By Roger Bell, Professional Trailbuilders Association

WHEN THE DECISION ON HOW to get a project accomplished is being contemplated, the typical assumption is that it must be an either/or approach: either put the project out to bid and hope to find a qualified contractor—or turn to volunteers, youth corps, or other groups. But it is possible to combine these resources in ways that would optimize the advantages of both.

I'd like to urge project sponsors to consider the expertise available from professional trail contractors. There are qualified contractors who can provide traditional services and are sufficiently flexible and willing to work effectively

with these other kinds of workers. I have contracted on numerous projects where we have worked alongside job corps teams, volunteers, and in-house crews. In some, we did the design and layout and the initial machine work while others did the hand work; or we came in to do a specialized aspect of a project for which the California Conservation Corps was the primary work group.

In more complex projects there are often concerns about the skill levels of the workforce. These projects can include a formal or informal training dimension to both accomplish the project while raising the skill level of the conservation corps or volunteers. It would be easy to write contracts to include training in the trail building process, equipment use, and other skills, while using project development funds.

I have come to call these alternative models "hybrid contracting:" promoting community service values and real-world skill advancement by engaging the resources of other groups. The goal is still to accomplish what we all want: better trails on the ground, genuine cost effectiveness, and a sense of fulfillment by all who contributed.

To read Roger Bell's article on Hybrid Contracting, visit www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/volunteer.

Accessibility rules still pending; USFS has guidelines online

THE ACCESS BOARD CONTINUES work on guidelines for Federal outdoor developed areas and for accessible public rights-of-ways. The Board, which is responsible for applying ADA to both the outdoor world as well as the built environment, will proceed with adding figures and advisory notes, drafting companion discussions of the rules, and preparing cost impact assessments. The guidelines have been in the works for several years.

One good resource for interpreting what are the "best practices" available for building accessible trails is the *Accessibility Guidebook on Outdoor Recreation and Trails*. This USDA Forest Service guide describes integrating accessibility in the outdoor recreation environment while maintaining the natural settings.

For more on the ADA and trails, as well as the "Accessibility Guidebook on Outdoor Recreation and Trails," visit www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/accessible.

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For classes, conferences, and training opportunities, visit the NTTP online calendar at www.TrailsTraining.net

Calendar

State and regional conferences

Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit

• September 27-29, 2009

• Altoona, PA

"Connecting Communities Through Recreation and Heritage." Tracks include: Community & Economic Development; Health, Wellness & Active Living; Technology; and Maintenance & Management; Mainline Greenway Workshop.

Info: www.prps.org

Missouri Trail Summit

• October 7-9, 2009

• Springfield, MO

Celebrating its sixth year with the Missouri Parks & Recreation Association, the Missouri Trail Summit includes the Outdoor Stewardship Institute course on trail building and maintenance. Learn new answers to specific trail problems, experience firsthand successes and challenges on local trail projects, and discuss your projects with other trail and park managers.

Info: www.mopark.org

Greenways: Connecting Business, Health, and the Outdoors

• October 22, 2009

• Lexington, SC

The statewide conference will inform and demonstrate to conference attendees how greenway corridors and trails encourage healthier lifestyles; provide alternative transportation options; increase a communities economic viability; and offer opportunities for environmental conservation and education. Key findings from case studies supporting the positive health, economic, and environmental impact derived from greenway systems will be presented.

Info: www.communityopenlandtrust.org/greenways09

Mid-America Trails and Greenways Conference

• October 25-28, 2009

• Kalamazoo, MI

Professionals, advocates, and trail users are working together to create a growing network of greenways and trails tying together people, places, and opportunities for recreation. In the spirit of working together, the 4th Mid-America Trails & Greenways Conference celebrates existing and new connections and offers an excellent opportunity for all those involved in trails and greenways to share our experiences, learn from each other, and continue connecting our trails and greenways.

