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Spring 2012

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Contents

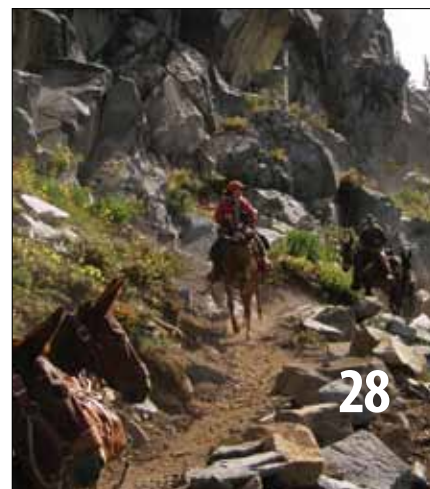
FEATURES

- 6 New Zealand builds cycle system**
National network of cycle trails supported by top agencies for economic benefits
- 10 Fountain Hills, Arizona**
Trails will lead to desert adventures at the 2013 International Trails Symposium
- 12 Symposium sponsors and awards**
The American Trails International Trails Symposium highlights trails and people
- 15 China launches greenway project**
Pearl River Delta Greenway Network will serve 25 million Chinese
- 24 A model for accessibility**
Crotched Mountain trail system provides natural setting for technical training
- 28 Making trail partnerships work**
Equestrians are the heart of volunteer efforts on national forest trail system



RESOURCES

- 25 Training opportunities**
Webinars, conferences, and courses across America can enhance trail skills
- 26 Locating playful paths**
Location plays a powerful role in the overall success of Pathways for Play
- 34 A new vision for American Trails**
Nine core values that cover the breadth of benefits that trails and greenways offer



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American Trails Magazine

American Trails Magazine (ISSN 1082-8303) is the magazine of American Trails, the nonprofit organization dedicated to quality trails and greenways within 15 minutes of every American home, school, and workplace.

Editor: Stuart H. Macdonald

Subscriptions are \$35 per year or free with membership—see page 35 for membership form.

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EDITORIAL

The value of what we do

It's no secret that the trails and greenway movement has been facing challenging times. The deficit challenges, a faltering economy, a deflating real estate market, and unemployment have sent us on a turbulent course. Right now there is no smooth air in sight. And, with tight times, there are many competing needs vying for limited dollars. Couple this with a vocal segment expressing opposition, even disdain, for any "non-essential" government programs, and it becomes a near perfect storm.

One can feel discouraged or, instead, picture a 17 year-old Hulet Hornbeck enlisting in the army and finding himself strapped into a B-17 flying off of a South Pacific airstrip into a gnarly sky—extremely dangerous even when the weather was good! He was undaunted and did what he had to do. He believed in this mission. He came back and remained a gentle but persistent warrior for the mission of public lands, trails, and preserving our nation's natural beauty—facing constant and daunting challenges (See "Hulet remembered" on page 32).

So when we feel frustrated or the outlook turns bleak we can remember Hulet, strap ourselves in, and continue. We need only look at the National Parks movement, the work of John Muir and folks like Hulet to know the current challenges are nothing new. Even in tough times communities are still passing trails and open space initiatives and still planning and building greenways and trails. We need to remember that when our cause is right, we believe in it, and we persist, we succeed.

Charlie Willard, past California State Trails Coordinator who worked with Hulet for many years, said "One of Hulet's favorite pieces of advice was that we in the park and trail movement are our own worst enemy. We too easily give in and don't fully recognize nor articulate the value of what we do."

I think Roger Bell, Vice-Chair of American Trails, provided a fitting conclusion: "It's a time to grieve his passing, but more importantly and along with so many others in a wide, encompassing circle, to celebrate one incredibly meaningful life."

— Robert Searns, Chair, American Trails

Identification Statement

Publication's title and number: American Trails Magazine (ISSN 1082-8303)

Issue date: April 15, 2012

Statement of frequency: Published three times a year

Authorized organization's name, address, phone number: American Trails, P.O. Box 491797, Redding, CA 96049-1797

Physical Address: 21750 Rolling Hills Drive, Palo Cedro, CA 96073 - Phone (530) 547-2060

Issue Number: Volume 41 Number 1

Subscription price: \$35 per year or free with membership

SUPPORTING TRAILS in CONGRESS



American Trails and other nationwide organizations are working together to support Recreational Trails, Enhancements, and Safe Routes to School programs as Congress debates federal transportation funding. The Coalition for Recreational Trails is a key group in defending funds for the Recreational Trails Programs. See our Web page for more about supporting these vital federal transportation programs: www.AmericanTrails.org/rtp.

■ Funding for trails is still temporary; Congress passes the buck again

We are still in a holding pattern with federal funding for Recreational Trails, Enhancements, and other programs for walkers and cyclists. While members of Congress try to score political points on the ongoing debate, time for considering a new transportation funding bill has again run out. The temporary solution was for Congress to extend SAFETEA-LU for the ninth time since 2009, expiring now on June 30.

The one big accomplishment is that supporters have made enough noise to keep funding for important programs in the Senate's two-year transportation bill. Approved in a bipartisan vote in March, the Senate bill would maintain funding for the Recreational Trails Program at \$85 million for Fiscal Year 2012 and 2013. It also ensures that two percent of the transportation budget is set aside for bicycle and pedestrian programs.

The House, however, has not been able to pass its own bill. The next fight will likely be over an updated version of the House bill, or possibly over the Senate bill if supporters can bring it to a conference of both chambers.

■ Land and Water Conservation Fund Senate bill would fund federal acquisition

The Senate transportation bill also includes dedicated funding and long-term authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. An amendment passed with support of both Democrats and Republicans which:

- Provides \$700 million in dedicated LWCF funding for each of the next two years beginning in FY13
- Extends the LWCF Act's authorization for an additional seven years (through 2022)

The National Recreation and Park Association and other groups are concerned that the Senate provision does not set aside money for the state LWCF program. The concern is that it would allow Congress to approve the full \$700 million for federal land acquisition each year and shut out state grants. The "statewide" program, which funds local government projects, has been important in past years for trail and greenway development.

For current information on LWCF program funding, visit www.AmericanTrails.org/support.html.

■ Your action has made a difference Congress hears from trails community

Through the interminable fight for funding, members of Congress have heard a great deal from advocates of trails as well as bicycle and pedestrian programs. Even though it seems like the same challenges come up over and over again, it is crucial to keep supporting our programs. Transportation spending bills in both House and Senate will eventually come to a vote, and we all need to be alert. Please keep an eye on the proceedings through our email alerts and website. We'll help you make the case for trails in a comprehensive transportation policy.

Watch for action on legislation and key programs at www.AmericanTrails.org/support.html.

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**Keep up to date on funding and legislation supporting trails:
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The 932-foot long Hapuawhenua Bridge on the Mountains to Sea Trail, Ruapehu, New Zealand

New trails for New Zealand

1,000 miles of the New Zealand Cycle Trail built

By Sarah Berry,
Ministry of Economic Development

The New Zealand Cycle Trail is a network of 19 “Great Rides” being built across the country. The Great Rides will offer cyclists the chance to ride through the cool of the New Zealand bush; dense with fern, dappled with light, where the only sound is the call of native birds loud above the hum of a bike. Or, to experience a trail that will round a wide sweeping bend to a

view that simply takes their breath away—stunning snowcapped peaks mirrored in a deep, still lake.

Marketed as the 100% pure adventure playground of the world, New Zealand is one of the most untouched natural wildernesses on earth. The country’s economy is particularly tied to the tourism industry, which contributes close to 10% of New Zealand’s Gross Domestic Product, as well as directly and indirectly employing nearly one in ten citizens.

The big idea

In February 2009, grappling with the international recession, the New Zealand Government hosted a meeting of some of the country’s top minds and business leaders to map out innovative ideas to keep New Zea-

land’s economy growing. One of the most popular, if “left field” projects to emerge from the summit, was the plan to build a national network of cycle trails.

New Zealand Cycle Trail Programme Manager John Dunn says the vision, based on sound economic planning, was to create immediate jobs through construction of the trails, and longer term jobs via the increased tourism that a network of trails would bring.

“Our objective is to encourage visitors to ride our network of Great Rides. The brand Nga Haerenga means “the journeys,” both in a physical and spiritual sense, and this is exactly the sort of experience we want visitors to New Zealand to enjoy,” Mr. Dunn says.

The Government invested \$NZ 50 million (about \$US 42 million) into the New Zealand Cycle Trail project

during 2009-2013. With 1,000 miles already built and 1,500 miles planned, these iconic Great Rides are expected to be completed in 2013.

Prime Minister John Key says, "The trail is designed to showcase the very best of our country—our spectacular scenery, unique culture, and first-class Kiwi hospitality. We have embraced the cycle trail as a way to build a valuable new asset for the tourism industry, with lasting economic benefits. It will bring important export dollars into our economy, provide a welcome boost to businesses, and create jobs in communities near the trails."

