



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE SINCE 1920

## Shaping the Future of the Trail Conference

**Dear Kendra,**

The Trail Conference is an organization powered by volunteers. Without you, we can't fulfill our mission to ensure the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy.

This means it's crucial our volunteer programming supports you and fosters positive experiences for all volunteers.

With your help we assessed the volunteer experience through three methods: an online survey sent to all volunteers, which garnered 254 responses; a 20-participant focus group; and 22 in-person interviews.

And **now you have the opportunity to put your thoughts into action!** Details below.

## Assessment Results



A **BIG** thank you to all those who participated. Openly sharing your thoughts provided valuable insight that will help shape the future of our volunteer programming. Here are some highlights of what you told us:

- The best parts of volunteering are the chance to grow and give back. Roughly **3/4** of volunteers feel there is opportunity for growth and **96%** feel volunteering for the Trail Conference is doing work for the greater good.

- We understand you don't volunteer to get recognition, but your hard work deserves resounding gratitude! **80%** of volunteers feel they receive enough appreciation, but unfortunately only **half** feel that recognition comes from the Trail Conference. Therefore, we intend to implement more recognition programs and we'll be better about verbalizing the gratitude we feel on a daily basis.

- It became clear our communication needs improvement. The focus group graded our communication skills **below average** and stated we need to communicate more proactively. Additionally, the **interviews indicated** a desire for better opportunities to interact with other volunteers. We'll be increasing volunteer-centric communications and events to ensure you get the information you need in a timely manner as well as the chance to network with others who share your passion.

- One of the biggest needs voiced is for more training. **72%** expressed interest in additional workshops to expand skills and **32%** want a better onboarding process when people initially volunteer. We intend to expand training offerings and develop a smoother onboarding procedure to ensure all volunteers get the support they need to do their job well.

Full results of the assessment can be viewed at [bit.ly/tc-vpar18](https://bit.ly/tc-vpar18).

## We Want Your Help!



We are seeking to engage a diverse group of volunteers in leadership roles on a variety of new Action Teams.

Please consider sharing your time, expertise, and enthusiasm to make a difference!

### **What are Action Teams?**

We're creating teams of volunteers that will each work on a particular project, program or problem.

Teams will work with staff on reviewing data from the assessment, current practices and materials relevant to their designated topic in order to identify possible changes. *Together they will create new or improve existing procedures and resources while using transparent and open processes.*

These working groups will be a key part of shaping the future of our volunteer programming.

***Don't have the time to commit to being on an action team but still want to provide input? Sign up to be a consultant*** and teams will tap you for your knowledge and expertise along their journey.

## **Action Team Opportunities**

***Hours and Accomplishments Reporting:*** We're developing online reporting so volunteers can more easily submit and track all of the effort and hours they put in. Join this team to inform the reporting system, test it, help conduct a pilot and ultimately roll it out to the entire volunteer base.

***Volunteer Recognition and Events:*** The amazing work volunteers do should be met with equal amounts gratitude. We also know that you want more opportunities to meet other volunteers who share your passion. Join this team to plan events meant to bring volunteers together, implement new recognition programs, and help with the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event.

***Recruitment and Onboarding:*** We've been working to improve our volunteer recruitment and onboarding processes and are seeing positive results. We want your help to bring things to the next level! Join this team if you want to ensure all interested and new volunteers have a great experience from the moment they first make contact with the Trail Conference.

More teams will be rolled out over time to address more topics and programs. If these three opportunities aren't a fit for you then keep an eye out for other opportunities in the future!

## **How to Apply**

We're looking for motivated individuals who have a positive attitude and believe in the mission of the Trail Conference.

To apply to be on a team or as a consultant fill out the application here:

[www.nynjtc.org/webform/trail-conference-action-team-application](http://www.nynjtc.org/webform/trail-conference-action-team-application)

Have any questions? Reach out to Kendra, our Volunteer Engagement Manager, and Jennifer, our Program Assistant, at [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org).

Thank you again for your participation and ongoing support during this process!



*Kendra Baumer*  
Volunteer Engagement Manager

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