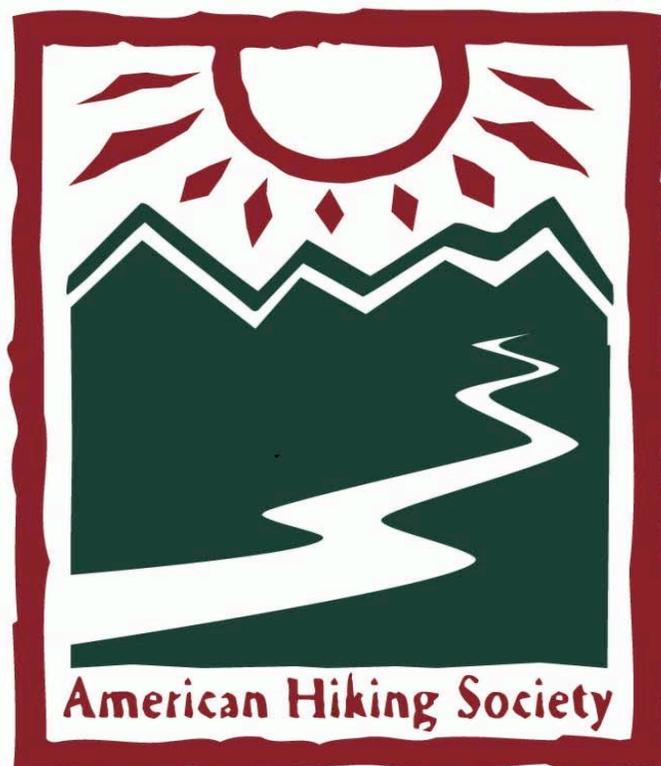


# National Trails Day<sup>®</sup> Event Organizer's Manual

## National Trails Day<sup>®</sup>



**June 4, 2005**

**"Take the Path to a Healthier You"**



1422 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-565-6704  
NTD@AmericanHiking.org  
[www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org)



Dear NTD Event Organizer,

National Trails Day® is becoming an annual regular event on calendars across the nation. American Hiking Society thanks **YOU** for bringing the awareness of trails to millions of people on NTD, making this the largest and most influential trails celebration in the nation. NTD is not only an opportunity to celebrate trails and thank trail maintainers and volunteers, but also to learn about and enjoy the many health benefits more than 200,000 miles of trails provide us.

With serious health epidemics plaguing our nation, our theme this year, “*Take the Path to a Healthier You,*” highlights the importance trails have in helping us improve and maintain our health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is writing a pamphlet on the health benefits of trails, which will be available for distribution on National Trails Day, for the third year in a row.

### ***Start Planning Your Event Today***

Whether it is a short day hike, a weekend full of trail related activities, or months of trail work with a celebration on National Trails Day, American Hiking Society will help you all along the way! This *Event Organizer's Manual* has been useful for many years with its planning and organizing tips, timelines, publicity information, fundraising pointers, and more.

### ***Register Your Event***

Starting in January 2005, visit the National Trails Day® web site at: [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org) to register your event in less than 5 minutes. All registered events will receive three NTD posters, a NTD banner, and a NTD window cling – **FREE!** (NOTE: Register your event even if you do not want it posted on our web site – we will not post it, but you will still receive NTD freebies.) With more than 187,000 people visiting the NTD web site in 2004, people all across the nation found events to attend. National Trails Day® 2004 generated 50 million media impressions. Articles appeared in major newspapers such as *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Baltimore Sun*; magazines such as *Backpacker*, *Prevention*, *Health*, and *Cooking Light*; and web sites such as *Newsday.com*, *Budweiser.com*, *Backpacker.com*, *Prevention.com*, *Recreation.gov*, *Volunteer.gov*, *Geocaching.com*, *Utah.com*, and many state park sites and all federal agency partner's web sites.

### ***Promote Your Event***

T-shirts, posters, banners and other promotional items will be available for purchase on the web site in January 2005. Download informative Fact Sheets about trails from NTD's web site, [www.NationalTrailsDay.org](http://www.NationalTrailsDay.org), for great handouts for your event.

I look forward to hearing about your event and making National Trails Day® 2005 the most successful yet! Please feel free to contact me at 1-800-972-8608 x208 or at [ILevin@AmericanHiking.org](mailto:ILevin@AmericanHiking.org) with any questions.

Happy Trails,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan Levin'.

Ivan Levin

National Trails Day® Coordinator

American Hiking Society is a national recreation-based conservation organization, whose members include hikers and hiking organizations. AHS organizes National Trails Day® in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Corporate support is provided by the following American Hiking Society sponsors: Adventure Medical Kits, *Backpacker*, Eastern Mountain Sports, Merrell, REI, Royal Robbins, and Thorlos.

