



# HIKING TRAILS IN AMERICA

*Pathways to Prosperity*

AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY | JUNE 2015



1965  
TO  
2015

Fifty years ago President Johnson set in motion the establishment of a national system of trails for America. Since LBJ's famous speech outlining his vision, **AMERICA HAS ACCOMPLISHED MUCH...**



## Created a National Trails System

The National Trails System was established, doubling the mileage of trails on federal lands and nearly tripling the mileage on state lands.

### TRAILS ON FEDERAL LANDS

1965 88,000 miles

2015 193,500 miles

### TRAILS ON STATE LANDS

1965 15,000 miles

2015 42,500 miles



## Got More Americans Outdoors

The number of Americans who get out on trails continues to climb. In 2013, here's how many Americans enjoyed trails:



**HIKERS** 34 million+



**BACKPACKERS** 9 million+



**MOUNTAIN BIKERS** 8 million+

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION DATA



## Nurtured Public/Private Partnership

The national system of trails encourages citizens to help maintain trails and their environs in their communities and take "ownership" of the experience on local trails.



1 million+

### VOLUNTEER HOURS

for trail maintenance and management of the National Scenic and Historic Trails alone

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM DATA

# next steps

... BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.



## Close the Gaps

Congress has authorized many trails, but most have yet to be completed. Funding to finish the task must be appropriated and Congress needs to ensure that land management agencies and their partners have the resources and tools required to close the existing gaps.



## Build More Urban Trails

While progress has been made, much more must be accomplished to provide sufficient mileage of trails in and around urban areas. For Americans to enjoy and benefit from trails, they must be accessible to where they live. This is particularly important for youth and others who may not be able to reach a trail because of transportation obstacles.



## Increase User Diversity

We must help make more Americans from diverse communities aware of trails, both near and far, that are available for public enjoyment. Efforts should also be focused on educational outreach to ensure new trail users feel safe and empowered when making initial visits.



Photo by Peter Olsen

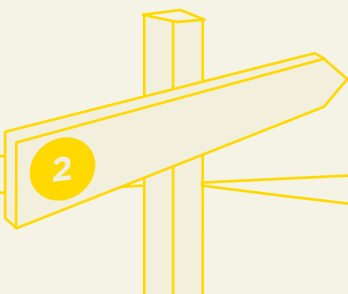
**Americans are a people who have always been engaged with and in love with the outdoors.** In the mid-19th century, Henry David Thoreau sauntered through the woods surrounding Walden Pond, and in his subsequent writings, provided a thoughtful expression of the natural world and humankind's place within it.

A few years later John Muir became perhaps the most famous hiker/naturalist of the era. He walked 1,000 miles from Indiana to Florida by the “wildest, leafiest, and least trodden way I could find” prior to heading west and falling in love with the natural beauty of Yosemite.

These men are characteristic of the American spirit—a people who seek adventure, a connection with nature, and the peace of spirit that being in nature brings. **This American spirit lives on in the hearts of Americans of all walks of life to this day.**

Whether it's a family out exploring along a nearby wooded trail or a rugged individualist thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, **Americans continue to seek places for outdoor recreation, a connection to nature, and healthy exercise.** And thanks to visionaries from decades ago there are now, all across America, hiking trails for these hikers and millions more like them to enjoy.

**BUT THESE TRAILS DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN.**



# Trails for America

The story of the creation of a national strategy to create and manage trails in modern America begins with President Lyndon Johnson's speech on the *"Conservation and Preservation of Natural Beauty"* in February, 1965. In his address to Congress, the President focused attention on many areas affecting the conservation and restoration of natural beauty in America. His address focused on clean water, parks in urban areas, the establishment of certain national seashore and national recreation areas—and of particular note—trails.

In his speech, President Johnson stated, "The forgotten outdoorsmen of today are those who like to walk, hike, ride horseback, or bicycle. For them we must have trails as well as highways...Old and young alike can participate. Our doctors recommend and encourage such activity for fitness and fun." He continued, "I am requesting, therefore, that

the Secretary of the Interior work with his colleagues in the Federal Government and with State and local leaders and recommend to me a cooperative program to encourage a national system of trails, building up the more than hundred thousand miles of trails in our national forests and parks."

In response to the President's request, then Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, formed a committee led by the Bureau of Recreation (then an agency within the Department of the Interior) to study existing trails in the U.S., how well they served the American public, and to recommend federal legislation that would bring into existence a cohesive national trails system. This committee's work resulted in a report entitled, *Trails for America*, which was published in December, 1966.

In this report, it was acknowledged that while no metrics existed

regarding how many Americans used trails each year, it was known that the expressed desire for trails exceeded existing opportunities. In an effort to address this and to respond to the President's request for suggested improvements, the committee recommended that a National Trails System be developed. It was also suggested that the system have three categories of trails:

## 1. National Scenic Trails

These were to be long-distance trails with natural, scenic, or historic qualities, such as the Appalachian Trail. These trails were envisioned as having shelters along their length for use by long distance hikers.

► It was suggested that these trails might be owned, constructed, and managed by various federal, state, and local authorities but that each trail be administered by either the Secretary of the

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— President Lydon B. Johnson, 1965 speech on the *Conservation and Preservation of Natural Beauty*



## EXISTING TRAIL MILEAGE ON FEDERAL LANDS IN 1966

AS LISTED IN *TRAILS FOR AMERICA*, P. 93, 1966

| STATE OR TERRITORY   | TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Alabama              | 2                   |
| Alaska               | 989                 |
| Arizona              | 5,268               |
| Arkansas             | 19                  |
| California           | 15,891              |
| Colorado             | 11,065              |
| Connecticut          | 0                   |
| Delaware             | 0                   |
| Florida              | 98                  |
| Georgia              | 54                  |
| Hawaii               | 191                 |
| Idaho                | 10,556              |
| Illinois             | 80                  |
| Indiana              | 6                   |
| Iowa                 | 4                   |
| Kansas               | 0                   |
| Kentucky             | 164                 |
| Louisiana            | 1                   |
| Maine                | 285                 |
| Maryland             | 213                 |
| Massachusetts        | 19                  |
| Michigan             | 219                 |
| Minnesota            | 132                 |
| Mississippi          | 20                  |
| Missouri             | 59                  |
| Montana              | 9,274               |
| Nebraska             | 5                   |
| Nevada               | 2,086               |
| New Hampshire        | 943                 |
| New Jersey           | 12                  |
| New Mexico           | 4,065               |
| New York             | 21                  |
| North Carolina       | 1,377               |
| North Dakota         | 17                  |
| Ohio                 | 19                  |
| Oklahoma             | 11                  |
| Oregon               | 5,179               |
| Pennsylvania         | 188                 |
| Rhode Island         | 0                   |
| South Carolina       | 20                  |
| South Dakota         | 34                  |
| Tennessee            | 639                 |
| Texas                | 251                 |
| Utah                 | 4,434               |
| Vermont              | 145                 |
| Virginia             | 1,058               |
| Washington           | 6,814               |
| West Virginia        | 589                 |
| Wisconsin            | 35                  |
| Wyoming              | 5,146               |
| District of Columbia | 82                  |
| Puerto Rico          | 40                  |
| Virgin Islands       | 15                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>87,834</b>       |

Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture. The report continued, “the entire length of each national scenic trail, together with sufficient land area on both sides to safeguard adequately and preserve its character, should be protected in some form of public control.”

### 2. Park and Forest Trails

These would be trails on public lands and managed by federal and state agencies; **the committee recommended increasing total mileage from 88,000 miles to 125,000 miles.**

- ▶ Park and Forest Trails would include those that lead the day visitor to these lands to perhaps a waterfall or overlook. They were envisioned as serving a broad array of users including hikers, picnickers, campers, and sightseers.
- ▶ In 1966 when the report was published the government maintained almost 88,000 miles of trails on federal lands, including those of the Forest Service (73,000 miles) and National Park Service (9,000 miles).
- ▶ State-managed trails on state lands at this time totaled 15,000 miles.

### 3. Metropolitan Trails

These trails would be in and around urban areas; with a suggested ratio of 25 miles of foot trail for every 50,000 residents. Since so many trails, particularly Park and Forest Trails on federal lands were west of the Mississippi River, it was felt that the greatest need for trails was

right where most people lived—in or near urban areas.

