

American Trails

more trails. better trails.

Annual Report

2020

American Trails

A challenging year

Hello Trails Community,

Well, 2020 has certainly been one for the record books! It is my hope that the following 2020 Annual Report can catch you up on where AT is currently, how we have adapted to the COVID pandemic, and where we are headed as we move into 2021.

I encourage you to review this information and provide thoughts and feedback as you see opportunities for improvement and increased focus.

Thank you for your support throughout 2020.

Sincerely,

The American Trails Team



OUR PURPOSE

American Trails is a national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of *all* trail interests, including hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, water trails, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, trail motorcycling, ATVs, snowmobiling and four-wheeling.



**MORE TRAILS.
BETTER TRAILS.
SERVING ALL.**

OUR VISION

American Trails envisions the nation's public trails and greenways being within reach of all people wherever they live, work, and play.



Connect

We connect people with the natural world by enabling those who build, maintain, use, and dream of trails.



Improve

We improve the nation's quality of life, health, and well-being with trails and greenways used for recreation and transportation.



Invigorate

We invigorate communities financially by supporting trails that add valuable amenities and spur economic development.

OUR VALUES

Our values express what we stand for and are core to our organization and our place within the trails community

At American Trails, we uphold a set of collective principles and ideals that guide our thoughts and work.

Teamwork

Respect

**Fiscal
Responsibility**

Diversity

**Healthy
Lifestyles**

Equity

Active Living

Inclusivity

WHO WE ARE

American Trails is a national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of all trail interests, including hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, water trails, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, trail motorcycling, ATVs, snowmobiling and four-wheeling.

24,257

Monthly email
correspondence

30+

Active nonprofit
partners

7

Federal agency
partners

1.5 M

Annual website
visitation



OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy is focused on driving growth and creating long-term values. It has six key pillars.



Trail Community Leadership

Leverage our current products/services and initiatives (ITS, Federal Program Management, Trails Move People Coalition) into a fully developed industry leadership role for AT that facilitates industry initiatives.



Research

Establish a robust and collaborative Industry Research Capacity with a focus on the development and understanding of how trails and the industry create value and impact at the community, state, and federal level.



Professional Development and Certification

Expand our current knowledge base and trails education program into a fully developed Professional Development program, including professional and organizational accreditations, and industry core competencies.

OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy is focused on driving growth and creating long-term values. It has six key pillars.



Brand Messaging and Industry Promotion

Establish a strong trails industry leadership brand using Research and Professional Development programming as a vehicle for a high visibility community and industry promotional effort.



Advocacy and Policy Development

Establish a strong collaborative trails industry advocacy program that will drive pro trail policy at federal, state and local level. Includes trails advocacy in municipal, corporate, and foundation communities.



Funding and Resource Development

Establish a strong fund development brand and capacity by engaging the broader industry through strong brand and marketing capability that articulates the value and impact of trails.



