



Backpacking 101 course: Photo courtesy of Wild Alabama Staff

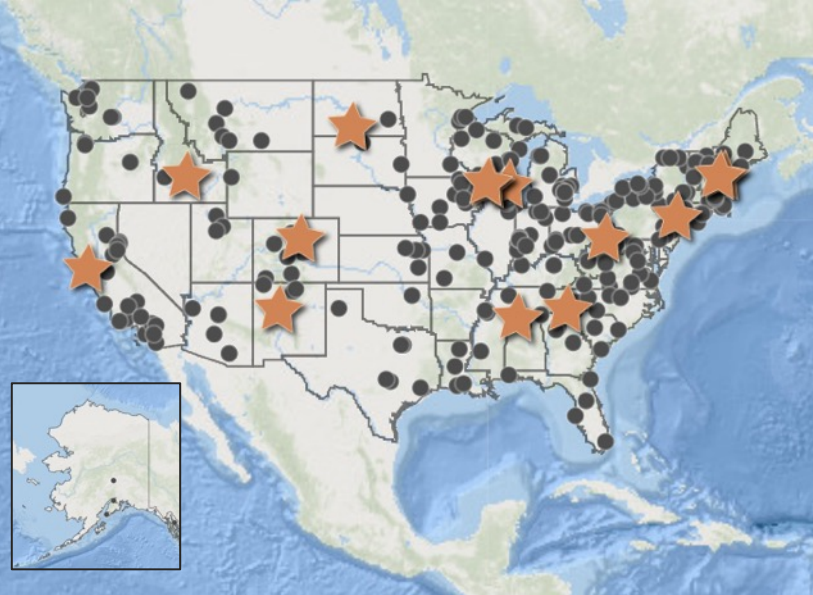


2022/23 Impact Report

THE TRAIL FUND

Trails Capacity Program

www.americantrails.org



The Trails Capacity Program

Funds projects that strategically improve the abilities and capacity of the trails community as a whole.

Strategic Impact

★ Funded in 2022/2023: 14 Awardees

818 trail miles improved

4:1 Leverage
\$475K Match :
\$122K Awarded

Ongoing Need

● 277 Fundable Projects

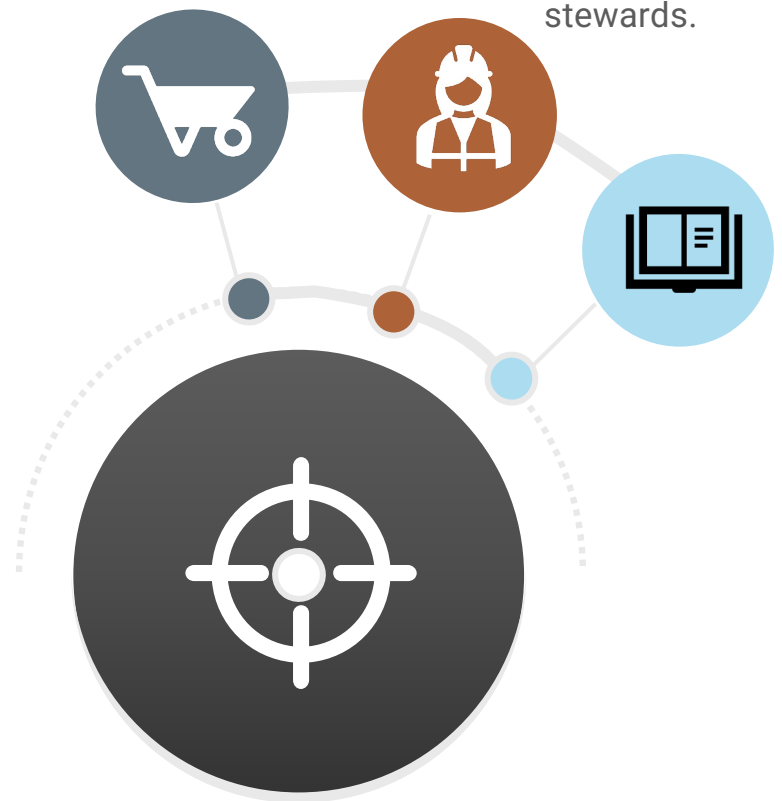
Representing \$3.1M of work

Trail Maintenance

Volunteers build and maintain trails!