- ▶ The Report suggested that the federal government could assist in the development of Metropolitan Trails by using Land & Water Conservation Fund grants and providing technical guidance and assistance in trail planning and development.
- ▶ It was suggested that states could encourage the development of these trails assisting in acquisition and development of lands for trails and enacting legislation, if necessary, to protect land owners from liability claims.

## THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT

The National Trails System Act of 1968 was the direct result of the *Trails for America* report. While differing slightly from the suggestions in the *Trails for America* report, this legislation did follow the Report’s original intent. It established three different types of trails: National Scenic Trails, National Recreation Trails, and Connecting and Side Trails. Later in 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed into law a bill that created an additional category of trails: National Historic Trails.

As the Act stands today, as amended, **National Scenic Trails** are described as extended trails of more than 100 miles in length that provide for outdoor recreation and “for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which



## CONNECTING AND SIDE TRAILS IN THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

- **Timms Hill Trail**  
(connects to Ice Age NST)
- **Iditarod-Anvik Connector Trail**  
(connects to Iditarod NHT)
- **Chester River Connecting Trail**  
(connects to John Smith Chesapeake NHT)
- **Upper James River Connecting Trail**  
(connects to John Smith Chesapeake NHT)
- **Upper Nanticoke River Connecting Trail**  
(connects to John Smith Chesapeake NHT)
- **Susquehanna River Connecting Trail**  
(connects to John Smith Chesapeake NHT)

such trails may pass.” National Scenic Trails may only be land-based, necessarily excluding any water-based travel routes. These trails may only be designated and authorized by an Act of Congress.

**National Historic Trails**, according to the Act, are also extended trails, although they may be less than 100 miles in length, and follow historic trails or routes of travel as closely as possible. The purpose of these trails is “the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment.” National Historic Trails, unlike National Scenic Trails, may include water-based routes. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail as an example is largely water-based, tracing Captain Smith’s 1607–1609 exploration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries as he created maps of the area and documented Native American communities.

Just like the National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails may also only be designated and authorized by an Act of Congress.

### **National Recreation Trails**

provide opportunities for outdoor recreation primarily in and around urban areas and have no minimal length requirement. These trails may be designated by either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture rather than by an Act of Congress. These trails may exist entirely on state, local, and private property as well as on federal lands.

The National Trails System Act also created the category of **Connecting and Side Trails** that, according to the Act, provide “additional points of public access to national recreation, national scenic or national historic trails or which will provide connections between such trails.” To date only six National Connecting and Side Trails have been designated. (See list above)

## THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM TODAY

The National Trails System Act of 1968 created only two National Scenic Trails when it was enacted: the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail, although others were suggested for possible later inclusion among the National Scenic Trails.

Despite the good intent of the National Trails System Act, ten years later in 1978 the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail still remained the only two Congressionally-designated National Scenic Trails. This changed in 1978 when President Carter signed into law a bill that amended the National Trails System Act by adding the category of National Historic Trails and also designated five new trails:

- ▶ The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail;
- ▶ The Iditarod National Historic Trail;
- ▶ The Oregon National Historic Trail;

*The Forest Service reports more than 165 million visitors to National Forests and that more than 40% of visitors hike or walk on forest trails. That's more than 66 million people enjoying the Forest Service trails annually!*



*Photo by Mark Going*

- ▶ The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail; and
- ▶ The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Today there are 11 National Scenic Trails and 19 National Historic Trails. (See chart on page 9.) While these account for most of the longer and perhaps more well-known trails in America, there are also 1,244 National Recreation Trails that total an additional 24,800

miles. All of these are nationally-designated trails within the National Trails System.

There are, however, thousands of additional miles of state trails, local trails, and regional trails that are not a part of the National Trails System. These trails are just as vital to the communities they serve and include unpaved, natural surface trails, as well as paved trails and are used for a variety of recreational activities including hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, off-highway

vehicle use, outdoor education, snowmobiling, hunting, and fishing.

In addition to meeting a demand for outdoor recreation, many of these trails—in urban and suburban settings particularly—are also used to meet basic transportation needs by those traveling on foot or by bicycle. Whether it's children walking to school, adults bicycling to work, or teens getting to a ball field for practice after school, trails in and near population centers are filling the need foreseen in the *Trails for America* report many decades ago.



## National Scenic Trails

| TRAIL                               | Year Est'd | Authorized Length | Open To Public & Maintained |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Appalachian                         | 1968       | 2,158             | 2,185                       |
| Arizona                             | 2009       | 761               | 819                         |
| Continental Divide                  | 1978       | 3,100             | 783                         |
| Florida                             | 1983       | 1,300             | 1,036                       |
| Ice Age                             | 1980       | 1,000             | 643                         |
| Natchez Trace                       | 1983       | 95                | 150                         |
| New England                         | 2009       | 190               | 215                         |
| North Country                       | 1980       | 3,200             | 2,723                       |
| Pacific Crest                       | 1968       | 2,638             | 2,650                       |
| Pacific Northwest                   | 2009       | 1,200             | 1,206                       |
| Potomac Heritage                    | 1983       | 700               | 694                         |
| <b>TOTAL NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS</b> |            |                   | <b>13,104</b>               |

## National Historic Trails

| TRAIL                                 | Year Est'd | Authorized Length | Miles Of Auto Tour Route Signed |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ala Kahakai                           | 2000       | 175               |                                 |
| California                            | 1992       | 5,665             | 3,274                           |
| Captain John Smith Chesapeake         | 2006       | 3,000             | 195                             |
| El Camino Real de los Tejas           | 2004       | 2,580             | 80                              |
| El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro      | 2000       | 404               | 25                              |
| Iditarod                              | 1978       | 2,350             |                                 |
| Juan Bautista de Anza                 | 1990       | 1,200             | 900                             |
| Lewis & Clark                         | 1978       | 3,700             | 7,000                           |
| Mormon Pioneer                        | 1978       | 1,300             | 1,495                           |
| Nez Perce                             | 1986       | 1,170             |                                 |
| Old Spanish                           | 2002       | 2,700             |                                 |
| Oregon                                | 1978       | 2,170             | 2,130                           |
| Overmountain Victory                  | 1980       | 275               |                                 |
| Pony Express                          | 1992       | 1,966             | 1,776                           |
| Santa Fe                              | 1987       | 1,203             | 1,202                           |
| Selma to Montgomery                   | 1996       | 54                | 54                              |
| Star-Spangled Banner                  | 2008       | 290               | 150                             |
| Trail of Tears                        | 1987       | 5,045             | 993                             |
| Washington-Rochambeau                 | 2009       | 2,020             |                                 |
| <b>TOTAL NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS</b> |            |                   | <b>19,274</b>                   |

Source: NTS Annual Report, 2013, p. 14, and [www.nps.gov/nts/nts\\_faqs.html](http://www.nps.gov/nts/nts_faqs.html)

## TRAILS ON FEDERAL LANDS TODAY

### National Park Service

According to the National Park Service (NPS), more than **273 million people visited America's national parks in 2013**. While visiting those parks, the public had the opportunity to **enjoy some of the 18,000 miles of trails** that the National Park Service manages. In addition to park-specific trails, the NPS also has the responsibility of administering 6 National Scenic Trails and 15 National Historic Trails.

### U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service, an agency of the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**, has more than **158,000 miles of trails within its 155 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands**, representing more mileage than any other federal agency. Approximately 32,000 miles of these Forest Service trails are within designated Wilderness areas.