Info: www.michigantrails.org

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NEW YORK STATE'S Erie Canalway Trail

Bringing new life to communities along a 200-year-old industrial corridor

By Wally Elton, Parks & Trails New York

ON A BREEZY JULY DAY, some 500 riders are part of the annual Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour. In a way, like many who followed this route in an earlier century, they are pioneers, a new wave of travelers who have “navigated” the famous canal corridor for 360 miles from Buffalo. The Erie Canalway Trail embodies both the allure of a new vision for the historic transportation corridor and the challenges of bringing this vision to reality.

THE BEGINNING

Almost 200 years ago the opening of the Erie Canal fulfilled a vision of a waterway connecting America's seaboard with the growing interior of the young country. Adjacent to this early canal, of course, was the towpath—

a trail, really—trodden by mules, and the “hoggies” who drove them, pulling the packet boats and freighters at an astounding four miles per hour!

In 1831, just 6 years after completion of the canal, New York's first railroad line paralleled the canal between Albany and Schenectady. With faster and more comfortable railroads and later modern highways, first passenger and then freight traffic on the canal began to decline.

A NEW CORRIDOR VISION TAKES SHAPE

In the 1960s, with commercial traffic all but gone, communities along the canal began seeking new ways to benefit from it. The first formal public presentation of the Canalway Trail concept came in 1995 when the NYS Canal Corporation, which operates and maintains the canal system, issued the NYS Canal Recreationway Plan. This plan called for new investment in the recreational potential of the corridor, and to enhance its economic development.



A golden sunset greets riders on the Canalway Trail



Lift bridge over the canal in Spencerport

Among its recommendations was the creation of an end-to-end trail that would also provide linkages with other trails. Today, 15 years after the release of that plan and nearly 40 years since initial trail construction, the Erie Canalway Trail is about 75% complete, with 270 miles of off-road pathway in place.

BRINGING CONSISTENCY TO THE TRAIL

The Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY), is responsible for guiding implementation of statewide vision and standards while a grassroots, community-based orientation. CTANY initiatives have included:

- **Adopt-a-Trail program.** Organizing volunteers is essential to consistent maintenance along a trail of this length. Local businesses, civic groups, and families sign up to clean and monitor specific trail segments and to report major maintenance needs to the Canal Corporation.
- **Canalway Trail Ambassadors.** Volunteers patrol part of the Canalway Trail to provide cleanup and monitoring. They also offer directions, assist with mechanical problems, and raise awareness among local users of the larger trail vision. The project will be expanded this year.
- **User counts.** Since 2005 CTANY volunteers have conducted user counts at points along the trail. Using an



extrapolation protocol developed at Indiana University, the most recent counts indicate up to 200,000 annual visits to the trail in some locations.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

In getting to this point, trail advocates have faced several challenges:

- **Length.** The sheer distance spanned by the trail (if it completed, it would be the nation's longest continuous multi-use path) has posed challenges in finding resources needed for construction and maintenance.
- **Multiple ownership and management.** About 70% of the Canalway Trail corridor is owned by two state agencies, the Canal Corporation and the Office of State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The remaining 30% is divided among more than a dozen counties, cities, and towns. Furthermore, OPRHP has delegated management of about half of its portion to municipalities through which it passes. Finally, the trail traverses more than 200 communities, resulting in inconsistencies in signage, surface, and permitted uses.
- **On-road connections.** Currently, about one quarter of the trail is on-road, and parts of it may remain so indefinitely. In these locations, often no entity has addressed continuity, safety, or signage for Canalway Trail users.
- **Fragmented local advocacy and promotion.** Because of the trail's length and the multiple jurisdictions involved, local advocates have not always delivered consistent and coordinated messages on the importance of completing the trail or recognized and promoted its potential as a statewide tourism resource.

In addressing these challenges, key stakeholders have collaborated on ways to bring more consistency to trail management, raise the profile of the trail, and create a



Annual Canal Clean Sweep, a series of "spring cleaning" events along the New York State Canal System

NEW YORK STATE'S Erie Canalway Trail *continued*



The trail helps preserve a 360-mile green corridor

RAISING THE PROFILE

Many Erie Canalway Trail enthusiasts believe that it has the potential to become a world-class tourism destination given its well-known history and its length. In addition, unlike many other long-distance trails, this one brings people into the hearts of numerous communities, each to some degree a canal town, offering endless opportunities for trailside exploration, from art galleries and historic sites to farmers markets and a multitude of shops.