Economic value

The cycle trail also gained strong support from the Green Party of Aotearoa, New Zealand, which became a key partner in the project. Green Party Member of Parliament Kevin Hague, a keen cyclist, says cycle trail networks are not only good for people and the planet, but they also make great economic sense.

"Cycle tourists tend to stay longer and spend more, with the benefits spread across the regions they are in," Mr. Hague says.

One inspiration for New Zealand was the United Kingdom National Cycle Network (Sustrans), started with seed funding of £43 million (about



Sharing the road on the Around the Mountains Trail, Queenstown; photo from Around the Mountains Trail

\$US 68 million) in 1995. That network now consists of over 10,000 miles of signed cycle routes carrying 386 million journeys in 2008.

"For every £1 spent on the UK cycle network, they're now realising up to £18-40 in benefits, particularly where the cycleway runs through urban areas," Mr. Hague adds.

The job of bringing the network of Great Rides into reality was allocated to New Zealand's Ministry of Economic Development, which then offered regional communities the chance to pitch funding applications to develop cycle trails across the

country.

"A fundamental factor towards stimulating economic development was that each regional trail partner was required to put forward co-funding for the trail which they wanted to build in their region," Mr. Dunn says.

"This co-funding is often being used to enhance the overall local experience for riders. An excellent example of this is a project which will see 6,000 native trees planted on the Twin Coast Cycle Trail in the Far North. This is being made possible by a \$40,000 grant from a major energy company," Mr. Dunn adds.

With around 60 funding applications to review, the Ministry's advisors along with regional trail partners, and an expert panel known as the Technical Assessment Group had started construction on the first of the 19 Great Rides by early 2010.

Construction progress

Roll forward to April 2012 and progress is now well underway. Four Great Rides have been completed and opened, construction on the remaining Great Rides is well underway, and 11 more already have sections that are open and in use.

One of the highlights of the trail has been the chance to include more than



St. James Cycle Trail, Hamner Springs; photo from St. James Cycle Trail

Continued on page 8

New Zealand continued

400 bridges on the cycle trails, many of which are expected to provide a major attraction for tourists.

"The 932-foot long Hapuawhenua Bridge on the Mountains to Sea Trail, located on the edge of New Zealand's largest active volcano, offers outstanding views over native forest and woodlands. Meanwhile the Te Rewa Rewa Bridge on New Plymouth's Forgotten World Highway, reminiscent of both a breaking wave and whale skeleton has already won two significant international awards," Mr. Dunn says.

Another key idea is to link the Great Rides to on-road cycle touring routes, the first three of which were launched in the North Island town of Taumarunui in August 2011.

"The original idea for the cycle routes grew out of our desire to enable cycle tourists to get from urban centres onto the Great Rides and between the Great Rides using quiet and safer back country roads. These cycle routes will encourage cyclists and cycle tourists to use safer and more enjoyable cycling routes and steer them away from busy state highways," Mr. Dunn says.

Achieving the vision

As more Great Rides are opened, marketing gurus at Tourism New Zealand are working to promote New Zealand as a global cycling destination. A new website offers riders a place to start planning their cycling itineraries as well as link to individual trail websites.

And, the project has also recently launched an Official Partner Programme to encourage local businesses to partner up with their local trails to offer services such as cycle tour guiding, transport, and accommodation to make the Great Ride experiences as easily accessible as possible for tourists.

There are already dozens of examples of businesses and communities

beginning to reap the benefits of the trails at a local level, Mr. Dunn says.

"There's a ski shop, TCB Adventure Sport, near the Mountains to Sea Trail in Ohakune for example, that used to only be open over the winter ski season. With a new cycle trail on their doorstep, this business has now expanded its range to offer bikes and bike accessories. They've now been able to take on new staff and keep the shop open right through the year, renting and selling bikes through the summer season. That's a great outcome with a real positive impact in the local town."

"We have embraced the cycle trail as a way to build a valuable new asset for the tourism industry, with lasting economic benefits."

- John Key, New Zealand Prime Minister

An important new partner is the Otago Central Rail Trail, New Zealand's most famous existing trail, which expects to benefit from the mass marketing of all the trails to the world. The latest user survey report from the Otago Central Rail Trail in June 2011 showed that this trail now



Te Rewa Rewa Bridge, Forgotten World Highway, New Plymouth; photo by Kennett Brothers

brings \$NZ 12.2 million into the local economy every year. That's up a significant \$NZ 5 million from the last report done in 2009.

And the benefits aren't all economic. Further north, on Northland's Twin Coast Cycle Trail, a local district health board has gifted bikes to a local school making it possible for children to ride to and from school along the new cycle trail. It's a great example of community collaboration, bringing important health and educational benefits to the region.

For more information on the New Zealand Cycle Trail visit www.nzcycletrail.com.



Thermal by Bike Trail, Rotorua; photo from Thermal by Bike Trail



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Photo by Becky Collman

Fountain Hills

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Uncover the secrets of more than 36,000 acres of Arizona's Sonoran desert? Impossible. But wouldn't it be fun to try? And there is no better place to start than Fountain Hills and Fort McDowell. Here, within easy reach of wilderness, small town charms, and authentic history is your base camp for desert discovery.

Once you've taken in panoramic views of rugged mountains and slopes lush with vegetation unique to the Sonoran desert, choose from a network of trails for hiking, biking, and wildlife watching at McDowell Mountain Regional Park or Fountain Hills McDowell Mountain Preserve. Both the Park and the Preserve connect to Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Together, these three areas connect you to a total of over 36,000 acres of contiguous Sonoran desert.

Thanks to the foresight of Fountain Hills residents determined to preserve natural beauty and wildlife habitat, today the Fountain Hills McDowell Mountain Preserve is 740 acres of open space and consists of four trails, with connectivity into the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and the McDowell Mountain Regional Park. The Preserve runs adjacent to the southern, western, and northern borders of

Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Maricopa County's McDowell Mountain Regional Park.

The McDowell Mountain Regional Park is a 21,099-acre paradise for hikers and mountain bikers and just four miles from Fountain Hills. McDowell Mountain Regional Park has over 50 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails through desert terrain found only



Photo by Fort McDowell Adventures

Welcoming the Symposium

"It's an honor to be selected as the destination for the 2013 International Trails Symposium. It will be the most prominent conference our destination has ever hosted. We are in full swing preparing activities to make this conference an unforgettable experience for attendees. Fountain Hills and Fort McDowell area offer the outdoor enthusiast a wide range of activities from easy hikes to challenging rides to float trips, there's something for everyone and we can't wait to share it."

— Mark McDermott, Director,
Fountain Hills, AZ Visitors Bureau

in this unique part of the world. Wildlife viewings are common; look for deer, javelina, coyotes, bobcats, and a multitude of bird species. A few trails are less than a mile; several are one to four miles; and the Pemberton Trail is 15.3 miles. Elevations rise from 1,600 feet to 3,000 feet at the base of the McDowell Mountains. One thing they all have in common is the awesome views of the mountains and desert. Mountain bikers can choose three different loops, of 8.2, 3.0, and 2.9 miles on the competitive track. The 3.0-mile length is a sport loop and the 2.9-mile length is a technical loop. Challenge your biking abilities with obstacles, steep inclines, swooping turns, technical descents, and rugged terrain.

Desert discovery in the Fountain Hills Fort McDowell area means nothing if not variety plus choices for numerous paths to exploration. If you are looking for trails that are both easy and rewarding, you have found the right spot. For example, the Lake Overlook Trail just off Panorama Boulevard across the street from Fountain Park is a readily accessed trail that rewards you with grab-the-camera-now views of Fountain Park set against hills and mountains jutting into the sky. From the trail overlook you have a bird's eye view of the Town and Fountain Park as well as scenic vistas of the majestic Four Peaks Mountain and Fort McDowell Yavapai reservation.