2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #1

Leadership

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

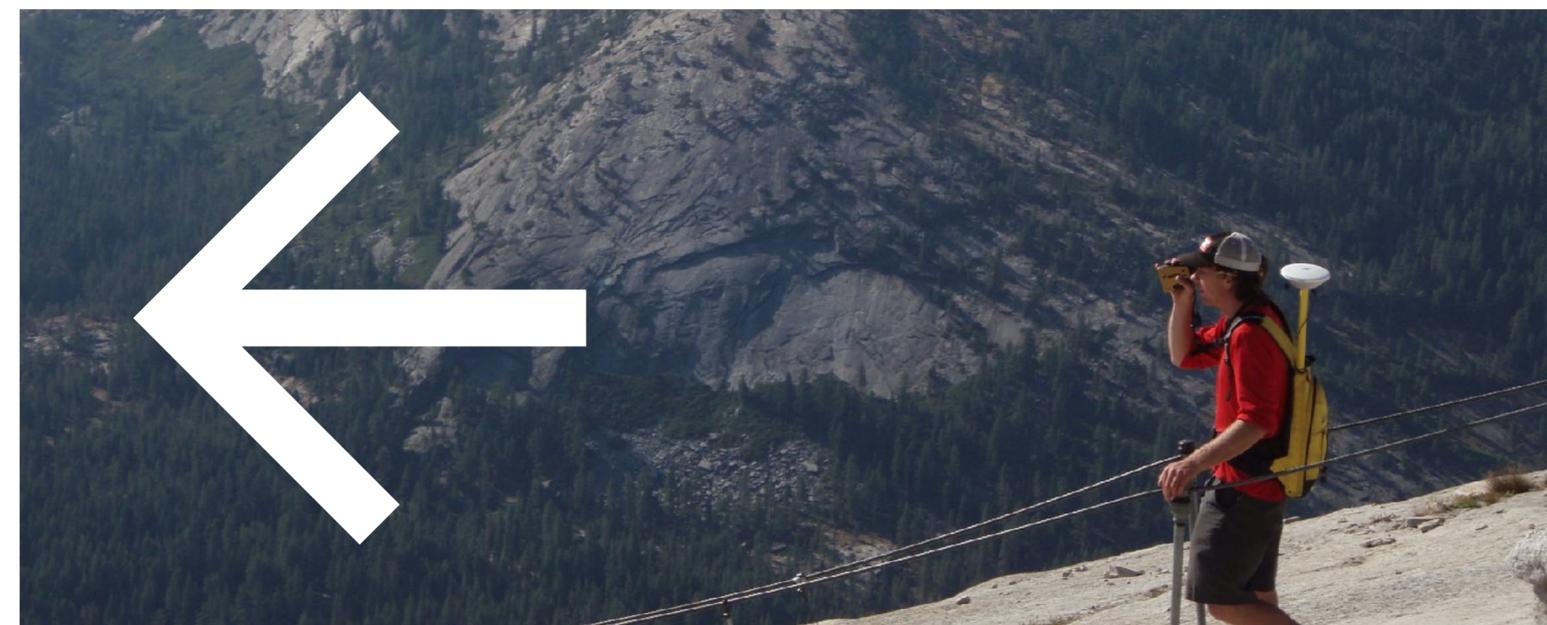
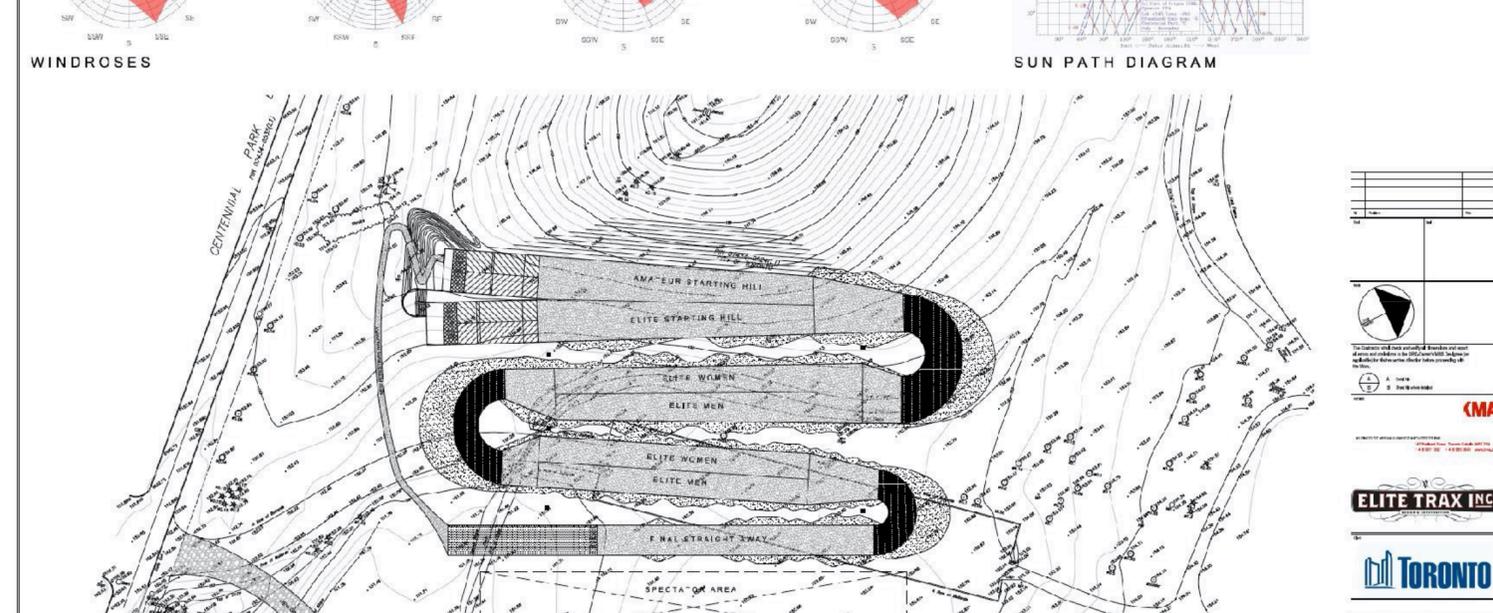
- **Continue to host the *Trails Move People Coalition***
- **Share *Partner Leadership Committee* work on the *10 Year Trails Challenge*.**
- ***Planned for a joint Trails and Outdoor Recreation Summit bringing together for the first time the outdoor recreation and trails industries.***
- ***Built a robust Business Directory of over 2,300 trail-related businesses and organizations.***
- ***Developed and expanded the National Recreation Trail Ambassador Program.***

2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #2

Research

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

- *Shovel-ready Project Research and Report in partnership with Penn State University*
- *Coordination with Outdoor Alliance, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, IMBA, and others on Shovel-ready Project Lists*
- *National Trails Shared Stewardship pilot study with Applied Trails Research and the USFS*