Recognizing the interrelationships among increased trail use, local awareness, and political support for trail completion, Parks & Trails New York, CTANY, and the Canal Corporation have launched several efforts to raise the trail's profile across the state (and beyond):

- **Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour.** Ten years ago, Parks & Trails New York started an annual, eight-day, end-to-end bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany to focus attention on the trail and its potential. This ride, which now fills to capacity and draws riders nationally and internationally, receives widespread advance publicity and also generates local coverage as it progresses along the trail.

- **Guide book and website.** Parks & Trails New York has produced an end-to-end guidebook, *Cycling the Erie Canal*, that includes detailed maps and lists of accommodations, bike shops, festivals, and other special events along the route. Parks & Trails New York has unveiled an interactive website (www.ptny.org/bikecanal) that allows users to tailor a tour to their interests. Earlier this year American Trails named this website the "Best Travel and Tourism Site for Trails."

- **"Bicyclists Bring Business" workshops.** Parks & Trails New York and the Canal Corporation have collaborated to develop and deliver workshops designed to help businesses and community leaders understand how to attract trail users and become "bicycle friendly."

- **Coordinated local/statewide events.** The Canal Clean Sweep, held in conjunction with Earth Day, is a series of "spring cleaning" events, while the Canalway Trail Celebration on National Trails Day in June, connects people with the trail through bike rides, walks, historical tours, festivals, and other activities. Both of these events have grown in participation each year.



Canal boat along the trail (photo by Linda Young)

CLOSING THE GAPS

To realize its potential as a tourism magnet and contribute to community economic renewal, the trail must be completed. This means that it must be off road wherever possible. Where not possible, the route must be selected carefully and marked clearly and consistently. A series of Gap Assessment Reports evaluated opportunities and constraints for each of the missing trail segments. Based on these reports, they also have secured planning and construction funds from within the Canal Corporation budget and from federal Transportation Enhancements.

At least one trail project will receive federal stimulus funding. Two projects funded as part of a statewide transportation bond are scheduled to move forward. A new "Close the Gaps" campaign brings together stakeholders to plan strategies for the remaining segments. CTANY is urging constituent pressure on local public officials while educating state legislators about the status of the trail and its potential contribution to economic revitalization.



Riders on the canal-side street through Canastota, NY

Read the full story of the Erie Canalway Trail along with links to resources for planning your own trip across New York at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/long.

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HISTORIC PATH TO FREEDOM Underground Railroad route

Students plan a 200-mile ride along the Underground Railroad Bicycle Route

By Sarah Eustis

ADVENTURE CYCLING ASSOCIATION, in partnership with the Center for Minority Health, developed the 2,008-mile Underground Railroad Bicycle Route to encourage people from all backgrounds to explore the landscapes and history of America by bicycle while combat-

ing our health crisis.

The route commemorates the network of secret corridors and safe houses by which freedom-seekers attempted to escape slavery before and during the Civil War. It passes points of interest and historic sites from Mobile, AL north to Owen Sound, Ontario.

Last summer, eight students of the Bronx Lab School spent eight days cycling 200 miles of the Underground Railroad. The students were able to discover a significant period

of our nation's history while experiencing the joy and physical activity of bicycling. Traveling through Ohio, they often encountered people who were inspired by the trip. Bike enthusiasts met the group outside of their towns to proudly escort the students to their homes. Cycle shops offered mechanical support and discounted supplies. Families came together to provide home cooked meals.

Due to the success of the trip, a new team of Bronx Lab Underground Railroad Riders will undertake the journey through Ohio in 2009. Again, in preparation, these students have been fund raising, studying, training, and eating well in preparation for the epic journey. But the journey does so much more than benefit a handful of students and adults from the Bronx and its continued success ensures that these positive ripple effects will continue.