The Forest Service reports more than 165 million visitors to National Forests and that more than 40% of visitors hike or walk on forest trails. That's more than 66 million people enjoying the Forest Service trails annually!<sup>1</sup>

### Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management manages more than **16,000 miles of trails** on its land.<sup>2</sup> Of these thousands of miles of trails, almost 5,000 miles are sections of National Historic Trails, more than 600 miles along National Scenic Trails,



## TRAIL MILEAGE ON STATE LANDS IN 1966 AND 2013

| STATE          | TRAIL MILEAGE REPORTED IN 1966* | TRAIL MILEAGE REPORTED IN 2013** |
|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alabama        | 40                              | 194                              |
| Alaska         | 153                             | 550                              |
| Arizona        | 1                               | 124                              |
| Arkansas       | 1,428                           | 390                              |
| California     | 1,532                           | 5,095                            |
| Colorado       | 49                              | 719                              |
| Connecticut    | 7                               | 95                               |
| Delaware       | 0                               | 157                              |
| Florida        | 90                              | 2,406                            |
| Georgia        | 25                              | 523                              |
| Hawaii         | 264                             | 125                              |
| Idaho          | 261                             | 1,003                            |
| Illinois       | 343                             | 262                              |
| Indiana        | 292                             |                                  |
| Iowa           | 105                             | 6                                |
| Kansas         | 2                               | 82                               |
| Kentucky       | 93                              | 335                              |
| Louisiana      | 13                              | 132                              |
| Maine          | 291                             | 331                              |
| Maryland       | 155                             | 789                              |
| Massachusetts  | 195                             | 2,145                            |
| Michigan       | 650                             | 687                              |
| Minnesota      | 204                             | 1,323                            |
| Mississippi    | 51                              | 115                              |
| Missouri       | 187                             | 967                              |
| Montana        | 54                              |                                  |
| Nebraska       | 11                              | 324                              |
| Nevada         | 2                               | 290                              |
| New Hampshire  | 65                              | 3,864                            |
| New Jersey     | 367                             | 1,007                            |
| New Mexico     | 59                              | 135                              |
| New York       | 980                             | 3,436                            |
| North Carolina | 54                              | 806                              |
| North Dakota   | 24                              | 3,250                            |
| Ohio           | 419                             | 1,498                            |
| Oklahoma       | 137                             | 402                              |
| Oregon         | 367                             | 152                              |
| Pennsylvania   | 4,238                           | 1,470                            |
| Rhode Island   | 7                               | 102                              |
| South Carolina | 25                              | 366                              |
| South Dakota   | 1                               | 1,897                            |
| Tennessee      | 84                              | 998                              |
| Texas          | 128                             | 97                               |
| Utah           | 17                              | 302                              |
| Vermont        | 0                               | 249                              |
| Virginia       | 226                             | 508                              |
| Washington     | 674                             | 467                              |
| West Virginia  | 197                             | 149                              |
| Wisconsin      | 243                             | 2,000                            |
| Wyoming        | 0                               | 110                              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>14,810</b>                   | <b>42,434</b>                    |

and about 500 miles of National Recreation Trails.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the BLM administers the Iditarod National Historic Trail as well as two National Historic Trails jointly with the National Park Service: the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail and the Old Spanish Trail.

### U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Refuge System protects land, water, and wildlife on 150 million acres of land and water. Each year 47 million Americans visit the refuges to enjoy opportunities to hike, hunt, fish, photograph wildlife, and more. And many of these visitors use the refuges' more than 1,500 miles of trails to do just that. These Refuges include National Recreation Trails as well as sections of a number of National Scenic and Historic Trails.

### Federal Highway Administration

While the Federal Highway Administration may not manage any trails, it does administer the Recreational Trails Program—a subset of the Transportation Alternatives Program. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides partial funding to help build and maintain recreational trails. Funding is derived from a portion of the federal taxes on the sale of fuels used for non-highway recreation such as the fuel for off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles, off-highway motorcycles and so on, making this a user-pay/user-play program, funded by those who use trails.

## TRAILS ON STATE LANDS TODAY

In response to the public's desire to engage in outdoor recreation, states have created numerous parks and set aside natural areas and other state lands for just this purpose. As a part of this effort most states have also instituted robust trail programs that allow the public to explore these special lands and that attract tourism activity as well. Today's state parks and other state lands boast more than 40,000 miles of trails.<sup>4</sup> (See chart on the left).

The more than 7,000 State Parks fill a special niche in our country, as they tend to be more numerous than National Parks in most states and are generally more easily accessible to people dispersed throughout each state. While Americans love to travel to iconic national parks such as Acadia, Yellowstone, and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks, and do so in large numbers, it is our state parks which frequently provide that "close to home" opportunity to get outdoors. Americans visit their state parks to enjoy all types of outdoor activities such as hiking and bicycling, fishing and hunting, picnicking and camping.

According to the National Association of State Park Directors, there are more than 700 million visits to America's state parks each year. While that number is sure to include visitors who return numerous times annually, it is evident from those numbers that Americans enjoy getting outside and experiencing these natural landscapes.

\* *Trails for America*, p. 93, 1966

\*\* The National Association of State Park Directors' Annual Information Exchange

# Why Trails?

While land conservation and preservation are important in their own right, it is through America's system of trails that the American people actually get to access and experience these places—whether it's a scenic National Park or an urban trail that wanders along a riverfront.

In a survey conducted by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1960, walking for pleasure ranked second among Americans' favorite recreational activities. (Driving for pleasure was the favorite activity.) In 1965, the authors of the *Trails for America* report reflected that while public use of trails was unmeasured, what they *did* know was that the demand for trails exceeded what was available. In 2013, more than 43 million Americans over 6 years of age went hiking and backpacking—for fun, exercise, to get in touch with nature, spend time with family and friends, or just to enjoy the outdoors on a beautiful day.<sup>5</sup>

## Nature

**TRAILS** lead millions of families to discover the scenic beauty of America's parks, forests, and untrammeled landscapes. Children can discover moose wading in an alpine lake, eagles soaring in a cloudless sky, and the sweet smell of a pine forest. For kids growing up in cities and the suburbs these trail visits allow them to explore and experience nature, forming positive, enduring memories. These visits can establish a life-long connection to the natural world and a love of outdoor recreation whether it's hiking, fishing, camping, or biking. Many of the champions of outdoor recreation and conservation today first connected to America's inspirational natural heritage on a trail blazed in the wild woods.



## Urban Renewal

**TRAILS** lead millions of Americans to discover their nearby neighborhood treasures whether it's an ice cream shop on an urban rail trail or a small paddle boat rental business at the side of a lakeside trail in the heart of downtown. Trails such as the Gwynns Falls Trail in Baltimore, MD, invite city kids to get out and walk and ride a bike or provide a way to get to a ballpark or library. In so many cities all across America, trails are helping to revitalize urban centers by providing a place for people who enjoy urban life to get outside and walk, run, connect with friends, and exercise. They are attracting new homeowners to areas that were suffering with empty housing and have become a feature of good urban renewal planning.



## Physical Health

**TRAILS** continue to put numerous Americans back on the path to good health. Hiking and walking are easily done by people of just about all levels of physical fitness and across the economic spectrum. Hiking or walking regularly can help with some of America's most costly health ailments including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. According to the American Heart Association walking briskly can even lower the likelihood of high blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol as much as running does.<sup>6</sup>



## Economic Health

**TRAILS** foster economic prosperity in both rural and urban areas. Whether it's lodging, dining, bike rentals, gear sales, or guiding, trails provide a basis for many facets of tourism throughout our nation. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, spending for outdoor recreation in America in 2012 totaled \$646 billion and supported 6.1 million jobs. For more detailed information on the economic impact of trails see this report's special section: The Economic Benefits of Trails on page 13.



## Connections

**TRAILS** help educate young and old alike about the connection between the places we live and the world at large. Whether it's increased environmental awareness about watersheds or forest systems and how they impact our lives or through interaction with neighboring communities around the trail, trails lead us to a better understanding of the world around us.



## History & Culture

**TRAILS** connect Americans to our historic and cultural heritage through our National Historic Trails. There are currently 19 National Historic Trails designated by Congress. These trails celebrate great accomplishments such as the journey of Lewis and Clark and the Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery, as well as historic events and places, such as the Pony Express and the Trail of Tears. These trails not only help to preserve the memory of America's past, but also to preserve artifacts associated with them.



# Trail Users

The trails community is comprised of numerous and highly varied user types: rugged outdoors people who seek deep-in-the-wilderness experiences as well as people who prefer a quick excursion on an urban trail for some exercise and fresh air.

And people experience the trail using all manner of conveyance: mountain bikes, horses, off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles, and on foot. As the leading nature-based outdoor recreation activity, it is no surprise that of all the ways Americans take to the trail hiking is by far the most common and popular.

## THE HIKING COMMUNITY

In 2013, 12% of Americans over six years of age went hiking.<sup>7</sup> Almost 35 million people enjoyed day hiking—about a 2% increase in the last three years and up from 30 million in 2006.