Make a five-minute drive and you can pair your Lake Overlook Trail hike with a stroll through the Fountain Hills Botanical Garden, just off Fountain Hills Boulevard. The garden is eight acres with elevations 1,696 to 1,800 feet. The perfect place to answer those nagging "I wonder what this one is called," botanical questions, the garden helpfully identifies many Sonoran Desert plants for you along a half-mile meandering trail on the desert slopes. Take in views of rock formations, desert flora, animal life, and an abandoned P-Bar Ranch campsite next to an old

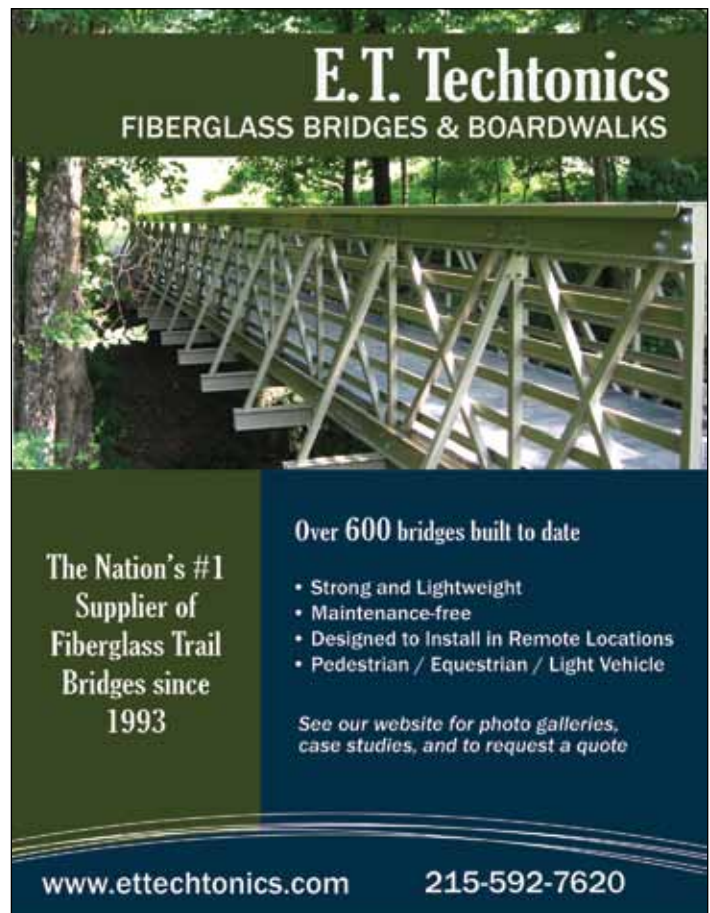
constructed dam wall.

Inviting you to look skyward is one of the world's highest fountains cascading into a blue lake ringed by a 33-acre green park with a 1.25-mile paved walking path. The town's famous fountain marks time, sending a graceful plume of water up to 360 feet high at the top of the hour from 9 AM to 9 PM.

Flowing rivers are rare in the desert, yet as home to the Salt River and Verde River, this area embraces two of the Southwest's largest and most scenic waterways. And lovely Saguaro Lake is only a few minutes away. Its beauty can be appreciated from the Lakeshore Restaurant, a boat cruise, or by renting a boat from the marina. Tubing down the Salt River is a cool experience in summer. Tubes and kayaks can be rented from Saguaro Lake Ranch Resort and Salt River Recreation.

Surrounded by beauty and connecting you to the desert, wilderness, relaxation, and history, the Fountain Hills destination is a delightful base camp to many memorable experiences.

For more information on recreation opportunities and events in Fountain Hills, visit www.fountainhillschamber.com.



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July 31 is the deadline for a 15% discount for exhibitors at the 2013 American Trails International Trails Symposium

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Exhibitors

Bring your business or nonprofit to the attention of the nation's trail-building community. Get great discounts and perks for signing up early, including choosing your booth location in the order we receive your contract!

There are opportunities to help build the "indoor trails & greenway system" inside the exhibit hall, too! We

are looking for all trail products from trail bridges, restrooms, trail building equipment, bicycles, ATVs, canoes, and camping equipment, to surfacing materials, greenery (trees, shrubs, flowers), signage, benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles— to name a few. You will receive recognition for your donated items, as well as give our attendees the opportunity to physically see your trail products first-hand in a virtual trail setting!

See photos and information on previous Symposium exhibit halls at www.AmericanTrails.org/2013/hall.html.

Sponsors

Host a keynote luncheon speaker, opening reception, awards banquet, happy trails hour, exhibit hall tents, or sponsor the conference bags or badge holders, among other events and items. Several great sponsor opportunities are available ranging from \$25 to \$30,000+.

Download exhibitor and sponsor contracts for the Symposium at www.AmericanTrails.org/2013. To discuss these opportunities, contact Candace Mitchell at candace@americantrails.org or call (530) 547-2060.



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21st American Trails International Trails Symposium

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- Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls
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- Professional Trailbuilders Association
- Santa Fe Trail Association

Manzanita ~ \$400 (table)

- Advanced Resource Solutions, Inc.
- Wheeler

National Trails Awards

Nominations for National Trails Awards are now open. Don't miss this great opportunity to nominate an outstanding person, project, or organization that has impacted the world of trails over the last two years. The National Trails Awards Program, sponsored by American Trails, recognizes the tremendous contributions of leaders who are working to create a national system of trails for all Americans. The awards will be announced at the American Trails International Trails Symposium Awards Banquet April 16, 2013.

The deadline for nominations is October 31, 2012.

Developers Award

This award recognizes well-designed trail systems that are integrated into private developments to encourage active lifestyles, reduce reliance on vehicles, connect to other pathways and destinations, and preserve and promote natural areas.

International Trails Award

This new award will recognize an outstanding project or partnership outside the United States for planning, design, or implementation that enhances the worldwide trails movement. Submissions are encouraged for projects that successfully address issues such as planning, design, challenges, public participation, sustainability, economic benefits, promotion, eco-tourism, and benefits to the local and global community.

Award Categories

Lifetime Service Award: For an individual demonstrating longstanding, significant, and exemplary service to trails planning, implementation, and recreation.

Best Trails State Award: This award recognizes a state which is facilitating an outstanding statewide system of trails.

Community Service Award: For a trail organization that performs exceptional community service relating to but beyond trail work per se.

Corporate Award: For a business or corporation that has demonstrated exemplary service to trails planning, implementation, and/or recreation.

Kids and Trails Award: This award honors efforts to engage children and youth in outdoor experiences using trails and related creative programs.

Outstanding Media Award: For significant efforts to provide positive public exposure and education to trail use, planning, or design.

Outstanding Trail Sharing Award: The award recognizes innovative and successful trail sharing efforts, programs, and systems.

Partnership Award: The partnership must have benefited agencies or services within the field of trail planning, design, or implementation.

Planning/Design Award: For problem solving through innovative methods on a trail project.

State-of-the-Art Technology Award: For a trails-related product, process, or service in trail design, development, or maintenance.

Trails and the Arts Award: For outstanding public art projects, interpretation, or creative structures associated with trail related improvements.

Trails for Health Award: For commitment to improving access to trails and promoting their use and importance for increasing physical activity.

Public Service Award: For an agency employee or volunteer, or elected or appointed official at the federal, state, or local level.

Trail Advocacy Award: (One award for each State, DC, and Puerto Rico): For efforts to influence public policy relating to trail planning, protection, development, or maintenance.

Trail Worker Award: (One award for each State, DC, and Puerto Rico): For outstanding trail planning, development, or maintenance work in a local area or state.

For more information, visit www.AmericanTrails.org/2013/awards.html.



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China launches greenway project

The Pearl River Delta Greenway Network

By Steve Han

In August 2009, the government of Guangdong Province, China, announced the first greenway project in this country's history—a major greenway network to serve the population of the greater Shenzhen region in southern China. This is an urban and rural area with over 25 million inhabitants.

Also known as the Guangdong Greenway, the *Pearl River Delta Greenway Network Plan* called for building a regional network of over 1,000 miles with six branches of inter-city routes networking 200 forest, parks, natural conversation areas, and scenic spots. The system would link both city and countryside.

The Governor of Guangdong Province emphasized that the project must take shape within one year, establish a complete framework in the second year, and significantly

advance in the third year. The intention is for the Guangdong Greenway to become a demonstration project both for the region and for the whole of China.

The greenway vision includes three major elements:

- Ecological greenways
- Rural greenways
- Urban greenways

At this point significant progress has been made with many miles of trails, dozens of trailheads, and fourteen



trail “inns” completed. In addition, over 150,000 trees and shrubs have been planted and over 80 acres of trailside green areas have been created. The trail system includes six main line routes ranging in length from 70 to 280 miles. In addition, the routes will connect 216 “improvement nodes” that include various public facilities and resorts.

In conjunction with the core system, there are numerous branch trails being planned and built simultaneously by local governments and municipal authorities, ultimately completing a total system length of over 1,300 miles and connecting nine cities. The aim is for any citizen in the region to have access to a route within a 15-minute walk.

The components of greenway network include five subsystems:

1. Green corridors, which are mainly green belts;
2. Multi-use trails;
3. Interconnections via ferry facilities;



Foreign students riding rental bikes on a section of China's new greenway

China launches greenway *continued*

4. Service facilities including inns, bed and breakfasts, and other lodging;
5. Access and wayfinding including trail heads, information boards, signage, and related furnishings.

Like the other major public infrastructure developments in China, this greenway is run by the government. Mr. Wang Yang, the governor of Guangdong Province, is the leader and top decision maker for this project.

