

MAINTAIN & ENHANCE

THE TRAIL FUND

AMERICA'S TRAILS

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES | 2020

American Trails

more trails. better trails.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Where would we be without trails? American Trails has launched the Trail Fund to create a focused program in which the outdoor recreation and conservation giving communities can invest in the trails infrastructure that supports our country's natural areas, industries, people, and communities.

MAINTENANCE.

The Trail Fund is dedicated to sustaining our vast trail networks and beginning to solve the trail maintenance backlog, funding the research that allows us to be effective stewards of our trails, and supporting stewardship education amongst a diverse new population of volunteers committed to sustaining the trails that allow access to the great outdoors.

RESEARCH.

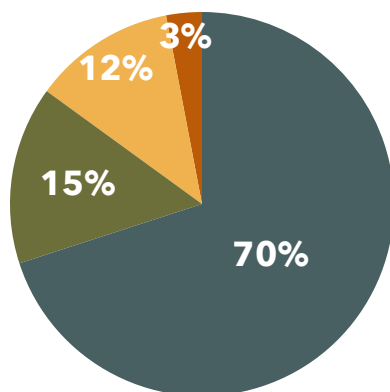
The Trail Fund will establish a robust and collaborative trail industry research capacity with a focus on the development and understanding of how trails create value and impact at the community, state, and federal level.

STEWARDSHIP TRAINING.

By focusing on engaging younger, diverse populations as active trail stewards, we can build a force of passionate individuals to tackle our nation's trail maintenance needs.

Every \$133 trains one brand new trail steward in high quality trail maintenance and building skills.

\$400 builds one high-quality trail steward volunteer to the Trainer level, effectively multiplying the total stewards trained by a factor of 10.



Your investment will sustain America's trails through maintenance, research, and stewardship training projects.

- Trail Maintenance
- Research
- Steward Training
- Administration



OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



Our Partners

American Council of Snowmobile Associations
American Hiking Society
American Trails
American Motorcyclist Association
Applied Trails Research
Backcountry Horsemen of America
The Conservation Fund
International Mountain Bicycling Association

National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Partnership for the National Trails System
Professional TrailBuilders Association
Rails-To-Trails Conservancy
TreadLightly!

Our Mission

To maintain and enhance America's trails through maintenance, research, and stewardship training projects.

Our Vision

The Trail Fund's vision is to engage the trail, outdoor recreation, and conservation giving community to partner with critical stewardship organizations to sustain our trails.

Our Values

We connect. Providing a link between foundations, businesses, and the full breadth of the trails community, we enable and inspire our colleagues to work together to protect the trails that are vital to rural and urban economies, and individual and community health.

We are collaborative. We recognize that our greatest strength is our collective nature. Our partners are trail community leaders who come together around a common goal of restoring our trails from decades of insufficient resources and neglect. We agree to respect each partner's space and concentrate our efforts on ensuring equitable distribution of support.

We get results. We strive to maximize all funds collected directly into trail maintenance, research, and stewardship training projects. We strive to find the best trail partners from across the trails spectrum, and we measure our success in terms of measurable, on-the-ground maintenance of trails and increased capacity of trail stewards to do the job effectively.

We are responsible. As a group of trails community representatives, we have a responsibility to honestly represent the needs of all trail users and invest in protecting the trails that are critical infrastructure supporting the quality of life of all citizens.



MAINTENANCE ~ SUSTAIN OUR TRAILS

When you're hiking on a trail, you often focus on details: the crunch of gravel beneath your boots, the wind whispering through the trees, the purr of your dirt bike as you negotiate a technical section of trail. In all likelihood, you aren't thinking about who maintains the trail, much less who provides the dollars to do so.

Well, the reality is that our trails are necessary infrastructure, and they need your help.

While there are Federal, State, and local agencies playing an important role in management of public lands, their bandwidth is limited and their funding is squeezed. A 2012 General Accounting Office study found that the trail maintenance backlog on U.S. Forest Service lands alone exceeds \$5.2 Billion.

*The National Park Service estimates that, by 2030, visitation at our National Parks will exceed **half a billion** visits per year.*

Amplifying the backlog is decreased budgets at Federal, State, and local agencies for programs that support recreation. Both the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service show dips of more than 15% since

2012—tens of millions of dollars our trails and rivers have sorely missed.

As the Department of the Interior acknowledged, “years of increased visitation and use” make these financial and preservation realities all the more urgent. One snapshot of this: the Pacific Crest Trail Association in 2018 issued 289% more long-distance permits than 2013.

The irony is all of this outdoor recreation generates billions of dollars in spending and millions of jobs, which foster healthier communities and economies. Yet public lands themselves have an uncertain fate.

These two diverging trends—more visitation, less money—create problems for our trails.

When trails aren't properly maintained, they can become overgrown, washed out, or simply blocked by obstacles like fallen trees. It starts a ripple effect. Hikers get creative to bypass rough spots—a safety risk itself—but forging a new path causes braiding and greater erosion. This can overwhelm local watersheds, disturbing the homes and health of wildlife.

Thankfully, we are empowered to protect our gateways to adventure. The Federal outlook may seem bleak, but we can affect change starting at the local level.

The Trail Fund is dedicated to sustaining our vast trail networks and beginning to solve the trail maintenance backlog, funding the research that allows us to be effective stewards of our trails, and supporting stewardship education amongst a diverse new population of volunteers committed to sustaining the trails that allow access to the great outdoors.





