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On our cover: *Walking along the Willamette River in downtown Portland with the towers of the Oregon Convention Center in the background (photo from Travel Portland)*

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American Trails

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American Trails Magazine

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Editor: Stuart H. Macdonald

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From the Executive Director Solutions for Success

We all know that trails are the solutions to— well— the world's problems— and we received a lot of very creative themes around the benefits of trails. But our thoughts for our 2015 International Trails Symposium evolved into three critical words: "Solutions for Success."

This idea first came to me at the inspirational World Trails Conference held in January of 2014 on Jeju Island, South Korea sitting across from a man with the Great Himalaya Trail Association in Nepal. He expressed that this had been a really great conference for networking and promoting our trails, but he came looking for more on-the-ground solutions.

Al LePage with the National Coast Trail Association and one of our Symposium Planning Partners put it this way: "I haven't often seen the hard issues addressed, the problems that face people working in the trail community, with real solutions. It's not always pretty, and can be hard, but I think offering realistic and effective solutions is sorely needed."

We know that trails are the right solution for making more livable communities and for managing public lands. But how do we get from concept to success? The Symposium programs will explore the many pathways to success for all types of trails, from cities to the backcountry:

- **Solutions for design:** The right trails in the right place, with the best materials and appropriate technology, including affordable solutions and challenging sites
- **Solutions for sustainability:** Building better trails that protect against erosion and enhance nature, investing in long-term success, and reducing costs
- **Solutions for management:** Implementing techniques for enhancing safe and enthusiastic use, and creating opportunities for learning
- **Solutions for advocacy:** Getting projects started, finding key allies, and building on small successes
- **Solutions for health:** Improving trails to be more engaging and enjoyable, promoting their use, and contributing to our health and well-being
- **Solutions for the future:** Creating a culture of investment in trails in our communities through political and popular support

Again, our goal is to address the difficult issues, and our programs will feature a wide range of experts offering realistic and effective solutions. We want YOU to join us in Portland to learn from the worldwide trails community, AND to share your solutions with the rest of us!

— Pam Gluck, Executive Director, American Trails

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SUPPORTING and FUNDING TRAILS

State by State: 20 years of RTP funding

Since 1993, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) has made over \$1 billion in Federal funding available to the States for local project funding, as well as environmental education and safety programs.

Since 1993, the RTP has played an essential role in over 20,500 trail-related projects nationwide, creating and improving urban greenways, nature centers, and trails for horse riding, hiking, mountain biking, and motorized recreation, as well as snow and water routes.

The table at right shows the number of projects funded plus the amount of funding for each State during the Federal Fiscal Years 1993-2013. It also shows the total RTP funds obligated by each State during the period.

In addition, the "Total Other Funding" column shows how much additional match was provided by project sponsors. Note that the matching funds are generally higher than the 20 percent minimum required by RTP. In 12 States the match is higher than the total RTP funds apportioned.

Footnotes for the table:

1 State's FY 2013 projects awaiting Federal approval

2 State's Governor opted out of the RTP but obligated past funds

3 State's Governor opted out of the RTP

4 State has not yet provided a breakdown of the number of FY 2013 projects

5 State's FY 2013 projects are combined with an earlier or later fiscal year

More information on RTP funding:

Access the Recreational Trails Program online searchable database at www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org.

Read the "2013 Recreational Trails Program Annual Report" at www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org.

You can also download a pdf of the full report (59 mb) at: www.AmericanTrails.org/rtp.

State	1993-2013 Projects	Total RTP Funding	Total Other Funding
Alabama	289	\$20,066,923	5,942,245
Alaska	365	12,325,767	4,363,211
Arizona	205	19,275,574	7,534,380
Arkansas	318	13,223,525	5,230,713
California	364	48,888,077	16,534,591
Colorado	397	13,160,320	22,590,702
Connecticut	325	12,166,629	7,776,080
Delaware ¹	130	6,005,446	5,008,679
District of Columbia	31	7,183,193	1,673,022
Florida ²	171	20,047,426	14,281,505
Georgia	281	23,769,613	21,681,582
Hawaii	1039	7,582,289	1,801,459
Idaho	540	17,024,171	16,110,769
Illinois	269	23,737,909	9,887,095
Indiana	130	16,725,694	5,534,668
Iowa	104	23,806,113	5,951,529
Kansas ³	279	15,721,863	9,849,016
Kentucky	453	15,326,986	15,340,654
Louisiana	341	18,970,407	16,151,082
Maine	566	13,127,483	4,740,994
Maryland	712	16,533,217	6,794,315
Massachusetts ⁴	359	9,776,289	7,728,214
Michigan	279	35,712,001	25,745,295
Minnesota	382	23,122,223	32,170,242
Mississippi	232	18,192,726	4,548,182
Missouri	290	19,671,696	19,915,690
Montana	742	15,861,003	14,395,835
Nebraska	123	12,050,910	6,465,933
Nevada	284	14,161,954	9,387,220
New Hampshire	675	11,427,381	14,673,759
New Jersey	783	16,826,488	40,516,886
New Mexico	183	14,124,852	5,958,016
New York ⁵	380	25,323,736	11,378,767
North Carolina	473	23,428,343	31,992,858
North Dakota	233	12,219,504	3,587,864
Ohio	272	19,458,765	19,274,926
Oklahoma	252	19,476,002	9,614,580
Oregon	383	17,112,548	18,759,759
Pennsylvania	366	28,638,118	16,416,261
Rhode Island	479	4,395,363	2,668,103
South Carolina ⁴	217	12,787,852	4,800,198
South Dakota	332	32,103,011	18,703,234
Tennessee	281	20,738,959	6,308,171
Texas	464	45,128,108	15,942,726
Utah	365	19,736,133	21,473,827
Vermont	2227	23,258,894	34,593,474
Virginia ¹	291	19,924,288	8,968,347
Washington	664	21,250,150	32,073,972
West Virginia	259	11,732,747	33,235,891
Wisconsin	547	23,100,075	31,229,231
Wyoming	409	16,763,196	13,401,293
Total:	20,535	952,171,940	720,707,045

Georgia's vision for trails

Prophecy and problem solving; Georgia Trail Summit a first in 15 years

By Herb Hiller

A conference of Georgians that didn't blink at the idea of marketing bicycle tours to commemorate Sherman's March to the Sea hardly raised an eyebrow at the assertion that trails, not cars, are fronting Georgia's urban future.

If the ravaging of antebellum culture could be re-packaged as economic development, why not trails to free Georgia from its oath to suburban culture?

The Georgia Trail Summit in April was the first in 15 years. Although its 150 registrants spent less than a day and a half under the same roof, they came away convinced of trails ascendant in a future channeled through volunteerism, non-profits, and a supportive private sector. Government would be vital, but the movement would lead.

The summit took place in Athens, a virtual city-state where arts and conservation thrive thanks to the \$2 billion annual economic impact of the University of Georgia. A riverfront greenway has become a focus for off-campus housing and for visitors to the city's convention hall two blocks away. Another 39 miles of trail will connect Athens with Union Point, in Georgia's rural north.

However, it was trail leadership from Atlanta that shone the summit beacon. Decatur bike commuter and lifelong trails advocate Tracie Sanchez successfully launched the summit idea, and organized the volunteers and agency people needed to pull it off. The nonprofit MillionMile Greenway,

led by Atlantan Jim Langford, offered up the initial challenge grant funding of \$5,000.