**[www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org)**

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**National  
Trails Day®**



**June 4, 2005**

**“Take the Path to a  
Healthier You”**

## Chapter 1: Frequently Asked Questions

### What?

National Trails Day® (NTD), a day of celebration at thousands of events nationwide, was created to:

- Promote public awareness of and appreciation for America's trails and the people who build and maintain them.
- Promote the health benefits of trails.
- Build partnerships among trail groups, businesses, and public land managers.
- Encourage cooperative efforts among the various trail users, including: hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, walkers, boaters, and others.

### When?

The 'official' date of National Trails Day® is the first Saturday in June, which falls on June 4, 2005. However, any date that fits your group's schedule is fine. Another option is for your event to be a part of a week or even a season of trail events building up to, or following, NTD.

### Why?

Without the support of volunteers, land managing agencies, and outdoor-minded businesses our trails would disappear. America's 200,000 miles of trails allow us access to the natural world for exercise, study, photography, camping, relaxing or solitude. Trails take us to good physical and mental health by giving us fresh air, getting our hearts pumping, and allowing us the chance to get away from our daily challenges and stresses. Trails provide gentle to strenuous workouts, depending on where you want to go and what you want to do.

National Trails Day® is the only nationwide trails celebration. At events in every state, Puerto Rico, Canada, the Virgin Islands, and Guam, NTD brings together trails enthusiasts to participate in educational exhibits, trail dedications, health fairs, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail work projects.

The 2002 Outdoor Industry Association's annual Outdoor Recreation Participation Study for the US, reports that 67.6% of all Americans 16 and older (147 million people) participate in at least one of the 22 outdoor activities they track - which includes: 73.3 million hiking; 14.1million backpacking; 17.6 million camping; and 13.5 million cross country skiing. OIA also reports 77.3%, or 168.1 million, walk for exercise.

### How?

For those who want to attend National Trails Day®, search for a local event at [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org), contact a local trail club (search on AHS web site), or contact American Hiking Society's National Trails Day® Coordinator, Ivan Levin, at 1-800-972-8608 x208 or [NTD@AmericanHiking.org](mailto:NTD@AmericanHiking.org).

### Who?

Since 1993, National Trails Day® has grown to nearly a million participants at over 2,000 events nationwide. NTD is now a permanent fixture on calendars of trail clubs, outdoor businesses and government agencies nationwide.

National Trails Day® is organized by American Hiking Society, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing, protecting and maintaining America's foot trails. Assistance comes from these American Hiking Society' sponsors: Adventure Medical Kits, *Backpacker*, Eastern Mountain Sports, Merrell, REI, Royal Robins, and Thorlos. Additional Federal Agency support comes from: Bureau of Land Management, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Chapter 2: Health Benefits of Trails

*"Take the Path to a Healthier You"* is our theme for NTD 2005. Our goal is to promote the many health benefits of trails. With obesity rates skyrocketing across the nation, trails are a convenient, enjoyable way to help curb this trend. When planning your event, team up with health care professionals. They will bring beneficial information and statistics on physical activity plus they can reach new audiences that might not otherwise attend a trail event.

Just 30 minutes of physical activity a day brings a range of health benefits, reducing risks for diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and respiratory ailments as well as stress and depression. Whether it is an easy stroll around the office building or an energetic mountain climb, these types of activities make your body physically and mentally stronger and more capable of fighting diseases. People who have not been physically active should check with their primary care physician before starting an exercise program. Walking and hiking are low impact, so they are very good activities for a routine exercise program.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has studied the effects of physical activity on health and disease. Their findings include:

### **LOSING EXCESS POUNDS**

Physical activity, such as hiking, is an excellent way to lose excess pounds and improve your health. Just 30 minutes of exercise a day, either at one time or in three, 10-minute sessions, will produce beneficial weight loss. When hiking a comfortable 2-MPH, a person weighing 150 pounds will burn 240 calories in one hour on average.

### **CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES**

Regular physical activity has proven to be beneficial in preventing or delaying the development of high blood pressure. Exercise also reduces blood pressure in people with hypertension. By maintaining a regular walking routine, the risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in general and of coronary heart disease mortality in particular are decreased.

### **CANCER**

Regular physical activity is associated with a decreased risk of colon cancer.

### **NON-INSULIN-DEPENDENT DIABETES MELLITUS**

Regular physical activity lowers the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

### **OSTEOARTHRITIS**

To maintain normal muscle strength, joint structure, and joint function, regular exercise is necessary. Research shows that physical activity decreases pain, improves function and delays disability. In addition, research studies suggest that maintaining an ideal body weight and avoiding joint injuries reduces the risk of developing arthritis and may decrease disease progression. Walking can be a gentle activity, with little stress on the joints.