There are also many Americans—more than 9 million—who in 2013 enjoyed the adventure of backpacking and enjoying a night under a canopy of stars. This is an

increase from 7 million in 2006 and an increase of 4% over just the last three years.

Hiking tends to be one of the more inclusive outdoor recreational pursuits due to the fact that no special training or high-tech gear is required. Despite this, outdoor recreation, including the hiking community, is not a complete reflection of American diversity—at least not yet. In 2012, among those Americans between the ages of 25-44, while 60% of Caucasians had participated in outdoor recreation, in that same age group, only 54% each among Asian/Pacific Islanders and Latinos and 47% of African Americans had.<sup>8</sup>

In a 2015 survey among American Hiking Society members, it is apparent that most hikers are primarily getting out for short day hikes of less than five hours. The number of hikers choosing to go on shorter day hikes as opposed to hikes longer than 5 hours or backpacking trips, has increased by approximately 10% since 2007. Of all American Hiking members, 78%

*In 2013, 12% of Americans over six years of age went hiking. Almost 35 million people enjoyed day hiking—about a 2% increase in the last three years and up from 30 million in 2006.*

primarily go on day hikes while the balance primarily enjoys backpacking trips.

One thing this indicates is that for Americans to be able to readily participate in hiking, the trail should not be too distant from the communities in which they reside. Most American Hiking Society members hike on trails that are within 60 miles of home, and of those, more than a third travel less than 15 miles to go hiking. This information reveals how important it is for trails to be located near where people live so that more of the public may access and enjoy them.

Why are Americans hiking in such great numbers? American Hiking Society members primarily



*Americans willingly provide millions of dollars' worth  
of work to ensure the trails are maintained.*



*American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacations crew. Photo by Rob Chen.*

hike to connect with nature and to exercise. These two reasons rank far above all other reasons members choose to hike. With hiking for exercise being so popular, this may be part of the reason that AHS members report hiking more frequently than they did eight years ago. In 2015, most members—60%—reported hiking 20 or more times a year, up from 54% in 2007. Viewing this from the healthy lifestyle perspective, this makes sense since exercise should be performed regularly to obtain the best outcomes.

The other top reason for hiking—connecting with nature—is important to note as well. The hiking community appears to prefer to hike along trails in a natural environment that renews their spirit and relaxes and refreshes them.

In addition to individual members, American Hiking Society also has more than 300 Alliance of Hiking Organization members. These

are organizations whose members lead hikes, build and repair trails, and conduct other similar activities. They help to manage and maintain trails and sections of trails all around the country.

The trails these organizations manage and maintain extend through a variety of landscapes. Oftentimes, the trail also traverses lands owned by more than one, or even two, types of land owners. For those Alliance members who manage trails owned by a variety of land owners, 57% work on trails, sections of which at least, are on state land, 54% work on trails that are on federal land, 58% on trails that are under local jurisdiction, and 45% of them have at least sections of trail they manage that are on privately owned land.

This is a reflection of America's rich trail system today. Americans aren't just getting out on trails in remote federal lands, but also in

state parks and forests, community parks, and even on privately owned lands. Together these trails form a network that allow people in cities, suburbs, and rural areas to enjoy some family time together while hiking or to reach a local fishing spot.

## **TRAIL VOLUNTEERISM— A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

The National Trails System Act specifically encourages federal agencies to utilize volunteers in the planning, maintenance, and management of trails and the public has fully embraced this concept of giving back to the trails they love. Whether it's volunteering with a trail or hiking club on a regular basis or going on a week-long Volunteer Vacation, Americans willingly provide millions of dollars' worth of work to ensure the trails



Photo by Bev Warton

*“Members of the Back Country Horsemen saddled up for a day of riding and trail maintenance deep in the forest along the Piedra Stock Trail in Colorado. Altogether, the group had an enjoyable and productive National Trails Day® effort as they cleared more than 9 miles of trail and 42 downed trees. The day finished with a wonderful cowboy stew and a crew member’s famous chocolate cherry cake.”*

—Bev Warton

are maintained and to conserve the lands around the trails. According to a 2013 Government Accounting Office report, the Forest Service alone benefitted from 1.2 million volunteer hours in fiscal year 2012—a donation of time that is valued at \$26 million.<sup>9</sup>

In 2014, the Partnership for the National Trails System reported that trail volunteers for the National Scenic and Historic Trails’ associated nonprofit organizations together contributed more than 1 million hours of volunteer time to the trails. This donation of time and sweat equity is valued at nearly \$24 million! (See page 24 in the Addenda for more details.)

Additionally, the more than 300 American Hiking Society Alliance members recently reported that for trails that they help to build and maintain, 63% of the labor was provided by volunteers,

15% by paid staff, 11% by government employees, 7% by the Service Corps, and 4% by other types of workers. Almost 25% of the Alliance members reported that *all* the trail work on the trails they managed was conducted by volunteers exclusively.

American Hiking Society’s individual members are also part of the national volunteer effort as they “Get Out and Give Back” each year through American Hiking’s **Volunteer Vacations** program. Each year American Hiking Society organizes more than 50 Volunteer Vacations at locations all across America. In 2014, 478 American Hiking volunteers participated in 48 trips in 23 states and the US Virgin Islands. These volunteers contributed more than 19,000 hours with a value of more than \$431,000.

Additionally, in an effort to engage the next generation of stewards, American Hiking Society organizes **Alternative Break**

**Volunteer Vacations.** During these trips college students learn about teamwork, building and maintaining sustainable trails, and the importance of citizens giving back to these public lands they’ve enjoyed much of their lives. In 2014, American Hiking Society organized 10 Volunteer Vacations just for college students with more than 100 students participating.

While the aforementioned efforts reflect a long-term, concerted effort, there are also opportunities for individuals to pitch in for just a day or a few hours. Sometimes these are club work days and sometimes part of a national effort such as **American Hiking Society’s National Trails Day®**. On National Trails Day®, 2014, 21,800 volunteers participated in 439 trail projects, a volunteer effort with a value of \$2.3 million. Volunteers included hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians—all joined together and giving back to the nation’s trails.

# The Economic Benefits of Trails

Green infrastructure like trails and parks are true economic engines and provide for the economic vitality of a community—and a nation. Well-managed and funded parks and trails makes strong, economic sense and are job-creating enterprises for the economic vitality of communities and their surrounding regions. Trails are an integral part of the outdoor recreation experience in America and stimulate business creation, influence corporate location decisions, increase property values, reduce medical costs by encouraging exercise, and generate tax dollars. Trails also provide low or no-cost recreation opportunities and transportation options to the public.

In 2012, the annual economic value of outdoor recreation in America was estimated by the Outdoor Industry Association (of which American Hiking Society is a member) to be \$646 billion in spending (\$81 billion directly from trail recreation) and supporting 6.1 million direct jobs (over 768,000 jobs from trail recreation), more than double that of the oil and gas

industry in America.<sup>10</sup> In addition, each year outdoor recreation generates \$80 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue (\$10.6 billion from trail recreation). And as recreational dollars change hands and work through the economy, the ‘multiplier or ripple effect’ grows to \$1.6 trillion in total annual economic activity (\$196 billion from trail recreation) and 12 million jobs in America from outdoor recreation. And the outdoor recreation sector is resilient, growing even during economic downturns. As an example, the outdoor recreation industry grew about 5% annually between 2005 and 2011, with trail recreation playing an important part in that growth.