Two more nonprofit leaders juxtaposed Georgia's past and future and made clear that the past was—well, passed. One called Atlanta “the poster child for sprawl.” Another pointed to Millennials moving to urban centers, including Atlanta, “by the millions, commuting, shopping and recreating without cars.”

Atlanta's BeltLine and PATH Foundation

Ryan Gravel spoke with prophetic vision. It was he in 1999, who as an engineering doctoral student at Georgia Tech, dreamed up the Atlanta BeltLine. That's the multi-use path in development by a public-private-nonprofit coalition that over the next 20 years will rim downtown with 33 miles of trails centered on an abandoned 22-mile rail corridor, connecting 45 in-town neighborhoods, public parks, MARTA commuter rail and the Atlanta Streetcar. As many as 10,000 on a Sunday enjoy the seven miles already in place.

“People along the route have discovered a vision better than anybody else was showing them,” Gravel said. “They're filling it out with affordable and public housing, with arts, farmers markets, local food, pollinators, bocce ball courts.

“People are really organizing their lives around this new corridor. It lets them live the lives they want.”

By 2015, an elevated portion of the BeltLine will run directly through the third level of the million-square-foot multi-purpose Ponce City Market that developers say will have bike valet, changing facilities, and showers. They project that if 10 percent of daily visitors arrive by bike or on foot, that will represent 1,000 non-polluting commutes.

“We're not only dramatically changing the physical form of the city and how people connect,” said Gravel, who now develops urban design solutions for Perkins+Will Global. “We're changing our cultural expectations. This is huge for a city generally considered the poster child for sprawl. Looking ahead, it's a different world.”

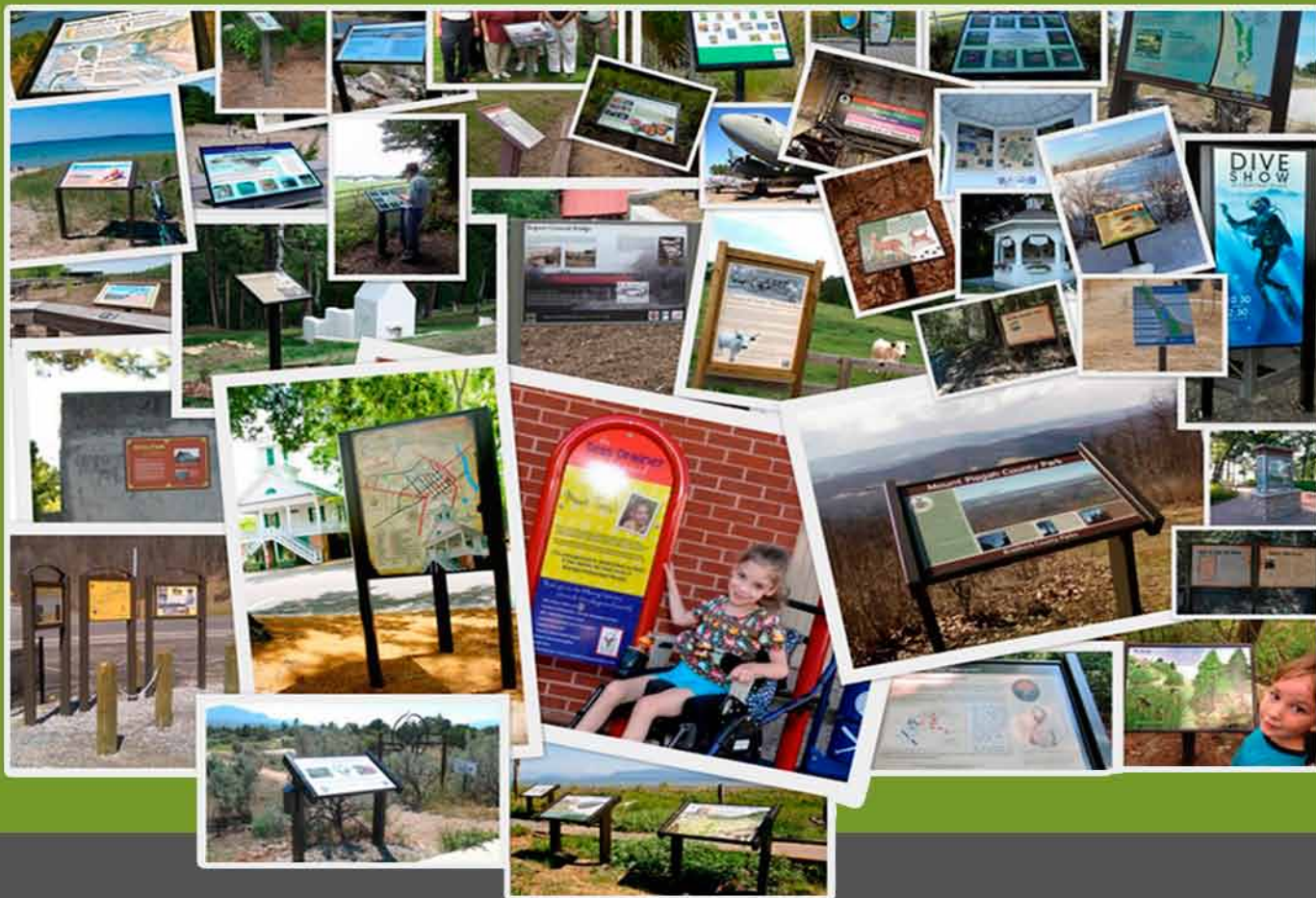
“Trails are proving as important in how we're learning to live as the transformation of America by cars and highways was.”

Ed McBrayer, who heads the nonprofit trail-building PATH Foundation, sees young adults as Atlanta's transforming agents. He cited data that the percentage of 16-to-24-year-olds who apply for driver licenses peaked in 1983 at 80 percent and has since fallen to 64, a timeframe in which bicycle use among the same cohort has jumped by 24 percent.

McBrayer, a one-time Colorado home-builder, called bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure “as important to new generations as highways were to our generation. The suburbs are not the happening place to be anymore!”



Jim Morrison, historic interpreter, Fort King George, Darien, GA, and Coastal Georgia Greenway Executive Director Jo Hickson during the 2014 Island Hopper Trail Tour



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The abandoned Georgia Railroad trestle along Athens' North Oconee Greenway

McBrayer runs a lean staff of five. In 23 years they've built 200 miles of trail, including the hugely popular Silver Comet Trail that runs for 61.5 miles from Atlanta to the Alabama line, where it continues another 33 miles as the Chief Ladiga Trail to Anniston.

By getting trails built, PATH Foundation and the Atlanta BeltLine have succeeded in attracting private sector and foundation backing for their vision. Corporate Atlanta leads trail-funding campaigns and populates nonprofit boards. Familiar supporting brands include Coca Cola, Cox Foundation, ING Direct, NIKE, Office Depot, Rollins and Turner Broadcasting. In a current campaign, PATH has successfully raised \$14.33 million to build 37 more miles of trail.



Trails advocate Tracie Sanchez, who successfully launched the Georgia Trails Summit idea

A vision for the future

Economic development was represented only by state and regional tourism managers, whose chief interest was marketing trail use to people who stay overnight.

Robyn Elliott, who operates Georgia Bicycle Tours, did report on tourism grants to extend her tours to mid-state's Antebellum Trail and to Sherman's trail of ruin. Few others represented trail-based businesses.

Yet the clear value of the summit showed in consensus about next moves. John Devine, senior planner at the Northeast Georgia Commission, and a summit host city organizer, led a visioning session that asked three questions:

How often should a Georgia Trail Summit happen?