Stewardship Training

Puts limited dollars to effective use by training the next generation of trails stewards.



Research and Education

Informs strategic training and stewardship.

Sustaining support

American Trails generates revenue for the American Trails Fund from webinars, text-to-donate, nonprofit partnerships and sustaining corporate supporters.



WATERFORD PRESS





Photo credit: Friends of Panthertown www.panthertown.org



Ongoing need

\$3M

**worth of projects representing
\$4.6M in cash match**

Ongoing Need for Trail Funding



Photo credit: Friends of Panthertown www.panthertown.org

2022



1K Volunteers Engaged

In 2022 six projects engaged an average of 176 volunteers each.

2023



1K Volunteers Engaged

In 2023 seven projects engaged an average of 143 volunteers each.



14K Volunteers Available

277 projects still waiting for funding across the country, on average representing 50 volunteers per project.

Ongoing Need for Trail Funding



2022

4,381 Miles of Trail

Projects unfunded

Each square represents ten miles of trail

4,624 total miles applied for among 291 projects

243 Miles of Trail Funded

Total maintenance addressed

112.5 miles of annual maintenance

130.7 miles of deferred maintenance



2023

3,806 Miles of Trail

Projects still awaiting funding

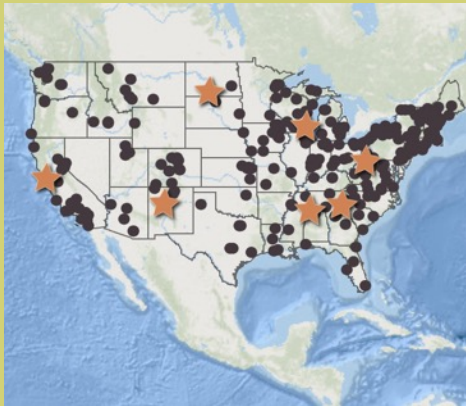
Each square represents ten miles of trail

4,381 miles of trail total in 2023

575 Miles of Trail Funded

Projected trail maintenance to be addressed

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardees



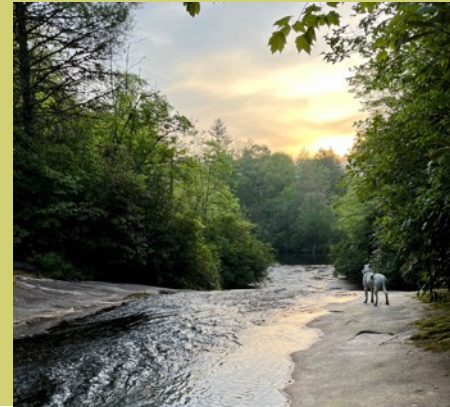
3:1 Leverage

\$166K Match : \$50.4K Awarded



Wild Alabama

Awarded: \$10K
Match: \$15K



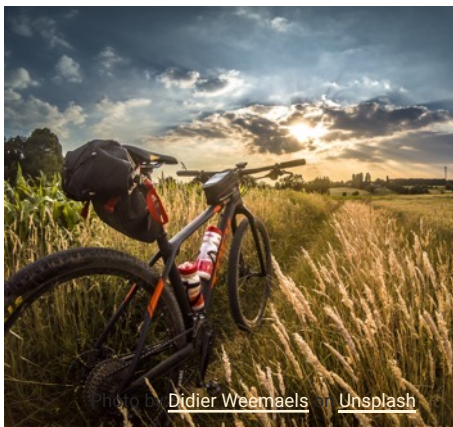
Friends of Panthertown

Awarded: \$5K
Match: \$45K



Partnership for the National Trails System

Awarded: \$5K
Match: \$59K



Didier Weemaels Unsplash

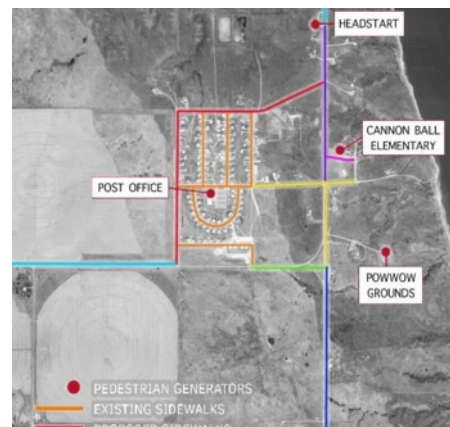
WVUR Research

Awarded: \$8.4K
Match: \$5.4K



River Revitalization Foundation

Awarded: \$5K
Match: \$23K



Cannonball Bike Trails

Awarded: \$10K
Match: \$3K



Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Awarded: \$7K
Match: \$15.7K

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wild Alabama

Categories



Annual Trail Maintenance/Deferred Maintenance



Environmental Education



Stewardship Training

Improvements

Habitat restoration

Trail structure(s) built/installed (bridges, stairs, kiosks, signage, etc.)