### **HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE**

Physical activity appears to improve health-related quality of life by enhancing psychological well-being and by improving physical functioning in persons compromised by poor health. Most musculoskeletal injuries related to physical activity are believed to be preventable by gradually working up to a desired level of activity. Starting an exercise program with gentle walking, gradually increasing the distance and amount of exertion is an excellent, low impact method of getting into a routine exercise program.

**PREVENTING HEART DISEASE, DECREASING HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE)**

Regular physical activity prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure, and exercise reduces blood pressure in people with hypertension. Hypertension, more commonly known as high blood pressure, plagues millions of Americans. Research has shown that regular exercise, such as walking, lowers systolic and diastolic blood pressure that correlates with blood pressure improvement.

**IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH**

Depression and stress are common medical problems in today's world. Thanks to research on the benefits of walking, however, many people who suffer from these ailments have found a simpler and much less expensive way to feel better—walking every day. Studies have shown that physical activity appears to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood. Regular physical activity may reduce the risk of developing depression.

**SLOWING THE AGING PROCESS**

Research shows that what we once accepted as a natural part of growing older—a decline in physical activity and strength—does not have to accompany aging. Aging doesn't decrease the body's ability to be physically active and healthy, but rather leading an inactive and unhealthy lifestyle accelerates the aging process!

**PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS**

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that affects mostly older women who lack sufficient amounts of calcium. Hiking and walking help reverse the negative effects of osteoporosis by increasing the bone density and slowing the rate of calcium loss, thus strengthening the bones and decreasing their susceptibility to break. Weight-bearing physical activity, such as walking, is essential for normal skeletal development during childhood and adolescence and for achieving and maintaining peak bone mass in young adults. Physical exercise is also crucial as we age to help maintain a strong bone structure.

**IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE AIR WE BREATHE**

Transportation is the largest single source of air pollution in the United States. Walking can replace short-distance motor-vehicle trips, which are the least fuel-efficient and generate the most pollution per mile traveled.

**RELIEVING BACK PAIN**

According to the Mayo Clinic, regular exercise is your most potent weapon against back problems. It can increase your aerobic capacity, improve your overall fitness, and help you shed the excess pounds that stress your back.

**HEALTHY HABITS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE**

Another powerful reason to get out on a trail doesn't involve a specific disease or a single facet of life. Rather it *is* life. Each time you go outside and walk, as long as you stay within your capabilities, you will come home feeling better than you did when you left. Your body will feel better, your head will feel clearer, and your stress level will have decreased. The result? You'll want to hike again! As you notice improvements in your body and state of mind, you may also want to start eating healthy foods. With each hike you will feel better, which will encourage you to continue your new healthy habits.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a pamphlet, *Trails for Health*, for National Trails Day last year, which will be updated for 2005. You may download a copy from the American Hiking Society web site at: [www.AmericanHiking.org/news/fact.html](http://www.AmericanHiking.org/news/fact.html). Several American Hiking Fact Sheets are found at this site and may be downloaded to print off as many copies as needed for handouts.

***Health Benefits of Trails, continued***

**Notes:**

## Chapter 3: Planning Your Event

In addition to getting people outside to enjoy trails, National Trails Day® events raise awareness of trails and inform the public of the need to protect and maintain trail corridors. It is the perfect springboard for local trail initiatives and a chance to recognize the groups, public agencies and individual leaders who are making a difference. Your event should be used as a tool to build alliances and to plan for the future. Specifically, the four primary goals are to:

- Raise awareness of trails and the need to help conserve them.
- Raise awareness of the health benefits of trails and how they can improve the quality of your life.
- Build partnerships and alliances that work together beyond National Trails Day®.
- Broaden the constituency for trails.

Planning a National Trails Day® event involves the following three steps:

1. Build partnerships with trail and conservation organizations, health professionals, public land agencies, and outdoor retailers and manufacturers.
2. Identify and plan your event.
3. Register your event at [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org).

### 1. Build your partnerships (also see Chapter 4)

The more people and organizations involved in your National Trails Day® event, the more success you will have. Chances are, whether you are a trail manager or a nonprofit group, you have already worked with quite a few different people and organizations. However, if you haven't, now is the time to broaden your trail "family." The following list illustrates potential groups that would be beneficial to your NTD event:

Health Professionals  
Schools  
Historical Societies  
Hospitals  
Transportation Planners  
Youth Groups  
Plant, Bird, and Animal Groups

Natural History Educators  
Businesses  
Artists  
Environmental Organizations  
Senior Citizen Groups  
Fitness Programs  
Nutritionists  
Other Community-based organizations or associations

### 2. Identify and plan your event (also see Chapter 5)

Identifying your event and careful planning are the two crucial steps that will determine the success of your event.

*Set your goals, and be as precise as possible.*

Your goal may be as simple as "Introduce 100 new people to the trail and its health benefits" or "raise \$100." It may be a complex mixture that includes fundraising, building public support, extending the trail, and/or preventing a development project that could adversely affect your trail. Whatever the goal(s), be clear and explicit. Make sure there is a common goal among the participating groups.