What do advocates need to support their trail-building work apart from future summits?

If Georgia needs a statewide trail organization, should this be a government agency, a new statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit, or an already existing nonprofit?

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges and opportunities were summed up this way:


- Reconvene annually. Bring Georgia's entire trail community together in one place to learn from each other.
- Create a statewide strategic plan for expanding resources and citizen support to build trails and connections.
- Educate elected officials on trail benefits through classes and mobile workshops.
- Move trails from a step-child of government awareness to top priority.

- Organize regional work groups that meet to solve problems.
- Share the economic and health benefits generated by the Silver Comet Trail, Atlanta BeltLine, Appalachian Trail, etc..
- Keep communicating to Georgia's corporate leaders the valuable returns from investing in trails.
- Conduct a statewide inventory of Georgia trails: existing, proposed and priorities.
- Identify corridors that need protection, and connections between trail systems.
- Involve people drawn to urban lifestyle. Document and communicate this cultural shift with user surveys and other measurements. Show that trails are not a fleeting trend.
- Create a marketing strategy to engage new generations with social media and entrepreneurial incentives.
- Just as cities and counties have access to revolving funds for building waste plants and other essential infrastructure, so should trail building agencies.
- Create a state trails database and online cooperative where communities can learn from each other. Create a website where all trail groups can pool resources.
- Should the state create a trail commission similar to the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office to actively encourage the business of trail building?
- On the other hand, an independent advisory council could encourage more private funding and rely less on financial support from the state.

Herb Hiller is Southeast Region Program Coordinator for the East Coast Greenway Alliance (www.greenway.org).

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American Trails

May 17-20, 2015 - Portland, Oregon

American Trails sponsors the International Trails Symposium every two years to bring together trail and greenway advocates, managers, planners, and users, as well as tourism, and business interests.

The Symposium is the premier opportunity for the worldwide trails community to come together to communicate and experience an inspirational and educational conference. This is one of the largest trail gatherings of all trail interests who believe their combined voices are the best way to strengthen trails for everyone.

The Symposium includes a vast array of educational sessions covering the broad range of trail issues, internationally prominent speakers, a state-of-the-art trail-related exhibit hall, informative and interactive mobile workshops, and much more.

The first American Trails National Trails Symposium was held in 1971, and it has continued every two years ever since – celebrating a 22nd Anniversary in 2015.

PTBA Sustainable Trails Workshops and Trade Show, a new addition to the Symposium, the Professional TrailBuilders Association will offer a series of workshops and an Outdoor Trade Show adjacent to the Symposium.

Thanks to our key sponsors

Thank you to our local host and sponsor, Metro, and to our major partners, The Intertwine, MIG, Inc., Northwest Youth Corps, and the Professional TrailBuilders Association, as well as the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife, and USDA Forest Service.

The premier trails experience

10 REASONS to attend the 2015 American Trails International Trails Symposium

1. Paddle, hike, bike, and ride—Portland offers access to the Cascades, the Columbia Gorge, and the Pacific Ocean.
2. Forest Park: 5,157 acres and over 80 miles of trail within city limits— the largest urban forest in the country.
3. Visitors ranked Portland No. 1 in the nation for public transportation and pedestrian-friendliness.
4. Sustainable transportation! Receive a FREE pass to ride the Max Light Rail and Streetcar system during your stay.
5. Over 80 cutting-edge trail presentations, field trips, and workshops led by America's trail experts.
6. Visit the Exhibit Hall, with over 100 vendor booths offering products and services for all types of trails.
7. "Play in the dirt" in the new Outdoor Trade Show presented by the Professional Trailbuilders Association!
8. "Talk Trails" and network with trail enthusiasts from around the country and the world!
9. You'll never go hungry in Portland with their abundance of food carts throughout the city.
10. No sales tax! In Portland you'll find everything you expect from big-city shopping, except the sales tax.

An international trails experience

Due to American Trails' widening of its network to the international trails community, the name and focus has evolved from a National Trails Symposium to an International Trails Symposium.

The 2015 program will feature international sessions, which will pro-

vide alternative ways of approaching challenges in the trails world and will provide excellent networking opportunities for our attendees.

We are stronger and more effective together, and the Symposium is a perfect way for the international trails community to share success stories and lessons learned.

Over ten different countries were represented at our 2013 Symposium. We hope to double that number for 2015.



The Eastbank Esplanade in Portland is the longest floating path in the United States

Celebrating trails and partnerships

Be part of the experience!

2015 Trails Awards are international

American Trails presents the **National & International Trails Awards Program** to honor the tremendous contributions of volunteers, professionals, and other leaders who are working for the betterment of trails both nationally and internationally.

The awards also recognize the contractors, corporations, advocates, media, communities, and developers who are working to create healthier communities and more accessible public lands.

Winners will be presented at the 22nd American Trails International Trails Symposium Awards Banquet in Portland, Oregon on May 19, 2015.

NATIONAL AWARDS

- Lifetime Service
- Best Trails State
- Community Service
- Corporate
- Friends of Trails (NEW)
- Kids and Trails
- Outstanding Media
- Outstanding Trail Sharing
- Partnership
- Planning/Design
- State-of-the-Art Technology
- Trails and the Arts
- Trails for Health
- Trails Public Service
- Trail Advocacy
- Trail Worker

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

- International Partnership
- International Planning/Design
- International Kids and Trails

DEVELOPER AWARD

- This award recognizes well-designed multi-use trails systems that are integrated into private development.

The deadline for submitting nominations is September 30, 2014.

Learn more about the **National & International Trails Awards** at www.AmericanTrails.org/2015.

TrailBuilders will host Symposium programs

The Professional TrailBuilders Association and American Trails are proud to announce a new partnership for the Sustainable Trails Workshop Series and Legacy Trail.

Through this program at the American Trails International Trails Symposium, PTBA will offer a series of hands-on workshops focusing on the important skills and techniques involved in the sustainable design, planning, construction, and maintenance of trails for all types of users in all types of environments.

These workshops will also result in a local segment of sustainably and professionally built trail being left behind as a legacy of the Symposium and the PTBA Sustainable Trails Workshop.

PTBA will also provide an Outdoor Demonstration Area and Trade Show as the kick-off to the Symposium on

Sunday, May 17. This is the only trade show in the nation dedicated to trail-builders and trailbuilding tools, technology, and techniques. The outdoor demonstration area will have dirt, terrain, rocks, logs, and brush for equipment demonstrations.

Learn about the **Professional TrailBuilders Association** at www.trailbuilders.org. See more information for exhibitors at www.AmericanTrails.org/2015.

Youth Scholars

The Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship Fund will provide training and mentoring opportunities at the American Trails International Trails Symposium to inspire young adults to choose a career path in the trails industry. Sponsors and mentors are needed for this valuable program.

Learn more about our "**Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program**" at www.AmericanTrails.org/2013/youth.html.

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- Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust
- Wheeler

The freedom to paddle



Making “carry-down” watercraft launch sites accessible

By Janet Zeller, National Accessibility Program Manager, US Forest Service

Do you paddle a canoe, kayak, raft, stand up paddle board or some other type of watercraft you can carry down to a launch site? If you do, you are among thousands of people across the U.S. participating in the fast-growing activity of paddlesports.

As long as you have a legal access point to the body of water you want to paddle, you can carry your watercraft and paddling gear with you to that point and launch. You aren't limited to

launching only at specially-constructed facilities, as is the case with larger watercraft such as motor boats and sailboats that must be towed by a vehicle to a boat ramp.

