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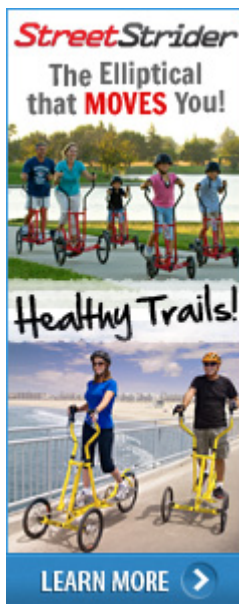
DECEMBER 2011



Trail Tracks is our monthly e-Newsletter with links to www.AmericanTrails.org, the world's most comprehensive online resource for planning, designing, building, funding, managing, and enhancing trails and greenways. We also bring you news from the halls of Congress, new studies and resources, interesting articles, events, and training opportunities. Check the topics below for what's new in the trails world!

Special thanks to the sponsors of this issue:

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WHAT'S HOT

25% discount deadline for Trails Symposium exhibitors ends December 31

While the next American Trails International Trails Symposium doesn't take place until April 2013, our 25% discount deadline for exhibitor fees is coming up soon. Exhibitors save 25% until December 31st - our highest savings ever (usually we only offer 20%)! Early exhibitors also get to take advantage of two new benefits: a logo link in our sponsor feeds on our homepage and Symposium pages and an article in the next issue of our *Trail Tracks* e-Newsletter. More promotion than ever as a big thank you to our early exhibitors! [Learn more about the Symposium](#) or [download the exhibitor packet...](#)

More delays bring more questions on transportation funding bills

The long-awaited House version of the transportation funding bill was delayed until after Congress returns January 17. The Senate bill, released in November, eliminates dedicated funding for trails and bike/ped projects. Many questions remain on how the House bill would treat the Transportation Enhancements and Recreational Trails programs. Meanwhile Rep. John Carney (D-DE) and Rep. Aaron Schock (R-IL) wrote on behalf of 111 House members, both Democrats and Republicans, asking the President to support a "fully paid-for" six-year transportation funding bill. [Read more and see current status...](#)

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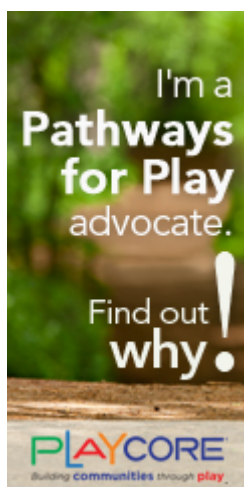
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Continuing threat to LWCF parks, trails, and open space funding

A bipartisan effort is underway to ensure that Land and Water Conservation Fund funding is preserved in any legislative proposal. The goal is to provide full, permanent, and dedicated funding for LWCF, which has helped thousands of park, trail, and open space projects. A bipartisan "Dear Colleague" letter supporting funding has been signed by 120 House members. [Read more and learn how you can support LWCF funding...](#)

Comment on guidelines for accessible public rights-of-way by Feb. 2, 2012

The Access Board has reopened the comment period on its proposed guidelines for accessible public rights-of-way until February 2, 2012. This action is being taken in response to requests from interested parties, including government and trade associations, for additional time to submit comments on the rule. The proposed guidelines address access to public streets and sidewalks, street crossings, on-street parking, and other components of public rights-of-way. [Read more and learn how to comment...](#)

Last chance to enter our contests for websites and NRT photos

December 31 is the deadline to enter the American Trails contest for photographs of National Recreation Trails across the country. We provide awards in several categories and show off entries (and previous winners) on the NRT website. [Read more and see photos from previous contests...](#)

The American Trails Website Contest recognizes websites of all sizes, types, and interests. Links to all nominated sites are added to the American Trails state trails pages. Winners in each category will be featured online, in print, and throughout cyberspace! [Read more and learn how to enter your favorite site...](#)