2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #3

Professional Development

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

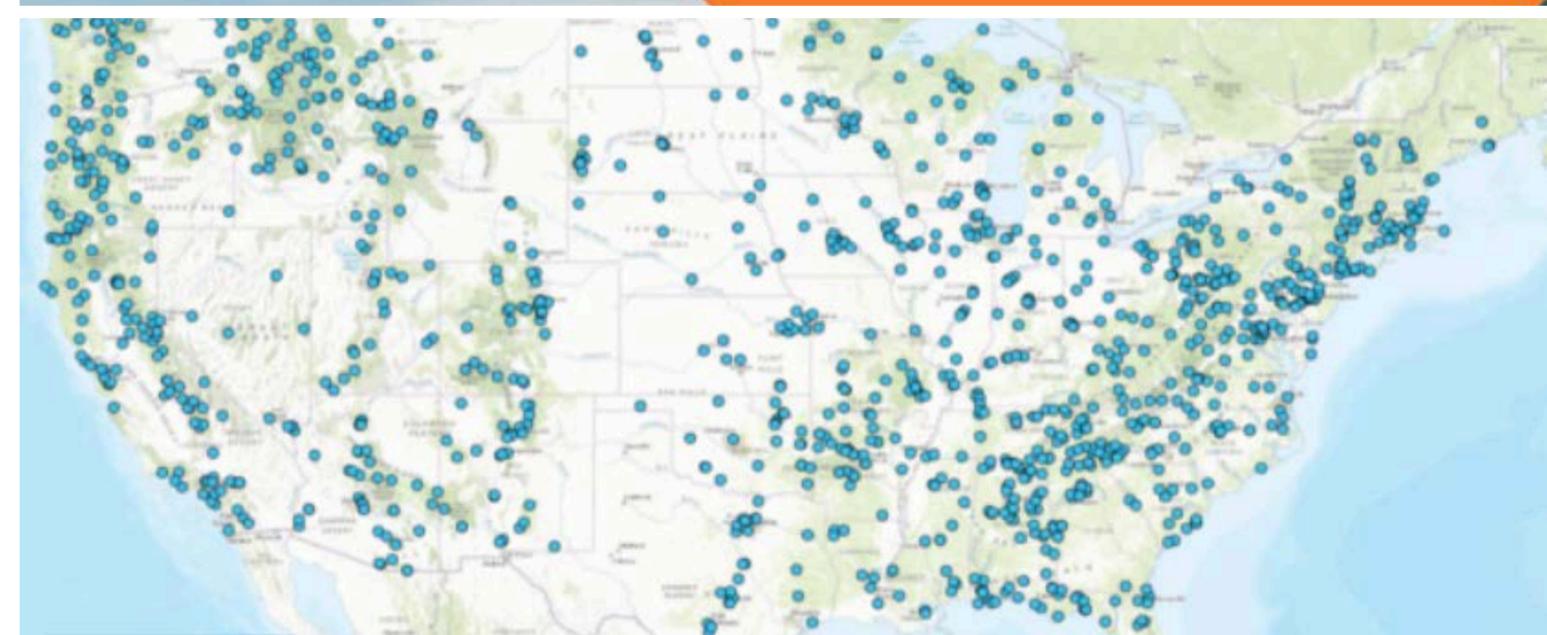
- *Development of Trail Core Competencies with PTBA, USFS, and others.*
- *Advancing Trails Webinar Series expansion with the onset of COVID-19.*
- *Partnerships with CA Trails and Greenways, NY Recreation and Parks Department, Oregon Trails Summit and others to host virtual trainings and provide CEU's.*
- *Planned for '[TrailsTraining.org](https://www.trailstraining.org)' as a collaborative platform for training and home to the Trails Community Map.*
- *Built a new and easily searchable Resource Library.*

2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #4

Messaging

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

- *Redeveloped website and planned for [TrailsTraining.org](https://trails.org/trails-training) as a collaborative platform for training*
- *Created a “Why Trails” document pulling together research and resources that identify the economic, health, and diversity benefits of trails.*
- *Business Directory development*





2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #5

Advocacy

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

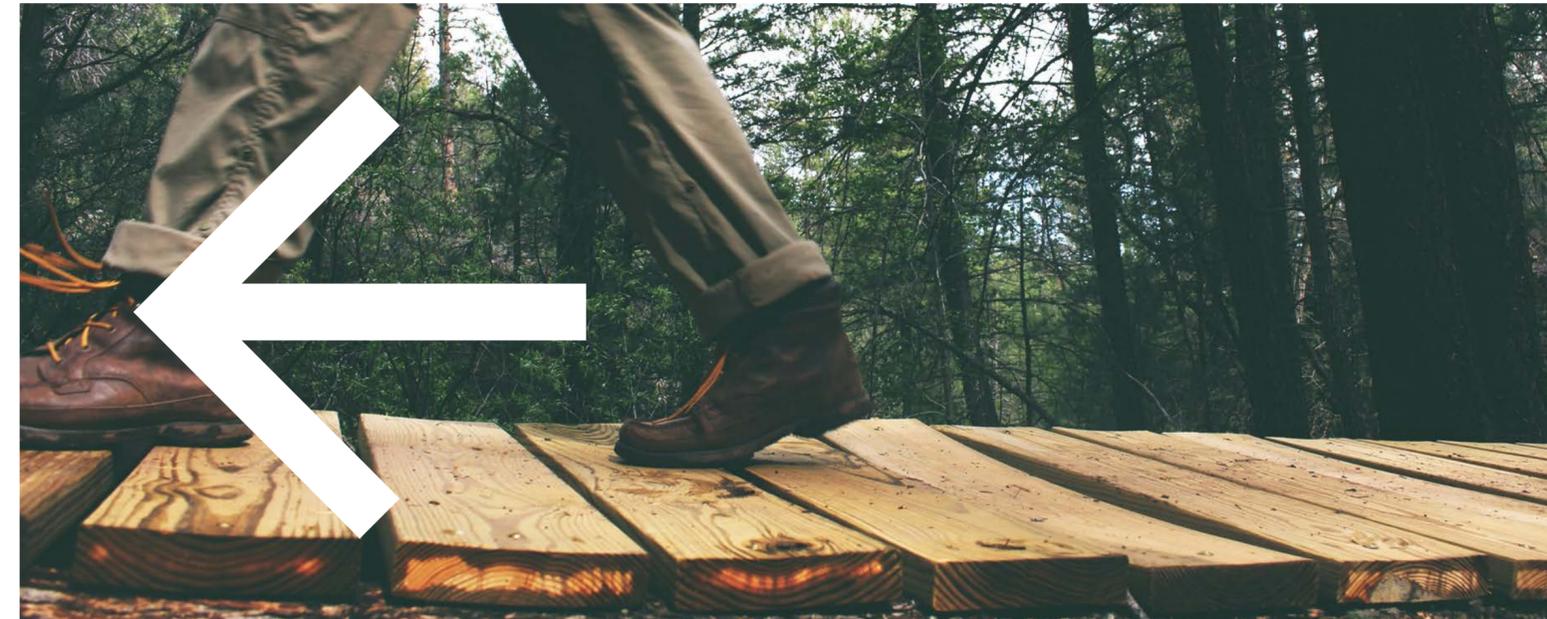
- *Worked with partners to develop “Trails Community Appropriations Recommendations” and “Trails Community Infrastructure Funding Recommendations” documents*
- *Supported the Coalition for Recreation Trails (CRT) through developing and hosting a new website at rectrails.org*
- *Worked closely with partners like PNTS, AHS, RTC, IMBA, the Wilderness Society, the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, etc. on GAOA passage and implementation, HR 2, and others.*

