TRAIL TRACKS

September 2023

American Tobacco Trail, North Carolina. Photo by Wake County Staff

Why Trails Matter: Outdoor Learning

Getting outside can help you learn, and trails play a critical role in accessing natural places and learning to love them. Exposure to greenspace has been proven to reduce stress and improve mental and cognitive health, which is key to effective learning at any age. Outdoor environments that provide opportunities to experience wild nature and outdoor classrooms are becoming more common.

Interpretive trails can tell engaging stories, with or without conventional signage. Whether on a wilderness trail or urban open space pathway, kids and young people who engage in hands-on trail work as a service-learning experience often grow up to be engaged volunteers in their communities. In short, trails can foster outdoor learning and engagement, which leads to community resilience. This article is intended for community-based organizations, trail designers, trail managers, and trail builders, as you build a case for grant-funded outdoor learning experiences or consider ways to integrate outdoor learning into a place-based experience made possible by a trail or path.

Find out more

American Trails Presents
ADVANCING TRAILS
WEBINAR SERIES
Since 2011

Become a Webinar Partner Sponsor - $500 Special Rate Total for Remaining 2023 Webinars!

We have had a successful run of our Advancing Trails Webinar Series, recently holding our 210th webinar! We continue to see an average of 500 attendees per webinar (sometimes reaching over 1,000), as well as a few hundred downloads of our archived webinars every single month. As a thank you to the many amazing companies that we work with that do great work on trails, we want to offer a special partner sponsor rate for the remaining webinars this year. **How does $500 total sound to become a partner sponsor for the remaining 12 webinars in 2023?** Each partner sponsorship typically costs $250 each. How can you resist?! Find out more ››

Healey-Driscoll Administration Names Director of Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR)

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper has announced the appointment of Paul Jahnige as the first Director of the MOOR. Find out more ››

2023 Recreational Trails Program Achievement Awards

The Coalition for Recreational Trails is excited to announce its 2023 achievement awards to recognize outstanding trail projects funded by the Recreational Trails Program. We invite you to nominate an outstanding project and/or encourage the sponsor(s) of an excellent project in your state to submit a nomination. **Deadline for nominations is 5 pm EST, November 17.** Find out more ››

How Will you Celebrate National Public Lands Day?

National Public Lands Day takes place every year on the fourth Saturday of September. There are numerous ways to get involved in this event. You can explore a National Park without paying an admission fee, contribute to a volunteer service project, or showcase your favorite outdoor pastime on social media platforms. Find out more ››

American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations

For over 45 years American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations have supported land managers and trail organizations by providing volunteer trail crews, crew leaders, and project support for nationwide trail maintenance needs. **Host applications should be submitted by November 3.** Find out more ››

Funding and Legislation

Legacy Trails Grant Program Opening Soon

American Trails is pleased to partner with the U.S. Forest Service in continuing the Legacy Trails Grant Program. We will be looking to fund projects that restore fish and aquatic organism passage, improve trail resiliency, preserve trail access, decommission unauthorized trails, and convert unneeded Forest Service roads to trails. **The application portal opens on October 2.** Find out more ››

H.R.1065 — 118th Congress (2023-2024) Outdoors for All Act

This bill directs the Department of the Interior to establish an outdoor recreation legacy partnership grant program under which the Interior may award grants to states, certain political subdivisions of a state, special purpose districts, Indian tribes, or Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian communities or organizations. Find out more ››

Waiver of Buy America Requirements for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants

A long-standing impediment to the effective implementation of the Recreational Trails Program (and other federal funding of trail projects) has been addressed by the Federal Highway Administration. Find out more ››

National Park Service Deferred Maintenance by the Numbers

It is crucial to attend to deferred maintenance and repairs in national parks to ensure their preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment. The National Park Service evaluates the state of its infrastructure annually and estimates the expenses required to carry out the necessary repairs. Find out more ››

Forest Service Trail Maintenance Priority Areas

The Forest Service is working to increase the role of partners and volunteers in trail maintenance on Forest Service-managed trails. The Forest Service has identified 15 priority areas for increased trail maintenance. Many of these areas have had issues with reduced access, damage to natural resources, and public safety concerns. These priority trail maintenance areas are a requirement of the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act of 2016. Find out more ››

The National Recreation Trails (NRT) and National Water Trails (NWT) System

NRTs are existing land-based and water-based trails that provide close-to-home recreation opportunities on Federal, State, and local lands in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Over 1,300 of these trails have been designated throughout the nation.

NWTs are a subset of the NRT Program. The NWT System is a network of water trails open to the public to explore and enjoy. The system also serves as a community of water resource managers that benefit from information sharing and collaboration. Currently, 90 NWTs are listed in the NRT database hosted by American Trails.