NOHVCC seeks input: planning for future of off-highway vehicle recreation

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council is in the process of planning future tools as part of the goal to "Create a Positive Future for OHV Recreation." NOHVCC would like help in making the right planning choices by learning the needs of the community. Is there a study that has not yet been done that should be done? Is there a program or an issue that should be developed? Is there a case study that should be publicized? A product that you wish existed? Is there a product, program, or study that exists but needs to be updated or promoted to be more effective? [Read more...](#)

Support trails and keep up to date on actions in Washington, DC

American Trails "SUPPORTING TRAILS" pages provide the facts on current issues and debates and the ongoing efforts of American Trails to continue its [20+ years of support](#) for positive policies and funding for trails and greenways. Please join our efforts to document the value of trails and bicycle/pedestrian facilities as transportation infrastructure, and be an active and positive voice in the reauthorization process, and Federal land management agency budgets. We continuously add news and action items to these pages. [Check back often and forward this link on through your networks...](#)

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JOIN THE AMERICAN TRAILS NETWORK

Your support helps us help trails!

Volunteer or intern with American Trails!

Start the New Year off right for 2012! American Trails is looking for volunteers or interns to assist us in a variety of ways. You do not have to be local to volunteer -- you can work from the convenience of your own home, on your schedule. We are looking for assistance with web-based research, data entry, project assistance, and more. [Check out some areas we need volunteers and interns.](#) Interested? Email [Candace Mitchell](#) with your areas of interest and computer skills.

Thanks for your support in 2011!

2011 was a good year for American Trails! Because of your work and dedication, the national trails community has built new trails, connected more people to nature, and increased accessibility to healthier lifestyles. We have ambitious plans for 2012 -- so ambitious that we'll only achieve our goals with unprecedented help from and collaboration with members of the trails community. We're asking you, our trail heroes, to support these endeavors by giving \$10 to trails this year. We're also challenging you to get all your friends and colleagues to do the same. [Give \\$10 to Trails...](#)

NEWS

Congratulations on Arizona National Scenic Trail milestone

The Arizona Trail is complete after twenty-six years of dedicated effort. The trail is a continuous, 800+ mile, diverse, and scenic route across Arizona from Mexico to Utah. Pam Gluck, Executive Director of American Trails, sent a letter to be read December 16 at the completion ceremony of the trails recognizing the inspirational leaders of the Arizona Trail Association, the dedicated land managing agencies and their tireless employees, and to all the volunteers who helped make this trail possible. [Read more and see photos...](#)

Outside Magazine named American Trails in their top 30 organizations

Recently, *Outside Magazine* selected American Trails as one of their top 30 organizations working to make this world better. In the December 2011 issue, *Outside* lists its 30 best -- smartly managed groups in their guide for giving. See "[The Outside Guide to Fixing the World](#)" for details about American Trails and 29 other organizations they recognized. Needless to say [we were pleased](#) to know *Outside* spotted American Trails when they went on their quest to find the best.

Big Four Bridge linking IN and KY has businesses thinking big

A major railroad bridge over the Ohio River between Louisville, Kentucky, and Jeffersonville, Indiana is being converted into a trail. The 2,525-foot bridge was built in 1929 on the giant piers of the original 1895 bridge it replaced. Business people are expecting the project will bring walkers and cyclists from Louisville to Jeffersonville's historic downtown. Big ramps are being built at each end to bring trail users up to the bridge level. [Read more...](#)

Portland, OR trail debate: 1,000 feet of paved 10-13% grade



Quick Links

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Cyclists and trail advocates in Portland have a lot to say about the Waud Bluff Trail which will improve access to the Willamette River. The \$3.2 million project includes 1,000 feet of paved trail at a 10-13% grade, a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and stairs. "Some stakeholders are pleased that the trail will be so steep. According to a PP&R press release, the U.S. Coast Guard station on Swan Island plans to use the steep trail for physical training." [Read more...](#)