According to the most recent U.S. Department of the Interior Economic Report for 2013, public lands managed by Interior (20% of the nation’s lands) hosted an estimated 407 million recreation visits in 2013, which contributed about \$41 billion in economic output, and supported about 355,400 jobs. As Interior Secretary Sally Jewell noted, “It is important both to our

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TRAIL RECREATION COMPARED TO TOTAL OUTDOOR RECREATION

|  | TRAIL RECREATION ACTIVITIES | OUTDOOR RECREATION-TOTAL |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Annual Spending                      | \$81 billion                | \$646 billion            |
| Direct Job Creation                        | 768,000 jobs                | 6.1 million jobs         |
| Tax Revenue Generated                      | \$10 billion                | \$80 billion             |
| Multiplier Effect: Total Economic Activity | \$196 billion               | \$1.6 trillion           |

Outdoor Industry Association 2012, The Outdoor Recreation Economy<sup>11</sup>



## Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail

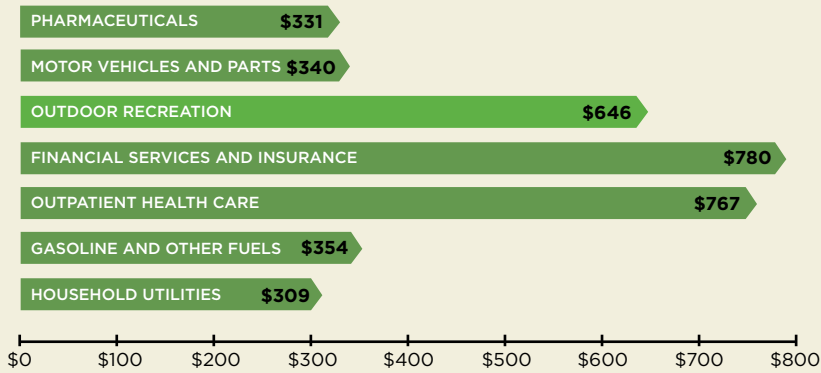
In the spring of 2015, America noted the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery voting rights march, which took place in March 1965. This march was intended to bring attention to the plight of African-Americans who were disenfranchised, particularly in the southern states. The first protest march early that month gained national and worldwide attention when the peaceful marchers were violently attacked by state troopers and private citizens as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Even as the marchers began to flee they were chased and beaten by mounted police. People across America were shocked by the violent images that television cameras caught on what became known as “bloody Sunday.”

Later that same month, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led another march, largely of African-Americans, but joined by people of all races from all across the country. When the peaceful marchers arrived in Montgomery they numbered 25,000 strong. These marches set the stage for the Voting Rights Act that was signed into law later that same year.

The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail follows the marchers’ route, from Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church to the state capital. The trail preserves the route the marchers used, allowing people to learn about this important piece of American history and to commemorate the people and events that took place in 1965.



## ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING, IN BILLIONS<sup>12</sup>



## DIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFITS PROVIDED ANNUALLY BY OUTDOOR RECREATION<sup>13</sup>

|                       | Participants Spending | Jobs Supported | Income          | Federal Taxes  | State & Local Taxes |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Trail Sports</b>   | \$80.6 Billion        | 768,251        | \$38.4 Billion  | \$5.1 Billion  | \$5.6 Billion       |
| <b>Bicycling</b>      | \$81.3 Billion        | 172,146        | \$3.8 Billion   | \$5.2 Billion  | \$5.6 Billion       |
| <b>Camping</b>        | \$143.4 Billion       | 1,356,902      | \$68.5 Billion  | \$9.4 Billion  | \$7.1 Billion       |
| <b>All Activities</b> | \$645.6 Billion       | 6.1 Million    | \$300.3 Billion | \$39.9 Billion | \$39.7 Billion      |

*“It is important both to our economy and to the promotion of healthy lifestyles to encourage people, especially young people, to paddle a river, take a bike trip or a hike, cast a line in a lake, or connect in other ways with nature and the great outdoors.”*

— Interior Secretary Sally Jewell

economy and to the promotion of healthy lifestyles to encourage people, especially young people, to paddle a river, take a bike trip or a hike, cast a line in a lake, or connect in other ways with nature and the great outdoors.” Trails play a fundamental role in driving this economic engine on Interior lands.

The economic importance of hiking was also highlighted in a 2011 USDA Forest Service Recreation Trends study, showing that outdoor recreation participation is expected to grow and by 2060, *day hiking is projected to be the outdoor recreation activity that will demonstrate the most growth in adults (70% to 113%).*<sup>14</sup> In the same study, the total number of days that adults will participate annually in different outdoor recreation activities is projected to increase, ranging from the low end of 8% to 24% for hunting to the upper end of 77% to 116% for *day hiking*.



## Appalachian Trail National Scenic Trail

**2 million** recreation/hiking visits annually  
**\$125—\$168 million** annual spending  
**\$27 million** tourist spending locally  
**\$36 million** local economic spinoffs

2010 Appalachian National Scenic Trail pilot survey Author(s): J.M. Bowker, S.J. Zarnoch, H. Ken Cordell—USDA FS; Neelam Poudyal, Gary Green—UGA; Matt Owens—GA DNR





***“Trails consistently remain the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners.”***

***— National Association of Homebuilders***

Federal, state, and local agencies and partners protect the lands and waters, trails and infrastructure to make these expenditures possible, underscoring the fact that community and backcountry trail projects are valuable investments and productive community and national assets. Some examples include:

- ▶ Over the last eight years, the Bureau of Land Management partnered with a diverse group of organizations and agencies in Redding, CA to develop more than 125 miles of hiking and other non-motorized trails. Thanks to a long-term vision and a culture of cooperation, these trails now provide an urban-wildlands link and high quality recreation opportunities for the local community, along with economic benefits and a quality of life that draws people and businesses to the area.
- ▶ On the 34 mile Virginia Creeper Trail located in southwest Virginia, locals and nonlocals spend more than \$2.5 million a year on outdoor recreation, with \$1.2 million of this spent by nonlocal visitors directly into the local economies.

- ▶ The New York State Trails Council, a trails advisory council comprised of a dozen trail user groups, estimated that trail-related activities account for more than 180 million user days per year.

## **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC VALUE FROM TRAILS**

Parks and trails help move cities and counties ‘up the ladder’ in public perception and desire for quality of life. There is a direct and positive impact of parks, trails and open space on property values which help contribute to nature-focused, economically valuable neighborhoods. A 2008 survey by the National Association of Homebuilders found that “trails consistently remain the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners.”<sup>15</sup> Trails were cited by 57% of prospective home buyers, ahead of public parks and outdoor pools, and “trail availability” outranked 16 other options including security, golf courses, parks, and access to shopping. In Dallas, developers report that there is a 25% premium for properties adjacent to the Katy Trail and in

San Francisco the estimated gross increase in residential property value due to proximity to the trails and open space of Golden Gate National Park is between \$500 million and \$1 billion.

Today, 8 of 10 Americans live in urban environments and we are faced with a new frontier—how can we venture out from our built environment and reconnect with nature? The challenge now is the larger built environment—our neighborhoods, suburbs, cities and countryside. American Hiking Society believes that it makes good economic sense to act now to conserve and restore our nation’s parks and trails and create new ones so that ‘nearby nature’ does not disappear. Trails can help society rebuild the all-important “nature-human connection” that nurtures those natural experiences and that generates the love of nature, of place. Working together we can revitalize our communities by making trails more accessible and relevant to kids and adults across our nation. The potential to reap economic, health and social benefits from individual action is great.

# Fifty Years After LBJ's Speech: The Verdict

In 1965, President Johnson challenged the nation, stating, “We can and should have an abundance of trails for walking, cycling, and horseback riding, in and close to our cities. In the back country we need to copy the great Appalachian Trail in all parts of America, and to make full use of rights-of-way and other public paths.” With this goal in mind the President called for the development of a national system of trails in America.

Fifty years later, have we as a nation fulfilled that vision? In many ways the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” but there remain areas where we have yet to finish the work that was begun.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 1965

One of the clearest achievements that resulted from President Johnson’s Natural Beauty speech was the passage of the National Trails System Act of 1968. This Act not only created the very foundation for future long distance trails, it provided mechanisms to ensure they were well-managed and had a vision for the future.

The Trails Act wasn’t just words, but was supported by both Congress and the American people. In the 1966 report, *Trails for America*, it listed 87,834 miles of trails on federal lands. In 2014 America’s federal landscapes boasted 193,500

miles of trails—more than double the trail miles that existed on federal lands 50 years previously.

And the growth has been just as incredible in America’s state parks and forests. While 14,810 miles of trails existed on state lands in 1966, that figure nearly tripled by 2013, with more than 8,000 trails with a cumulative distance of 42,434 miles.

This abundance of trails has demonstrated new ways to connect communities with each other as well as with surrounding landscapes and businesses, even while improving the home values in the neighborhoods through which they travel.<sup>16</sup> They have helped numerous Americans improve their health by walking and bicycling and for many children they are one of the few opportunities for them to experience nature first hand: viewing wildlife and witnessing the changing landscapes through the seasons.

