

# National Park Service



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## National Recreation Trails Program *A Partnership to Celebrate America's Community of Trails*



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## National Recreation Trail (NRT) Program

- Recognizes existing trails that connect people to local resources and improve their quality of life.



## National Trails System Act of 1968

- Creation of a network of scenic, historic and recreation trails.
- Calls for establishing trails in both urban and rural settings for persons of all ages, interests, skills, and physical abilities.



## Program Goals

- Promote the use and care of existing trails and stimulate the development of new trails throughout U.S.
- Realize the vision of “Trails for All Americans” - within 15 minutes of home and work.



## Existing NRTs

- Over 1,000 trails designated on Federal, state, local, and privately-owned land throughout the country.
- Range from  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile – over 400 miles in length.



## It's All about Partnerships..

- Exemplified both in the trails that are recognized as well as in the management of the program.
- Cooperation and support by a number of Federal agencies as well as national non-profit organizations.

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## Program Administration

- National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program and USDA Forest Service jointly administer the program, with support from our lead non-profit partner, American Trails.
- Support from a number of partners, including:
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - American Hiking Society
  - Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
  - National Association of State Trail Administrators
  - U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



## NRT Designation

- Trails may be designated by either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.
- USDA Forest Service has developed separate process.
- Management responsibility remains with local agency/organization.





## Nominations

- Come voluntarily from states, communities, or private interests (public or private trail manager eligible).
- Must satisfy trail definition and designation criteria.



## Definition of a Trail

- A travel way established either through construction or use.
- Passable by one or more of the following: foot traffic, stock, watercraft, bicycles, skates, wheelchairs, XC skis, and ATVs.
- Roads and highways not eligible.



## Designation Criteria

- Supported by all landowners, public or private, whose property the trail crosses.
- Must be open to public use and be designed, constructed, and maintained according to best management practices, in keeping with anticipated use.
- In compliance with applicable land use plans and environmental laws.
- Will be open to public for at least 10 years after designation.

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## Since Revitalization...

- 🐾 **2001** - 15 trails designated in 13 states
- 🐾 **2002** - 26 trails designated in 16 states
- 🐾 **2003** - 27 trails designated in 12 states
- 🐾 **2004** - 27 trails designated in 15 states
- 🐾 **2005** - 37 trails designated in 23 states
- 🐾 **2006** - 35 trails designated in 24 states
- 🐾 **2007** - 40 trails designated in 22 states
- 🐾 **2008** - 28 trails designated in 16 states
- 🐾 **2009** - 22 trails designated in 13 states
- 🐾 **2010** - 31 trails designated in 15 states



## Application Process



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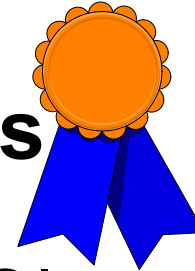
- Download Word file or PDF from NRT website (form will be online in 2011)

[www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails](http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails)

- Contact appropriate agency representative for assistance.
- Contact state trail administrator to request support letter.



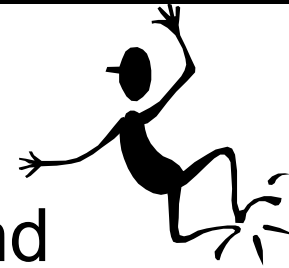
## Review & Designation Process



- Nov. 1 - Deadline for submission of DOI applications to NRT Coordinator (trails on USDA lands follow a separate procedure)
- Jan. 15 - Review completed by Regional Coordinators.
- Feb. 15 - Review completed by NRT Coordinator; applications begin next review process prior to approval by the Secretary.
- May/June - New designations announced prior to National Trails Day.



## Benefits



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NRT designation brings recognition and support for the partnerships that make these trails a success.

- Promotion & assistance from program partners
- Access to funding opportunities
- NRT News and e-mail news group
- Access to technical assistance from NRT Program partners



## Promotion & Assistance

- Prestige and increased visibility - National Trails Day announcement
- NRT certificate and trail markers
- Trail details in online NRT database
- Web page for your trail
- NRT photo contest



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## Access to Funding Sources



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- Federal Challenge Cost Share Program – minimum 50% match of cash, goods, or services from non-federal sources
- State funding programs - FHWA's Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Transportation Enhancements
  - RTP Guidance recommendation:  
*"States are encouraged to give extra project evaluation credit to projects on National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails (provided the project provides a recreational purpose), and trails designated as National Recreation Trails."*



## NRT News

- Program updates
- Recent & upcoming events
- Technical assistance (funding sources and training opportunities)
- Spotlight on various NRTs



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## NRT e-mail news group



- Funding sources
- Networking & training opportunities
- Trail resources & publications

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## For More Info

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