Mission:
American Trails advances the development of diverse, high quality trails and greenways for the benefit of people and communities. Through collaboration, education, and communication, American Trails raises awareness of the value these trail systems offer.
Dear Trail Partners,

2019 has truly been a year of accomplishments. In May, we hosted what has generally been considered one of the most engaging and inspiring International Trails Symposiums in recent history. Collectively, we explored some of the most pressing needs in the greater trails community.

At the same time, we wrapped up what was for American Trails, a transformational effort to complete our Strategic Repositioning effort with our friends and partners at Active Strategies. This two-year effort focused on engagement, research, writing, and planning to create a Strategic Repositioning Plan. The chief goal has been to provide an implementable strategic plan that would serve as a roadmap for American Trails future operations as it seeks to achieve financial sustainability, elevated brand reputation and awareness, and greater impact towards our mission.

We are extremely excited to have fully launched American Trails’ new signature program called Trails Move People (TMP). The TMP coalition brings together a diverse cross section of the organized trails community. It is made up of trail-oriented national nonprofit organizations, member organizations, and other organized trail advocates. The member organizations of TMP represent millions of Americans who spend their time, money, and energy to get out on trails for fun and to volunteer. On behalf of the thousands of diverse trail users our collective organizations represent, we urge appropriators to adequately invest in our nation’s trails.

We have also spent this year planning and creating the structure that will support a brand new Trail Fund. The mission of this new fund is to maintain and enhance America’s trails through trail maintenance, research, and stewardship training projects. The Trail Fund’s vision is to engage the trail, outdoor recreation, and conservation giving community to partner with critical stewardship organizations to sustain our trails. We hope to build our endowment and publicly launch this program fully in 2020.

Thank you for being a part of American Trails and, as always, we thank you for all that you do to realize the value of trails in every American’s experience.

Sincerely,

Mike Passo, Executive Director

John Favro, Board Chair
AMERICAN TRAILS BOARD

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Evansville, IN

Danielle Fowles-McNiven
Tread Lightly!, Inc.
West Jordan, UT

Cathy Corlett
Corlett Landscape Architecture, LLC
Portland, OR

www.americantrails.org
American Trails (AT) has spent almost two years working with Active Strategies on engagement, research, writing, and planning to create a Strategic Repositioning Plan. The chief goal is to provide an implementable strategic plan that would serve as a roadmap for AT future operations as we seek to have more impact toward our mission of advancing the development of diverse, high quality trails and greenways for the benefit of people and communities.

Based on this plan, we are very excited to announce the newly focused Strategic Thrusts, accompanied by initial objectives, for our community building efforts over the next five years:

1. **Leadership**
   - Make American Trails an effective partner focused on building a strong, resilient, and respected voice for the existing trails community and burgeoning trails industry.
   - Build upon the successes of the Trails Move People program in unifying and amplifying the voice of the trails community.

2. **Research**
   - Begin to research and collect data for a biennial “State of Trails Report.”
   - Develop new tools and collaborative efforts to fill the research needs of our community.

3. **Professional Development and Certification**
   - Explore working with partners to identify trail core competencies.
   - Explore building a Trail Community Map to connect valued volunteers, stewards, and professionals with the agencies and organizations that need their skills.

4. **Brand Messaging, Marketing, and Industry Promotion**
   - Establish a compelling set of common messages for the trails community.
   - Create a high visibility trails industry promotional and marketing effort.

5. **Advocacy and Policy**
   - Establish a strong collaborative trails community advocacy program that will drive pro trail policy at Federal, State, and local level.
   - Disseminate the joint policy guidance to State, municipal, corporate, and foundation communities involved in trails.

6. **Fund and Resources Development**
   - Build and fund “The Trail Fund” to maintain and enhance America’s trails through maintenance, research, and stewardship training projects.
   - Build engagement and help to identify with the broader trails industry so that we can effectively share resources, funding, and data across all invested partners.

If implemented boldly, tempered by thoughtfulness and patience, we believe that our new strategic direction can build a stronger trails community.
The Trails Move People (TMP) coalition brings together a diverse cross section of the organized trails community. It is made up of trail-oriented national nonprofit organizations, member organizations, and other organized trail advocates. TMP uses collaboration, communication, and education to ensure that the benefits of trails are rightly considered by recreationists, industry, decision-makers, and the general public. We already know that outdoor recreation has a massive positive impact on our nation’s economy and that much of the impact is generated via trails.