As a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese government, he has been advocating for switching toward a more sustainable development of the economy. Indeed, more and more officials have reached a consensus that, along with growth, there have been serious consequences impacting



Top governors of Guangdong Province, including Mr. Wang Yang, on the trail

China's environment, ecology, and society, and that this must change.

The planning work for the Greenway has been directly led and coordinated by the government of Guangdong Province, and executed by the Guangdong Province Housing and Urban-Rural Construction Department together with municipal

agencies.

In the fundraising realm, the Government of Guangdong requires municipalities and agencies to contribute local public funds. Funding has also come from state-run and private enterprises, including many large companies. This is a typical aspect of project funding. It should be noted that the budget for this project has not been publicized.

As is the usual practice, all construction is coordinated by the lead agencies. Because of the massive workload and the limited time period, heavy equipment was used for construction.

At this time, operations and maintenance programming for the Greenway are being developed. Obviously for the key agencies that take on these tasks, such as the

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Bureau of Parks and Woods, a project this massive will be challenging. In addition, a recent Web news commentary raised concerns that some trailheads, path surfacing, and trees along trails have been vandalized. As yet there are no volunteer groups or NGO's participating. Generally the concept and development of NGOs in China are in the initial stages.

On the promotion front, the government has engaged TV, newspapers, and the Internet to introduce the greenway to citizens and organizes all kinds of events to promote the project. But until now many city residents have no idea what the greenway is.

At this point, however, guide documentations have been compiled and published by Housing and Urban-Rural Construction Department. These documents are another first in China.



A section of the Shenzhen Shore Pathway runs through a park

In addition to the Pearl River Delta Greenway there are other activities relative to the National Trail System in China. For example, the Chinese Mountaineering Association (CMA)

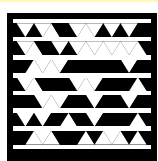
has been cooperating with local governments since 2009 on a number of projects part of what is referred to as the "National Trail System."

CMA has formulated their own trail authentication standards and several trails have been put into service, such as the Ninghai National Trail System in Zhejiang Province. But until now, there is no universally applicable act or bill in China specifically for trails and greenways.

Steve Han is a trails and greenway advocate and currently Visiting Professor of Finance and Economics at Tianjin University, which includes engagement in the Outdoor Recreation Resource Planning Project. He lives in Jinan City, China.

For more information, see our online article about the Pearl River Delta Greenway at www.americantrails.org/resources/international.

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FEATURED NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL

Niobrara Scenic River Water Trail



The Niobrara River, which was called Running Water by Indians and early settlers, extends across far northern Nebraska from its narrow beginning in eastern Wyoming. It empties into the Missouri River some 300 miles east between the village of Niobrara and Niobrara State Park. Its springs and waterfalls make this river one of the nation's best canoeing waters.

A 76-mile stretch of the Niobrara, including the section through the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), was designated a National Scenic River in 1991. The 5.6 miles of the Refuge portion of the river is considered the most "scenic" and offers visitors a unique experience not available elsewhere. The designated National Recreation Trail begins at the Fort Niobrara canoe launch at Wild and Scenic River mile 4.8, and continues 5.6 miles to the refuge's eastern boundary at river mile 10.4.

The Refuge section of the river is an interesting and diverse place. The river cuts a deep canyon into the sandstone rocks that underlie the Sandhills. Waterfalls occur where seeps and springs flow over layers of hard rock. Six major plant communities converge along the river and are situated according to their habitat needs and tolerances.

The diverse habitats draw a wide array of birds. The river canyon acts as a migration corridor for many bird species as well as a permanent home for several local species. Management of Fort Niobrara NWR focuses on conserving native birds, bison, elk, and the biological diversity of the area. Prescribed fire and planned periods of rest, or non-disturbance, are used in combination with grazing by bison and elk in an effort to mimic the historic processes that helped shape the native plant communities and the landscape.

The canoe launch is located adjacent to Cornel Bridge, on the upstream side. An ADA compliant launch is reserved for special needs, on the downstream side of the bridge. Allow 2-4 hours for a float trip through the Refuge. There is a \$1 per person launch fee. Private outfitters in the area rent watercraft and provide shuttle services.

More information on visiting the Refuge as well as a Niobrara Wildlife and Scenic River Guide can be found at www.fws.gov/fortniobrara.



Floating through Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge



Water trail access area on the river



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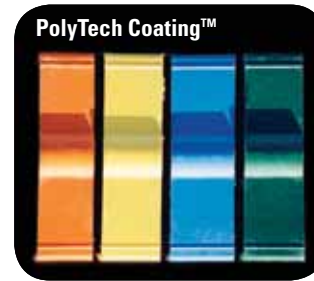
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4-Rail



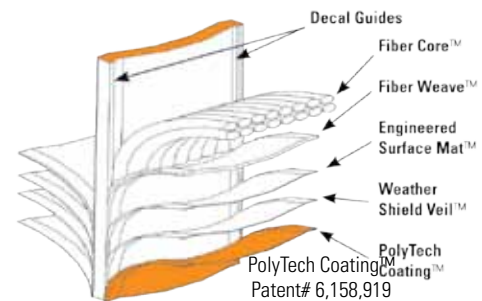
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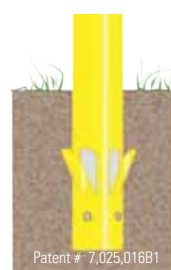
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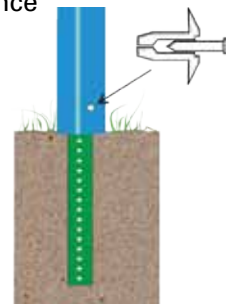


Patent # 7,025,016B1

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NRT Photo Contest winners for 2011

We are proud to announce this year's winners of the annual National Recreation Trails Photo Contest. Our goal is to show off these great trails with good photos of trail users and facilities, management ideas, construction, and volunteers. We also try to highlight the many types and uses of NRTs throughout America.

If you'd like to enter the 2012 contest, check the online searchable database for a list of NRTs in your state and for more information on individual trails.

See all the winning photos and the 275 entries at www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/photocon.html

THANKS TO THESE PHOTOGRAPHERS

(See photos at right)

1. Mary Shaw • Great Allegheny Passage, PA
2. Andrew Cost • Montevallo Greenway, AL
3. Sherry Sullivan • Eastern Shore Trail, AL
4. Roxie Crouch • Wetland Wonders Walk, UT
5. Lane Thomas • Metolious-Windigo Trail, OR
6. Mary Shaw • Three Rivers Heritage Trail, PA
7. Jody Carman • Berg and Animas Parks Trail System, NM
8. Doug Alderson • Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail

ADDITIONAL WINNING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Mark Alexander • Minooka Park Trail System, AL
Jonathan Canfield • Mountains-to-Sea Trail, NC
Spencer Cross • Lost Coast Trail, CA
Beth McCreless • Richard Martin Trail, AL
Rob Grant • Citronelle Trail, AL
Kari Kirby • Richard Martin Trail, AL
John Morgan • Chief Ladiga Trail, AL
Mary Shaw • Montour Trail, PA
Rick Sherman • Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail, AL
Linda Thomas • Metolious-Windigo Trail, OR
Yves Zsutty • Guadalupe River Trail, CA



National Recreation Trails Program:
Read more at www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails

Interior Department unveils National Water Trails System

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar signed a Secretarial Order that establishes national water trails as a class of national recreational trails under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The February 29 order sets the framework for Secretarial designation of a nationwide system of water trails. The Department of the Interior stated that the goal is to “help facilitate outdoor recreation on waterways in and around urban areas, and provide national recognition and resources to existing, local water trails.”

The Chattahoochee River Water Trail in Georgia will be the first river to be included as a National Water Trail under the new system. The paddling route designated runs 48 miles through the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. The park and new water trail contain 18 developed public access points and connects with other local city and county parks.