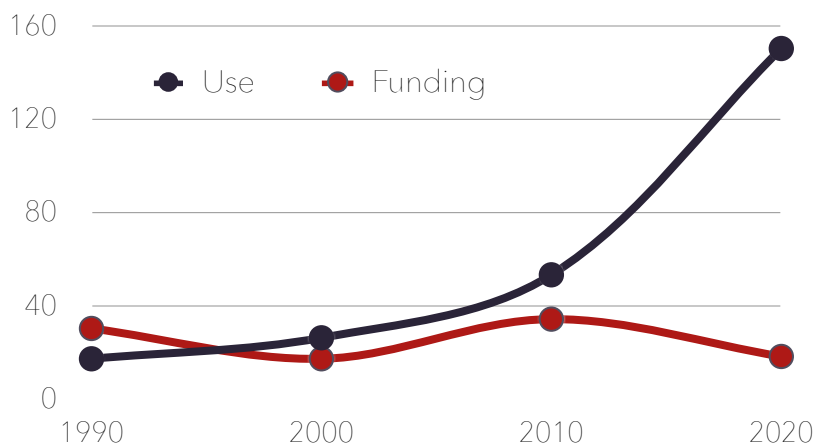
RESEARCH ~ ARTICULATE THE VALUE OF TRAILS



Research and data on trails are critical to show the impact and benefits of trails. The trails community is witnessing unprecedented growth and a shift in leadership away from Federal agencies, toward foundation and private investment driving trail development. This highlights the need to develop the tools that allow a dynamic trail community to come together, professionalize and standardize, document our value and impact, and articulate this value and impact to public leaders, the outdoor industry, and other industries that unwittingly benefit from trails.

Recent data from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) calculated that outdoor recreation generated \$734 billion in economic activity in 2016, surpassing other sectors such as agriculture, petroleum and coal. Outdoor recreation makes up 2.2% percent of U.S. GDP, supports 5.2 million jobs and is growing faster than the economy as a whole. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, trail centered activities directly generate over \$594 billion and nearly 3.5 million jobs. We know that on federally managed land, outdoor recreation contributes more than \$64.6 billion to the national economy and supports more than 623,000 jobs annually, but we don't even know the economic impacts of State and local trail-focused outdoor recreation. It could be huge!

The Trail Fund will establish a robust and collaborative trail industry research capacity with a focus on the development and understanding of how trails create value and impact at the community, state, and federal level. We will utilize the data and knowledge from research initiatives across the country to inform and grow this critical trails knowledge base.





RESEARCH ~ "STATE OF TRAILS" REPORT

The trails community would benefit from sound and representative data and analyses upon which to explore and define how trails impact America. The trails community is seeing unprecedented growth and a shift in leadership away from Federal agencies, toward foundation and private investment driving trail development. These changes highlight the need to develop the tools that allow our coalition to:

- bring a dynamic trail community together,
- professionalize and standardize the trails industry,
- document our value and impact, and
- articulate this value and impact to public leaders, the outdoor industry, and other industries that unwittingly benefit from trails.

There is a perception that trails just exist. If we do not help our decision-makers, investors, and citizens understand that trails are critical infrastructure requiring consistent, ongoing funding and maintenance, they will simply disappear or degrade over time. We must make it apparent to citizens, leaders, and investors that trails improve the quality of life for all Americans.

Trails and trails system are in constant flux; our organization needs to track these changes to stay current and to leverage the historical context of trails and trail systems. Identifying ways to share the burden of staying current while retaining relevancy and connectivity to users, user communities and trails managing agencies will be key to the success of this program.

American Trails (AT) and Trails Move People (TMP) are leading this effort. Mike Passo from AT is working with Jeremy Wimpey from Applied Trails Research (ATR) and Ryan Branciforte from OuterSpatial to support scoping out an initial phase of this work.

The proposed team to lead and work collaboratively on this effort will be Applied Trails Research, Virginia Tech University, and OuterSpatial.





STEWARDSHIP ~ TRAIL TRAINING PROGRAM

The management of our nation's trails is largely supported by trail organizations and citizen volunteers who leverage government resources to maintain and expand our trails. On the National Trails System alone, since 1995, hundreds of thousands of citizen volunteers have contributed more than 19 million hours to build and maintain National Scenic and Historic Trails, and nonprofit trail organizations have contributed more than \$200 million toward trail stewardship projects, a total value of \$577.4 million. This historical and ongoing public "sweat equity" investment has led to an increased recognition of the importance of adequate federal funding for our public lands and trails to maintain quality visitor experiences.

The goal of developing high quality, consistent training opportunities is to preserve skills that have been developed over decades as well as teaching the newest technology. Top quality and readily accessible training will help all of us perform to the best of our abilities. By focusing on engaging younger, diverse populations as active trail stewards, we can build a force of passionate individuals to tackle our nation's trail maintenance needs.



\$135 *trains one new trail steward*

Every \$135 of donated funds will find and train one diverse, excited, brand new trail steward in high quality trail maintenance, land conservation, and trail construction skills. These new trail stewards will bring new energy and form a dedicated force for sustaining trails in their region for years to come.

\$400 *builds one new trail trainer*

Every \$400 can train an existing trail volunteer steward or agency professional, and builds the skills and knowledge necessary to create one trail trainer. This new trail trainer will effectively multiply the impact of donations. You can expect this new trainer to train an average of 10 new trail stewards every year.

Over the next 10 years, your investment will be multiplied 100 times!



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Target your investment in the program that most closely aligns with your interest.

- Trail Maintenance Program
- Trail Research Program
- Trail Stewardship Training Program

Contact Us:

The Trail Fund
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**HELP
SUSTAIN
OUR TRAILS.**



**Donate \$5 by texting
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Learn more at AmericanTrails.org





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