But more than just federal legislation and miles on the ground, the changes since 1965 reflect the changes in society between people and public resources such as trails. Today, nearly every trail has a group of volunteers or a nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for it. This civic engagement—especially at a time when civic engagement is decreasing in many other sectors—provides evidence of the fact that when the *Trails in America* report in 1966 stated that “expressed desire surpasses

existing opportunities” they were correct. As we have built more trails throughout the nation, the public not only came out to enjoy them by the millions, but also took an active role in maintaining them and being their caretakers and guardians.

## THE TRAIL AHEAD: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As much as Americans have adopted their local trails as their own and seek adventure on far away trails, there remains much to be done. As a nation, we need to finish the work that was started all those years ago, fulfilling the vision of a nation where trails are readily available near where people live, particularly in urban areas, as well as ensure that all people are encouraged to enjoy them and gain the many health and recreation benefits that trails offer.

Over the course of the next 20 years we must continue to work on the following:

### Complete the trails on the ground

Of the 11 National Scenic Trails, there remain significant gaps in more than half of them.<sup>17</sup> The gaps in long distance trails prevent people from enjoying the long distance recreational opportunities the trails were designed to provide. These gaps also prevent local citizens from enjoying that “near-to-home” recreational opportunity which would

benefit them and their community. Congress must ensure funding is available to close these gaps when willing sellers opt to sell privately owned land with the hope that it will continue to be used to benefit the trail. One important fund for some of these land purchases is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, due to be reauthorized by Congress in 2015.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ▶ Fund the purchase of land by willing sellers to complete the National Scenic Trails.
- ▶ Pass the Complete America's Great Trails Act that would provide a tax credit for conservation easements along National Scenic Trails.
- ▶ Reauthorize the Land & Water Conservation Fund.
- ▶ Pass the North Country Trail Re-Route bill.

**Provide more near-to-home opportunities** As the *Trails for America* report published in 1966 recognized as well, there continues to be a need for more trails in urban areas and places where outdoor recreational opportunities are lacking. The creation of new trails in and near these communities, particularly trails that connect to other trails, would provide healthy recreational opportunities to communities that are currently underserved.

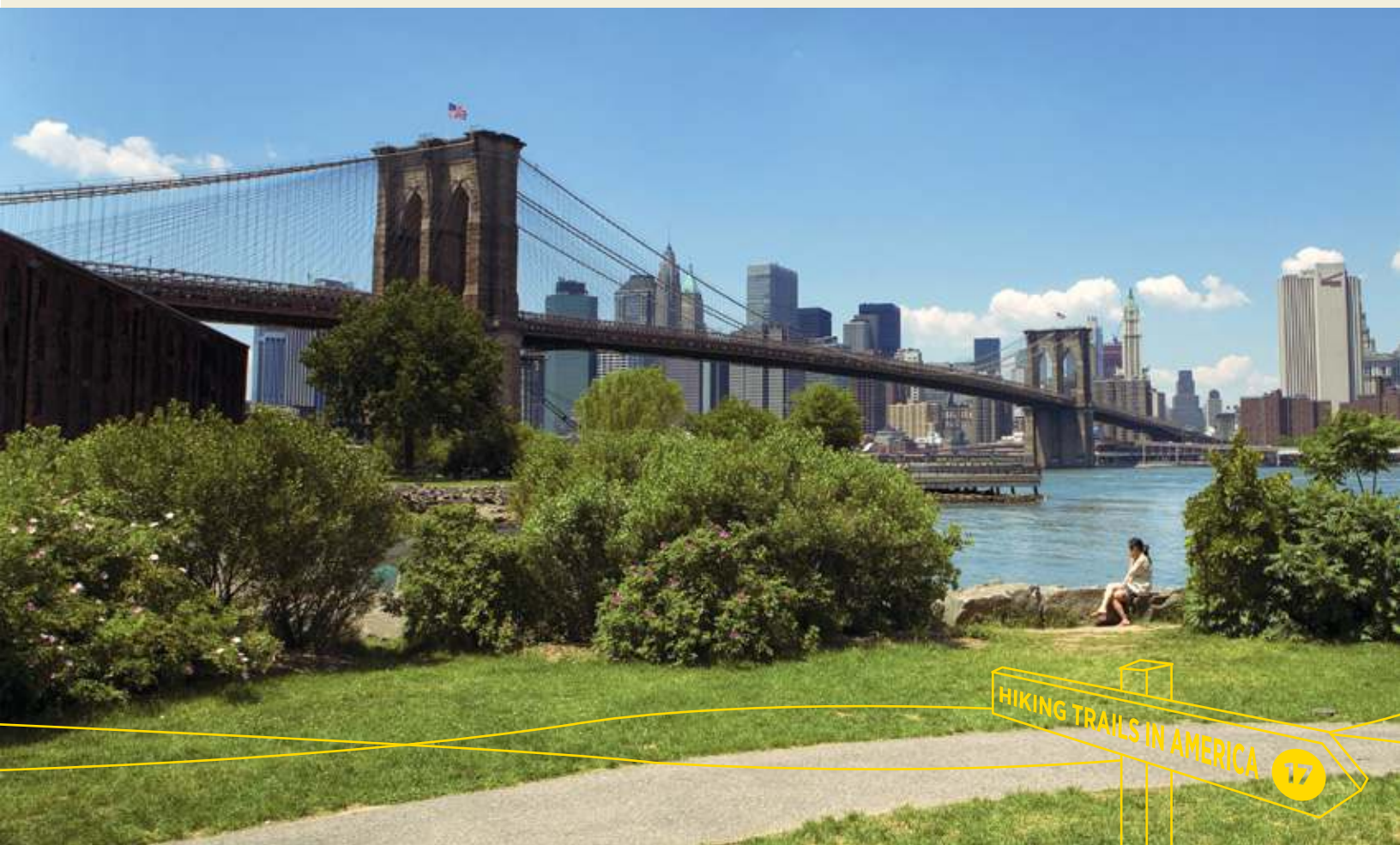
#### **ACTIONS:**

- ▶ Work with state governments to fully utilize available Recreational Trails Program funds.
- ▶ Encourage citizens groups, parks personnel, metropolitan planning organizations, and state bicycle/pedestrian coordinators to work collaboratively to capitalize on opportunities to create new trails in urban and densely suburban areas.

**Create opportunities for a diversity of users** The Outdoor Industry Association's 2013 Participation Study revealed that African-Americans, Latinos, and other minority populations are underrepresented in outdoor recreation. Hiking, as one of the gateway activities for outdoor recreation, has relatively few hurdles to engagement for most Americans, and should be fairly representative of our nation's diversity. Outreach to all underrepresented communities should encourage all people to enjoy America's trails and to partake of the opportunities for fun and fitness that they allow.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ▶ Working with underrepresented communities, establish a strategy to engage, educate, and encourage members of those communities to enjoy the benefits that trails offer.





- ▶ Facilitate urban trail events and activities that will provide an introduction to the trail, its facilities, and the local trail community.

**Increase public awareness of trails**—When many citizens are considering where they can go to enjoy the outdoors they think of traditional parks but fail to make the connection to trails which are essentially linear parks. Because of their linear and long-distance nature, trails are frequently the nearest and best-suited opportunity for recreation for many communities, however these same communities are unaware that the trails are nearby and available. Increased knowledge of trailhead amenities such as parking, maps, and restroom facilities would also serve to encourage those unfamiliar with these opportunities to experience these trails for the first time.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ▶ Pass introduced legislation that would make the Ice Age Trail, North Country Trail, and New England Trail units of the National Park Service.
- ▶ Encourage trail administrators and managers as well as federal and state highway officials to increase road signage near trails.
- ▶ Encourage trail managers, hiking clubs, and others to host National Trails Day® and similar events that will introduce the trail and its facilities to new users.

**Maintain funding that supports trails**—Trails don't require intensive support or infrastructure; they are actually quite low cost facilities to operate and maintain, but they do require on-going upkeep and, for new trail segments, construction costs. While volunteers and public donations do much to help offset this, the government has an important role to play as well. Funds from the Recreational Trails Program

(funded from the sales tax on fuel for recreational fuels) help to build and maintain trails and funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (funded from royalties on off-shore energy exploration) fund some willing seller land purchases. Additionally, general funding to the land management agencies through the normal Congressional appropriations process should also be thoughtfully funded to ensure that these public resources reach maximum public benefit.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ▶ Adequately fund through the regular appropriations process America's land management agencies through the US Department of the Interior and the US Department of Agriculture.
- ▶ Fund the Land & Water Conservation Fund at its full funding level of \$900 million.
- ▶ Ensure the Recreational Trails Program is included in future transportation bills.