“As our nation opens a new chapter on rivers— one where we value our waterways for their recreational,

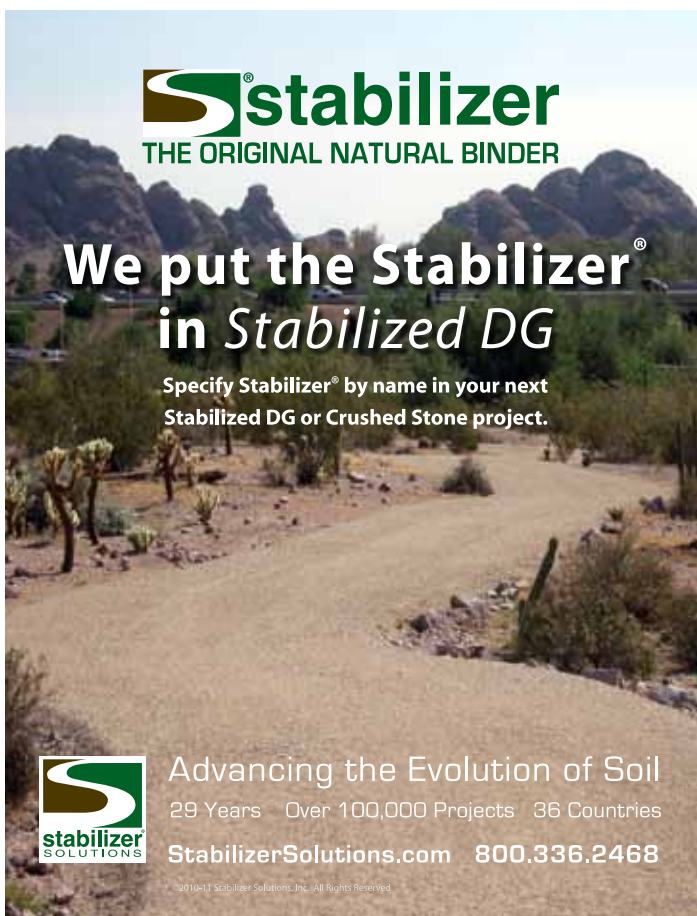
economic, and ecological importance— it is fitting that the Chattahoochee River Water Trail leads the way,” Salazar said.

According to the Department, “With each designation, signage, technical assistance, and resources will be provided to build on and promote the development of quality water trails. Water trails that are designated can become catalysts for restoring the health of local waterways throughout the community.”

The National Trails System is composed of National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, and National Historic Trails. Although National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails may only be designated by an Act of Congress, National Recreation Trails may be designated by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture.

Under the Secretarial Order, the National Park Service will coordinate the water trail nomination process.


For more information on the Water Trails System and the National Recreation Trails program, visit www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.



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Trails training opportunities

A model for accessibility: learning on Crotched Mountain trail system

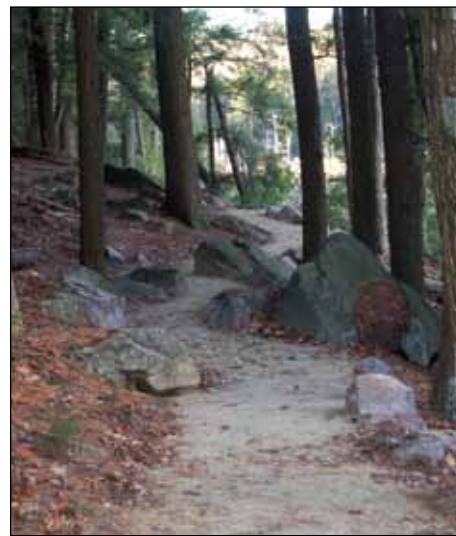
By **Peter S. Jensen**, Trail Planner/Builder
Peter S. Jensen & Associates, LLC

At Crotched Mountain in Greenfield, NH sustainable trails are also accessible trails. The Crotched Mountain Foundation's new trail system was designed and built to the proposed federal trail accessibility guidelines and was officially opened in June 2011.

The trail system is fully accessible, ranging from a wetland loop at the lowest point to a stunning vista at the summit of a knoll 300 feet above. The entire trail is perched on the southerly side of Crotched Mountain with views of Mt. Monadnock. The

trail system provides a total of 3.6 miles of pedestrian recreation through lowbush blueberry fields, pine forests, dense hardwoods, meadows, and wetlands. It provides a thorough visual explanation of the morphology of this part of southwestern New Hampshire.

Construction of these trails was accomplished over a four-year period using native materials for the stone trail structures and the trail surfacing. Bridges and boardwalks were constructed of imported materials. The majority of the trail system is a 5 foot wide treadway. Other sections are 4 feet wide and 3 foot wide. A combi-



Accessible tread through boulders

nation of machine built and hand built trail exists on the property.

This sustainable trail system has become the focal point for training workshops on trail development using the proposed federal trail accessibility guidelines. Two workshops are planned this year at Crotched Mountain:

- June 19-20, 2012
- October 10-11, 2012

Additional workshops will be scheduled for 2013. A combination of classroom and extensive field work, these two day training sessions provide attendees with the information that they need to return to their sites to plan out and implement their projects. Topics include an overview of the accessibility guidelines and how to implement them, assessing trails for accessibility, field evaluation of accessible trail features, and field layout of trails meeting the proposed federal guidelines.

Details of the Accessible Trails workshops in 2012 are available on the online American Trails Training Calendar at www.AmericanTrails.org.

For more information on the trails at Crotched Mountain please visit www.crotchedmountain.org. You can email SustainableTrailsWorkshops@gmail.com if you have questions.



Knoll Summit Platform



Incorporating natural features into trail alignments



The National Trails Training Partnership is a nationwide coalition committed to improving skills for trail work

Webinar focuses on interpretive panels

The next American Trails Webinar will be held April 26 at 10:00 a.m. (Pacific). The topic is "Telling a Better Story: Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Panels for Trails."

This program focuses on strategies for captivating your trail audience with provocative, well designed interpretive panels. Get practical advice for developing theme-based messages, establishing budgets, selecting images and design elements, understanding how visitors learn, writing interpretive text, and preparing files for production. Join us for discussions and case studies, and take away valuable tips and techniques to turn ordinary panels into extraordinary experiences.

Presenters:

- Jennifer Rigby, Director, The Acorn Group and American Trails Board Member
- Erica Fielder, Owner, Erica Fielder Studio, Interpretive Panels Start to Finish

For more information on the webinar, and how to register, please visit www.AmericanTrailsStore.org.

CA trails conference: navigating change

The California Trails and Greenways Conference in Woodland Hills, April 18-20, 2012, features the theme of "Navigating Radical Change: The New Normal."

The conference will consider the multiple challenges facing trails and public lands, the trends affecting those challenges, and how to pursue creative solutions while preserving the integrity of the resources we hold dear.

Other topics include linking trails to transportation funding, the expanding role of trails in fostering health and well-being, and exploring a wide variety of partnerships.

American Trails Chair Bob Searns will be a keynote speaker on exploring strategies for success in turbulent times. He will be speaking on *A Tool Kit for Surfing the Tempest*. "Tough times can engender the best in us—and the best in what we can accomplish," says Bob.

"In this time of seemingly unprecedented change, achieving our trail endeavors may not be easy, but the challenges we all face in reaching our very worthwhile goals also won't be boring. Let's explore how we, in the Trails and Greenway movement, can read the treads and the cross currents to survive, innovate, and thrive in the coming decade."

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Trails training: 2012 highlights

For details of these and more training events, see www.TrailsTraining.net.

April 18-20 - Woodland Hills, CA
• California Trails & Greenways Conference

April 26 - Online Webinar
• American Trails Webinar: "Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Panels for Trails"

May 1, 3, and 5 - Morrison, CO
• Crew Leadership for Trails Training

May 14-18 - Socorro, NM
• National Historic Trails Workshop

May 15-17 - Burns, TN
• Accessibility: Recreation and Supporting Facilities

May 21-25 - Shawnee, CO
• Horse Packing for the Real World

May 23 - Normal, IL
• Central Illinois Bike Summit

May 30 - June 1 - Indianapolis, IN
• National ADA Symposium

June 2 - On trails across America!
• National Trails Day®

June 6-9 - Delafield, WI
• Wisconsin Trail Design and Construction School

June 6-9 - Sturbridge, MA
• International Snowmobile Congress

June 18-21 - Ingersoll/Woodstock, Ontario, Canada
• Trailhead Ontario

June 19-20 - Greenfield, NH
• Sustainable Trails for All and Trail Accessibility Guidelines

See details of these and more currently scheduled trainings at www.TrailsTraining.net, sponsored by American Trails and the National Trails Training Partnership.

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

pathways for play

Locating playful paths for maximum impact

Across the United States, playful trails and pathways are being added to both urban and suburban neighborhoods. Trail owners are increasing community capital, encouraging active lifestyles, and creating more interactive paths that add playful stops along the way.

Many children don't have the opportunities to interact with nature as their parents did when they were children. Urban density, crowded schedules, and lack of amenities within walking distance all contribute to sedentary lifestyles and a disconnect with nature.

Playful pathway networks have yielded positive findings, but the location chosen plays a powerful role in its overall success. A well-located playful path can add:

Increased use. Areas we've observed were not well used before the addition of the playful exhibits. After installation of playful exhibits along the trail, traffic grew considerably, and continues to grow as word of mouth spreads.

Diversity of ages. Rather than just the occasional jogger or adult walker, we observed the trails being used by young families, bringing a real energy to the space.

Places to play, and to rest. Because the walk was broken into small, manageable segments, the overall adventure was more enjoyable by younger members of the family. The play pockets located along the trail gave children a place to rest, play, refocus, observe, and interact.