The Impulsive Traveler: walking New York City's shorelines

Cy Adler, the founder of the 30-year-old walking club Shorewalkers, has logged hundreds of hours traversing New York's shorelines and bridges. The group's many volunteers lead several walks every week, year-round, throughout the five boroughs, and the New York suburbs. It's now possible to walk or bike along an uninterrupted greenway that traverses nearly all of Manhattan's West Side waterfront, from Battery Park in the south to Dyckman Street in the north. And in March, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced a \$3.3 billion plan to invest in revamping even more of the city's shorelines. [Read more...](#)

Wisconsin's Fox Cities Trestle Trail sees 80% spike in use

Six years after the recreational trail over water in Wisconsin opened in late July 2005, officials say the popularity of one of the state's busiest recreational trails has continued to grow. A trail counter located near Fritse Park recorded 354,631 users over the year that ended Oct. 31, 2011 -- an 80% increase over the 197,156 count recorded for November 2009 to October 2010. [Read more...](#)

GIS enhances printing for new generations of trail maps

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is about to release the 10th edition of its North Jersey Trails Map set. According to cartographer Jeremy Apgar, the new edition is the end result of hundreds of hours of in-house software manipulation, state park participation, and volunteer data collection, which provides most of the information that allows these routes to be charted and re-charted. Volunteers log GPS coordinates and satellite images, which are then applied to digital geographic information system maps. [Read more...](#)

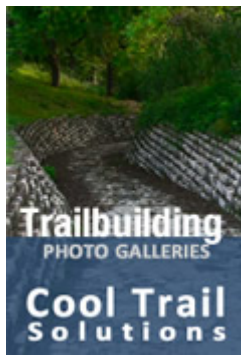
FEATURES

Harrowing experiences on the trail: Part 1, by Roger Bell

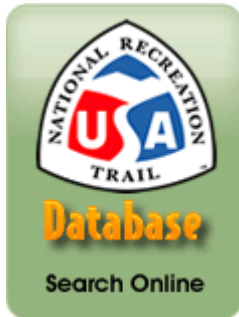
Roger Bell tells us some stories of challenging times in backcountry environments: "I'm guessing all serious trail users and builders can recall at least a few intense, cautionary moments when things got harrowing, where quick decisions were crucial, and from which you gathered wisdom about being prepared in the wilds. And invariably such experiences help tap inner resources of inestimable value to our lives beyond the trail." [Read more...](#)

Jeju Olle Trail, South Korea named as provisional winner of New 7 Wonders of Nature

Trails are most definitely a worldwide movement and American Trails got the opportunity to take part in the 2nd World Trail Conference in South Korea this past November on Jeju Island. Part of the trip included exploring



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the vast Jeju Olle Trail, named as one of the provisional winners of the New 7 Wonders of Nature contest, and it comes as no surprise considering the picturesque volcanic lava rock scenery, ocean cliff views, and beautiful groves of tangerine trees. [Read more...](#)

San Clemente builds coastal trail along active railroad tracks

The City of San Clemente has completed a "rail with trail" project along 2.5 miles of active railroad tracks in Orange County Transportation Authority right-of-way. Amtrak trains as well as freight trains use the busy rail corridor, which runs along popular public beaches. The project includes five new licensed at-grade pedestrian crossings, one new pedestrian under-crossing, improved access for three existing under-crossings, and one at-grade crossing. [Read more and see photos...](#)

Living Bridge in Meghalaya, India constructed by living roots of fig trees

A bridge in Meghalaya, a state in north-eastern India, is constructed by the living roots of fig trees. This is actually "sustainable living architecture." [Watch the video...](#)

Featured National Recreation Trail: Sandtown Nature Trail at Sequoyah NWR, OK

Sandtown Nature Trail gives visitors a glimpse of the 20,800 acres of the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge near Vian, Oklahoma. The refuge is nestled in the gently rolling foothills of the Ozark Mountains and serves as a major stopover for waterfowl during their spring and fall migrations. The trail has been reconfigured as a one-mile paved loop to improve accessibility, while enhancing its role in environmental education. Since paving the trail, the number of visitors has increased dramatically. This year the trail was officially recognized as a National Recreation Trail. [Read more and see photos...](#)

