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November 2013

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

Special thanks to the sponsor of this issue:

- [Composite Advantage](#)

WHAT'S HOT

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act has bipartisan support

Last week, a coalition of bipartisan lawmakers in the House and Senate introduced identical bills -- the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act -- to help reduce the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities on American roadways. The League of American Bicyclists' has more information on safety, a media kit and more resources on how you can help support this important piece of legislation. [Read more...](#)

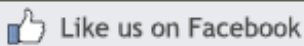
Planning trails with wildlife in mind: new website resource

Balancing the benefits of creating trails with stewardship of nature and wildlife is an important effort. What impacts do trail development and use have on wildlife? How can we maximize the positive contributions of trails and greenways in conserving nature? AmericanTrails.org is now hosting the online version of Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind: A Handbook for Trail Planners. [Read more and](#)

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American Trails webinar: Navigating the American Trails Website

Join us December 11 for a **FREE webinar** that will help our many visitors to navigate the American Trails website. AmericanTrails.org is one of the world's largest online resources for trails, greenways, blueways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Our mission is to share new technology and expertise for better trails everywhere. We'd also like your feedback on how to improve the website and better serve your need for information. We welcome your questions for this webinar (send them to us when you register)!

This webinar will help you navigate our vast clearinghouse for trails. It will be presented by our webmaster, Stuart Macdonald, and moderated by Candace Mitchell, our Communications Specialist.

You'll learn:

- How to find the right resources for every trail-related topic
- How to search for a variety of trails
- How to connect with organizations and communities
- How to take action on funding and policy issues
- How to publicize your projects, photos, and trails
- How to find training

This is a **FREE webinar**, but [donations are welcomed](#) to help keep you up-to-date on the latest in trails news and technology.

If you donate at the \$35 level, you will receive one FREE webinar for the American Trails [Advancing Trails Webinar Series](#) in 2014 (donate \$75 and receive two FREE webinars).

A special thanks to the sponsors of this webinar:

- [E.T. Techtonics, Inc.](#)
- [Maxiforce Traffic Control Bollards](#)
- [Rhino Marking & Protection Systems](#)
- [Terrabilt Wayfinding Systems](#)

[Learn more about this webinar and how to register here...](#)

Forest Service trail needs reported to Congress in GAO study

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a study in June of how the U.S. Forest Service is meeting trail maintenance needs. The new report identifies several challenges, including many miles of trails that "were built on steep slopes, leaving unsustainable, erosion-prone trails that require continual maintenance." The report is titled "Long- and Short-Term Improvements Could Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Enhance System Sustainability." [Read more and download report...](#)

Rail-trail issue to be heard by U.S. Supreme Court

This case involves the Railroad Right-of Way Act of 1875, under which

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Quick Links

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thousands of miles of rights-of-way were established across America. The question is whether the United States retains the right to keep those corridors in public use (such as trails) after railroad operations have ceased. Opponents argue that private property rights take legal precedence. At stake: hundreds of millions of dollars to U.S. taxpayers. [Read more about the case and rail-trail legal issues...](#)

Land & Water Conservation Fund diverted to National Parks?

U.S. Senator Tom Coburn issued a report on October 29 to address National Park Service funding issues. One of Coburn's key recommendations is to move Land and Water Conservation Fund money from federal land acquisition to maintenance of NPS properties. The report also criticizes the past use of LWCF funding: "Over the last decade, Congress has appropriated \$527.4 million through the LWCF to acquire more land for the National Park Service. During that period, the needed repairs on existing NPS land increased by \$5.4 billion." [Read more...](#)

Let's Go Smart™ website helps promote connections between transportation modes

The Let's Go Smart™ website (discussed during a recent American Trails webinar, "From the Driveway to the Trailhead" - [available in the American Trails Online Store as a recording](#)) is now available for public viewing. Let's Go Smart™ is a community partnership, led by Ozark Greenways, designed to encourage the people of Springfield, Missouri to make wiser transportation choices every day. Whether it's walking, biking, riding the bus, or driving, "going smart" means thinking ahead to make the most of resources, health, environment, and quality of life. [Learn more at www.LetsGoSmart.org...](http://www.LetsGoSmart.org)

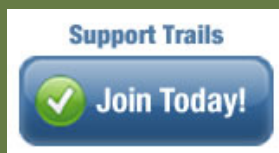
December 3 is national day of giving ~ donate to American Trails to help serve the trails community