# Conclusion

Hiking trails in America have proven to be tremendously popular and beneficial to individuals and to the nation as a whole. This intentional system of trails forged decades ago brings not just health benefits, a connection to nature, and opportunities for recreation, but real, measurable financial benefits—building stronger communities and a stronger America.

However, we cannot rest on our accomplishments as much remains to be done: trails that were

begun must be completed, a new generation of trail stewards must be fostered, and we must continue to invest in the same trails that put new muscle into our economy.

At the end of the day, we know this is true: Americans do and will continue to follow in the footsteps of Lewis & Clark, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir. They will continue to seek outdoor adventure, literally blazing new trails both nearby and far from home. They will seek to live a healthier life and

establish a closer connection to the natural world.

*If we build the trail, the American people will come. And they will thrive. And they will prosper. And they will pass on a legacy worthy of posterity.*



**American Hiking Society's National Trails Day®**

American Hiking Society's National Trails Day® (NTD) is the nation's largest celebration of America's trails and all that trails offer. This annual celebration gets thousands of Americans out onto nearby trails, engaged in outdoor recreation, and pitching in on volunteer efforts that benefit our trails and parks.

Since 1993, National Trails Day has been celebrated every year on the first Saturday of June and has grown into one of America's largest, community-based, outdoor initiatives. Each year NTD features a variety of outdoor activities designed to promote and celebrate the importance of trails in the United

States; activities such as: hiking, biking, paddling, horseback riding, trail running, and bird watching.

Growth in participation among event organizers and participants can be traced to a number of factors, including the inclusivity of events, few barriers to participation, and the uniqueness of each event. Trail clubs, outdoors groups, and land management agencies have capitalized on National Trails Day as a platform to introduce new users to their trails as well as introduce the public to outdoor activities such as rock climbing and hiking. Conservancies and service-oriented organizations find National Trails Day to be an excellent recruitment tool

for expanding their volunteer- and member-bases.

In 2014, 144,000 Americans participated in over 2,100 trail events across all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. Thousands of hosts offered activities for participants to enjoy, including guided backcountry hikes, interpretive urban hikes, mountain bike rides, and volunteer stewardship projects. Some people discovered trails near their homes that they didn't know were there. Others learned about how to hike safely or about orienteering from local experts, while still others used the day to volunteer and give back to the trails and parks they've been enjoying all along.

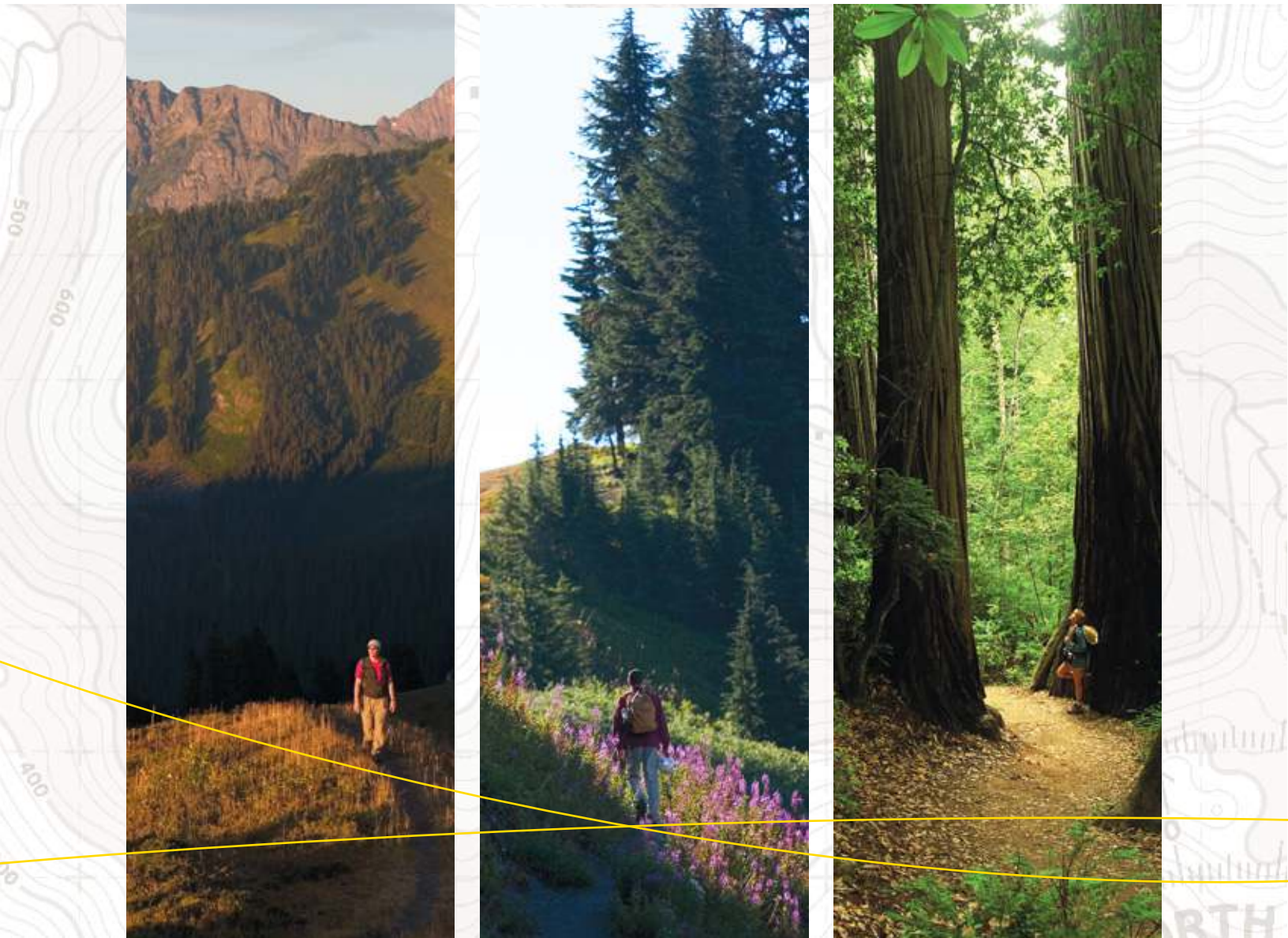




Photo by Mark Going

## American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund

American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund is the only privately funded, national grants program dedicated solely to building and protecting hiking trails. Created in response to the growing backlog of trail maintenance projects, the National Trails Fund has helped hundreds of grassroots organizations acquire the resources needed to protect America's cherished hiking trails. To date, American Hiking Society has funded 192 trail projects by awarding over \$588,000 in National Trails Fund grants.

## 2015 NATIONAL TRAILS FUND GRANT WINNERS

### Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Colorado

#### NTF Award: \$2,500

Beaver Brook Trail is a historic 8.65-mile hiking trail that begins just north of Genesee, west of Denver. VOC will undertake a one day 100-120 volunteer project to build 3,000 feet of new hiking trail from a new Beaver Brook Trailhead/ parking area to the existing trail system. This project will significantly improve regional hiking trail connections in the Front Range area directly west of the Denver Metro area. The new trailhead will

offer more recreational access to the park and will heighten awareness and use of the historic Beaver Brook Trail.

### Ice Age Trail Alliance, Wisconsin

#### NTF AWARD: \$3,600

The Ice Age Trail Alliance will conduct three large-scale volunteer events at two separate locations resulting in the construction of over a mile of sustainable side-hill trail through glacial terrain and build 200 feet of elevated

boardwalk through a wet area in Chequamegon National Forest. This project creates a new hiking opportunity by constructing and opening a new section of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail for public use near Rib Lake. The trail reroute design minimizes wetland impacts by eliminating trampled vegetation and preventing soil erosion.

### Wilmington Trail Club, Delaware

#### NTF AWARD: \$2,000

This project is a continuation of an

effort initiated in 2013 to construct a 4 mile loop trail from the Delaware White Clay Creek State Park (WCCSP) Nature Center to the Mason-Dixon Tri-State Marker and return to Arc Corner Road to connect to existing trails in the WCCSP.