*Plan your event. Select when and where you should host it.*

In most cases, the best place for you to hold your event is at an easily accessible trail entrance. For larger events try to select a spot that has enough open space to set up risers and a podium for the "official" part of your program. Make sure there is room to accommodate a big crowd; this will present an opportunity for clearer, higher quality photographs and TV footage. Work with the appropriate land managing agency or other entity with jurisdiction for the trail to coordinate the event and obtain any necessary permits.

### ***Planning Your Event, continued***

Although National Trails Day® is officially the first Saturday in June, you don't have to schedule your event on this day. There may be other factors that make another day better for you, such as a scheduled event that will lure away some of your participants or extreme weather conditions. If so, pick the day and time that is best for you – even if it is not in June.

You may have a long-term event, such as building a portion of trail that could take one day a month for several months. Each trip may be listed as an NTD event, with a big celebration and thanks to all of the volunteers on NTD.

### **3. Register Your Event at [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org)**

Log on to your computer at [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org), and go to the National Trails Day page to register your event in less than five minutes. Don't worry if you do not have all the details together - you can always submit changes to your event listing. All registered events will receive two posters, one banner, an NTD window cling, and other goodies - FREE!

By letting American Hiking know about your event, we can inform the media, sponsors, and other trails enthusiasts about events in their area. Last year more than 187,000 people visited the American Hiking Society's web site to find a National Trails Day® event. National Trails Day® 2004 generated 50 million media impressions. Articles were in major newspapers such as *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and all major Connecticut newspapers; magazines such as *Backpacker*, *Prevention*, *Health*, and *Cooking Light*; and web sites such as *Newsday.com*, *Budweiser.com*, *Backpacker.com*, *Prevention.com*, *Recreation.gov*, *Volunteer.gov*, *Geocaching.com*, *Utah.com*, all Oregon State Park sites and all federal agency partner web sites.

Register your event even if you do not want it publicized. By doing so you will still receive the posters and banner, but your event will not appear on our website. You will also receive e-mails with updates on NTD and suggestions for your event.

### **Notes:**

## Chapter 4: Fundraising - Partnerships and Sponsors

In order for your National Trails Day® event to be successful, you may need to raise money through sponsorships and partnership with other groups for support. Finding good partnerships and sponsors can be a challenge. For this reason, it's best to think creatively, plan thoroughly, and cast a wide net.

### Partnerships

An alliance with a local health organization – especially those that focus on diseases that can be controlled or prevented with physical exercise; cooperation with youth groups such as Scout Troops and 4-H; weight watching groups; senior organizations; land trusts and conservation groups; retailers – especially our national sponsors and your local outdoor retailers; or working with other trail groups in your area are different examples of partnerships. As you plan your event, you may discover that other organizations in your area are also hosting an NTD festival; it may be beneficial to combine your efforts into one, large unified event, although individual events can still be registered on our web site.

American Hiking has the resources to help you with your partnerships. Log on to American Hiking's website: [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org) and follow the links to "Alliance of Hiking Organizations" to find a list of American Hiking Society member hiking groups in your area.

### Sponsors

Sponsors, through beneficial service and funding provisions, can maximize the potential of your NTD event. Benefits you provide your sponsors include increased community appreciation, media publicity, and corporate recognition. The options are limitless for sponsors. Remember that any business or agency could be a potential sponsor - think creatively.

Some tips for approaching potential sponsors:

1. Know what you want from them and ask for it directly. This can be achieved through conversation, e-mail, or by letter, written in plain, straightforward language. Find out the best way to communicate with each sponsor before approaching them.
2. Explain what a potential sponsor receives in exchange for its support. For example, detail a bullet list of expected attendance, any "Sponsor ID" (logo placements, mentions of their support, banners hung, etc.), and anticipated or guaranteed media exposure.
3. Speak to your target audience. For example, when talking to a businessperson, speak in marketing terms; explain how they will receive "exposure," reach out to a "focused market of committed outdoors people," receive "cause-related marketing opportunities," and be seen by the community as a "good corporate citizen." If you have any demographics for attendees, present those statistics at this time.
4. Keep in mind you may be just one of many asking for help. If you appear to have your "stuff together," it might just make all the difference in who they choose to work with.
5. Under-promise and over-deliver. When providing exposure for sponsors deliver a little more than what you promised. This will be a pleasant surprise for them and help create a strong foundation to expand upon your relationship in the future and for next year's NTD event.
6. Be creative. Remember that various local businesses can provide invaluable in-kind support as well; this is particularly true for the local media. Some examples:
  - Community media (print, radio, even TV) to cover your event.
  - Health professionals to donate health screening services.
  - Print shops to design and print flyers, signage, or advertisements.
  - Car dealers to provide vehicles to shuttle volunteers or attendees to various trailheads.