Apply for designation! **The deadline is November 1 of every year.** Find out more ››

Featured NRT: Sarah Zigler Interpretive Trail, Oregon

The Sarah Zigler Interpretive Trail begins in the historic Peter Britt Gardens, where Peter Britt settled in 1852, built his home, and planted gardens that were the foundation of the area's multi-million dollar fruit industry. Find out more ››

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's 37th Hall of Fame Inductee

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the nation's largest trails advocacy organization, announced that California's Sacramento River Rail Trail and Sacramento River Trail will be inducted into its iconic Hall of Fame. Find out more ››

The Sacramento River Trail is also an NRT and is where American Trail's main office is based! View in NRT database ››

Training and Resources

Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) National Trails Workshop November 7-9, 2023

The early bird pricing deadline has been **extended for the 2023 National Trails Workshop until September 25**! PNTS hopes to see you in Orlando for three days of learning, collaboration, and networking for trail professionals and emerging leaders within the trails community! Find out more ››

From Passion to Action Call for Proposals

The National Service-Learning Conference® is the largest gathering of youth, educators, policymakers, and more who are dedicated to improving education, strengthening communities, and building youth leadership with service-learning. They invite you to share your stories, successes, and lessons learned at the conference! **The deadline to submit proposals is October 20.** Find out more ››

SOCIETY OF
OUTDOOR RECREATION
PROFESSIONALS

National Outdoor Recreation Conference Call for Proposals

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals is proud to present the 2024 National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC) – Stewarding People, Place, and Play. The program work group is seeking presentations that convey durable transformative solutions of any scale that support outdoor recreation destinations, local communities, and the outdoor recreation workforce. These are pivotal times for outdoor recreation. Their goal is to present a program that is solutions-forward and equity-centric.

Please view the detailed Call for Proposals prior to completing and submitting your proposals to learn more about this goal as well as additional details on the program and presenter expectations. **Submissions will be accepted until October 20.** Find out more ››

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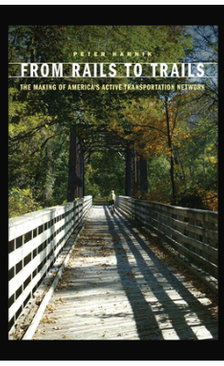

FROM RAILS TO TRAILS
The Making of America's Active Transportation Network
by Peter Harnik

"Peter Harnik captures the history of a movement that has provided so many pathways for people to commute, recreate, and enjoy nature."
—SALLY JEWELL, former U.S. secretary of the Interior and former CEO of REI

Advancing Trails Webinar Series

American Trails brings agencies, trail builders, planners, architects, advocates, and volunteers the latest in state-of-the-art information on all aspects of trails and greenways.

All webinars are recorded and can be accessed for free via our online store at any time. Recordings of past webinars are also being added to our YouTube channel on a weekly basis.

Free September Webinars

- September 7: Destination Stewardship: Reimagining the Purpose of Tourism in Outdoor Communities
- September 21: How Trails Support Healthy Aging for All
- September 28: Engaging, Enabling, and Motivating Families and Diverse Trail Users

Free Future Webinars

- October 5: Assessment and Repair of a Trail After Catastrophic Damage: The Elroy-Sparta State Trail
- October 19: The Trail Research Hub
- October 26: Measuring Our Success in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- November 2: Approvals, Permits, and Compliance: Navigating the Regulatory Waters from Trail Plan Through Construction
- November 9: Indigenous Placemaking Along Canadian Trails
- November 16: Water Management on Legacy Trails: The SET (Sustainable, Effective, Traversable) Standard
- November 30: Digital Transformation of Trail Management and Monitoring
- December 7: Trail Planning and Design: Foundations of Success
- December 14: Encouraging Indigenous Participation in Trail Management and Interpretation
- December 21: Outdoor Electric Assist Devices: Opportunity or Opposition
- January 4: Trails as Rural Economic Drivers *(registration available soon)*
- January 11: Risk Management During Trail Construction
- January 18: The Third Mode: Bonus Chapters
- January 25: The Path to Mental Health: Using Trails to Equip Healthy Communities
- February 8: Systemic Condition Analysis and Management for Multi-Use Trails

Additional Free Learning Credit Opportunities

APA AICP LA CES™
CEUs Continuing Education Units Equivalency Petition
PDH Professional Development Hours Equivalency Petition

American Trails is partnering with the following organization(s) to offer free learning credits to attendees.

Send us an email if you wish to offer learning credits for FREE to your attendees for your conference, webinar, workshop, etc. (virtual or in-person).

Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit – November 2-4, 2023 – Coos Bay-North Bend, Oregon
In partnership with Oregon Trails Coalition
Learn more ››

California Trails and Greenways Conference – April 30-May 3, 2024 – North Lake Tahoe/Olympic Valley, Nevada
In partnership with the California Trails Conference Foundation
Learn more ››

National Outdoor Recreation Conference – May 6-9, 2024 – South Lake Tahoe/Stateline, Nevada
In partnership with the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
Learn more ››

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