2020 Efforts Toward Strategic Thrust #6

Funding

Here are some of the steps we've taken to move American Trails forward in this area over the course of 2020:

- *Trail Fund incorporation with Rhino Marking Signs and text to donate program.*
- *Partnered with TMP members to review funding opportunities of the Trail Partner Fund through the US Forest Service.*
- *1% for the Planet partnership*
- *2020 Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency since 2018*
- *US Forest Service Challenge Cost Share increased funding:*
 - *Developing a video on the value of trails and the 10 YTC.*
 - *Developing Trail Core Competency finalization and Trail Community Map.*



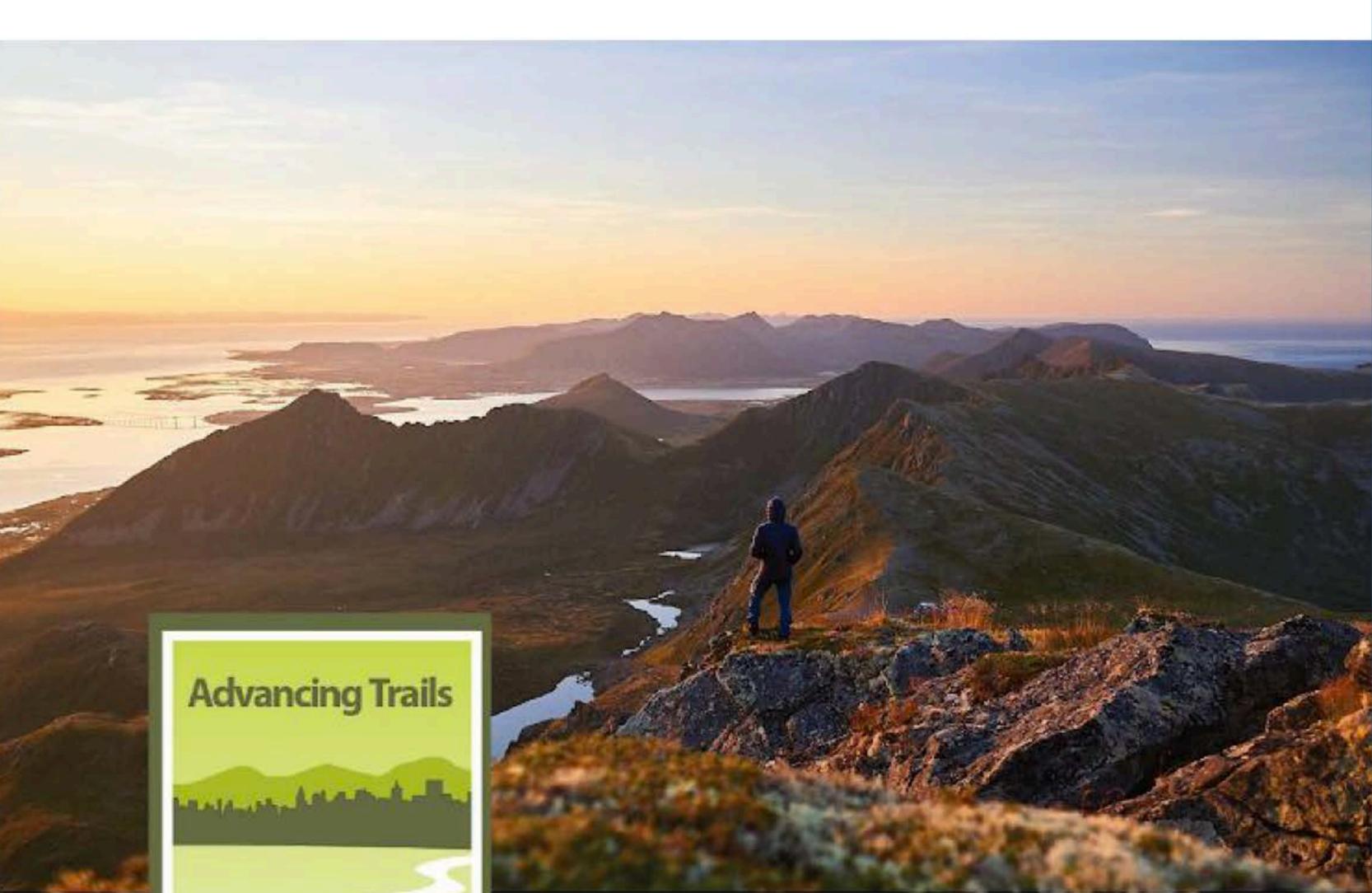
2020

AMERICAN TRAILS

A LOOK BACK

In an extremely challenging year, American Trails has had significant successes.





Our board and team finished our Strategic Repositioning effort.

Advancing Trails

For those who build, maintain, use, and dream of trails...

American Trails

American Trails
Strategic
Repositioning Plan

ACTIVE STRATEGIES

December 2019

We completed a two year effort to identify the needs of the trails community, build American Trails' impact on the trail community, and create the financial capacity

Webinars as an important response to the COVID - 19 pandemic

With the loss of trails-related conferences and summits, there was a great need for continued training opportunities. AT's history and expertise in the Advancing Trails Webinar Series bloomed into a very well received program with exploding visitation (500-1,100 attendees per webinar) of weekly webinars.