Magnetism. The interactive playful exhibits along the way worked as magnets to encourage children to continue. Rather than paths that lack focal points or fun activities, the play trails had children abuzz wondering what they would find next. Kids who had already been to the trail made friends with new arrivals by sharing experiences and explaining the fun adventures that awaited ahead.



Increased family interaction. Rather than sitting on a bench, adults on the path shared the experience with the kids, reading signs, playing games, and communicating.

Communities looking to increase pathway use and success should examine locations closely for the following criteria when evaluating a potential location for a playful path:

- 1. Form:** Curving paths make a more exciting route, as they create an air of mystery as walkers wonder what is coming up next. Looping paths are even better to add variety to the play, and users do not need to return to start by retracing steps.
- 2. Location:** Climate, geology, and habitat can all offer education potential, while paths in more densely populated areas may enjoy a greater usage than more rural pathways.
- 3. Access:** How long is the path, will it be considered too long or short to be usable? Does the path connect meaningful destinations like schools, friends' homes, entertainment venues?
- 4. Usability:** Has the tread slope, surface, and width of the path been considered to offer usability to the widest group of people?
- 5. Safety:** Is the site separated from traffic, well maintained, and enjoy good visibility to make users feel more comfortable?
- 6. Jurisdiction:** Is the pathway affected by differing regulations, for instance county, city, or floodway regulations? By choosing the right location, pathway owners can help increase participation, create opportunities for community connectivity, promote healthy behavior for people of all ages and abilities, and offer a unique way for families to play and recreate together!

To learn more about choosing a site for your community's playful path, request a copy of "Pathways For Play: Best Practice Guidelines" by visiting www.pathwaysforplay.org or sending a request to info@playcore.com.



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Photos by Shasta Trinity Unit, Backcountry Horsemen of California

Making trail partnerships work

Volunteers, agencies, and partnerships: how to make it work

BY ALAN HILL

Shasta Trinity Unit, Backcountry Horsemen of California

To face the reality of declining budgets at every level of government required to provide for maintenance and reconstruction of our national trail systems is a depressing and serious problem that trail users and the recreating public in general must face if the investments of over 150 years is to be protected. Hundreds of miles of existing trails have been placed on a rotation schedule of many years between annual maintenance.

Although these issues are recognized by all the land managers, the fact remains that appropriated dollars and agency budgets are falling farther behind and our nations trails are not receiving the attention necessary to even meet the level of a maintenance program that will maintain the status quo.

To this end, there have been a variety of approaches tried on different projects with varying degrees and level of volunteer commitment. There has been a very valuable period of time over the last 40 years learning how different entities can learn to work together efficiently and effectively. The process of how volunteers, youth, and agency staff can function effectively together is probably waiting for another few generations to judge and still learn more about how to better define a somewhat intangible or undefined work product.

The elements of trail maintenance are not very difficult to define. When the responsibility and the work force is one and the same, all the planning, organizing, staffing, logistic support, tools, supplies, and budgeting is in one set of hands. Each of these management and organization efforts are critical and must be incorporated from the front end of any project to ensure clarity and success.

The Shasta Trinity unit of Backcountry Horsemen of America (BCHA) is one example of a successful partnership. The group has been very fortunate to have been involved with a proactive land management staff at the Shasta-Trinity National Forest for over 20 years. The Forest includes over two million acres of public land, and over 40 percent is designated Wilderness.

Organized in 1973 in Montana, BCHA volunteer contributions nationwide for the past year was \$11,450,000. The role of BCHA is to provide help and assistance, but the ultimate responsibility for trails management remained with the agencies. BCHA units have worked hard to develop sustainable programs to provide effective and efficient volunteer support on this model.

The opportunity provided on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest was to develop a sustainable partnership among the California Conservation Corps, Forest Service, and Backcountry Horsemen. As in any business arrangement it is vitally important that a meeting of the minds of all the key players takes place, with the goals clearly articulated and understood. The process that has evolved over years ensures that each partner will do what has been agreed to. It is this trust and confidence in a mutual benefit that we are all seeking and willing to work hard for.

A good example is the maintenance and reconstruction of 550 miles of high altitude wilderness trails in the Trinity Alps of Northern California. Most of the old existing



California Conservation Corps members at work



Volunteers and staff relaxing after a long day

trails were originally built during 1850s gold rush days by stockmen and miners with substantial trail reconstruction and new trails by the Forest Service since 1910 and CCC of the 1930s. These trails are in both high alpine country and in lower elevations forested with red fir and pine five to seven feet diameter. Heavy snow years and blow down can drop up to 100 trees per mile that can close trails for years unless adequate numbers of crews are involved.

There are clear responsibilities for each of the partners. Here's how the process works:

- California Conservation Corps provides backcountry crews of 15-18 youth aged 18 to 23 from late April through September. The Corps hires applicants from across the country along with capable crew leaders. Leaders live and work together with the crews in the backcountry for the season. Camp set-up and management, as well as trail and tread work is under the supervision of the CCC leader.
- CCC's enter into a contract with the USFS to pay for the season.
- USFS plans the CIP projects and obtains grant funding if possible. USFS identifies the work projects, with input from others, for the season and meets with the partners in February to determine both work needs and available budget. USFS provides a supervisor for the CCC crews and other technical support as required. USFS provides all camp materials, tools, and supplies. USFS also locates all camp and work sites.
- USFS has ultimate responsibility for all trails management, crew support, and planning and logistics for all

Continued on page 30

Partnership for trails *continued*

camp moves and resupplies.

- BCH has the responsibility to help inventory storm damage, and locate trails work required to open early in the year possible.
- BCH has the responsibility to help provide the stock necessary to move, resupply, and support each backcountry camp. Typically this is a 200-250 stock day commitment for the season, in addition to the volunteer packers, trucks, trailers, and packing equipment.
- BCH has the responsibility to commit to the season project stock support required by April or May of each year.
- BCH has the responsibility to coordinate weekly with the needs of both USFS and CCC backcountry camps and work project sites for logistics and stock required.

Jon Sanstrom, Trails Manager for the Trinity Alps in 2006, called the Shasta Trinity unit of BCH "the backbone of the trails program in the Trinity Alps." Jon said "We could not do what we do without their invaluable help each season. We hope this partnership program can be copied throughout the country."

Peter Lewis, a former CCC Backcountry Supervisor, shared his thoughts: "It is kind of like a big family that works together toward a shared goal. BCH get trails opened, CCC brings a youth group together for work in some of the most beautiful wilderness in the country, and the Forest Service gets organized committed help to meet its responsibilities for wilderness trails maintenance."

It is important to realize that the most important requirement of all partnerships is be able to adjust when things change with either retirements, budgets, personalities, or



management philosophies. In one case the commitment originally made by BCH was to provide half the stock required for the season. However, as a result of trail manager retirements, aging stock, loss of experienced packers, and fire demands on existing USFS stock, BCH was faced with increasing demands to provide more and more stock to service the CCC programs in the Trinity Alps.

How do you resolve a conflict like this? In our experience, positive communication stating the problem is critical, with the clear understanding that unless things change partners will no longer be able to fulfill our commitments made to the program. In this case, the National Forest committed to support BCH recommendations with a major stock rebuilding program and hiring two competent packers.

At the end of 2011 all partners are back working together with the end of a very successful season in the mountains.

Plans for 2012 are being developed with a great deal of optimism and enthusiasm to get back on the high mountain trails. There was a very wise person who once wrote words to the effect that happy partnerships are the only partnerships that will survive and succeed. The Shasta Trinity unit of BCHC is firmly committed to the future sustainable success of our 20 year partnership with the USFS and California Conservation Corps.

For more about the Shasta Trinity Unit, Backcountry Horsemen of California, go to www.bchcshastatrinity.org. Alan Hill can be reached at athill01@charter.net.

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www.trailbuilders.org

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More details at www.AmericanTrails.org/patrons.html



Ontario Federation of Trail Riders

The OFTR represents off-highway motorcycling clubs in Ontario, Canada, with the goal of promoting safe and responsible trail motorcycle riding. OFTR sponsored a pilot study of physical benefits of OHV riding that was eventually expanded into a recognized study published in medical journals worldwide. Our Mandate: to source, create, and maintain a trail network in Ontario for safe, family use by trail motorcyclists, as well as any other well-intentioned users.

Learn more about how OFTR represent trail users at www.oftr.ca.

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Remembering Hulet Hornbeck

At the first National Symposium on Trails held in 1971, Hulet predicted:

“Urban trails will materially assist in the re-creation and enhancement of our urban living environment. This, therefore, is the time of opportunity for trails. Recreational trails must play a vital role in the new city.”

Hulet Hornbeck enjoyed a distinguished career as Chief of Land Acquisition for the East Bay Regional Park District from 1965 through 1985. He was well-known for his many years of volunteer efforts on behalf of trails, including over 16 years of service on the American Trails board. Hulet inspired us all throughout the years with his zest for life, integrity, wisdom, passion for trails, and unwavering dedication to preservation.