See the full story of the Bronx Lab Underground Railroad Riders at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/long.



Bronx Lab School riders on the 2008 journey

AUSTRALIA'S The Bibbulmun Track

Western Australia trail passes through 22 national parks and reserves

THE BIBBULMUN TRACK stretches almost 1,000 kilometers from Kalamunda to Albany through some of the most beautiful natural areas in Western Australia and through nine rural communities. It was designed for people with varying fitness levels and interests and can be walked as part of a relaxing day in the bush, an overnight or weekend camping adventure, or as an eight-to-10-week end-to-end hike.



There are few places on Earth where walkers can experience such a distance of unbroken natural environment with the scenic variety offered by the Bibbulmun Track. Well equipped campsites with rustic sleeping shelters, water tank, picnic table, and pit toilet, are spaced no more than a day's walk apart, usually in places offering spec-

tacular scenery, providing safe and convenient facilities and a welcome haven at the day's end.

The Bibbulmun Track Foundation was established in 1997 to support the now Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in the management, maintenance, and marketing of the Track. This not-for-profit community based organization, funded mainly through membership, sponsorship and grants, has developed many programs and activities in the last ten years in line with its mission "to support the management of the Track so it becomes, and remains, a long distance trail of international significance and quality."

To ensure the Track's long term protection and sustainability more than 350 dedicated volunteers are involved a Track maintenance program where each "own" their



A giant Karri tree along the Bibbulmun Track

section of Track. They carry out lightweight tasks such as pruning, clearing minor obstacles, replacing trail markers, keeping campsites clean, and reporting regularly on conditions likely to affect walkers or the long-term future of the Track itself. These reports are vital in formulating works programs for DEC who do the "heavy" work.

As well as offering a free information service to walkers, trip planning for its members and equipment hire, the Foundation has developed a range of tourism products to meet the needs of local, interstate, and overseas visitors.

See photos and more about the Bibbulmun Track at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/long.

Solving policy issues for trail systems

Permits, and policies, rules and regulations... yuck!



**By Terry Whaley,
Ozark Greenways**

IF YOU WANT TO suck the excitement and creativity out of a community trail planning initiative fast, just invite the attorney, risk manager, or insurance provider to your next meeting. The one trait all trail proponents around the country have in common is the desire to “get ‘er done.” Which means we usually strive for trail on the ground and feet on the trail. While developing policies and regulations for a trail is not a fun task, it will become a necessity in time with any successful trail project.

I remember several years ago passing around an article to my board members about a trail that was experiencing user conflicts due to its popularity. At that time we had little trail on the ground, and no finished project we could hang our hats on. However, we all had the same thought after reading that article: “Wouldn’t it be great to have that problem?” Someday...

From that meeting on, in the back of our minds we looked forward to the day which we might be lucky enough to have desirable trails on the ground that we might experience user conflict and get to deal with permits or special use policies. Well, be careful of what you wish for. As just a few years later we were in the permit and rules mode of trail management.

“Trail policies are often driven by a need to position an opinion, to control situations, to protect a resource, or reduce potential conflict – and always provide for the safety of the trail user.”

The need for trail policy and rules will evolve with the success and maturity of your trail system. The trail itself needs no rules or operation policy. The common ingredient driving this need from my experience has been the introduction of people to the trail. Trail policies are often driven by a current hot issue or need to position an opinion, to control situations, to protect a resource, or reduce potential conflict, and always provide for the safety of the trail user.

It would be great if we all had the crystal ball and could accurately predict the next policy need so we might be ahead of the game. However, because we are still operating on the desire to “get ‘er done” and put trail on the ground, we tend to address policy needs as they arise and often with a knee-jerk reaction and under some self-inflicted time deadline. This approach only places additional stress on the decision-making process and often creates unclear or incomplete policies.