There are two key concepts in developing or improving a carry-down watercraft launch site: sustainability and accessibility. The need for sustainability is obvious— what is constructed today needs to last to protect the resource and also to need as little maintenance as possible. Accessibility requires more thought, but there are plenty of good ideas and examples to guide you in making your water trails accessible to people of all abilities.

Accessibility standards

There are accessibility standards

for boarding docks, gangways, and other areas at marinas. See Chapter 10 of the 2006 Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) for federal agencies and Chapter 10 of the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design (ADASAD) for state and local governments and private entities open to the public.

There are also ABAAS accessibility standards for the routes in outdoor developed area recreation between opportunities on federal lands, such as the parking lot to the water access point, which are the Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, the ODA.

However there are no accessibility standards or guidelines that apply to

the water entry point of carry-down craft launch sites. At the same time that launch site is a program opportunity and under the laws there is a responsibility that when improvements are made the site is to be usable by people with and without disabilities.

Universal design principles

The lowest-impact, most sustainable and accessible carry-down watercraft launch sites follow universal design principles to the extent possible within that environment. The result is a launch site that maintains the natural resource and the character of the setting while providing a launch site that is usable for all people to the greatest extent possible.

For the route to the water's edge, universal and sustainable design suggests the grade or running slope should rarely exceed 10%, because steeper grades tend to have water drainage problems resulting in erosion.

The following design and construction techniques focus on improved drainage include, for example, grade reversals with out-sloped tread rather than steps. Eliminating steps also reduces the tripping hazards steps present when those on the route are carrying a large canoe or kayak. A route design that works with the terrain is also best for managing drainage.

A sustainable surface is designed to have the firmness and stability needed to hold up during the primary seasons of use and between planned maintenance cycles. The route's tread needs to be wide enough for the anticipated amount of use to keep the foot traffic within the tread while boats are being carried to avoid encroachment on the surrounding area.

At an ideal universally designed carry-down watercraft launch site this firm and stable route widens as it approaches the water's edge to accommodate loading and unloading of people and gear into their watercraft. With all of these design principles in place the route will require less maintenance, maintain the character of the setting, and be more accessible for all.

Site limitations

Unfortunately, designers don't always have such ideal locations to work with. If the only available launch site is a wetland, marsh, or tidal area, it is likely to be challenging to provide for firm and stable surfaces. Other site limitations may make it not possible to create the ideal universal design.

Here are some site considerations

regarding the impact on the environment and the final usability of that launch site:

If a dock is being considered, weigh out the potential impacts for people getting in and out of paddle craft from the dock or dock system. For a person seated in their wheelchair it is approximately 22 inches from the seat of the average wheelchair to the surface of the dock.

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Pine River, Michigan carry-down launch site on the Huron-Manistee National Forest

Then add the depth of the deck plus the distance down to the kayak seat in the bottom of the floating kayak. That is the total distance a person will have to transfer down into their boat and on the return that person to move themselves back up that same distance into the seat of their wheelchair.

Docks and facilities

When you see commercial products for kayak or canoe launch site docks advertised as “ADA compliant,” or “Accessible,” keep in mind there are no accessibility standards for those water entry points. That rating is simply that company’s perspective. You need to be sure whether there are barriers with any dock system that might prevent some people from being able to launch their boats.

Railings and bars of any height often block access for those with wheelchairs, walkers, or visual limitations. Transfer benches that are built into a dock system are only helpful for those who have a strong upper body and good balance. A transfer bench as well as steps can also block direct transfer from wheelchair, walker, or crutches into a carry-down watercraft.

Chutes of various types require a companion with a strong back, or the paddler has to be able to get out and pull up their own boat. Caution: any

devices with moving parts installed at a launch site need to always be maintained and staffed.

So plan ahead, think broadly about the potential use of the launch site by a wide range of boaters or all ages and abilities. Good planning and design opens opportunities for all people to fully enjoy the environment from the water level.

RESOURCES

Access these and other water trail resources at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/water.

- **Iowa Water Trails Toolkit:**

Practical guidance and with templates for planning, launch site design, signage construction and more used on the Iowa Water Trails system. This excellent and practical resource is available online. It also includes clear, illustrated explanations concerning how best to situate a launch/landing area, especially where there are strong currents, risk of flooding and so forth.

- **NPS Prepare to Launch:**

An online guidebook for assessing, designing, and building carry-down watercraft launch sites.

- **Access Board’s Accessible Boating Facilities:**

An online technical assistance how-to guide for applying the accessible boating facilities requirements.



Launch site on the Quinebaug Water Trail in Connecticut

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Water Trails in Connecticut's "Last Green Valley"



Mansfield, Connecticut's accessible launch site is smooth and barrier free

When canoeist Larry Diamond paddled the Willimantic River in the early 1990s, he saw other paddlers, but not many. Launches were mostly unimproved and hard to find, but in-the-know paddlers enjoyed scenery that felt like Maine wilderness, even in the midst of northeastern Connecticut.

Today Larry sees more paddlers thanks to the work of the Willimantic River Alliance (WRA) and The Last Green Valley, a national heritage corridor (TLGV). The heritage corridor includes two National Recreation Trail water trails, the "Willi" as locals call it, and the Quinebaug.

Acting on an off-hand comment – "Let's paddle to the Sound!" – in 2009, TLGV organized a six-week-long

"Source-to-Sea" trip on navigable rivers of the watershed. Each weekend put new paddlers on the rivers and raised awareness through educational events and celebrations.

As Bill Reid of TLGV recalls, "Most of us knew certain stretches, but almost nobody saw the big picture. As Source-to-Sea logistics came together, we created a forum for individualists with a shared passion: the rivers."

WRA and TLGV have always known that people who enjoy rivers are people who care for rivers. They also recognize two major gaps: little public information about where to paddle and difficult, limited physical access to the river.

To bridge these gaps, both groups built awareness through events, inventoried the Quinebaug and Willimantic rivers, then compiled that data to produce detailed paddle guides, stewardship plans and finally designation as

National Recreation Trails.

Others with a stake in the rivers, such as the US Army Corps of Engineers, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and riverside towns, developed launches and programming to promote both rivers.

In 2008, the town of Mansfield cut ribbon on a 20-year-old idea to create a launch on the Eagleville Pond impoundment on the Willi. It took a land swap with the University of Connecticut and remediation of an old septic field to create River Park, a 10-acre site with a multipurpose playing field, parking, and of critical importance to boaters, a universal-access launch for paddle craft.

Jennifer Kaufman of the Town of Mansfield says, "River Park demonstrated to us how important accessibility is for recreation by people of many ages and abilities. Right now we are

lining up funding for a universal-access trail around Bicentennial Pond.”

She adds, “And beyond those projects, the town plan now states clearly that Mansfield’s park and preserve system, including natural and active recreation areas, provides access to and meet the needs of all residents.”

Vicky Wetherell, longtime leader of WRA, appreciates how each step built on past accomplishments. “It has been a steady progression. The Willimantic River Yacht Club—volunteers who organized a river race for 27 years—did the wet and sweaty work of clearing obstructions. We distributed their one-page guide for many years. Then we created a web-based guide.”

She adds, “Working with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, we used a four-step process to get NRT designation. First, our volunteers inventoried every launch site and reach of the Willi. Second, we used that data to write one-page stewardship plans for each launch—to control erosion and invasive plants for example.



Paddlers on the Quinebaug River Water Trail

Next, we wrote a paddle guide with lots of safety and logistical suggestions for novice paddlers and families.”

TLGV repeated the process on the Quinebaug two years later. Next up is the Shetucket River.