American Trails has joined #GivingTuesday, a collective of charities, families, business and individuals all around the world, to transform how people think about, talk about, and participate in the giving season. Coinciding with the Thanksgiving Holiday and the kickoff to the holiday shopping season, consider giving a donation to American Trails to help us serve the trails community **on December 3**, the national day of giving! Keep an eye out for the link to donate on December 3. [Learn more about the #GivingTuesday movement...](#)

Deadline December 15 for 2013 National Recreation Trails Photo Contest

American Trails sponsors an annual contest for photographs of National Recreation Trails (NRT) across the country. It's easy to enter, so take your camera when you're out on the trail! We'll be giving awards in several categories to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails. Deadline for entries is December 15, 2013. [See details on the 2013 NRT Photo Contest...](#)

Join American Trails - one of the World's most comprehensive online go-to sources for planning, designing, building, funding, managing, enhancing, and supporting trails and greenways ~ [Join Now!](#)



NEWS

RTP funds critical bridge connection in Highwood, Montana

The *Great Falls Tribune* reports on the new bridge over Highwood Creek that completes a Safe Route to School: "A crowd of local supporters, elementary schoolchildren and officials from agencies such as Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks gathered to cut the ceremonial ribbon crossing the Wendell Mee Memorial Bridge that has been at least 62 years in the making." Funding from the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) was also used in the construction of the project, which was spearheaded by Highwood community activists. [Read more...](#)

Cyclists and pedestrians jam new Bay Bridge path

For the first time in history, pedestrians and cyclists have the chance to travel across the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Thousands have been flocking to the new bicycle/pedestrian path, which has become one of the Bay Area's hottest attractions since it opened Sept. 3. [See photos and map...](#) and [directions to access the path...](#)

New DOI campaign will try to move Millennials outdoors

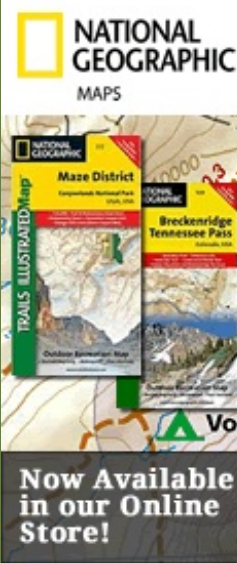
Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced a partnership with business, health, education, non-profit and conservation leaders to launch a national campaign to expand opportunities for youth on public lands. DOI will develop or enhance outdoor recreation partnerships in a total of 50 cities over the next four years, as well as provide educational opportunities, engage many new volunteers on public lands, and provide 100,000 work and training opportunities for young people. [Read more...](#)

Utah 22-mile trail to link routes in Wasatch high country

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported on Wasatch Mountain State Park, which is working with the Mountain Trails Foundation and Wasatch Trails Alliance to build a 22-mile trail for non-motorized uses in the popular 22,000-acre park. Besides incredible views, the project will link Wasatch and Summit counties to seven other trails and developed communities in the area. [Read more and see photo gallery...](#)

\$10 million has helped move Delaware Valley trails forward

In November 2010, the William Penn Foundation awarded the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission \$10 million to create a Regional Trails Program, in the Greater Philadelphia area, which would distribute the funding to trail development projects over a three-year span. Since then that \$10 million has helped move 40 miles of trails forward as well as leverage millions of additional dollars.



Trail advocates are now campaigning for The Circuit, a 750-mile regional trail network. [Read more and see photos...](#)

Preserving railroad corridors: a huge fiscal liability?

The *National Law Journal* reports on 80 lawsuits representing 8,000 property owners along rail-trails. The landowners argue that converting rail lines into recreational trails represents a new use of their property, one for which they are entitled to compensation from the government under the Fifth Amendment. To date, the courts have agreed, and plaintiffs lawyers predict the ultimate liability for taxpayers could top \$500 million. [Read more...](#)

The Bicycling Advantage - It's Not About the Bike

[Shasta Living Streets](#) in Shasta County in northern California, and representative Anne Wallach-Thomas, talk about an exciting opportunity to build great cities and towns by making bicycling safe, convenient, and fun. "This is not about thinking bikes are cool and it's not about weekend exercise and recreation in our beautiful parks and open spaces. Though those things are good, too. Making bicycling safe, convenient, and fun for everyday transportation brings tremendous advantages - it allows families to be healthy and save money on transportation, makes more vibrant and connected communities, and supports our local businesses by helping them attract customers, retain talented staff, and attract tourists." [Read more...](#)