Photo of Hulet Hornbeck by John Steere

MORE ABOUT HULET ON OUR WEBSITE

- Hulet's obituary provided by his family
- See more remembrances and add your own on the American Trails blog
- Links to articles by, and about, Hulet

Visit www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/memorial

Hulet's Path

A tribute to his life and legacy - by John Steere, Hulet's nephew - written for Hulet's memorial, February 26, 2012

Hulet had a way with you; ever unflinching, direct, and intent;
Sparing in his words, but never in his deeds.
How deeply those deeds touched me -- and continue to --
Every day that I ramble or ride through the wild spaces he set aside.
Deeds, like waves that ripple wider through the passing of time.

Hulet was a man with a vision to renew our better nature
Through preserving wild nature and the paths that could take us there.
He knew that going out was the truest way home,
By way of the places that restore our spirit...
This was his path, his faith: "biophilia,"
the love and affinity for life in all its resonances in the land.

Hulet would navigate by the stars,
or by that unerring compass that only he sensed.
He was always on a mission,
whether it was in the war that forged him,
or one of many secret campaigns to save open space;
Even in a seeming simple conversation,
There was always a purpose -- if known only to him;
For he would hold it that close.
How was it he always seemed to summon the moment?
To serve the greater good,
To cultivate a future that did not erase
The jewels of our collective past in the landscape.

Hulet held a view like few others can, decisively wide,
Ever the overview guiding his craft
Whether it was a flying fortress over remote Pacific islands or his inner voice;
He would climb to the most strategic vantage point, stay mostly hidden,
enigmatic. He was a quiet giant...
Never attracting attention to himself, but to the public assets he won.

I remember as a child, growing up back East,
Listening to tapes he sent monthly to his mother on the other coast;
Tapes of his campaigns to wrest lands from developers
and to deed them to the public in perpetuity.
They sounded like dispatches from the Front,
In the war against shortsightedness and greed.

And I remember as a youth, going up to the Sierras
with him in the dark of night, my first time to these mountains,
and wondering where it was we were going, not that he would say,
And I thought he must have liked mysteries... and of course he did.
Then awakening in Tuolumne Meadows,
as if in a dream of peaks and flowers and flowing waters;
Then backpacking with him for days and hearing him talk of Muir, his hero.

But Hulet was my hero; my touchstone
of what a life well lived truly meant...
His passion for preserving places and piecing together urban trails
poured into me like a spring
and elicited my passion for restoring the commons.

I, like so many others, have been shaped by his faith
in the renewing power of natural places,
This legacy that he so consciously and cunningly shaped.
In his day, there were so few with his conviction
for protecting our wild commonwealth,
Now we are legion, no small measure thanks to his path breaking...
In cutting the trail that made us all fall back in love
with porous nature in the midst of hard-skinned cities.
His hidden path was to return us to our centers of being,
Where we might listen, as with him, to the wind whispering in the redwoods,
Or to feel the tall grass caressing our legs,
Or to watch shards of light, flitting like birds, from one ripple to another.

There is no greater legacy to bequeath than this:
To spend a lifetime setting aside green hills to roam in,
and streams that make the valleys sing,
and vistas that lift our sights
and meandering-limbed oak glades...
That these and trails to them abide, make us more whole.
They are most vibrant threads of our urban cloth, and the
richest fruit of Hulet's intent to serve the greatest good
by securing the wild lands; home to
Generations of plants and animals *and* to our truest humanity,
Generations that were -- and have yet to come.



Amy Camp joins Board of American Trails

Prior to joining SWSG, she helped to launch, and later manage, the nationally-recognized Trail Town Program. The program works with communities along the Great Allegheny Passage rail-trail to maximize the economic potential of the trail. In 2011, the program received the Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Award for its innovative approach to rural economic development through trail tourism.

Amy has shared best practices and economic research with numerous trail and community advocates throughout the US and Canada. She spoke about the Trail Town Program at the 20th American Trails Symposium in 2010, and in 2011 presented on the American Trails webinar "Making the Case for Trails in Tight Economic Times." Also in 2011, she hosted a delegation of trail and tourism officials on a best practices mission from Atlantic Canada.

Amy became involved in trails and tourism after working to market Pittsburgh city neighborhoods through heritage tourism efforts. She served as a marketing and Main Street Manager in Pittsburgh's South Side from 2001-07. Amy earned a Master of Public Administration from University of Pittsburgh and a Bachelor's Degree in English from Saint Vincent College. She is a native of western Pennsylvania and enjoys hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing around Pittsburgh and throughout the Alleghenies.

American Trails is pleased to welcome Amy Camp to the Board of Directors. Amy Camp is Pittsburgh Senior Program Manager of Strong Women, Strong Girls. SWSG delivers after-school programming to third, fourth, and fifth graders in Boston, Pittsburgh, and South Florida by using the study of female role models, skill-building activities, and relationships with mentors.



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News from American Trails

A new vision for American Trails

By Jenny Rigby
American Trails Board

In October 2011, the board and staff of American Trails convened in Arizona and began the introspective process of revisiting the mission and vision statements of the organization. Not taking this task lightly, the team did some serious soul searching, taking stock of American Trails' services, drivers, and values, and then clearly defining the organization's niche.

At the end of hours of robust dialogue and many exchanges of email, the mission statement evolved from "the pursuit of a national infrastructure of trails and greenways" to recognition that American Trails' efforts ultimately "enrich lives and communities." This truly gets at the heart of our organization.

"American Trails enriches our lives and communities by advancing the development of diverse, high quality trails and greenways."

The next step was to examine the vision statement and subject it (and team members) to another round of rigorous discussion! We knew we needed to expand the introductory statement and specifically define our vision five years out. In the course of discussion, we soon realized that the existing support statements were better served as core values.

Ultimately, American Trails' vision statement went from a listing of 10 purposes of trails and greenways

(with a notable absence of mention of education and interpretation) to one overarching statement, "American Trails envisions a network of diverse, high quality trails for all people and a trail within 15 minutes of every home, school, and workplace." This statement is now supported by nine core values that cover the breadth of benefits trails and greenways offer.

American Trails recognizes the value of these statements. They are fundamentally important to our capacity to be successful and effective as an organization. We intend to review these statements on a regular basis. We also intend to keep them well within view on a daily basis.

Mission Statement:

American Trails enriches our lives and communities by advancing the development of diverse, high quality trails and greenways.

Vision Statement:

American Trails envisions a network of diverse, high quality trails for all people and a trail within 15 minutes of every home, school, and workplace.

Core Values

American Trails seeks trails and greenways that promote:

Accessibility: A national infrastructure of trails and greenways that are a part of everyday life and accessible to all people of varying abilities, ages, and backgrounds

Healthy lifestyles: Improved fitness, health, and well-being for all people through trails and greenways that offer opportunities for physical activity, recreation, rejuvenation, and preventative health care

Economic vitality: A trail system that contributes to the financial strength and attractiveness of a community by enhancing business opportunities, tourism, and property values

Sustainable development: A trail system that offers alternative transportation opportunities, contributes to the

health and vitality of a community, and connects people to nature

Best practices: Innovative, sustainable, and technically sound guidelines that are understood and applied by decision makers in the planning, design, development, and construction of high quality trail systems

Experiences in the outdoors: Responsible and enjoyable opportunities that are afforded to all trail users and contribute to each community of trail recreationists

Appreciation for the outdoors: Inspiring trail experiences that cultivate an appreciation for our natural and cultural heritage

Learning in the outdoors: Formal and informal educational and interpretive opportunities that promote understanding of our "sense of place"

Connectivity: Trail systems that link communities, natural areas, and people

Speakers Bureau to be launched

Looking for a dynamite speaker to keynote your trail event or conference? We are working with experts from around the nationwide trail community to be available as "Trails Talkers."

We are assembling a "stable" of the best experienced presenters who can set the tone and energize your event.

We are also pleased to say that each speaker has offered to donate a percent of their honoraria to American Trails to help keep all the great services and info American Trails provides coming your way!

We'll be adding a new area to our website for the "Trail Talkers" program. In the meantime contact Candace Mitchell at American Trails at (530) 547-2060 or candace@americantrails.org.



American Trails

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American Trails members receive these great benefits!

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Online at AmericanTrails.org

Articles, studies, and project information at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources

Roger Bell presents more cautionary tales

Drawing on his forty years of building trails all over the country, American Trails Board member Roger Bell has written about three distinctly "un-safe" trail experiences. "Since those experiences didn't kill us, hopefully they taught us a thing or two about survival," he writes.

The point of these stories is to learn from challenging times in backcountry environments, and how to be safer on the trail. The three "Harrowing Experiences on the Trail" are titled:

- Surviving a Chain Saw Accident
- A Near Death Fall
- Bees and Cliffs

Read Roger Bell's tales in our **Safe Trails Forum** area under "On the Trail" at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/safety.