The member organizations of TMP represent millions of Americans who spend their time, money, and energy to get out on trails for fun and to volunteer. TMP hopes to elevate the recognition of trails by developing funding and research resources so that everyone irrespective of geography, mode of recreation, socio-economic status or experience will have access to more and better trail opportunities and in turn more fulfilling personal experiences.

Though each of the individual organizations below will also have their own priorities, this coalition represents the shared goals that have been agreed upon by the following organizations:
2019 FINANCIALS

2019 INCOME SUMMARY

- Programs: 33%
- Gov Grants: 58%
- Contributions: 4%
- Membership: 5%
2019 EXPENSE SUMMARY

- Payroll: 34%
- Projects: 40%
- Fundraising: 19%
- Administration: 3%
- Symposium: 40%

www.americantrails.org
Webinar stats:

- 2,591 live webinar attendees in 2019 (up from 1,866 in 2018).
- In December 2019 we held our 73rd webinar.
- In 2019 we held a total of 11 webinars.
- 244 previously recorded webinars were downloaded from the American Trails online store (up from 59 in 2018).

2019 webinars included: (All available for download in the American Trails Online Store)

- Investment Opportunity: How to Make Your Trail Irresistible to Private Funders
- Now That e-Bikes Are On Trails, What Do We Know?
- Trail Towns: Leveraging Trails for Community and Economic Development
- Improve Your Volunteer Stewardship Toolbox
- Designing Near Wetlands, Streams, Forests, and Other Environmental Resources
- Social Media + Trails: Growing and Engaging Your Followers
- Equestrian Trail Design for Urban Shared Use Trails
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) (2 parts)
- The Nature of Trail Aesthetics
- The Future of Transportation and Recreation Trail Projects

Thank you to our webinar partners and sponsors:
LEARNING CREDITS AND CEUs

Earn Learning Credits and CEUs

American Trails not only offers learning credits for our Advancing Trails Webinar Series and our International Trails Symposium and Training Institute, but we also offer learning credits at other trail-related conferences, workshops, and webinars.

American Trails is a certified provider of the following learning credits and continuing education opportunities:

- American Institute of Certified Planners Continuing Maintenance (AICP CM)
- Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System (LA CES PDH)
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) CEU equivalency petition
- CEU equivalency petition for other organizations (please inquire with American Trails)

In 2019, in addition to offering learning credits for 11 of our monthly webinars in our Advancing Trails Webinar Series and for over 80 sessions at the 2019 International Trails Symposium and Training Institute in April, we also offered learning credits for the following three conferences:

- Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference
- Oregon Trails Summit
- Safe Routes to School National Conference

If you are interested in working with American Trails to offer learning credits at your own conference, workshop, or webinar, contact trailhead@americantrails.org to learn more.
In 2019 we changed how we measure our web impact:

In the past, American Trails tracked our web visits through the system provided by our web server. Through that system, we saw large increases in web traffic on the americantrails.org and the nrtdatabase.org websites, on the order of 3.1 million page views per year. However, in early 2019 we realized that these numbers were likely inflated due to bot traffic and other visitation that was not necessarily accurate to count. Therefore, we researched the best practices of web analytics, and decided to switch to Google Analytics to count and monitor our web traffic more effectively.

Google Analytics drastically changes the numbers calculated by removing all potential bot traffic. Unfortunately, it also removes visitors that do not use cookies or utilize ad blockers. While this can reduce actual traffic by an additional 30-70%, we decided to fully embrace Google Analytics as the gold standard for web analytics.

Therefore, the below statistics show a dramatic decrease in measured traffic. We will use the 2019 numbers as the baseline moving forward and will base future site increases on these numbers. Despite these raw number decreases, we continue to see increases of 13-20% in web traffic year to year.