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Trails training survey samples opinions from over 1,000 trail supporters

Over 1,000 people involved in trails provided responses to a trails training survey administered in October-November 2011. The online survey was conducted by American Trails for the National Trails Training Partnership (NTP), a nationwide cooperative effort to improve the quality and availability of trail-related skills. FHWA funded the survey through the Recreational Trails Program. The survey asked respondents to share their experience and ideas on effective types of training and delivery methods, as well as identifying important skills where training is needed. [Read more and download a summary of results...](#)

Arizona will host 2013 American Trails International Trails Symposium

Plan to join us April 14-17, 2013 at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Resort Destination, AAA Four Diamond Radisson Resort & Conference Center, near Fountain Hills, Mesa, and Scottsdale, Arizona. Arizona's recreation leaders are enthusiastic about hosting this event because of the educational opportunities this conference will provide for trail planners and

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trail enthusiasts alike. Arizona has been able to gather amazing public support for preserving open space and developing trails over the past ten plus years. [Read more...](#)

American Trails blog covers topics across the trails community

Join the conversation on trails with the American Trails blog! You'll find regular updates on current topics and ideas and opinions from the world of trails. We also will be sharing photos and information on trail projects as well as interesting solutions for trail design, access, interpretation, and management. You are also welcome to share your own ideas, resources, and questions. [Join the conversation on the American Trails blog...](#)

Learn about classes and training for trail skills across America

Check the Online Training Calendar for a wide variety of learning opportunities for volunteers and professionals engaged with trails of all kinds. American Trails, through the National Trails Training Partnership (NTTP), works with agencies and organizations across America to promote trail-related training. Let us know if we can publicize your training, courses, workshops, or conferences! *See details on events below and many more opportunities for training on the [Online Trails Training Calendar...](#)*

Upcoming trail-related training opportunities in 2012:

January 3 - Online webinar: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm CST

* Webinar: Fundraising For Byways

February 1-3, 2012 - San Antonio, TX

* Texas Trails and Active Transportation Conference

February 2-4 - San Diego, CA

* New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

February 11 - Davis, CA

* Open House for Horse Programs

February 11-16 - Washington, DC

* Hike the Hill: Trails Advocacy Week 2012

February 12-15 - Washington, DC

* The Corps Network's 2012 National Conference

February 13-16 - San Francisco, CA

* Principles & Techniques of Fundraising

March 4-8 - Las Vegas, NV

* Association of Partners for Public Lands Convention & Trade Show

March 7-8 - Albuquerque, NM

* Trail Contracting Roundtable

March 9-11 - Columbiana, AL

* Alabama Hiking Trail Society Conference

March 12-14 - Orlando, FL

* National ADA Symposium

Contact us with your scheduled training opportunities at

NTTP@AmericanTrails.org.

NEW RESOURCES

Cool Trail Solutions photo gallery: interpretive signs and displays along trails

One of the attractions of trails is that they provide a close look at natural areas, neighborhoods, or wild places. This "sense of place" is what brings people back to a pathway. Many trails are specifically designed as "nature trails" to teach school groups and the public about a particular habitat or ecosystem. Many different kinds of signs are in use, from the basic plaque to large gazebo-style exhibits. [Read more and browse the Cool Trail Solutions photo gallery...](#)

Five "best practices" for increasing trail use from Hike Ontario

An understanding of the trail experience is critical to developing strategies for increasing trail use. It is also important to understand the barriers and factors that may prevent people from using trails. Hike Ontario, with funding from the Trails for Life program, has gathered many case studies to highlight various ways to make trails more attractive and usable. The guide highlights ways to collaborate, market, enhance the trail experience, and target specific audiences. [Read more and download the guidebook...](#)