In 2014, dozens of on-the-water events will acquaint more people with the beauty of the Quinebaug and Willimantic.

Rivers. Larry Diamond enjoys the company on the water. “Everybody is smiling and happy as we pass. Now I wonder: How do we get kids and adults away from electronic gadgets to enjoy these treasures for real?”

Learn more about visiting and paddling the area at www.thelastgreenvalley.org.

Information sign for a water trail access point



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New Haven & Northampton Canal Rail Trail in Massachusetts

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS

New national trails for 2014

The National Recreation Trails (NRT) program is authorized in the National Trails System Act, along with the National Scenic and Historic Trails. Routes may be designated by the Secretaries of Interior or Agriculture to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance in response to an application from the trail's managing agency or organization.

Every kind of trail activity is represented among designated National Recreation Trails. Besides hiking and bicycling, the system includes water trails, motorized routes, snow tracks, greenways, and equestrian paths. The NRT program showcases the diversity of trails across America, from our cities and suburbs to deserts, waterways, and mountains. See details of these and over 1,200 other trails on the NRT website at www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.

For 2014, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Director of the National Park Service Jonathan B. Jarvis have designated these 21 trails in 11 states as National Recreation Trails:



Harlem Valley Rail Trail in New York

ARIZONA

- **Wild Burro Trail**

The 6.3 miles long trail is the gateway to the Tortolita Mountains. The trail offers views, historical sites, and the opportunity to observe birds, reptiles, and mammals of the Sonoran Desert.

CALIFORNIA

- **North Slope Trail**

An easy to hike one mile trail through the coastal hills of northern California, the North Slope Trail has sweeping views of Lake Sonoma and the surrounding wine country.

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS

- **Ventura River Parkway Trail**

From the Ventura River Estuary to the City of Ojai, the 16.5-mile corridor of pedestrian and cycling trails reconnects people in city neighborhoods and rural communities to the river.

FLORIDA

- **Apalachicola River Blueway**

This water trail stretches 106 miles from the dam in Chattahoochee to Apalachicola Bay. The majestic Apalachicola River flows through one of the nation's richest hotspots of biodiversity and is bordered by large tracts of pristine, undeveloped land, home to many threatened and rare species of plants and animals.

GEORGIA

- **Harbins Park Trail System**

Located in eastern Gwinnett County and adjacent to several schools, the 30-mile trail system is the setting for environmental studies, fitness activities, and nature experiences, with a variety of multi-use paved trails and soft surface nature trails.

- **Little Mulberry Park Trails**

From the handicapped-accessible Pond Trail to the challenging unpaved Ravine Loop Trail, the park's trails offer 13 miles of walking, hiking, jogging, equestrian, and biking opportunities for all ages and fitness levels.

- **McDaniel Farm Park Trails**

Historic farm buildings, green pastures, and shaded tree groves line the trails, providing a glimpse of the historic past and a natural oasis in the midst of modern day "mall sprawl."

- **Settles Bridge Park Trail**

Located on the upper banks of the Chattahoochee River and adjacent to an elementary school, the 4.5-mile multi-use trail system provides an antidote to nature deficit disorder.

MASSACHUSETTS

- **Dedham Loop Water Trail**

This 7.2-mile water trail on the Charles River in Dedham offers trail programs throughout the year.



McDaniel Farm Park Trails in Georgia

- **Mass Central Rail Trail (Northampton Section)**

Portions of this 5.3-mile trail were among the first municipal rail trails developed in New England (1985). In 2001 the trail expanded to connect to other rail trails and tie various village centers together.

- **New Haven & Northampton Canal Rail Trail (Northampton Section)**

Extending from downtown Northampton to the Easthampton town line, the 4-mile trail hosts walking, running, bicycling, and skating. A highlight of the trail is a mural on the rail trail bridge over Main Street.

2014 National Recreation Trail designations
Details at www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails



Rocky Knob Park Trail System in North Carolina is designed for challenging mountain bicycling

MICHIGAN

• Copper Harbor Trails

At the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula, this 30-mile trail system has sweeping views of Lake Superior, with extensive singletrack over cedar-planked bridges and boardwalks.

NEW YORK

• Genesee Valley Greenway State Park

This 84-mile corridor follows the route of the 19th century Genesee Valley Canal and the railroad. It links sixteen towns from Rochester to the Village of Cuba.

• Harlem Valley Rail Trail – Columbia County

The paved bicycle/pedestrian path built on the former New York Central Railroad hosts runners, bicyclists, walkers, roller-bladers, cross-country skiers, wheelchair users, hikers and dog walkers who enjoy combining the quiet beauty of rural landscapes with healthy exercise.

• Harlem Valley Rail Trail – Dutchess County

The 10.7-mile trail extends north from Metro North's Harlem Valley commuter line at Wassaic through forests, wetlands, fields, and meadows to the historic village of Millerton.

• Hudson Valley Rail Trail

The 3.6-mile trail passes through the Black Creek Wetlands Complex and connects at its eastern end to Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park.

• Long Path through Mine Kill State Park

The trail is supported by a partnership among Mine Kill State Park, the New York Power Authority, and the Long Path North Hiking Club.



Harbins Park Trail System in Georgia

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS

NORTH CAROLINA

- **Rocky Knob Park Trail System**

The nine miles of mountain bike trails climb in stacked loops to the top of Rocky Knob Mountain, providing for a variety of skill levels through challenging terrain.

PENNSYLVANIA

- **Horse-Shoe Trail – Warwick to FCSP Section**

This 88-mile water trail runs through historic sites and river gorges. The trail features remnants of the early American iron industry.

SOUTH CAROLINA

- **SC Revolutionary Rivers**

This 66-mile trail on scenic waterways offers a series of short excursions, overnight rustic camping opportunities, and reminders of the Revolutionary War hero General Francis Marion, known as the Swamp Fox.

TENNESSEE

- **Urban Wilderness South Loop Trail**

A few miles from Knoxville's downtown core, the 28.4-mile trail offers a diversity of topography and scenery. The majority of the trail was built by volunteers from the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club.

If you enjoy photography, look up designated NRTs in your area or in places you travel. Enter our annual photo contest! Deadline for entries is Dec. 15, 2014. Learn more about the National Recreation Trails Program and see more photos at www.AmericanTrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.



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Northwest Youth Corps helps Portland area's trail system

By Natalie Whitson

Often named the "Greenest City in America," Portland, Oregon is one of the best walking and running cities in the country. The area's many avid trail users benefit from the region's temperate weather, and beautiful surroundings, while being well-equipped by numerous local outdoor companies which include Nike, Adidas, Columbia Sportswear, Keen, Hi-Tec Sports, Under Armour, and Merrell.

And needless to say, the area's abundant trails—many with a relatively low altitude, easy approach, and short distance from the Portland metro area, if not actually in the city—make them popular among hikers with various skill levels. A quick glance at the

Portland Hiker's website lists no less than 63 different loop hikes ranging from Portland's Forest Park—the largest urban forest in the United States—to hikes through deciduous woodlands and beaches at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

Another popular recreational destination in the greater Portland area is the rural, predominantly forested Sandy Ridge Trail System, located about 50 miles east of the city on a ridge just west of Mount Hood. Home to two designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Sandy Ridge Trail System provides new trail opportunities specifically designed for mountain bikers in the foothills of the Cascade Range.

Operated by the Salem BLM—which has acquired nearly 6,000 acres of land in the area in the past 15 years—the trail system winds through a typical western Oregon forest of Douglas fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, and various hardwood species.