78 miles of trail maintained

User types served

Hike/Walk

Equestrian

The budget submitted for this \$10,000 grant was focused on the work we do in the Sipsey Wilderness and the Bankhead National Forest, but we also have a team of staff and volunteers in the Talladega National Forest and along the 138 miles of the Pinhoti Trail that weaves its way through that Forest. We did spend this funding to support the Sipsey and Bankhead, but are sharing our successes in both of the public lands in which we work.

Wild Alabama's mission is to inspire people to enjoy, value and protect the wild places in Alabama. We do this through environmental education and stewardship.



Environmental education - Photo courtesy of Wild Alabama Staff

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wild Alabama



Within the Bankhead and Sipsey, three staff worked on environmental education and/or stewardship approximately 92 hours a week.

Some of these are part time staff and others have multiple job responsibilities besides this work. So approximately 4,784 hours was devoted to the work that this grants budget was to assist with.

The volunteers with whom we work range from individuals who come out weekly to spend a day on the trail clearing brush or doing crosscut work with in the Wilderness areas to groups of high school students who do service projects several times a year with us. These include campsite rehabilitation, cleaning up dump sites within the National Forest, and cleaning graffiti from rocks in the Forest.

Photos courtesy of Wild Alabama Staff



We feel that these young people are to be our future ambassadors for the wild places... always telling others about why they should protect and preserve these places!

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wild Alabama

This project had 120 miles of trail that had “deferred maintenance” done along the Pinhoti Trail that was in dire need of re-blazing.



Photos courtesy of Wild Alabama Staff



We were always getting complaints of how difficult the trail was to follow, so Wild Alabama organized weekly Blaze the Pinhoti events with one staff leading several volunteers to hike from 6 to 12-mile sections and paint blue blazes to guide the way.

Brittany Seaborg, our Wild Alabama Stewardship Coordinator, directed this work, so we renamed the blue color paint as “Brittany Blue!” Lindsay Madison, the Stewardship Coordinator for the Bankhead National Forest, led 2-3 volunteer work days within the Sipsey Wilderness each week in 2022.

These ranged from privet pulling, brushing the trail, to traditional hand tool days with crosscut saws. There are 53 miles of trails in the Sipsey.

We also are the state organization that does the primary work of training people in crosscut saws, Leave No Trace and even offer a Backpacking 101 class occasionally.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Friends of Panthertown

Panthertown Valley Trail Maintenance & Stewardship Training Project

Categories



Annual Trail Maintenance/Deferred Maintenance



Environmental Education



Stewardship Training

Improvements

Erosion reduction (Trail drainage or trail x stream crossing improvements)

Trail structure(s) built/installed (bridges, stairs, kiosks, signage, etc.)

21 miles of annual trail maintenance and
2 miles of deferred maintenance addressed

User types served

Hike/Walk

Equestrian

Mountain bike

Water

A three-day sustainable trails training course prepared 14 individuals, 4 of whom self-identified as young adult, underrepresented, and/or diverse, plus two staff members who gained skills in how to plan, design, layout, construct, and maintain sustainable natural surface trails for multiple uses.



Photos courtesy of Wild Alabama Staff

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee Friends of Panthertown

Panthertown Valley Trail Maintenance & Stewardship Training Project



In addition to the training, **247 volunteers participated** in weekly work days, contributing 1,725 hours maintaining trails in Panthertown.

Improvements to the trail system, including two new natural staircases built and a repaired shelter, were accomplished with our volunteers this season.

Panthertown's Great Wall Trail steps were replaced, the Great Wall Shelter had metal roofing repair and floor replacement, hazard trees were removed from several popular campsites, multiple day campsites were cleaned up and fire pits cleared out, and condition assessments were reported by our trail ambassadors.