Playful pathways: a national model in Germantown, TN

An innovative community uses play to get kids in nature and active on trails. The city of Germantown, TN incorporated PlayCore's Pathways for Play design principles, and used a series of park grants to help design and fund the project. The five nature-themed play pockets along the path leading to the playground feature playful interactive exhibits that include a butterfly metamorphosis, spider habitat, leaves, pond life, and birds. To further increase play value, additional native plants were added to the landscape, and picnic tables and benches were placed under a grove of trees near the playground. [Read more and see photos...](#)

50-State America's Great Outdoors Report from Department of Interior

The intent of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to build on the country's heritage of conservation. The report highlights two projects in each state that were identified for their potential to conserve important lands and build recreation opportunities and economic growth for the surrounding communities. While the Department of the Interior "will not be in a position to provide significant financial resources to most projects," DOI says it will work with states and communities to advance these projects with existing resources. [Read more...](#)

Book review: *Bicycling Guide to the Mississippi River Trail*

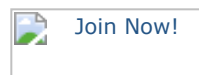
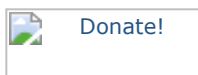
About.com reviewed this informative guidebook: "When cyclists think of crossing the country on bike, perhaps one of the major east-west touring routes comes to mind first. However, it would be a big mistake to overlook the Mississippi River Trail, a marked bike route that follows the historic river on its 2,000 mile course from Itasca State Park, where the river's headwaters are found in northern Minnesota, all the way down to where the Mississippi enters the Gulf of Mexico at the southernmost point in Louisiana. To help guide fellow travelers on their own version of this epic trip, author and cyclist Bob Robinson has compiled the *Bicycling Guide to the Mississippi River Trail*." [Read more of the review on About.com...](#)

JOIN THE AMERICAN TRAILS NETWORK

Your support helps us help trails!

Our mission is to enrich lives and communities by advancing the development of trails and greenways. If you've enjoyed any trails in the last 23 years, odds are good that American Trails' work has benefited their development. ***Congress is taking dramatic steps to reduce federal trails funding in the upcoming year.*** American Trails knows that you are passionate about trails and the positive impacts they bring to your community. We need your commitment of support in order to help us secure funding and to continue advocating for more and better trails across the country! *Please take a moment to [become a member of the American Trails network](#) or [make a donation](#) to support our work...*

Thank you for supporting American Trails and America's trails!

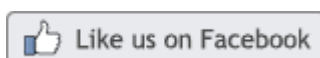


QUICK LINKS

- [Join us on Facebook and Twitter!](#)
- **Attend, Exhibit, Sponsor!** The [21st American Trails International Trails Symposium \(ITS\)](#) ~ April 14-17, 2013. Check out the early exhibitor discounts and benefits and their deadlines!
- I'm a [Pathways for Play](#) advocate. [Ask me why.](#)
- The [NTTP Online Calendar](#) connects you with courses, conferences, and trail-related training.
- Need Trails Training? Visit www.TrailsTraining.net.
- [Find Products and Services for Trails.](#)
- The largest online resource in the world for trail advocates is www.AmericanTrails.org.
- Purchase books and memberships through the [American Trails Online Store](#).
- What's your opinion? [Send us](#) your editorial or opinion piece.
- [Cool Trail Solutions](#): view galleries of trail projects, enhancements, and facilities to give you ideas and see how others solved typical trails and greenways problems.
- If you appreciate the thousands of resources we provide to help you do your work better, please help support American Trails ~ [make a donation today](#).
- [Join American Trails](#) and receive a 40% discounted rate (dropping the price to just \$29.95) on an annual unlimited subscription for access to over 47,000 trails on Trails.com.
- American Trails wants your opinion! [Take our online web survey!](#)
- **Join American Trails** - the World's most comprehensive online go-to source for planning, designing, building, funding, managing, enhancing, and supporting trails and greenways ~ [Join Now!](#)

Send news and calendar items to trailhead@americantrails.org.

American Trails is a tax-exempt, nonprofit charitable organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.



Header photo: Flatirons Vista Trail, City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, CO; photo by Scott Linnenburger