### ***Fundraising, continued***

- Local cafes, delis, or grocers to donate food and beverages. See if any of them can provide healthy foods for people to try.
- Outdoor retail and hardware stores can give clinics, provide services (blister kits, gear repairs, tool maintenance, etc.), or donate gear for a fund-raising raffle.

### **Thanking Partners and Sponsors**

Be sure to thank your sponsors and partners before, during and after your event: in print on flyers, posters and handouts; in the media before and after the event; verbally during the event; and a thank you note. It also serves as a great help to American Hiking when you recognize National Sponsors as well - a written note, or an email sent through their website, shows your gratitude and lets them know their national support is appreciated by dedicated trail users and event hosts. A sponsor that is supportive one year will be more willing to participate in future years when given a lot of acknowledgement and appreciation.

### **Notes:**

## Chapter 5: Building Your National Trails Day® Event

When planning your NTD event, remember that how prepared you are will determine its success, level of media coverage, and support/participation from the community. The more detailed and explicit your event preparation, the more successful it will be. And by being creative, you can receive more attention.

Because local groups host National Trails Day® events, the day's activities are a reflection of the local conditions, opportunities and solutions. These community events combine a number of activities, but consider the following:

- Host an all-day "trails fair" complete with trail user booths from hiking to biking to horseback riding to kayaking. Include demonstrations, food, music, tours to nearby trails, and special programs such as education about wildlife.
- Include health professionals who can do health screenings and discuss the health benefits of physical exercise gained from using trails.
- Celebrate the diversity and unity among trail users. Include a day hike, a youth nature walk, an equestrian and/or bike ride, a workday on the trail, or a backpacking event.
- Hold an annual walk-a-thon to raise funds for a specific trail.
- Dedicate a portion of a trail in the evening and hold a moonlight walk. Include music, entertainment, food and refreshments.
- Involve youth in setting up the event and have special activities for them.
- Lead a recreational hike, ride, or paddle.
- Create a trail fundraiser or membership drive.
- Develop a dedication, welcome, or other ceremony.
- Nominate an American Hiking Society Volunteer of the Year and thank them at the event for all of their valuable help. If they are a winner, present them with their plaque and award from American Hiking. (For more information and a nomination form visit the American Hiking web site at: [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org).)

### Plan

Creating a tentative timeline and job structure for your NTD event will help keep it running on schedule. By establishing these beforehand, you will be better prepared for your event and have a clearer picture of when certain elements must be completed. It will also aid in targeting specific goals and tasks for different workers and volunteers involved in the event.

### Timeline

Circulate a clearly written timeline with day-by-day deadlines to all those involved in the organization of your NTD event. It may also be beneficial to establish external deadlines, such as a printer's schedule or the need to secure a permit by a certain time, to keep your group on target.

1. Anticipate all possible disruptions of the event: rain, speakers who don't show up, etc. Add disaster contingency plans to the task list (e.g., know where you can get a tent in the event of rain or backup volunteers in the case of illness).

### ***Building Your NTD Event, continued***

2. Consider your audience. The design, location, date, time and duration of your event will affect the audience you attract. In addition, the types of promotion and media outlets you use will also influence the amount of participants.
3. This timeline is based on a four-month plan. It's possible to organize an event in less time, although it may be difficult. Initial organizing tasks should be completed in March and April so that a more intense effort can begin in May.

First, register your event on the American Hiking NTD web site: [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org). Even if your event is not open to the public, by registering you will receive a banner, three posters, an NTD window cling, and more! But, your event will not be published on our web site.

#### **Notes:**

**Building Your NTD Event, continued**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed</b>
February	Order Promotional items from American Hiking Society		
	Hold initial organizing meeting		
	Secure commitments from participating organizations		
	Hire or appoint event coordinator		
	Select the date, time, duration of the event, and secure a site		
March	Design the overall event plan and budget		
	Register your event at <a href="http://www.AmericanHiking.org">www.AmericanHiking.org</a>		
	Begin fundraising for the event		
	Begin scheduling speakers and entertainment		
	Acquire necessary permits and insurance		
	Establish media plan and press list		
	Involve local radio station as sponsor		
	Submit Volunteer of the Year Application January 1 – March 31 – see American Hiking’s web site for more information: <a href="http://www.AmericanHiking.org">www.AmericanHiking.org</a> (Due April 1)		
April	Write first press release announcing event		
	Invite VIP’s		
	Send out promotional mailing to potential participants		
	Contact press for interviews, feature stories and show appearances		
	Prepare logistics instructions for all exhibitors so that they know everything they need to know about setting up for your event		
May	Distribute posters and flyers		
	Follow-up with press efforts		
	Follow-up on all invitations		
	Send out public service announcements and announcements to community calendars		
3 weeks before	Schedule volunteer crews (security, clean up, etc.)		
	Confirm all guest speakers		
	Reserve risers for stage and sound equipment		
	Arrange for banners, background music and other attractions at site		
2 weeks before	Keep up with Press work		
1 week out	Confirm volunteers, committees, vendors, exhibitors		
	Double check publicity progress and re-leaflet poster as necessary		
	Notify police, local rescue squad, and other organizations who have a “need to know.”		
Day of event	Confirm volunteers, committees, vendors, exhibitors		