 This was a terrific webinar, one of the best I've ever attended, and I really appreciate you letting me know about it. Since this webinar that iZone sponsored, I've attended two more webinars and joined American Trails. I do hope you're happy with the credit iZone received for sponsoring the event. Thanks so much!

— Terre Dunivant, Gaia Graphics

 I just want to thank you & the American Trails team for doing a phenomenal job of producing, securing, providing, facilitating, and whatever else it is that y'all do to make all the webinars available this year. With the Forest Service, we have lost (for various reasons that you're probably aware of) most of the knowledge and skills that we once possessed. These webinars help ensure that the folks who manage the land can actually manage the land!

Thanks again for allowing us to access the webinars!

— Brian Bourne, Shawnee National Forest, Vienna, IL

 The webinars were very challenging and the quizzes as well. A couple I needed your advice...which you were more than willing to give. The best take-away for me is I initially knew nothing about trails, trail building, trail design, mountain biking, etc., etc. I now know a whole lot more! Thanks to you and your team of professionals.

If a potential participant requests a personal reference or a professional requesting a professional reference, please give them my name:

— Kurt Snyder, Licensed Landscape Architect

 We really appreciate the opportunity to present. Candace and the team were a real pleasure to work with. The level of coordination around this is truly remarkable. The level of detail for getting the wide attendance, sharing resources, and follow up with contact info hits all the right notes. In addition to the presentations, I have been able to attend a half-dozen of the AT webinars prior. Really great stuff. I am thoroughly impressed.

Thank you!

— Aaron Wilcher, Independent Researcher

Advancing Trails Webinar Series

TRULY ADVANCING TRAILS

Filling the gap in training due to COVID.

Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, we have been offering weekly webinars (versus monthly webinars) resulting in 3 times the webinar offerings. With more people working and being stuck at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing incredible jumps in attendance of our webinars (now seeing attendance of **500-1,100** individuals), as well as with the downloads of our webinar recordings (an average of **200-300 per month**), and all indications are that this is likely to continue into FY21. Given these trends, we felt like we could serve the trails community by continuing to offer increased options for online training (most of which were free to attendees) in place of the many conferences that have been canceled/postponed in 2020 and more than likely into 2021.

01

Dramatically Increased Funding

In 2020, we received a total of **\$143,306** in funding for our webinar series, including \$98,257 in Federal agreements, \$23,800 in State RTP Funding, and \$21,249 in additional sponsorships.

02

Huge Impact

To date, we have had a total of **17,976 webinar attendees**, and **2712 downloads**, increasing our list by over 150 individuals per week.

03

15x More Learning Credits

At 3,209, our requests for learning credits has increased by almost 15 times over last years' requests.

04

Celebrating our 100th Webinar!

We hosted our **100th webinar on October 1**, celebrating with over 20 giveaways worth over \$900.

Highlights 2020

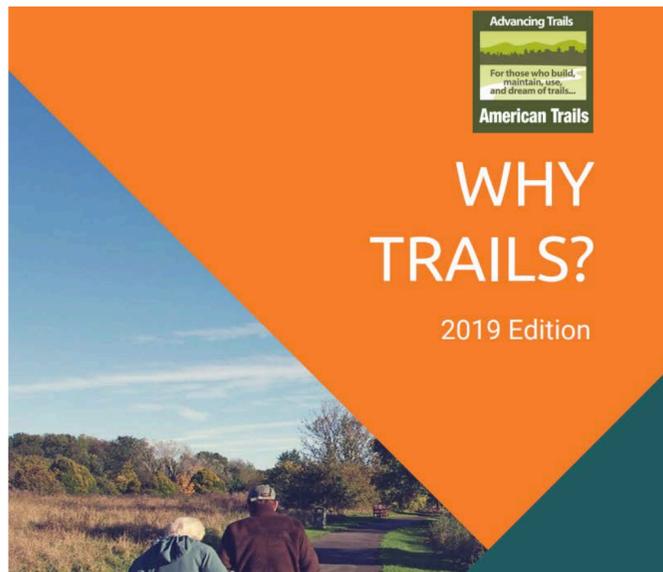
The Year At A Glance

01

Launched

Why Trails

Developed and improved a document and website that helps advocates and stewards to fully tell the tale of why trails are important .



02

Built and Organized

NRT Ambassador Program

Volunteer NRT Trail Ambassadors are reviewing NRT data in their assigned regions and spreading the word about this great program.

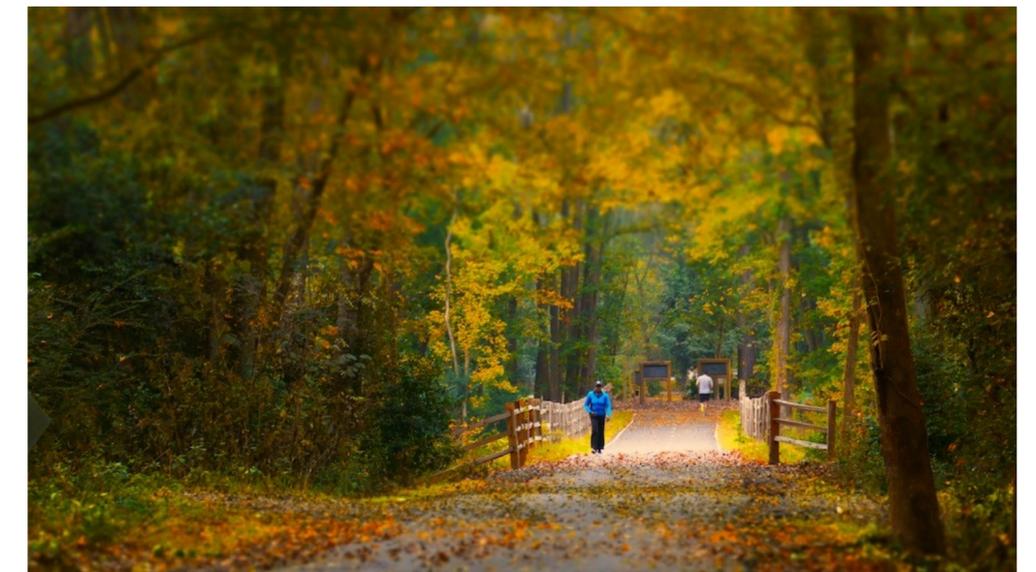


03

Increased Content and Frequency

Advancing Trails Webinars

Cancelled events due to COVID-19 opened a need for more frequent webinars as the only source of trails training. Attendance up to 1,100.