Volunteers replaced damaged and missing signage and blazing, and we installed check dams along the Panthertown Valley Trail and Panthertown Creek.

"Thank you! This course/ class has changed the way I view trails in terms of erosion control."

- Jerry Novak, volunteer, Sustainable Trails Training participant

Photos courtesy of Friends of Panthertown



2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee Partnership for the National Trails System

Category



Stewardship Training

With the contribution of the Trail Fund grant funds we were successful in providing 19.5 hours of in-person stewardship training for each attendee. This equates to over 3,000 total training hours.

During the 2022 National Trails Workshop we provided skills training focused on a variety of priority topics and stewardship techniques for current and emerging trail stewards to develop and sharpen skills. Stewardship skills gained throughout the workshop sessions included, but are not limited to, maintenance and management, land protection, organizational development and partnership, and outreach and engagement. The first day of the workshop was dedicated to understanding tribal sovereignty and how to create opportunities for co-led stewardship and engagement with Indigenous communities. Workshop sessions provided training on the ways in which native lands, ancestral lands, and tribal lands are reflected on maps;



The seven 2022 Trail Apprentices with PNTS Staff Kiana Etsate-Gashytewa & Cara Yendrzski at the 2022 National Trails workshop. Photo taken by Cate Yendrzski.

how to utilize the newly developed cultural resource framework for engagement with Indigenous communities; and successful collaboration with Indigenous communities to support work along National Trails. Training on the first day also included how trail organizations and federal agencies can use and build upon the work completed through the Indigenous Mapping and Research Project. Through this project, tools and resources were created that encourage genuine relationships between Indigenous communities and National Scenic and Historic Trails that enhance the ability to have crucial conversations, to co-create projects that are inclusive of marginalized voices, to listen to the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, and to act on much-needed change.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee Partnership for the National Trails System

The second and third day of the event provided stewardship training that appealed to both novice and advanced skill levels



Workshop attendees during a training. Photo taken by Callum Cintron.

The following areas were addressed: -Campaign planning, identifying decision-makers, and using a motivational mapping strategy to secure conservation victories; -Understanding the traits of effective trail towns and how they can lead to increased stewardship and community-led stewardship of trails; -How to move beyond trail development to community development practices that build and strengthen community relationships; - How to invite, engage and introduce strategies for working with broader communities to support our trails; -Understanding issues underrepresented and often overlooked communities are facing when they head into the “outdoors”; How to utilize the trail planning support tool of the USGS National Digital Trails Project; -Why National Trails exist, how they are administered, and understanding cooperative partnership;

-How to engage and collaborate with stakeholders using ArcGIS; -How to use geospatial capabilities for trails that map and analyze inequities, enhance community outreach, operationalize positive practices, monitor progress of initiatives, and deliver meaningful results; -Acknowledge assumptions, challenge understanding, and address challenges for National Historic Trails; - How National Trails System partner organizations can work with the agencies to help them implement their equity action plans; -Stewardship basics such as how to effectively write letters, testimonies and membership alerts, NEPA 101, techniques and tools for effective advocacy; -Implementing the New BLM Inventory, Assessment, and Monitoring Process; and more.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Partnership for the National Trails System

Opportunities for peer exchange through structured roundtables occurring over lunch breaks or after trainings, as well as 'free space' for self-directed or impromptu exchange and co-creation was achieved.

We offered a volunteer program working group, small shop roundtable, National Historic Trails Roundtable, National Scenic Trails Roundtable, and New and Emerging Leaders Roundtable. The New and Emerging Leaders Roundtable was a space where next generation attendees had the opportunity to connect with one another and discuss how trail organizations and federal agencies can reduce barriers for young people to become trails professionals. PNTS was successful in involving a broader audience of trail stewards throughout the event with speakers and attendees from organizations outside of the National Trails community such as Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, Outdoor F.U.T.U.R.E., Conservation Legacy, Next 100 Coalition, Logan Simpson, Hispanic Access Foundation, Cycle Forward, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, Western New Mexico University, Esri, Keystone Policy Center, Acoma Business Enterprises, San Luis Valley Great Outdoors, and many other local tourism and small trail organizations.



Trail Apprentices, Melissa Olivar and Lisette Perez, during a workshop session. Photo taken by Callum Cintron.