Rocky Mountain Regional Specialty Pack String on the job

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The Rocky Mountain Regional Specialty Pack String assists in managing and maintaining wilderness and back country areas using traditional packing skills. Learn about courses in packing with horses and mules offered by the Pack String.

Read more at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/horse under "Education."

American Trails Blog: a new outlook on trails

We are proud to present another new area on our website: the American Trails Blog. The idea of the Blog is to offer more ideas, opinions, and current issues from the world of trails. We welcome your submissions of interest to the trails community.

See new and archived Blog articles at www.AmericanTrails.org/blog.

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*Jon Kovach,
Pannier Graphics*

"We've been very pleased with the number of people who have found our business listing on americantrails.org and have contacted us about their specific project needs."

*Stephen Beach,
PermaTrak*

American Trails Business Directory

Visit AmericanTrails.org or contact us at (530) 547-2060.



American Trails Member Organizations

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BOOKS and PUBLICATIONS

Pathfinder: Blazing a New Wilderness Trail in Modern America

REVIEW by Roger Bell

Author Ron Strickland tells the story of exciting times in the world of trails through his own wealth of experiences. Strickland had the idea of building a new trail through the remote mountains of Glacier National Park to the Olympic Mountains, 1,200 miles to the west. That concept became the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.

His apt trail moniker was Pathfinder, and he wrote this book, he told me, "to recruit newbies to the hiking world. But so far almost no one has heard of the book. My intended audience is not getting the message." Maybe we've spawned a generation of youngsters too enamored with electronic media, too snared by either the sensational or the convenient to plod long distances on their own, taste the

raw and challenging adventure of being pathfinders themselves. "We authors are like matchmakers who try to create a romance between readers and trails." But I think he senses some of that love may be unrequited.

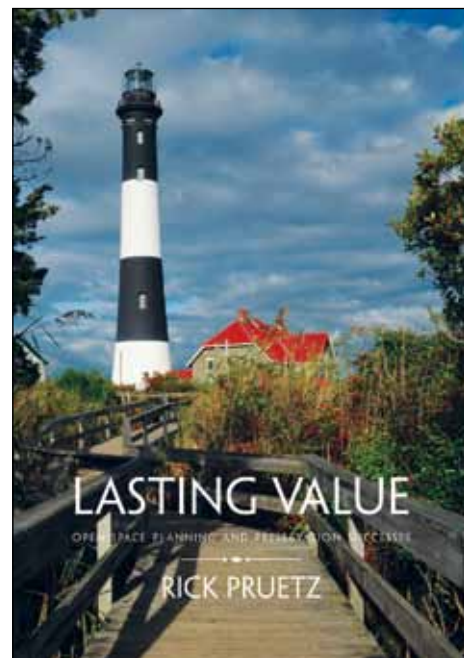
And it's much more than the story of that one trail, as he spins tales of his mentors and heroes, some of those other pathfinders he met and learned from, dedicated souls who have similarly persisted and brought new pathways into being. One of his literary icons, Ralph Waldo Emerson, supposedly said "Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Ron had an obvious talent for asking questions and would stop hikers on his trails to find out what brought them there and what they had experienced, always making notes, a writer seeking material and willing to listen.

Read more about Ron Strickland and how to purchase *Pathfinder* and other books at www.ronstrickland.com.

National Parks study sees economic impacts

A recent study documents *Economic Benefits to Local Communities from National Park Visitation and Payroll*. The National Park System received 281 million recreation visits in 2010. Park visitors spent \$12.13 billion in local gateway regions (within roughly 60 miles of the park). Visitors staying outside the park in motels, hotels, cabins, and bed and breakfasts accounted for 56% of the total spending. Combining both visitor spending and NPS payroll yields a total impact of 300,000 jobs.

Download the National Parks study at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/economics under the "Studies" tab.

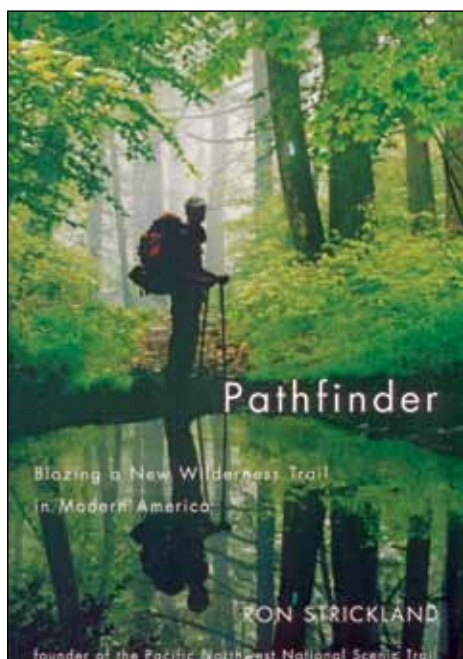


Open Space Planning and Preservation Success

The American Planning Association has recently published a 232-page paperback book on land preservation case histories. Titled *Lasting Value: Open Space Planning and Preservation Success*, it is written by Rick Pruett.

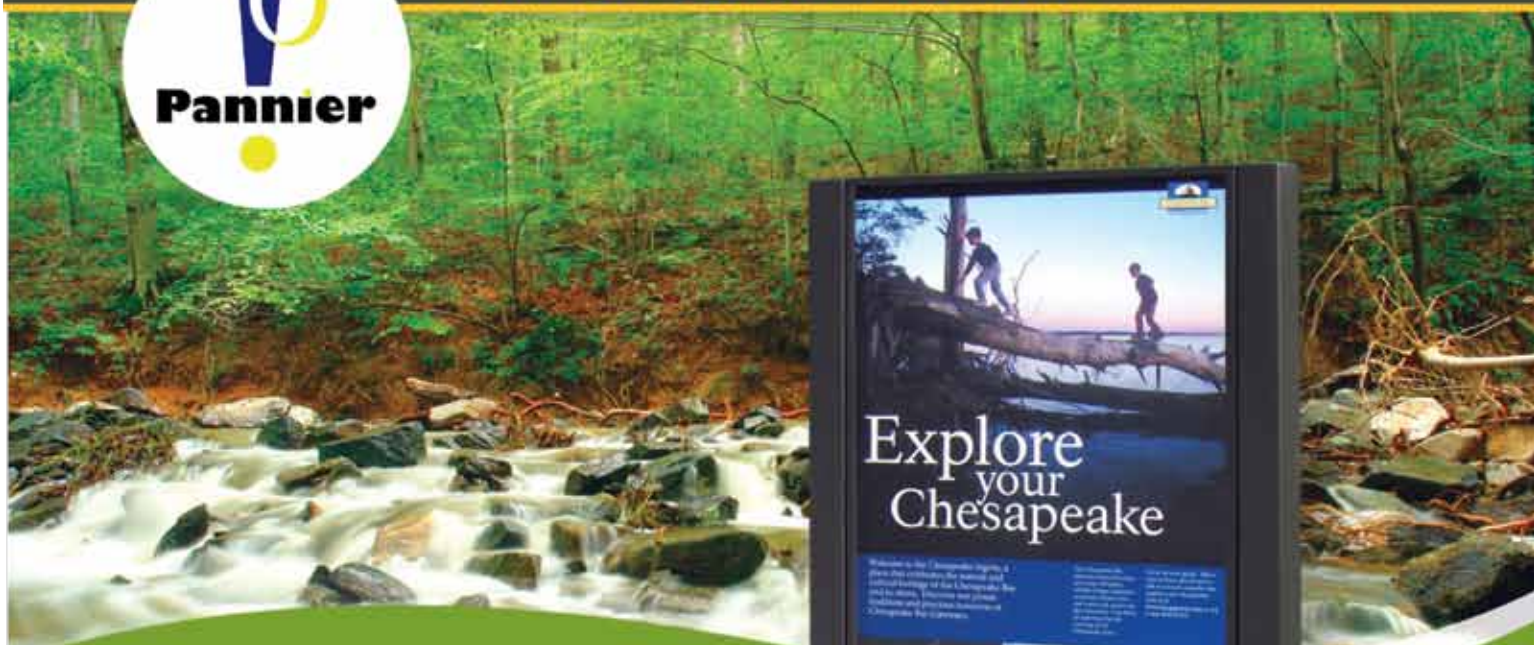
The book shows how land preservation happens and covers practical techniques and goals. It celebrates communities succeeding in preservation activities and endeavors to inspire others. Techniques profiled include transferable development rights (TDR), property taxes, real estate transfer taxes, sales taxes, open space bonds, matching funds, charitable donations of property or cash, conservation and agricultural easements (e.g. purchase of development rights or PDR), and outright purchases or fee simple acquisitions.

***Lasting Value* is available from the American Planning Association at www.planning.org.**





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