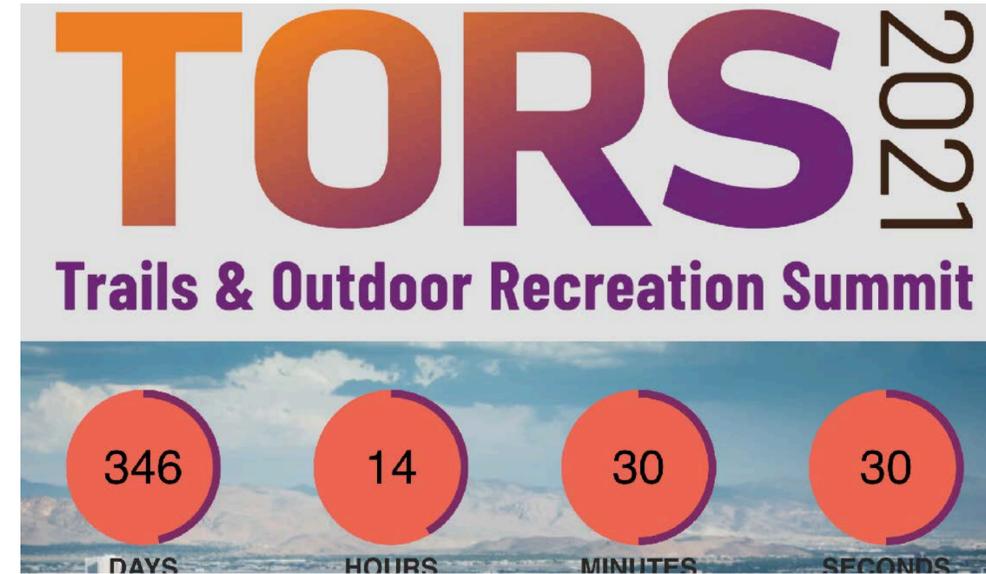


Highlights 2020

The Year At A Glance



The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT) is an alliance of national and regional trail-related organizations across a broad spectrum of interests representing motorized and non-motorized communities. Its members work together to build awareness and understanding of the Recreational Trails Program, which returns federal gasoline taxes paid by off-highway recreationists to the states for trail development and maintenance. [Read more about CRT.](#)



04

Launched a new website

Coalition for Recreational Trails

AT built, hosted, and launched a new website for the CRT Coalition at www.rectrails.org. This site gave a home to new pushes to increase funding for RTP by 175%.

05

Planned, Scheduled, and Rescheduled

Trails & Outdoor Recreation Summit

Worked closely with SORP to plan and schedule the 2021 TORS event in Reno. Unfortunately, we had to postpone to Sept of 2021.

06

Researched and Grew

Business Directory

Our new Business Directory map and search capacity, for over 2,300 business and organizational resources in every state.



Highlights 2020

The Year At A Glance

07

Created and Built Partnership Trail Fund - Text to Donate

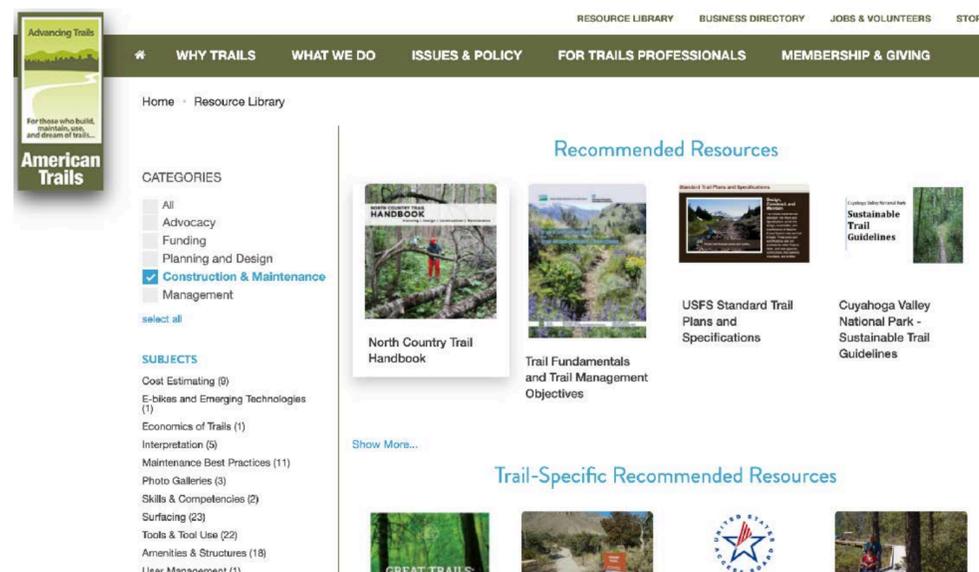
Built a text to donate program that feeds funding to the Trail Fund, and built a partnership with Rhino Markings to promote on all sign sales.



08

Improved Function and Useability Resource Library

We significantly increased the content, discoverability, and quality of resources in the online Resource Library.