The need for the Sandy Ridge Trail System was identified after BLM



bought the land in 2001, and conducted surveys to hear what Oregonians wanted as a new recreation option. With the construction of a mountain bike trail emerging as the clear winner, the Sandy Ridge master plan was created by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA).

The Sandy Ridge trails form the nation's largest trail system built specifically for mountain bikes on federal land, and one of only a handful of projects like it in the U.S. An important economic driver for the nearby town of Sandy—which created a mountain bike rental program to capitalize on the trails' success—more than half of the users live farther than 15 miles away. Many tourists even come from other countries, according to Sandy Assistant City Manager David Snider.

While IMBA volunteers have contributed heavily to the trail's construction in recent years, they have been



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Northwest Youth Corps *continued*



joined by crews from Northwest Youth Corps, a nonprofit organization that has employed over 18,000 teens in educational work projects across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, northern California, and Arizona since 1984.

NYC's crews use a combination of service, training, education, and employment to help youth and young adults protect, restore, and enhance public lands and waterways. Last year, funding by Northwest Youth Corps' partners allowed 781 youth and young adults to earn a total of \$775,956 (an average of \$755-1,400 apiece) as they constructed or maintained 401 miles of multi-use trails, as well as other conservation outcomes on public lands.

Northwest Youth Corps has worked with the Salem BLM since 2000, and on the Sandy Ridge Trail System since 2009. At Sandy Ridge, the crew has completed trail maintenance, water bars and retaining walls, up slope and cross slope drainages, and built berms, retaining walls, and jumps for the mountain bikers who ride the rugged trails. Once finished, the Sandy Ridge Trail System will provide more than 15 miles of high quality single-track mountain biking experience.

Thanks to "cost shares" with partners like BLM, which operates the Sandy Ridge Trail System, and grants from programs like the National Fish

and Wildlife Foundation, NYC can pay each crew member an educational stipend of up to \$1,500 for their work on the trail.

Other Portland area trails projects that NYC crews are currently tackling include building recreational infrastructure in the Butler Creek Greenway in southwest Gresham (east Portland). Located along scenic Butler Creek, the soft-surfaced Butler Creek Greenway Trail connects with the Springwater Trail, 1.5 miles east to downtown Gresham, and is 1.7 miles west to the City of Portland's 616-acre Powell Butte Nature Park.

This summer, with funding from a Portland Metro "Nature in Neighborhoods" grant, local NYC participants are tackling invasive weeds in the Butler Creek Greenway; restoring several severely eroded stream banks; and enhancing habitat for coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and Oregon slender salamanders. Other long-term NYC projects in the Portland area include trails for the Molalla River Recreation Area, the Table Rock Wilderness, and L.L. "Stub" Stewart State Park, one of Oregon's newest. The Park's trails provide 1,888 acres of rolling hills, forest glades, gleaming streams, and views of

the Coastal Range for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians to explore.

According to Tom Helmer, an NYC project manager overseeing the Portland area crews, these types of trail-building activities empower youth through job skills, education, and plain hard work.

"We've found that the outdoors is the most effective way of delivering those teamwork skills," he added.

"Building a trail is a team effort. And, you can see the result right away."

At the end of each day, youth participate in an hour of hands-on education. Whether crewmembers return home each night, or camp (depending on the NYC program), all earn a paycheck, high school credit, and solid job reference for their successful participation, as well as learn the importance of safe work habits, and basic job and communication skills.

"We look at it as a jobs training program. Paying these kids for their hard work shows them that they can get a job doing this, that there's a future there," Helmer said.

Visit www.nwyouthcorps.org to learn more about projects and opportunities with Northwest Youth Corps.



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- Cleveland Metroparks
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- County Line Riders of Catalina, Inc.
- County of El Dorado
- CT Forest & Park Association
- Dillon Nature Center – Hutchinson Recreation Commission
- Disabled Equestrians Organization
- Dolan Springs Trail System
- East Bay Regional Park District
- East Coast Greenway Alliance
- Cheryl Ellsworth
- George Finch (Boney and Associates)
- Jeffery Goetter
- Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
- Forever Green Council
- Gallatin Valley Land Trust
- Georgia River Network
- Green Mountain Horse Association
- Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition
- Michael Haas
- Heckrodt Wetland Reserve
- Hike BC / National Hiking Trail of BC
- Hoosier Hiker's Council
- Interior Trails Preservation Coalition
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Trail Protector

Best Practices: new resources

See many more recent articles and studies at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources



Trail safety and crime prevention features

Our newest gallery of photos highlights user safety and crime prevention on trails. While trails have proven to be generally extremely safe recreational facilities, as with any public place they are subject to the possibilities of criminal activity.

Some of the techniques used to help ensure the safety of trail users are:

- Emergency call boxes
- Numbered trail markers to assist 911 responders
- Video cameras
- Trail patrols
- Warning signs

Read more and view the photos at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/cool.

Study cites health benefits of greenways

Urban River Parkways: An Essential Tool for Public Health, by UCLA's Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, suggests that investing in bikeways and greenways can reduce the health costs of physical

inactivity in our cities.

The report notes that "From current evidence, we find that urban river parkways can improve physical, mental, and community health, and that they are particularly important in offering opportunity for 'green exercise'—physical activity in the presence of nature."

To read the article and download the study, see "Study cites health benefits of Urban River Parkways" online at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/health.

Protected bike lanes encourage cycling

As cities move to increase levels of bicycling for transportation, many practitioners and advocates have promoted the use of protected bicycle lanes (also known as "cycle tracks" or "protected bikeways") as an important component of the infrastructure for cyclists.

Lessons from the Green Lanes: Evaluating Protected Bike Lanes, from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities, finds "consistent evidence that the protected facilities improved the perception of safety for people on bicycles."

To read more and download the study, see "Protected bike lanes encourage active transportation" online at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/trans.

USDOT plans ped/bike safety initiative

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced a new initiative to reduce the growing number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities through a comprehensive approach that addresses infrastructure safety, education, vehicle safety, and data collection.

The 18-month campaign will begin with road safety assessments conducted by U.S. Department of Transportation

field offices in every state, and will produce multiple resources to help communities build streets that are safer for people walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation.

The Department will promote the development of multimodal networks which include interconnected pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities that allow people of all ages and abilities to safely and conveniently get where they want to go. This will be accomplished, in part, by promoting pedestrian and bicycle facility design flexibility, and by highlighting best practices at the local, regional, and state level.

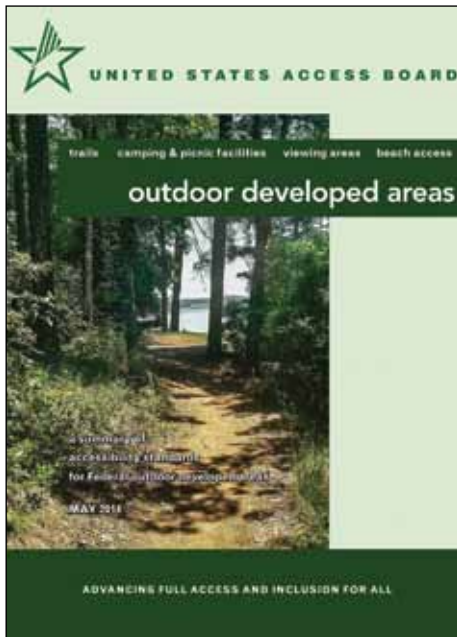
The new pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative will promote design improvements to routes for pedestrians and bicycles, promote behavioral safety, and provide education to help individuals make safer travel choices.