FEATURES

Carolina Thread Trail: Connecting the Charlotte Region

The Charlotte region has embraced a vision to connect regional destinations, rural towns, urban cores, open spaces, and natural areas with trails, greenways, and blueways. Through that extensive community planning effort, the Carolina Thread Trail was born. Known locally as The Thread, this 15-county, two-state initiative will ultimately link an estimated 2.3 million people with more than 1,400 miles of trail. The City of Charlotte is one of the communities where momentum is high. Commitment and support started from the top with former Mayor Anthony Foxx, now U.S. Transportation Secretary. Former Mayor Foxx promoted a vision and advocated for policies to make the city more pedestrian and bike friendly to help attract new businesses, residents, and visitors. [Read more and see photos...](#)

Featured National Recreation Trail: Sugar Bottom Trail System, Iowa

Set in rugged terrain surrounding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Coralville Reservoir on the Iowa River, 13 miles of trail are arranged as a one-way system of loops to create an extended, continuous riding experience and serve riders of all skill levels. The goal is to have a beautiful and challenging trail system suitable for both novices and

experts, which is both sustainable and relatively easy to maintain. [Read more and see photos...](#)

Michael Castle Trail opens along Delaware shipping canal

The new Michael Castle Trail, which is part of Governor Markell's First State Trails and Pathways Initiative, runs along the canal bank as a multi-use pathway for pedestrians, bicyclists, anglers, and equestrians, and will be managed by DNREC's Division of Fish and Wildlife as part of the C&D Canal Conservation Area. When the remaining phases are completed, the pathway will extend 16 miles along the active shipping route from Delaware City to Chesapeake City, MD. [Read more and access resources...](#)

Cool Trail Solutions: low boardwalks for accessible nature trails

Planked walks that are only slightly raised off the ground provide a smooth surface for wheelchairs and other users. These paths are essentially boardwalks without elaborate piers or other footings. Others are built like bridges crossing wet soil, rather than flowing water. Low boardwalks are also commonly used to cross sand dunes to avoid disturbing the vegetation while providing a firm surface. [See commentary and gallery of photos...](#)

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Webinars from American Trails continue with winter programs

American Trails continues our dynamic online Webinar series to help trail planners, supporters, and managers learn about focused topics of special interest. Our webinars are now eligible for CEUs through the [Texas Recreation and Park Society](#), an authorized independent CEU provider through the [International Association for Continuing Education and Training](#). Our 75 minute webinars are worth .10 CEUs.

Check out upcoming webinars for winter 2013-2014:

- **DECEMBER 11: Navigating the American Trails Website ~ Your Comprehensive Online Resource for Advancing Trails, Greenways, and Blueways** *(presented by American Trails)* [click here for details and to register](#)

FREE - And if you donate \$35 you'll get one free webinar in 2014, or donate \$75 and receive two free webinars.

Special thanks to our sponsors (to learn more about sponsoring for only \$250, [click here](#)):

- [E.T. Techtonics](#)
- [MaxiForce Traffic Control Bollards](#)
- [Rhino Marking & Protection Systems](#)
- [Terrabilt Wayfinding Systems](#)

- JANUARY 9: **Trails and the New Federal Accessibility Guidelines** (presented by U.S. Forest Service)

FREE! This webinar is produced in part with funding from the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#).

- JANUARY 30: **Creative Fundraising for Trails** (presented by Conservation Partners and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation)
- FEBRUARY (date TBD): **Managing User Conflicts ~ Part 3 of 3** (presented by Chinook Associates LLC)

Questions? Interested in presenting or sponsoring a webinar?

Contact Candace Mitchell, Webinar Coordinator, candace@americantrails.org or (530) 547-2060.

[Read more and see current webinar schedule...](#)

American Trails archived webinar: erosion control for natural surface trails

You can now purchase the recording of the American Trails webinar "Natural Surface Trail Tread Maintenance." This is the second in a series of webinars on Trail Maintenance Management presented by Kim Frederick of [Chinook Associates LLC](#). This workshop focuses on managing the flow of water on trail treads, including grade dips, waterbars, check dams, and berm removal. [Access the recording of this webinar in the American Trails Store...](#)

Bike/ped facility design flexibility policy from FHWA

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has released a memorandum on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility." This memorandum expresses the FHWA's support for taking a flexible approach to bicycle and pedestrian facility design. A recording of the webinar and presentation on the topic is also available. [Read more and download pdf...](#)