In 2019, through Google Analytics, we saw the following web traffic:

229,168 – unique visitors to the American Trails website (includes americantrails.org and nrtdatabase.org)  
562,762 – page views on American Trails website  
13,839 – page views to our business directory  
35,900 – page views to our jobs and volunteer boards  
14,218 – page views to our photo database  
33,859 – page views to NRT-related pages on americantrails.org  
10,945 – searches for trails in the NRT database

Additionally, American Trails added a "Why Trails?" section to the website, to give trail professionals a resource for the latest information on trail benefits.
After revamping the Online Business Directory in early 2019, we had a total of 842 organizations in a searchable directory by the end of the year. The new and improved Business Directory now offers search fields by category and state. People can recommend a business or businesses can add their own company with free and paid options. Paid advertisers are listed towards the top of searches as featured advertisers and also offer complimentary banner ads on relevant articles throughout the website, with new articles being added every week.

In 2019 American Trails switched from having a print magazine to putting articles exclusively on the website, meaning we are able to update the website more often with timely articles and information.
The 2019 International Trails Symposium and Training Institute was a resounding success. The eight countries represented included Australia, Canada, China, Nepal, Panama, South Africa, South Korea, and the United States. The educational sessions covered the world of trails, from concept to construction to promotion. This year, 225 people gave a presentation, hosted a field trip, or spoke to the crowd. This included 58 Concurrent Sessions, 18 TRAILSNext™ Series talks, 6 TRAILSLead™ Forums, 5 PTBA Sustainable Trails Workshops, 10 Educational Mobile Workshops, 6 Poster Sessions, and 3 (very well attended) Trail Talk Breakfasts that included 26 topics over the course of 3 days.

The Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Trail Leaders Scholarship Program was continued for the 4th consecutive symposium. This program provided training and mentoring opportunities at the International Trails Symposium and Training Institute to inspire young adults to choose a career path so they, too, can leave a lasting legacy on the world—as Hulet (past American Trails board member) did.
The TRAILSLead™ Forums brought together thought leaders from across the trails industry to discuss some of today’s hottest trail topics. This moderated panel discussion encouraged significant audience questions and interaction as the primary mechanism for discussing these important issues. Invited panelists responded to questions and encouraged further discussion in the hopes of developing tangible policy guidance or best-practice takeaways on the subject being discussed.

Two of these forums were livestreamed over Facebook, resulting in thousands of views from those who could not attend the forums in person, and included live comments and interactions from people across the world. Notes on the forums not livestreamed were provided to all International Trails Symposium attendees.

Forums included Tourism and Trails, Trails Research and Economics, Trail Funders, Multi-Use Trails and Conflicts, Engaging the Health Community, and Trail Management and Maintenance.

TRAILSNext™ SERIES - HIGH ENERGY, 18-MINUTE PRESENTATIONS ON TRAIL INNOVATION

In the style of TEDx, the TRAILSNext™ Series brings you cutting edge information from leading experts in the trails world on today’s important trail topics. These high energy, 18-minute presentations were recorded to be made available to folks who were unable to attend this year’s International Trails Symposium.
EMERGING TRAIL LEADER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Alivia Acosta – Unity, Maine
Nicole Elizabeth Barrios Adames – Panama City, Panama
Cody Arana – Albany, New York
Kendra Barat – Franklin Park, New Jersey
Julien Cossette – Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Erinn Drage – Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Julio Escarce – Santa Monica, California
Mike Giapponi – Bethlehem, Connecticut
Greg Grierson – Dayton, Ohio
Katie Koster – Spearfish, South Dakota
Michael Meister – Nashville, Tennessee
India Nielsen – Salt Lake City, Utah
Elyse Peters – Jasper, Alabama
Bonnie Ricord – Columbia, Missouri
Mark Rooney – Red Lion, Pennsylvania
Alyssa Wentz – Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

ADVANCING TRAILS AWARDS

Hulet Hornbeck Lifetime Service
Presented to Rory Robinson

Chairman's Award
Presented to Gary Vernon (The Walton Family Foundation)

Trail Accessibility
Presented to Willie Wildlife Marsh, Fulton County, New York

Trail Planning/Design (Two Levels)
Level one (less than 500k) presented to Western Piedmont Trail, Clarkburg, Maryland