We have found the best approach is to take a deep breath and count to ten. Then find 3-5 people who like to solve problems and can see situations from different perspectives. People outside the organization often bring a clarity and balance to the discussion when staff or board members might be too close to offer fair policy. However, make sure to include representatives from your user groups affected by any policy development.

Give them a time line to work from... not a deadline. You will get better attention and faster results from a task force if they know their comment is not a life term. I like to start with a specific statement of the problem or develop a very brief objective of what the policy is to solve. This helps to keep your task force focused on the specific issue and avoids policy creep (i.e. reduce trailhead parking conflicts during peak weekend use). Once an outline or draft policy is developed, put it aside and let the old policy fermentation process work for a week to ten days.

You will be surprised how much simpler situations can be after you have spilled the initial concerns and discussion points. Much like any fermentation process, the policy and specific

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A key to good policy is communication: listening as well as explaining

needs will begin to become clearer with some time distance. This helps to remove and avoid the knee jerk reaction which cultivates attempts to solve today's problem, but creates future problems for the enforcement of unclear policy which often is targeted toward one very specific situation.

I also like to keep policy simple so it can be understood by all who need to know, and are impacted or guided by your policy. Legalese with confusing "whereas, therefore, alterations, defaults, and counterparts" only misdirect your intentions. As such, often a policy might be as simple and short as a paragraph stating or guiding when a practice or action is to take place. Many years ago we developed an Investment Policy to direct how we would handle the transfer of stock gifts to our organization. What was perceived as a monumental task, and would possibly be contained in nothing less than several three-ring binders, became that very simple paragraph which the board to this day follows without question or conflict. The policy is clear, concise, manageable, and effective.

Other issues for which we have developed operation policy include: Our Good Neighbor Fence Policy, which guide how and when we might participate in providing fences to landowners where trails or trail users become an issue. Another is our Trail Access Policy which has worked for years in guiding requests from public or private parties desiring to cross our trails with utilities, water lines, or even driveways. In the early years we developed a Trail Paving Policy which guided us as to what conditions we might hard surface a trail... this was considered a sin by some in the early days, and still by some today.

Most recently, due to the great success of our trails we needed to develop a Trail Use/Reservation Policy to manage special events such as bicycle rides, walks, and runs on trails. Many of these activities are fund raisers for local

charities. While the trail could accommodate the user load, the challenge was how to handle the trailhead or parking area loads when several hundred unexpected users showed up and competed for the same restroom, parking, and shelter facilities which were already reserved by others via park or shelter reservation practices. In addition, we use this as an opportunity to promote other lesser used trail locations as the special event trails.

One additional tip we have learned is to first introduce new policy on "friendly users" to work out possible bugs or operational hang-ups. It may even be prudent to give new policies a trail time frame of a season or two just to see how it will work before locking into a rule or official regulation which is set to cause additional conflict.

Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Permits: Here's hoping you have to deal with some in the future, because it will be a sign that you have some great community trails on the ground and people are using it in ways you never conceived.

Terry Whaley is Executive Director of Ozark Greenways, Inc. in Springfield, Missouri, and a board member of American Trails. Read the full article on Solving Policy Issues with examples of policies from Ozark Greenways at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/ManageMaintain.

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Roger Bell wins Professional Trailbuilders Association Award

Just before the turn of the 21st century, Harvey Bell, a long-time trail contractor, passed away. As a stickler for quality trail design and construction—and an opinionated and memorable character as well—the Professional Trailbuilders Association keeps Harvey's memory alive with its Harvey Bell Memorial Award.

Writer, trail contractor, and promoter of trails in new developments, Roger Bell is the winner of the 2009 award, presented at the Trailbuilders Conference last March. A visionary and tireless advocate for better trails, Roger is a well-known figure in the trails community. He has been a member of the American Trails Board for over 10 years.

Several of Roger Bell's articles and editorials can be found at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/opinion.

Remembering Tammy Jamieson

Tammy Jamieson worked for the Town of Silverthorne, CO for 14 years serving for nine years as Director of Recreation and Culture. She was a treasured and respected member of the Town's management team and in the trails community in Colorado. Tammy left a lasting legacy in the parks, trails, and open space features that she created during her tenure. She was admired and respected as a leader by all those she worked with.