Learning from trails along active railroad tracks

The report America's Rails-with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocates on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors examines the characteristics of 88 rails-with-trails in 33 states, based on a survey of trail managers and the results of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's ongoing study over the past 20 years. It also provides a collection of data, examples, and practical tools to assist trail planners and advocates in increasing awareness of the rail-with-trail concept. [Read more and download report...](#)

Illinois website showcases statewide outdoor activities

"Mile after magnificent mile" is the slogan for Illinois' new website

that provides details of trail trips by foot, wheel, and paddle. Trails and waterways are featured along with many outdoor activities available in the Land of Lincoln. Off-Road Illinois is a one-stop shop for hiking, biking, running, and rock climbing. [Visit the website at www.enjoyillinois.com...](#)

Understanding state recreational use statutes

Understanding landowner liability is an important factor in gaining recreational access to property. Liability is determined on a state-by-state basis, and in most states is governed by two sets of laws: Activity Statutes and Recreational Use Statutes. The Equine Land Conservation Resource has assembled an in-depth resource showing both sets of laws for each state. This provides a single source to view and compare statutes by state with live links to the statutes themselves. [See the recreational use statutes for your state...](#)

Calendar of trails training and educational opportunities

Here are some of the trail-related training opportunities coming up in winter 2013-2014. [See the Online Trails Training Calendar for details...](#)

December 1-8 - Rancho Mastatal, Costa Rica

* Tropical Trailwork Adventure

December 5-8 - Columbia, SC

* Subaru/IMBA Trailbuilders School

December 11 - Online Webinar

* American Trails Webinar: Navigating the American Trails Website ~ Your Clearinghouse for Online Resources Advancing Trails, Greenways, and Blueways

December 12 - Online Webinar

* Webinar: The GIS 20 Essential Skills

December 12-13 - Toronto, ON, Canada

* Open Your Mind to Winter Placemaking Training Session

December 12-15 - McCalla, AL

* Subaru/IMBA Trailbuilders School

December 18 - Online Webinar

* Webinar: Integrating Equity in Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

January 9 - Online Webinar

* American Trails Webinar: Trails and the New Federal Accessibility Guidelines

January 14-18, 2014 - Jeju, South Korea

* World Trails Conference

January 21-24, 2014 - Salt Lake City, UT

* Outdoor Retailers Winter Market Trade Show

January 30 - Online Webinar

* American Trails Webinar: Creative Fundraising for Trails

February 18-21, 2014 - Corpus Christi, TX

* Texas Recreation & Park Society Institute & EXPO

Contact us with your scheduled training opportunities at ntp@americantrails.org.

JOIN THE AMERICAN TRAILS NETWORK

Working together - works! There is strength in numbers!

For over 25 years, [American Trails](#) has been a collective voice for a diverse coalition of enthusiasts, professionals, advocates, land managers, conservationists, and friends of the outdoors and livable cities. American Trails strives to enrich the quality of life for all people and the sustainable development of communities by advancing and promoting the development, preservation, and enjoyment of diverse, high quality trails and greenways. We envision a network of trails *within 15 minutes of every home, school, and workplace.*

American Trails will continue to keep you informed on both trail know-how and issues critical to the future of trails. With your help, we can increase funding for trails, keep more trails open, and improve the health and well-being of Americans of all ages and abilities, including our children.

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QUICK LINKS

- Find products and services for trails in our [Online Business Directory](#).
- Visit our [Blog](#).
- Join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter!](#)
- Learn about and find [National Recreation Trails \(NRT\)](#) near you today!
- I'm a [Pathways for Play](#) advocate. [Ask me why.](#)
- The [Online Trails Training Calendar](#) connects you with courses, conferences, and trail-related training.
- Purchase books, maps, memberships, and webinars through the [American Trails Online Store](#).
- Need Trails Training? Visit www.TrailsTraining.net.
- [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 myriad of resources we provide on our website to help you do your work better, please help support American Trails ~ [by making an end of the year donation today.](#)
- **American Trails** - maintains one of the World's most comprehensive online go-to sources for planning, designing, building, funding, managing, enhancing, and supporting trails, greenways, and blueways at www.AmericanTrails.org.

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

Advertising Opportunities:

Learn about cost-effective advertising opportunities in our Trail Tracks

e-Newsletter! Find out more [here](#).

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: Canal trail at Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado; photo by Stuart Macdonald