There are a myriad of social trails that have been established in this area as people wander through the area without a well-defined trail. The new trail will be routed around portions of the existing social trail that drain poorly, cross streams at oxbow bends, or are built on fall lines and will focus traffic onto a single sustainable trail.

**Montana Wilderness Association, Montana**

**NTF AWARD: \$2,785**

**GALEN ROWELL AWARD**

Montana Wilderness Association's Continental Divide Trail Montana program is the lead steward of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail's northernmost 980 miles. This section from Yellowstone to Glacier boasts some of the most scenic hiking and the best-preserved ecosystems along the CDNST. However, only 60% of this section is complete and many of the

existing trails need repairs. This grant will help provide volunteers with tools and equipment to use on 14 trail projects to improve trail sections of particular need.

**Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Nevada**

**NTF AWARD: \$4,000**

The Backcountry Trail Restoration Project aims to address critical maintenance needs on remote sections of the Tahoe Rim Trail. The two destinations for these projects are some of the most highly impacted areas on the Tahoe Rim Trail: Armstrong Pass and in the Desolation Wilderness, the most visited wilderness area in the country. Work projects will address stream crossings and failing rock retaining structures. It will also reduce run off from the trail, which is vitally important in the Lake Tahoe Basin Watershed where lake clarity and sediment run off are critical issues.

**Sheltowee Trace Association, Kentucky**

**NTF AWARD: \$3,600**

Sheltowee Trace Association (STA) will construct two sets of pres-sure-treated wooden stairs as part

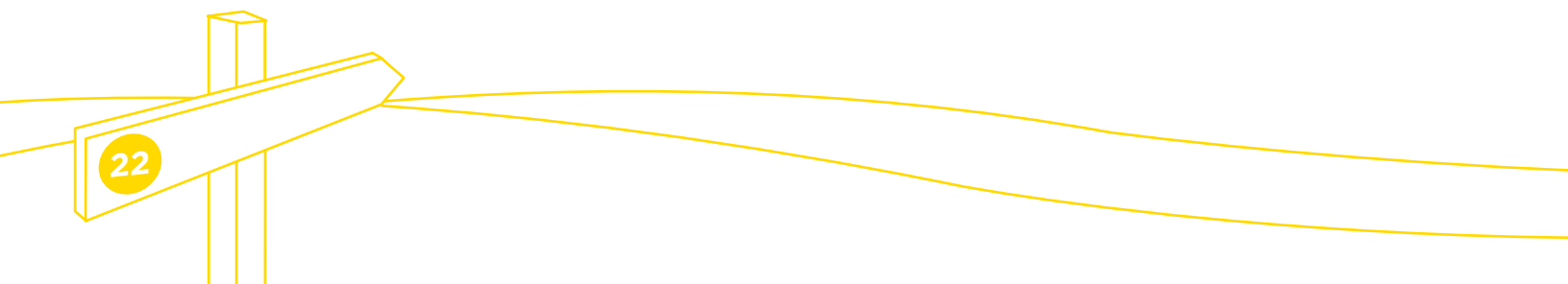
of the trails at Van Hook Falls (near London, KY) and at Mill Branch. STA will also install directional signs at pivotal trail crossings as well as an observation platform overlooking the waterfall. Enhancements to the footpath will minimize the steepness of the exposed grade, stabilizing its sloped ascent and improving its safety while restricting traffic to a set route, thereby preserving the natural contour and reducing erosion by disturbing the land as little as possible.

**Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Colorado**

**NTF AWARD: \$2,755**

The Cathedral Lake/Electric Pass, in the Maroon-Snowmass Wilderness, is a popular and heavily used trail, affording hikers spectacular scenery as it traverses the fragile alpine environment. This three-day project will utilize volunteers to reconstruct, repair, and restore damaged sections of this trail 4 to 5 miles in from the trailhead. Long term preservation of the resources, sustainability of the trail, and maintaining public access to this landscape are the top goals of the project.

*National Trails Fund has helped hundreds of grassroots organizations acquire the resources needed to protect America's cherished hiking trails.*







*While land conservation and preservation are important in their own right, it is through America's system of trails that the American people actually get to access and experience these places—whether it's a scenic National Park or an urban trail that wanders along a riverfront.*

**CONTRIBUTIONS SUSTAINING THE NATIONAL & HISTORIC TRAILS  
MADE BY PARTNER TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS**

|      | <b>Volunteer Hours</b> | <b>Est. Value of Volunteer Labor</b> | <b>Financial Contributions</b> | <b>Total \$ Value</b> |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1995 | 369,941                | \$4,262,093                          | \$2,754,934                    | \$7,017,027           |
| 1996 | 473,066                | \$4,467,794                          | \$4,071,409                    | \$8,539,203           |
| 1997 | 439,299                | \$5,686,028                          | \$4,243,943                    | \$9,929,971           |
| 1998 | 498,702                | \$6,909,157                          | \$4,403,802                    | \$11,312,959          |
| 1999 | 553,905                | \$7,422,326                          | \$5,780,340                    | \$13,202,666          |
| 2000 | 593,392                | \$8,799,993                          | \$6,638,313                    | \$15,438,306          |
| 2001 | 621,615                | \$9,566,652                          | \$6,652,079                    | \$16,218,731          |
| 2002 | 662,429                | \$10,631,985                         | \$6,850,214                    | \$17,482,199          |
| 2003 | 648,548                | \$10,726,994                         | \$6,997,803                    | \$17,724,797          |
| 2004 | 668,996                | \$11,801,091                         | \$6,449,719                    | \$18,250,810          |
| 2005 | 723,191                | \$13,046,366                         | \$7,275,556                    | \$20,321,922          |
| 2006 | 687,904                | \$12,409,472                         | \$7,934,074                    | \$20,343,546          |
| 2007 | 720,935                | \$13,540,396                         | \$8,064,293                    | \$21,604,689          |
| 2008 | 771,993                | \$15,631,643                         | \$9,108,338                    | \$24,739,981          |
| 2009 | 907,380                | \$18,601,296                         | \$8,823,248                    | \$27,424,544          |
| 2010 | 1,115,559              | \$24,366,484                         | \$12,486,240                   | \$36,852,724          |
| 2011 | 1,141,866              | \$24,390,258                         | \$8,714,610                    | \$33,104,868          |
| 2012 | 1,185,375              | \$26,244,202                         | \$7,509,777                    | \$33,753,979          |
| 2013 | 1,144,407              | \$25,337,171                         | \$10,685,751                   | \$36,022,922          |
| 2014 | 1,053,896              | \$23,765,355                         | \$12,116,029                   | \$35,881,384          |

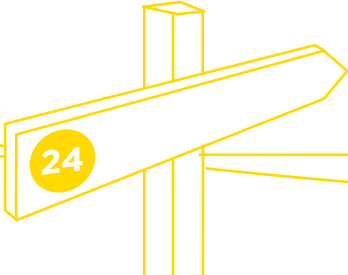



*Photo by Mark Going*

Dollar values not adjusted for inflation.  
Courtesy of the Partnership for the National Trails System

**ENDNOTES**

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**AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY** is grateful to the following organizations that offered their assistance and information for this report:

- National Association of State Park Directors
- National Park Service
- Outdoor Foundation
- Outdoor Industry Association
- Partnership for the National Trails System
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY** also thanks its Board of Directors, especially:

- Larry Luxenberg
- Ders Anderson
- Laura Belleville
- Jennifer Chambers
- Tom Johnson
- Dennis Lewon



**FOUNDED IN 1976, AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY** is the only national organization that promotes and protects foot trails, their surrounding natural areas, and the hiking experience. As the national voice for hikers, American Hiking Society recognizes that foot trails and hiking are essential to connect people with nature, offer access to public lands, conserve open space, provide biological corridors for diverse plants and wildlife, and for the health of Americans and our natural environment. We represent millions of hikers who are committed to beautiful places to hike and believe that the preservation of hiking trails and their environments is important and a worthwhile legacy to leave future generations.


American Hiking Society champions conservation issues, builds public and private partnerships, supports volunteer stewardship, and provides critical resources to help plan, fund, and develop trails. We also provide resources to the public about how and where to hike and are committed to increasing the participation and enjoyment of hiking by everyone.



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