PNTS brought 7 Trail Apprentices to the workshop where 5 out of the 7 identify as BIPOC. These Apprentices actively participated in all workshop sessions and provided valuable perspectives and made important connections to trails professionals. There was a diverse range of age groups that participated in the workshop, where 18% were aged 21-29, 22% were 30-39, 28% were 40-49, 18% were 50-59, and 10% were 60 or older. Additionally, 64% of participants responded to the post-event survey stating that this was the first PNTS workshop that they have attended. 80% of participants said that they would likely attend a future PNTS workshop. 92% of survey respondents reported that they learned something new, and 66% percent reported that they gained a new area of interest. Training participants received knowledge and resources in a variety of areas that allowed them to advance their stewardship skills that they can now use to train and manage other stewards at their organizations.



Photo courtesy of Partnership for the National Trails System

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Partnership for the National Trails System

“It was incredible. I loved the focus on Indigenous lands and people.”

– National Trails System workshop attendee

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

West Virginia University

Category



Research

User types served

Mountain Bikers

Measuring Recreation Specialization of Mountain Bike Riders in the US

- A comprehensive library on mountain bike research was established.
- The dataset that includes over 13,623 usable surveys was coded and shared among the research team for individual work.
- Dr. Chad Pierskalla shared a research report with American Trails.



Centrality to Lifestyle

Photos courtesy of Chad Pierskalla of West Virginia University



Skill and Experience



Equipment and Investment

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee West Virginia University

Measuring Recreation Specialization of Mountain Bike Riders in the US

Research was presented by Chad Pierskalla's Ph.D. student at the National Environment and Recreation Research Symposium (April 16-18 2023).

This research was also highlighted in the WVU eNews.

The team expects to publish the research in a scientific journal in 2023.

Other team members are working on 2 other papers using the data.

A MS student replicated the study within WV and published a thesis in 2022.

Study Purpose

- Use the Recreation Specialization construct to better understand the diversity of mountain bike riders in the US so managers can match participants with the appropriate trails and other resources.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

River Revitalization Foundation

Category



Deferred Trail Maintenance

Improvements

Trail structure(s) built/installed (bridges, stairs, kiosks, signage, etc.)

Habitat restoration

User types served

Hike/Walk

Water

Other

Our contracted crew led by Trail Eyes LLC did the initial work of assessment, removal, and bridge design. They completed the installation of the bridge base prior to our volunteer work day. This enabled volunteers to help with laying the deck and finishing the hand railings. The bridge itself was constructed with pressure-treated southern yellow pine wood to resist rot and provide a strong foundation for the bridge. The bridge deck wood used was swamp white oak. The bridge was built on higher ground than the previous so it will not be affected by annual and repetitive flood waters.

The Westabrook Trail Bridge Construction project was a success! All of our outcomes were achieved. These included removing the old unsafe bridge, construction of a safe, 24 ft clear span footbridge, and trail edge maintenance and tree planting.



Photo courtesy of River Revitalization Foundation

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

River Revitalization Foundation

The bridge spans the small creek runoff from the river that leads to the Blue Hole, an old quarry spot that is now a deep pond which serves as a great habitat now. The Milwaukee River is sensitive to rain and its water level varies drastically with weather and season.



Photo by Tim Malzhan

The bridge is anchored to a cable post per the requirements of our permit with the Wisconsin DNR to ensure the bridge will withstand a potential 100-year flood event. For the volunteer work day on April 29th, 2022 (which was also Arbor Day), we had 27 volunteers from Johnson Controls, Inc scheduled from 8:30am-12:30pm. More than half of the volunteers helped contribute to bridge building, and the rest of the group focused on trail clearing and oak-tree sapling planting.

Every year we apply for and receive hundreds of Oak tree saplings from the Argosy Foundation. Approximately 70 trees were planted and protected on the volunteer work day, all along the Westabrook Trail, mostly on the shoreline closer to the river. Staff also worked to remove garlic mustard and dame's rocket while working alongside volunteers planting.



Photo courtesy of River Revitalization Foundation

**“Trail building is
people building!”**

-Tim Malzhan, Trail Eyes LLC

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

River Revitalization Foundation



The Westabrook Trail Bridge Construction project concluded with the removal of the original footbridge that had been worn out over time.