## **Job Descriptions**

All the jobs needed for your event must be defined and assigned. Try to match jobs to each volunteer's strength and interests. Help can come from anywhere, but how effective it is depends on what you make of it. Below are three basic classifications that you can use as guidelines for assigning jobs.

### **Coordinator**

The coordinator is the person with the most responsibility, dealing directly with American Hiking and your partners. Their tasks include registering your event, drawing up a budget, recruiting volunteers, calling meetings, and overseeing logistics and publicity.

### **Media Committee**

Committee members should be selected as soon as possible to develop a media strategy and contact the local media establishments. Their work should focus on lining up interviews and appearances, writing press releases, and placing public service announcements. For suggestions on working with the media and sample press releases visit the American Hiking NTD web site: [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org).

### **Logistics Committee**

The bulk of the administrative work falls in the lap of the Logistics Committee; responsibilities include pre-event preparations, event-day logistics, and post-event cleanup. As soon as this committee is established, pre-event preparations should take place, such as:

- securing necessary permits
- checking the need for liability insurance
- planning the event layout
- coordinating exhibitors
- arranging equipment
- setting up first aid
- setting up security, if necessary

Simpler preparations should take place closer to the event; these include setting up a "Clean up Crew," and sending out flyers and posters.

### **Notes:**

## Chapter 6: Publicity and Promotion

Promotion is an extremely important facet of your planning. A well thought out promotion plan can determine the influence your National Trails Day® event has on your community and trails. American Hiking Society promotes events among national media, so the more we know about your plans, the easier it is to get interested reporters to you. However, you must also work with your local media to publicize your event. The final impact of the national celebration will be determined by the sum total of all the local constituents. There are three steps you should take for maximum media exposure:

1. Create a Media Committee
2. Create your press material
3. Get your message out

### 1. The Media Committee

Because publicity is so important, your NTD partnership should have a person or group in charge of creating and circulating information about your event. Find a coordinator as soon as possible (some magazines have six-month or longer lead times), or if creating a committee, try to find persons who have experience with the media, art/graphics/layout, public relations, etc. The committee should contact reporters, schedule interviews, keep the event on track for its publicity strategy, and also maintain a scrapbook of all the news stories and listings it generates.

#### Publicity Strategy

The media committee should create a publicity strategy. Start by identifying your target audience. Once your audience is identified, plan what types of media to contact, as well as how much and what type of publicity you will want to incorporate.

Be conscious of your target audience's "language" and style preferences and determine what media sources would best reach those persons. Posters on bulletin boards may be perfect for college students but useless for downtown office workers. It's important that you prioritize media outlets that provide the most "bang" for the least "buck."

### 2. Creating Press Material

#### Press List

A press list is a list of reporters that you can contact to publicize your NTD event. The process is relatively simple. First identify media personnel and then gather contact information.

Reporters, columnists and editors at local papers, magazines, and radio or television stations who cover environment, science, health, or transportation issues should all be considered. If the media outlet is small, and they don't have a reporter specifically assigned to any of these topics, ask for a "general assignment" reporter or talk to the "assignment editor" in the city newsroom. If your event is planned for a weekend, alert the "weekend assignment editor" at each outlet; these individuals likely make decisions about what gets covered during those times.

#### Outlets You Should Put on Your Press List

- Local newspapers
- Local radio stations
- Local TV stations
- Local cable stations
- Local magazines
- Weekly newspapers
- Network TV affiliates
- Associated Press wire service

## ***Publicity and Promotion, continued***

- Organizational newsletters
- Shoppers and neighborhood papers
- American Hiking Society
- Local store flyers (outfitters, grocery, hardware, etc.)
- Local Web Sites

### Press Release

When a press release is sent to media, it is in competition with hundreds of other ideas, programs and events. Most reporters will read no further than the second or third paragraph before making a decision to pursue the story or not. Remember to:

- Include Who, What, When, Where, Why and How in the first paragraph. The most important information should be written first to attract editors and readers. Be accurate with names, numbers, statements, and quotes.
- Be brief. Keep sentences and paragraphs short. The release should be one page (never more than two) single-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point type. Write in the active voice, which is more powerful and requires fewer words.
- Include a centered headline near the top of the first page.
- Include a quote from an officer of your organization by at least the third paragraph of the release. This will identify your organization and add interest to the text.
- If using two pages, type "more" at the bottom of page one and "30" or "###" at the bottom of page two.
- Double and triple check for accuracy, spelling and punctuation. A professional release is more credible.
- If possible, find out how each press contact likes to receive press releases - e-mail, fax or mail. If that is not possible, default to fax or mail. Plan for the release to arrive at least seven days before you want the story to appear.
- Call your contact after submitting your release to see if he/she intends to cover the event. Follow-ups are critical if you hope to get much attention or airtime. Talking to reporters by phone may build relationships with them that could result in better, more complete coverage of your event.