Among the many resources the Department will provide will be a guide to creating "road diets," in which roadways with lower traffic volumes are redesigned to add space for bicycle riders and pedestrians.

To read more and download "Safer People, Safer Streets" visit www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/trans.



See solutions and ideas for trails and greenways at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources



Access Board releases accessibility guide

A new guide on achieving accessible outdoor sites, including trails and camping areas, is now available from the U.S. Access Board. It's called *A Summary of Accessibility Standards for Federal Outdoor Developed Areas*.

The 112-page document discusses and illustrates provisions of accessibility guidelines the Board issued in 2013 for outdoor sites developed by the federal government. These guidelines provide detailed specifications for accessible trails, picnic and camping areas, viewing areas, beach access routes, and other components of outdoor developed areas when newly built or altered.

The new guide serves as a companion resource to the guidelines by explaining the intent of various requirements and how they can be met. In addition, the guide explains exceptions in the guidelines that may apply where compliance is not practicable because of terrain, prevailing construction practices, or other specified conditions.

For trails, it addresses surface characteristics, width, and running and cross slopes. Other facilities detailed include camp sites, tent pads and platforms, pic-

nic tables, grills, fire rings, and toilet and bathing facilities.

The provisions for outdoor developed areas are part of the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards and apply to federal agencies that develop outdoor areas for recreational purposes.

However, the guidelines will also be helpful to local and state governments and organizations seeking to improve accessibility of their trails and recreation facilities.

The complete guide is available at www.AmericanTrails.org/resources/accessible.

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Trails training opportunities

American Trails hosts the National Trails Training Partnership, a nationwide coalition promoting learning and improving skills for trail work.

American Trails “Advancing Trails Webinar Series”

American Trails is committed to bringing you the latest in state-of-the-art information on all aspects of trails and greenways. Both upcoming webinars and recorded presentations are available for purchase through our online store.

We know that during these tough economic times we cannot always travel to attend important and informative meetings in the trails industry. American Trails members receive a discount on webinar registration fees!

Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for \$20 for our webinars. CEUs are provided through the Texas Recreation and Park Society, an authorized independent CEU provider. Our 75 minute webinars are worth 0.10 CEUs. CEUs are only available when attending a live webinar and not for archived webinar purchases.

Upcoming webinars

- **DECEMBER 11, 2014:** Towards a Mountain Trail Sustainability Ethic ~ Part 3 of 3

Recorded webinars available

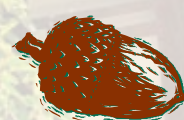
A wide variety of recordings of webinars previously presented are also available through the American Trails Store. Some are available for purchase and access to others is free (marked “FREE RECORDING”).

- Horses and Trails - How to be Successful with Both
- Fundamentals of Mountain Trail Sustainability (Part 2 of 3)
- Integrating Habitat and Trails
- Applying Foundations of Mountain Trail Sustainability (Part 1 of 3)
- Building Urban Trails in Difficult Places
- Managing User Conflicts ~ Part 3 of the Trail Maintenance Management Series
- Effective Fundraising for Trails and Greenways
- Trails and the New Federal Accessibility Guidelines ~ FREE RECORDING
- Navigating the American Trails Website - Your Comprehensive Online Resource for Trails, Greenways, and Blueways ~ FREE RECORDING
- Natural Surface Trail Tread Water Maintenance ~ Part 2 of the Trail Maintenance Management Series
- Introduction to Trail Maintenance Management Planning: Part 1 of 3
- From the Driveway to the Trailhead – the Missing Link
- Building Your Trail Right the First Time



- Pathways for Play
- Making the Case for Trails in Tight Economic Times
- The Third Mode: Connecting Greenways, Trails and Active Mobility (On-Street Bike Routes, Sidewalks and Transit)
- The Art of Sustainable, Natural Surface, Trail Management
- Water Trail Accessibility: Assessing and Creating More Accessible Facilities and Programs
- Telling a Better Story - Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Panels for Trails
- Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices ~ FREE RECORDING

Check the American Trails website for more details and how to purchase an upcoming or archived webinar at www.AmericanTrails.org/ntp/webinars-american-trails.html.



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**For classes, conferences, and training opportunities:
online calendar at www.TrailsTraining.net**

AASHTO bicycle facilities training programs available

The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* serves as a key resource for creating and designing bicycle facilities in the U.S.

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center and Toole Design Group offered a seven-part webinar series on the updated AASHTO Bike Guide. Both presentation slides and videos of the full webinars are available from the archived presentations:

- Overview of Revised AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities
- Bicycle Planning
- On-Road Facilities Part 1: Bike Lanes
- On-Road Facilities Part 2: Shared Lanes, Paved Shoulders, Bicycle Boulevards, and Traffic Signals
- Off Road Facilities: Shared Use Path Design
- Off Road Facilities: Shared Use Path - Roadway Intersection Design
- Maintenance and Operations

Access the bike facility training programs at www.pedbikeinfo.org/training/webinars_PBIC_LC_AASHTO.cfm.

Trails training: 2014 highlights

October 8 – Neighborhoods around the world!

- International Walk to School Day 2014

October 16-18 — Bellingham, WA

- Washington State Trails Conference

October 16-17 — Greenfield, NH

- Sustainable Trails for All Conference

October 18-19 — Greenfield, NH

- Trail Construction for Universal Access Workshop

October 21 — Online Webinar

- Webinar: MAP-21 2.0

October 21-23 — Sydney, NSW, Australia

- International Conference on Walking & Liveable Communities

November 8 — Leominster, MA

- Massachusetts Trails Conference

November 12-19 — Sydney, NSW, Australia

- IUCN World Parks Congress 2014

See details of these and many more learning opportunities at www.AmericanTrails.org/Calendar.html.

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

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Shasta Living Streets

Shasta Living Streets is a civic organization dedicated to building better bikeways, trails, and vibrant, walkable public places. Our vision for Shasta County, California recognizes that one of our greatest public assets is the interconnected network of streets and public places that binds our homes, schools, businesses, and parks.

When we couple superior facilities for active transportation and public space with our existing world-class recreational attractions, we will ensure our region excels as a place for families and businesses to thrive and as a destination for tourists. Visit Shastalivingstreets.org or contact Anne Thomas, athomas@shastalivingstreets.org or (530) 355-2230.



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See more on our members at www.AmericanTrails.org/patrons.html

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RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

2014 Annual Achievement Awards

The Coalition for Recreational Trails' "Annual Achievement Awards" recognize outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds. Award winners were recognized in June in Washington, DC during the annual celebration for Great Outdoors Week. Ten trail projects were chosen as award recipients for 2014:

Construction and Design

• **Abbott Motocross Park (Nebraska)**

The motocross park is part of the Abbott Sports Complex, which includes soccer and football fields, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, and indoor volleyball. It complements these traditional sports facilities with motocross tracks that were professionally designed to provide safe and fun riding experiences for athletes of all ages.

Use of Youth Conservation/Service Corps:

• **Mobile Trail Tools Trailers (Alaska)**

Alaska Trails' two mobile tool trailers are rented by trail constructors or donated for use by nonprofits and volunteer trail builders. The trailers, one in Fairbanks and one in Anchorage, have supported trail building by local, state, and federal agencies, service groups, and Girl and Boy Scouts. Both trailers are equipped with over 50 different hand tools and safety equipment. Alaska Trails invested funds from a Recreational Trails Program grant in 2013 to replace the popular tool trailers and purchase new tools and equipment to outfit them.