Among her accomplishments, Tammy led the development of the *Silverthorne Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan*; the acquisition and construction of the Silverthorne to Dillon Trail Connection; open space purchases; and construction of the Blue River Trail. These and many other projects have benefited residents as well as the thousands of tourists who visit the Colorado high country each year.

Read more about Tammy Jamieson at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/advocacy.

Tribute paid to GGNRA Superintendent Brian O'Neill

The Bay Area open space community suffered a great loss on May 13th with the untimely passing of Brian O'Neill. Brian served as the Superintendent of the Golden Gate National

Recreation Area for 23 years. During his tenure, the former army base at the Presidio became part of the GGNRA, Alcatraz Prison was opened for tours to the public, and Crissy Field was restored as one of SF's open space jewels.

Colleagues and friends described Brian as a charismatic and dedicated leader whose passionate commitment to parks was an inspiration. Brian was a member of the Mayor's Open Space Task Force, trying to help San Francisco figure out comprehensive strategies to improve the city's open spaces. According to Isabel Wade, Executive Director of NPC, "Brian was a rare combination of a big thinker who had vision and management skills, too. He didn't confine his thinking to just the GGNRA, and his loss is of huge impact to the open space community in San Francisco."

Read more about the Golden Gate National Recreation Area at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/planning.

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Do these trail grades meet ADA accessibility standards?

How can I effectively manage this volunteer?



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BOOK *reviews*

Conservation Corps and Transportation: Making the Connection

By *Stuart Macdonald*

Youth and conservation corps can help public land managers accomplish their missions. Young people are eager to work, and funding is available to get projects underway. To connect stewardship needs with the right workforce, this guide provides case studies from several States to highlight the opportunities:

- Federal transportation funding can be applied to natural resource and recreation projects.
- Every State has programs in place to make funds available to appropriate projects.
- America's service and conservation corps are trained and ready to do the work.

The 36-page book was produced in partnership with The Corps Network and the Federal Highway Administration. It includes a Guide for Project Sponsors, ideas on developing suitable projects, and details of how to work with state trails programs and corps organizations.

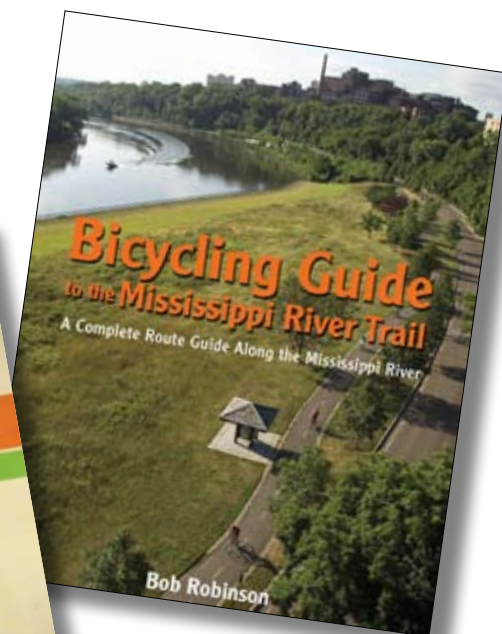


Download a pdf of the publication at www.AmericanTrails.org. Printed copies may be available from The Corps Network at www.corpsnetwork.org.

Bicycling Guide to the Mississippi River Trail

By *Bob Robinson*

This publication guides cyclists along the route of the Mississippi River Trail, from the river's headwaters in Minnesota to the southern-



most point on the Gulf of Mexico. The 3,000 miles of the MRT are divided into sections ranging from 40 to 100 miles.

Each section begins with points of interest and history, followed by a list of camping, lodging, and bike shops, turn-by-turn directions, and a detailed map. The guidebook also identifies biker-friendly bridges and ferries across the river for cyclists to use for multi-day loop tours.