### Media Kit

A media kit is a compilation of materials that "sell" your event to the press, possible sponsors and celebrity speakers. By presenting real and substantial information, you will give the event credibility.

Your NTD media kit should contain:

- Pocket folder to hold news releases, fact sheets, and other materials.
- Press release about the event.
- A list of the speakers expected, accompanied by one-paragraph biographical profiles.
- A newsletter from your group.
- A fact sheet about the trail or park.
- Your event program and any National Trails Day® materials.
- You may also include a feature story about your trail with photos and logos.

## **3. Getting your message in the media**

### Radio

Local radio stations can play an extremely valuable, promotional role in your event; they may attract participants in droves. Ask all radio stations to cover the event itself on their news programs, and air your PSAs. You can recruit a radio sponsor for your event, which may be anointed the "official National Trails Day® station," who could broadcast live from the event. Throughout the week leading up to National Trails Day®, the station could offer listeners t-shirts or other memorabilia. You may even find it helpful to recruit one of the station's disc jockeys to be your emcee.

Pick a station with the most appeal to your target audience - call the station and ask to speak with either the director of marketing or promotions, or the disc jockey you've targeted. If the station does

## ***Publicity and Promotion, continued***

agree to participate, encourage them to provide the sound system for the event; this will save you time and money.

### Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs (or "spot announcements") are advertisement-like messages made on behalf of nonprofit groups. Radio and television stations air PSAs free of charge as a community service. PSAs can be useful in reaching a mass audience, although you cannot determine when the spots will be aired or what kind of program they will accompany. To get airtime you must convince the station that your message is especially important to its local audience. Contact each station, because guidelines for the acceptance of PSAs vary. Some general rules include:

- Your group must be a nonprofit organization.
- All announcements must identify the sponsoring group.
- Finished or pre-produced PSAs must be provided to the station at least two weeks before they are to run, earlier if possible. You may be able to convince a station to help you produce the PSA free-of-charge.

### *Sample PSA*

#### LOCAL NATIONAL TRAILS DAY® EVENTS

15 Seconds: Don't miss the action on the [name of trail] Saturday, June 4th! Join [name of your group] for a pony rides, hiking gear demonstrations, nature walks, health and fitness information, and for you early birds, a sunrise hike. For details call [phone number].

### Television

To enhance local television coverage, invite reporters to tour the trail a week or two before the event. This will give the reporters a chance to collect terrific footage of the trail that they can use to augment their coverage of the event (particularly if it rains). Tip: Contact television meteorologists in addition to regular reporters. Urge the meteorologists to deliver their local weather reports from the event location the Friday before the event begins.

### Other Promotional Ideas

- Write an editorial or letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Invite local politicians and community leaders. It's courteous and promotes word-of-mouth publicity and can help increase support for your trail. Elected officials like to attend "photo-ops."
- Make and hang large signs or banners over the site two weeks before the event.
- Print fliers on bright paper. Post them around your neighborhood (also appoint people to remove the posters after the event), ask other groups to hand them out at their events, include as stuffers in other programs, and hand out at busy intersections.
- Print posters on heavy colored paper. Have a team of people hang them in local merchants' windows, bus/train stations, outdoors stores, and professional offices near the event site. Post them on bulletin boards in schools, health centers, churches, bars, theaters, and youth centers.
- Set up a simple display at your library, town hall or YMCA to develop interest.
- Encourage school teachers to create projects (essays on transportation alternatives or impact studies of creating accessible greenways in our communities, for example) in his/her classes.
- Take advantage of the free classifieds offered by some weekly newspapers.
- Contact the owners of notable buildings and ask for free use of their building's sign or marquee.
- Ask for a paragraph plugging the event in other organizations' newsletters. Promise to reciprocate.

### Utilize your own networks

- Mail to donor lists.
- Run a feature article, photos, and a big ad in your newsletter.
- Activate your telephone chain to be sure everyone is informed.
- Build up word-of-mouth promotion with hoopla. Buttons and bumper stickers promote discussion.

(Excerpted from *The Grassroots Fundraising Book* by Joan Flanagan, for the Youth Project, Washington, D.C.)

## Chapter 7: At Your Event

After the months and weeks of careful planning, your event is ready. Here are some considerations to make when setting up for the festivities.