The wood was weak, full of moisture and creaky in certain parts. The crew did not remove the old bridge until the new one was fully finished being constructed. This was a quick and simple task since it was not built with many reinforcements.

Overall, this project has already had great impacts on trail users who complimented our work as we finished, and have made sure to compliment us whenever they saw us out there the rest of the year.

The project also allowed us to clear the section where the bridge was built so now there is new access to some forgotten, overgrown stairs, and the corridor is nice and bright and open where the bridge is located.

Trail users can feel our presence out there and appreciate the care that goes into maintaining the trail. And because the bridge is such a large and healthy structure, we can use it to post information as well. Including fish consumption advisories and information on future trail improvement projects.

Ultimately, the trail is impacted in a positive way that allows people to easily access the trails safely for years to come.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wozu, Incorporated

Cannonball Trail Project

Category



Annual Trail Maintenance

Improvements

Habitat restoration

User types served

Hike/Walk

Mountain bike

Bicycle

Water

Non-Motorized Snow

Other

In the 2022 grant period, we were successful in opening 5.5 miles of trails along the Cannonball River in Sioux County ND on an abandoned railroad grade and our neighboring property.



Photo courtesy of Wozu, Inc.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wozu, Incorporated

Cannonball Trail Project

The CMP grant allowed us to purchase a 72' wide brush mower bobcat attachment, that along with our chainsaws, we were able to create a useable trail.

The trail received a lot of use in spring, summer and fall of 2022 by walkers, runners, youth programs/outdoor activities and mountain bikers. Both our local community members and tourist visitors used the trails almost daily. Several organizations used the trail as natural space to hold community events and activities. We conservatively estimate that between 450-500 people utilized the trail in 2022.

We are currently working with a partner organization to host an Iron/man/woman endurance event in June 2023 where participants will Run, Bike, Kayak and Shoot archery on an 8.4-mile course.

These trails were covered with debris and growth and were unusable as public access trails.



Photo courtesy of Wozu, Inc.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Wozu, Incorporated

Cannonball Trail Project

A youth culture camp is also in discussion now that the trail exists.

In November we had a series of winter weather storms that buried the trail under 2-5 feet of snow.

Through the CMP grant we were able to purchase a cross country skiing trail groomer with tracks, this along with our tracked side by side, we were able to create a 5.1-mile cross country skiing course.

Through our budget we were able to purchase some skiing equipment for community members and the trails have begun to get winter use.

These are all huge accomplishments for our community as no trails currently exist in our tribal communities. We are reconnecting our people with nature. We have been asked to come help the other communities on Standing Rock to establish trails in their communities as well.



Photo courtesy of Wozu, Inc.

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Ridge Trail Service Day

Categories



Annual Trail Maintenance/Deferred Maintenance



Environmental Education



Stewardship Training

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council's 15th annual Ridge Trail Service Day on Saturday, November 5, 2022, hosted over 430 volunteers/staff at 13 locations throughout the region on one day and on one regional trail.

Improvements

Erosion reduction (Trail drainage or trail x stream crossing improvements)

Trail structure(s) built/installed (bridges, stairs, kiosks, signage, etc.)

User types served

Hike/Walk

Equestrian

Mountain bike

At over 400 miles long, the Ridge Trail is in constant need of trail maintenance and restoration, as well as trail-building projects on new trail extensions. With the support of planning and coordination with our 15 regional partners, over 7 miles of Ridge Trail was maintained, restored or built.



Sanborn County Park project in Saratoga, CA - photo by Marie Sayles

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Ridge Trail Service Day

Here are some of the high-level stats: - Got over 400 volunteers (and staff) out on the Trail: 364 volunteers, plus 68 additional staff, agency and volunteers with 1204 volunteer hours, plus 340 staff/agency hours provided trail maintenance and stewardship activities at 13 partner sites. - Volunteers worked on 7 miles of trail: Over 7 miles of trail were built, repaired or improved on top priority Ridge Trail projects, working with 15 partners, including parks / open space land managers and govt agencies. - Promoted Stewardship: This community volunteer event gave 364 volunteers safe & healthy hands-on volunteering experiences with trail work & stewardship including: -- 368 native plants installed -- 4460 lbs of trash removed

Built Awareness of Trails: As part of the event outreach and promotion, thousands of Bay Area residents were introduced to the vast network of parks, open space, and trails that are a part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail network which can be used for connecting with nature, transportation, and recreation. -- Email and social media to over 25,000 -- Partner toolkits sent to 20+ land managers and park partners -- Press Release to media contacts at local and regional new sites.