Where possible, the MRT route uses seldom-traveled rural roads as well as trails to keep the route near the banks of the Mississippi River.

You may order a copy of the guidebook at www.mississippirivertrail.org. A portion of the proceeds will go to MRT, Inc.



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Awards for Recreational Trail projects

Coalition for Recreational Trails announces awards for 2009



Sam Houston Multiple-Use Trail on National Forest lands

THE COALITION FOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS has announced the winners of its "Annual Achievement Awards" in recognition of outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds. Seven trail projects and two state programs were recognized. See details of the award winners and more about supporting RTP funding at: www.americantrails.org/awards.

The trail projects and programs honored for 2009 are:

- **Maintenance and Rehabilitation**
Kings Campground and Trailhead Project (California)
- **Construction and Design**
Sam Houston Multiple-Use Trail (Texas)
- **Education and Communication**
Giant's Stairs Trail Project (Maine)
- **Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing**
Meduxnekeag River Bridge (Maine)
- **Environment and Wildlife Compatibility**
Highbridge Park Project (New York)
- **Accessibility Enhancement**
Southwest Key Trail (Texas)
- **Use of Youth Conservation/Service Corps**
North Bend Lake Equestrian Trail (West Virginia)
- **Outstanding State Trail Program**
Oregon
- **Outstanding State Recreational Trails Advisory Committee**
Minnesota



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Dirty kids are the best kind of kids

By Fredric Rice

San Gabriel Mountains Trailbuilders

It has always seemed to me that experiencing new environments broadens the young mind regardless of whether the experience contains beauty or ugliness, comfort or hardship, success or failure. Getting young people out of the cities to experience nature “red in tooth and claw” awakens the mind to a broader realm of possibilities and can instill an affinity for quiet places where young minds can pause for self-reflection.

With the advent of relatively inexpensive game boxes and access to the Internet, very few people seem to have any desire to take to the outdoors, either going to the beach to body surf, hiking through a desert, taking to the mountains to hike, climb, or ski, or doing anything that gets

“A kid covered in dirt and maybe sunburned a bit or perhaps suffering from a touch of poison oak is a happy, healthy kid.”

them off the couch and in to healthy places where the mind can get some respite from the day-to-day grind of school, work, economics, and politics.

One of the best ways that I have seen to give kids the chance to get out in to the wilderness is to volunteer with the United States Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management, both agencies

of which work very closely with organized volunteer groups that perform hiking trail maintenance, pollution mitigation projects, fire mitigation projects, erosion control efforts, tree plantings (which is excellent forestry work for kids!), and a whole lot of other bits of valuable exercise in our nation’s wild places.

Parents who don’t have the time or energy to take their kids outdoors can telephone their local Forest Service or state parks office to find out what volunteer groups their kids can work with. The result: kids can experience what it’s like to hike four miles in to the wilderness with a pick and shovel strapped to their backpacks, work on clearing a well-loved hiking trail for four or five hours, then hike back, tired, none too clean, but immensely satisfied with a job well done that others will appreciate for years to come.

There is so much more that volunteers can do that allows kids an opportunity to get out of the cities. Foot bridges along trails that cross streams or gulches sometimes need maintenance, rock bridges across streams and rivers need constant attention, trees that fall down across hiking trails

need someone to safely cut them up and remove them, brush growing on or around trails constantly need to be cut back and removed, and a whole lot more.

Volunteering in the forest and working in young Conservation Corps groups teach young people far more than tool-use skills. Working in the wilderness shows each person they really can accomplish tasks that are difficult, demanding, and at times are exhausting, and it shows them that life is much more than sitting in front of a television.

I happen to think that dirty kids are the best kind of kids there are. An active kid is a healthy kid, and I like seeing that. We should find every opportunity to encourage our nation’s youth to exercise more, not only for physical health but for healthier minds. We adults too often settle into comfortable apathy and our children often follow us in our footsteps, and that’s unfortunate because there’s a whole big wide world out there!



A Southwest Conservation Corps crew member



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