### Set-Up

- Place exhibits along attendees' anticipated lines of travel. Strategically orient concessions, raffles and other attractions behind the exhibits and information tables, so participants and onlookers will have to pass by the stands to get to the "goodies."
- If possible, have a special press table at the event with press releases, supporting documentation and other information. It can also be a place for reporters to conduct interviews and learn about schedules and logistics.
- Your podium should be equipped with a microphone and a "multi box" that allow radio and TV stations to plug into the sound system.

### Signage

All services offered at your event should be clearly marked with identification and directional signs. You will need signs directing participants to restrooms, first aid, childcare (if provided) and information/lost-and-found. Make sure your security staff know where all these services are located.

### Media Coverage

Be sure to follow up with all press contacts and personally invite reporters to the event. Find out what different reporters are interested in knowing or seeing during/about the event, and provide that information/service for them to the best of your abilities. Make sure your media table is staffed or that your event planner is accessible so that press queries can be handled quickly and knowledgeably.

Introduce reporters to speakers, performers, and celebrities. Prepare your speakers to talk with reporters by giving them memorable quotes, explanations of the event's purpose, descriptions of what donations will be applied to and details about the next steps for your trail.

Send a special "Photo Op" memo to photographers, print media assignment editors and local TV stations explaining activities they can photograph, where the best viewing sites are, and what the best times are. Keep these visual elements in mind when planning your event and remember that the more unusual a photo opportunity is, the more likely you are to see it in the papers or on TV.

## Day of Event Logistics Checklist

Task	Who	Completed
Have proper insurance papers		
Have cash boxes		
Have change in proper denominations for each cash box		
Keep your receipts		
Have cash for emergencies; coins for pay phone and/or cell phone		
Bring American Hiking Society Fact Sheets to display at the event		
Bring your organization's current newsletter, fact sheet, calendar of meetings and events, membership applications, and sale merchandise		
Provide sign-in list		
Provide name tags for organizers and volunteers		
List all necessary phone numbers: host speakers, entertainers, politicians, etc.		
Have pens, scissors, tape, poster board, big markers and other office supplies		
Assign an errand runner for emergencies and forgotten items		
Have a watch		
Wear comfortable shoes		
Provide a first-aid kit		
Keep handy name of doctor, nurse or paramedic who will be present		
Have emergency numbers for police, fire, and ambulance		
Keep your sense of humor, tact, patience and imagination		

## Chapter 8: Other Ways American Hiking Society Can Help

American Hiking can help make your National Trails Day® event a success! And here are some of the ways:

### Organizer's Kit

Available in February 2005, it will have NTD t-shirts, posters, a banner, and other NTD goodies.

### Website Publicity

In 2004, publications such as *Backpacker*, *Health*, *Cooking Light*, and *Prevention* as well as hundreds of other magazines, newspapers, and web sites throughout the country directed their readers to American Hiking Society's website to find a National Trails Day® event. In order for American Hiking to get the word out about your event you need to keep us informed. Start by completing the official registration form online at [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org), then follow-up with updates to American Hiking Society on new developments by e-mailing [NTD@AmericanHiking.org](mailto:NTD@AmericanHiking.org) and referencing your event location and host organization name.

By registering your event, we can list it on our web page; the press can then contact you, and prospective participants in your area will be able to easily obtain information on your National Trails Day® event. (Note: If you do not want your event publicized, after you register we will not list it on our web site.)

### Support

The National Trails Day® staff is here to help. Every day we talk to people who, like you, are planning NTD events. If you need help or have specific questions, contact Ivan Levin, American Hiking's National Trails Day® Coordinator at 1-800-972-8608 x208 or [NTD@AmericanHiking.org](mailto:NTD@AmericanHiking.org).

### American Hiking Society Materials and Programs

- *American Hiker*, American Hiking Society's official magazine. This bimonthly publication keeps readers up to date on pending trails legislation, trail events, American Hiking Society programs, and (of course) National Trails Day®.
- [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org): Search the Alliance of Hiking Organizations section for a local trail club; learn about pending trails legislation; read hiking fact sheets; find press releases; buy gear; search for hikes, events, and volunteer opportunities in your state.
- Volunteer Vacations: American Hiking Society sends over 100 trail crews into the nation's backcountry each year for week long trail repairs and maintenance work trips in national parks, forests and other public lands. For a complete schedule and registration information, call Shirley Hearn, Volunteer Vacation Coordinator at 1-800-972-8608 x206, log onto [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org), or email [Volunteer@AmericanHiking.org](mailto:Volunteer@AmericanHiking.org).

## Chapter 9: 2004 NTD Sponsors

The support of the National Trails Day® sponsors and agencies provide critical funding for American Hiking Society’s trail conservation programs. Please write a note or an email sent through their website thanking them for their support. Address all correspondence to “National Trails Day Support Coordinator.”

### NATIONAL BUSINESS SPONSORS

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