- [Vallejo Times Herald, Nov 3, 2023](#)
- [Solano Daily Republic, Nov 4, 2023](#)
- [Bay Area Monitor](#)

Community Engagement: A number of community and corporate groups participated, including: a local Boy scout troop, West Valley Community College trail-building class, Sherwood Engineering work team and Cal Maritime Academy students. In addition, there were a handful of high school students getting their community service hours completed on the trail. Key trail maintenance accomplishments include:

San Francisco Recreation and Parks in **Golden Gate Park/Oak Woodlands/Phil Arnold Trail** in the City and County of San Francisco: Trail restoration and maintenance activities include installing erosion control, planting, and enhancing wildlife habitat along the trail.



Oak Woodlands Trail Project in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA (Photos via Meaghan Webster)

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Ridge Trail Service Day

Sutro Stewards at **Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve**, San Francisco City & County: Trail maintenance and restoration activities include brushing, maintenance and invasive species removal.

Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful at Coyote Creek in Santa Clara County: Trail cleanup and beautification activities for the Coyote Creek trail and the creek with a community cleanup.

Skyline Wilderness Park group with the Napa Open Space District at Skyline Wilderness Park / River To Ridge in Napa County: Trail building of an alternate route for a trail section and decommissioning a social trail. Activities include some rock work, slash cutting, trail building, trail drainage and lots of lopping.

San Mateo County Parks at Huddart County park in San Mateo County: Trail maintenance activities include the use of hand tools to repair & restore trail tread along Skyline Trail.

Solano Land Trust at the Patwino Worrtila Kodoi Dihi Open Space in Solano County: Trail building and maintenance. Activities include brushing and maintenance of newly constructed but unused trail.

East Bay Regional Park District at Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park's Golden Spike Trail in Contra Costa County: Trail activities include brushing and trail maintenance with basic trail tread, drainage and brush clearing along the Golden Spike Trail.



Sutro Stewards Project at Mount Sutro, San Francisco, CA (Photos via Meaghan Webster)

2022 Trails Capacity Grant Awardee

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Ridge Trail Service Day

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority at the **Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve** in Santa Clara County: Trail building and maintenance for Ridge Trail section on the Boccardo trail, using hand tools.

City of Vallejo in partnership with Solano Trail Advisory Group at Highgate Rd / Hiddenbrooke Backside Trailhead in Solano County: Trail building. Activities include moderate to strenuous trail building using hand tools at the Hiddenbrooke Backside Trailhead to reroute a steep, eroding section.

Marin County Parks and Open Space District on the White Hill Trail in Marin County: Trail maintenance on the White Hill and possibly Porcupine trail; maintain drainage features, repair eroded tread, and brush the trail corridor to improve line of sight.

City of American Canyon at Newell Open Space in Solano County: Trail building and maintenance. Activities focus on trail improvements on the upper portion of Newell Open Space.

Santa Clara County Parks at Sanborn County Park/ Skyline Trail in Santa Clara County: Trail building and maintenance activities including installing drainage structure and armor trail surface and sign repair.

City of San José at the Guadalupe River Trail in Santa Clara County: Trail clean up and beautification on regional connector for the Ridge Trail with removal of vegetation and litter.



2023 Trail Capacity Grant Awardees

Thanks to the Bronco Wild Fund, we were able to fund seven trails projects across the United States In early 2023

4:1 Leverage

\$307K Match : \$71.5K Awarded



Photo submitted by Kathryn Grohusky at the Sawtooth Society

Sawtooth Society

Awarded: \$10K
Match: \$73K

Scarborough Land Trust

Awarded: \$12.5K
Match: \$24K

Ice Age Trail Alliance

Awarded: \$8K
Match: \$89K

NYNJ Trail Conference

Awarded: \$15K
Match: \$13.2K

Mile High Youth Corps

Awarded: \$11K
Match: \$4K

3 Rivers Land Trust

Awarded: \$10K
Match: \$99.4K

WI Cycling League

Awarded: \$5K
Match: \$5K



Photo courtesy of Friends of Panthertown



2022/23 Impact Report

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Trails Capacity Program

www.americantrails.org

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