One of Alaska Trails' Mobile Trail Tools Trailers in action



Merrimack County Rail Trail in New Hampshire

Accessibility Enhancement

• **Merrimack County Four-Season Northern Rail Trail (New Hampshire)**

This project involved resurfacing 34 miles to make a four-season trail. A citizens' action group, the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County, worked from 2005 to improve the trail surface to a treadway that is sufficiently smooth and stable for use by individuals in wheelchairs.

Maintenance and Rehabilitation

• **Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (Pennsylvania)**

The AOAA nonprofit converted 6,500 acres of County-owned abandoned coal lands into a premier motorized and non-motorized outdoor recreation facility. RTP funding helped develop the accessible trailhead building, road, and parking lot as well as to upgrade the trail system.

Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing

• **Discovery Hill Community Trails (Idaho)**

Discovery Hill had a long history of user-created conflicts and vandalism which were impacting important keystone wildlife species such as sage grouse. The community-driven project developed 35 miles of nonmotorized trails and the designated travel route system was clearly signed and mapped for safer navigation by motorized users.

Maintenance and Rehabilitation

• **Sawyer Trail Project (Louisiana)**

The 22,000-acre Russell Sage Wildlife Management Area is a popular destination for over 30,000 users annually. Prior to department ownership of this property, this trail was an oil-field road. The trail project makes the popular area safely and adequately accessible to many recreation enthusiasts.

Construction and Design

• **Millersburg Historic Park and Trailhead (Michigan)**

Town, county, and state governments collaborated on the construction of a four-season trailhead along the North Eastern State Trail, which is open to snowmobiles in the winter, that extends from Alpena to Cheboygan, Michigan. The facility provides parking, restrooms, picnic tables, and interpretive signs in a covered shelter.

Education and Communication

• **State Parks Trail Book (Missouri)**

In 2012 Missouri State Parks took on the project of creating a guide to help visitors who want to explore the nearly 1,000 miles of trails in Missouri's state parks and historic sites. An RTP grant funded the creation of "Trails of Missouri State Parks." The 422-page, full-color book describes and maps trails in 58 state parks and historic sites.

Environment and Wildlife Compatibility

• **Navajo Lake State Park BOR Trail (New Mexico)**

Fishing enthusiasts from all over the world come to New Mexico to fish the waters of the San Juan River below Navajo Dam. The trail that descends steeply to the wetlands and the river below had become significantly eroded. This project improved the safety and sustainability of the trail with more than 2,000 modular retaining wall blocks and 43 pre-formed concrete steps installed by hand.



Sawyer Trail Project in Louisiana

Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing

• **Yellow Creek Bridge Project (Pennsylvania)**

RTP funds were used to construct an 85-foot fiberglass hiking bridge connecting the 300-mile Mid State Trail in Loysburg, Pennsylvania. The new bridge provides a safe span over Yellow Creek. It replaces a 100-year-old wire and wood "swinging bridge" that had become unsafe after suffering from years of flooding and nature's other elements.

See details and photos of the awards at www.AmericanTrails.org/awards/CRT14awards. The Coalition for Recreational Trails is a federation of national and regional trail-related organizations that work together to build awareness and support funding of the Recreational Trails Program.

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Common ground

Why you should support other recreational trail users' trails

By Karen Umphress

Outdoor activity has long been a part of my life. When I was growing up, swimming, bike riding, hiking, and camping were family recreational activities. There was a decade of sailing. As a young mother, my son and I biked locally and hiked many trail miles across Delmarva and in Northeast states. Today, I prefer to hike, walk, and bike.

I remember reading an article regarding a national conservation group's members leading people for off-trail runs through an area that was recently scorched by a fire, creating rogue trails and trampling areas that were posted as closed to give the earth time to recover from the fires. Should I assume that all hikers/runners are bad or that all members of this conservation group don't really care about the environment?

I have seen parents let their children loose on a posted closed area in Mt. St. Helens national park. The kids were running on a fragile meadow which was set aside for rehabilitation after the volcano erupted in 1980. Should I assume that all parents have no control over their kids or have no care for the impact their children cause to the environment?

I have heard of equestrians threatening to interrupt a fully permitted youth dirt bike event by riding on trails that were not open to horses, not caring of the potential to harm children who thought they were riding on one-way trails. I have heard of dirt bike riders who have breached equestrian-only trails with little concern that they could spook the horses. I have heard of mountain bike riders who travel down steep multi-use trails at unsafe speeds without a thought of potentially running down a hiker or spooking a horse. Does this mean I should think ill of all equestrians, dirt bike riders, or mountain bike riders?

I hope your answer is "no" for all of the questions above. People are people no matter how we choose to recreate. Most of us are good, responsible recreators regardless of our form of recreation. And in every single group, there are a few bad apples that give the rest of us a bad name.

If you are wondering about how this philosophical reflection relates to the article title, it is to help us to remember that each trail user has more in common with each other than differences. For all of you doubting my sanity with that statement, take a step back and think of why you like to use trails. Do these ideas strike a chord?

- Physical exercise
- Being out in nature
- Getting away from it all
- Being in God's country
- Seeing awesome views
- Seeing flora and fauna

"If we want a lot of great, quality, sustainable trails, we need to focus more on cooperating with the people with whom we have the most in common: other trail users."

- Relieving stress
- That sense of freedom or spirit revitalization that only comes when you are out in nature and are absorbing the essence of the environment

It doesn't matter what your type of recreation is, those are most likely the key aspects of why you like trails.

Now we get to the reason for this article. All of us want trails and there is only so much land to go around. There is no longer enough land available for each trail user to have their own dedicated trail system. We are going to have to share some trail with other recreational types.

The more acreage that is shut off to any type of trail system leaves that much less available acreage for everyone. If a local equestrian trail system is closed, those equestrians may end up on trails designed and focused on hikers or mountain bikers. If ATV trails are closed, they may end up on forest roads or other, wider trails which were not designed for their use. If walking trails are closed, the hikers may end up on dirt bike or mountain bike trails. You get the picture. Forcing other trail users off of their trail systems could very well put them onto your trail systems.

And getting back to people being people, they are most likely going to continue their chosen form of recreation whether or not their trails are closed or prevented from being open. Although, I don't condone any type of illegal trail use, I have to acknowledge that it exists and is not likely to stop unless those trail user's needs are met in a legal and managed setting.

So the next time you think of opposing a trail system for another recreational type, take a moment and reflect that assisting in the creation of those other trails, your trails could be either improved or remain intact. And in the end, if we want a lot of great, quality, sustainable trails systems that get us all into nature, we need to focus more on cooperating with the people with whom we have the most in common, other trail users.

Karen Umphress is a member of the American Trails Board and Project Manager for the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (www.nohvcc.org).



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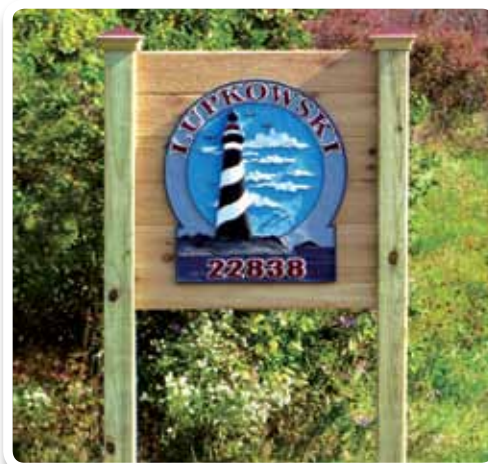
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