09

Researched and Completed Shovel-ready Project Research

AT partnered with Penn State University to survey the trails community on shovel-ready projects in anticipation of potential legislation.



Highlights 2020

The Year At A Glance

	100 Series	200 Series	300 Series	400 Series
KNOWLEDGE & CONSTRUCTION SKILLS	Basic Knowledge 1st and 2nd year	Intermediate Knowledge/Skills 3rd & 4th year	Specialized Skills 5+ years	Advanced/ Management Skills 5+ years
	Basic Trail Maintenance Skills, Clearing, Brushing, Tread & Drainage Basic First Aid Basic Trail Tools, care and use SCA, WTA, COTI etc. Trails Training Basic Map Reading including roads, streams, trails and compass	Advanced Trail Maintenance Skills/Crew Supervision Advanced Wilderness First Aid Basic Rigging aka Ropes, Pulleys & Winches Volunteer Project Supervision Advanced Map Reading, including topo maps, aerial photos, trail maps and trail condition (egs, compass, altimeter & clinometer) Cross-Cut Certification Chain Saw and Small power tool maintenance and repair Working around Livestock	Crew Leadership Training Wilderness First Responder Advanced Rigging Chainsaw Certification Equestrian Packing Equestrian Yarding	Program Management and Budgets Felling School Excavator Certification
	Basic Trails Construction	Intermediate Trail Construction Techniques	Advanced Trail Construction & Mechanical Techniques Basic, diesel and hydraulic mechanics, maintenance, operation and repair	
	Primitive & Traditional tools	Basic Trail Structures - boardwalks (pinchcoats), tumpikes, stairs & cribbing Drainage Structures Rockwork Techniques Drywall Construction Remote Project Mobilization	Trail Bridges & Complex Structures Construction & Repair Advanced Trail Drainage Systems Remote Project Management	



10

Coordinated Efforts to Finalize Trail Core Competencies

AT lead a diverse coalition in trying to FINALLY develop an agreed upon set of core competencies for use by the trail community in professionalizing our training efforts.

11

Continued to Engage and Lead Trails Move People Coalition

Engaged the TMP Coalition on a variety of topics including DOA and DOI implementation of the GAOA, webinar trainings, and funding through the Trail Partners grant program.

12

Built and dramatically expanded USFS Challenge Cost Share

We found funding from the US Forest Service to support AT's efforts to build core competencies, build a Trail Community Map, develop a Partner Leadership Committee, and develop a video.

Looking forward

If implemented boldly, tempered by thoughtfulness and patience, AT can command a trails community leadership role that provides financial, image, and organizational sustainability into the future.

Our recently completed Strategic Repositioning Initiative will become beneficial to the trails community when the individual goals and objectives are brought to life by creating real change in how AT accomplishes its mission. At the start of this initiative, the overarching goal was to create a sustainable organization that had greater brand visibility in the market, so that AT could have more impact on its mission. To take AT to its true potential, these goals and objectives must be brought to life through the hard work of operationalizing them into action plans that AT staff and board can effectively use on a day-to-day basis.

Looking forward, the following slides demonstrate how the American Trails intends to effectively implement our Strategic Repositioning plan.



Looking Forward - Areas of Focus

American Trails staff and board will seek to focus on the following over the remainder of 2020 and into the following two years:

Build the Trail Fund

- Further develop partnerships with the Conservation Fund.
- Build upon the Trail Partners Fund.
- Develop effective marketing with Rhino to build the Text-to-Donate system.
- Seek foundation and corporate support (Barrett Foundation, Walton, Altra, etc.)
- Engage Trails Move People Coalition involvement and support.

\$ 1M

Goal to start program

Organize the Trail and Outdoor Recreation Summit

- Build an amazing program with high quality, diverse presenters.
- Invite participation from PTBA, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, and the National Governors Association.
- Build and plan for all COVID-19 related uncertainties.
- Ensure budgeting and profit sharing sufficient for all partner needs.

1000+

Goal for attendance of Summit

Develop Trail Training Opportunities

- Create the Shared Partner Leadership Committee to advise USFS, and DOI.
- Coordinate a finalized, agreed upon Trail Core Competencies.
- Build the "[TrailsTraining.com](https://trailsTraining.com)" shared platform highlighting the Trail Community Map.
- Seek continued funding from Federal Land Management Agencies for this effort.
- Continue to build Advancing Trails Webinar Series and seek sponsorship.

10,000

Goal for participants in Trail Community Map

Looking Forward - 4 Key Pillars

When discussing what American Trails is about, we should use these 4 key pillars as they lead to our 3 priority efforts this year.



RESEARCH AND DATA

Research and data on trails are critical to show the impact and benefits of trails.



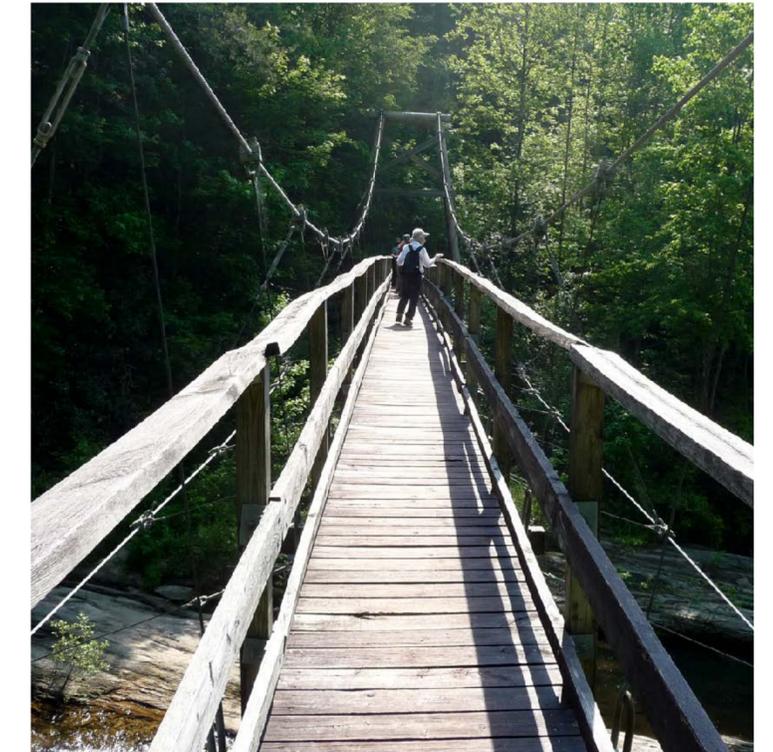
COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Presenting a unified voice for trails from TMP will create a recognizable public presence.



FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Identify and leverage funding and other resources, to benefit the trails community as a whole.

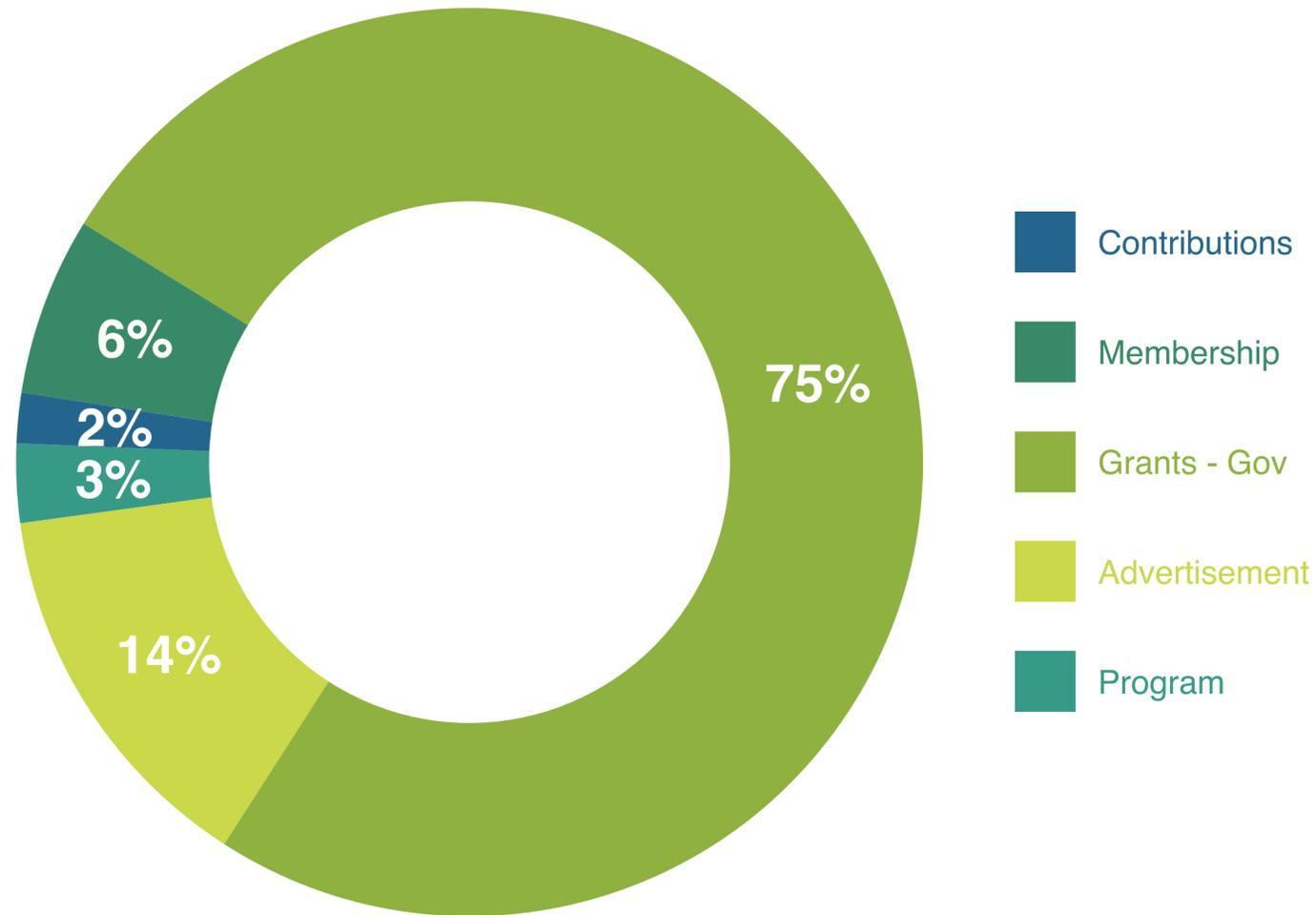


ADVOCACY AND POLICY

Increasing influence in legislation and policy through the joint advocacy efforts of the TMP.

Year-to-Date Income & Operations Review

January through December 2020



Income - January through December 2020

	FY20 Budget	FY20 Actual	Difference
	\$	\$	%
Contributions	18,000	7,841	44%
Membership	27,300	27,787	102%
Grants - Government	320,000	329,810	103%
Advertisement	48,000	60,255	126%
Program Income	8,700	12,329	142%
Dividends & Interest	6	3	50%
Other			
Total Income	422,006	438,025	104%

More trails.

Better trails.

Serving

all Americans.

– the ATeam

American Trails

more trails. better trails.

**THANK
YOU!**

The Trails Community's patience, wisdom, energy, and support has lead American Trails through a challenging year and into a hopeful future.