Level two (more than 500k) presented to Three Creeks Trail, San Jose, California

Individual State Award Recipients

Alabama: Adam Dasinger
California: Erik Pritchard
Colorado: Kriste Peoples
Florida: Jill Lingard
Illinois: Diane Banta
Indiana: Angie Pool
Louisiana: Damon Robison
Maryland: Bonnie Bell
Minnesota: Anne Gullion
Missouri: Josh Adams
North Carolina: Tim Johnson
New York: Erik Mickelson
Ohio: Andy Niekamp
Oregon: Wayne Chevalier
Virginia: Sean Gobin
Wisconsin: Gary Werner

Trail Promotion and Education
Presented to the Georgia Mountains Children’s Forest Network

Trails and the Arts
Presented to Major Taylor Trail Mural, Illinois

Trails for Health
Presented to City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana

International Partnership
Presented to Hidden Lakes Trail Network, Perito Moreno National Park, Argentina

Trail Partnership
Presented to Tahoe East Shore Trail Alliance, Nevada
PRESS COVERAGE OF THE 2019 SYMPOSIUM

Thanks to extensive outreach from the American Trails team we received significant local press coverage of the 2019 Symposium. These interviews brought attention not just to the Symposium, but allowed us to highlight local trails, and why we chose Syracuse as the 2019 location. This coverage included:

- Radio interviews on their local National Public Radio station
- Live in-studio interview with American Trails Executive Director on the local NBC affiliate
- News stories on CNYCentral.com, Syracuse.com, NewYorkUpstate.com, and more

Photo top left: Candace Gallagher being interviewed for Syracuse University radio
Photo bottom left: Mike Passo being interviewed on Syracuse NBC 3
Photo on right: Candace Gallagher being interviewed for Syracuse NPR affiliate
American Trails provided 1,653 new NRT signs to National Recreation Trails across the country. These signs are vital for recognition and promotion of the NRT program.

American Trails promoted the application process which led to dozens of trails applying for NRT status in 2019.

33,859 page views to NRT-related pages at nrtdatabase.org, managed by American Trails.

10,945 searches for trails in the NRT database.

Our annual NRT photo contest for 2019 received a total of 275 photo submissions. Winners were selected in 20 categories including trail use, management, and features, as well as artistic merit.
National Recreation Trails are some of America’s finest trails. NRTs include trails for all users types (equestrian, atv/utv, motorcycle, snowmobile, hiking, mountain biking, etc.), are located in urban and rural settings, and are managed by a variety of Federal, State, and local managing agencies.

American Trails manages the database of these unique trails and has launched a new program to organize Trail Ambassadors to inform, preserve, and protect these national treasures. Ambassadors visit as many of the NRTs in their region as possible to gather data and identify issues on these great trails.

**Ambassador News**

- In 2019 American Trails officially released t-shirts for the NRT ambassadors. Qualified ambassadors can wear these shirts out on the trail while conducting their volunteer work.
- In 2019 American Trails also put into place codes of conduct and a waiver to create a better and more professionally conducted program.
- 205 individuals have signed up to be NRT ambassadors.

Learn more at www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails
2019 National Trails Training Partnership (NTTP) stats:

- 129,707 page views in our resource library for NTTP pages.
- 32,585 page views to our training section.
- 87% of our visitors come from the United States and the rest are spread over 192 other countries.

Goals of NTTP include:

- Identifying important trail training programs available around the country through organizations, agencies, universities, and businesses.
- Exploring ways to enhance cooperation on training efforts.
- Developing a clearinghouse of training and a wealth of technical resources.
- Studying target audiences, delivery methods, and special needs.
- Identifying needs and gaps in existing trail training.
- Publicizing model statewide programs for trails training cooperation.
- Creating individual state pages in the website to highlight training providers and resources in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Learn more at www.americantrails.org/learn/nttp
American Trails is under contract with KMS Enterprises to develop, operate, and update the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) searchable database and website.

In 2019 American Trails performed these tasks associated with the RTP:

- Entered 834 RTP-funded projects to the database.
- Responded to inquiries from the public within 48 hours.
- Actively communicated with State RTP Administrators, answering questions and following up with them regarding the requested data.
- Continued to communicate with the States to procure photos for the Image Library, as well as to share information with the public about the RTP for future Annual Reports, through the American Trails “Trail Tracks” e-Newsletter, and other marketing opportunities as they arose.
- Prepared monthly work plan reports.
- Prepared the RTP Annual Report.
- Presentation on the RTP Database and Image Library at the annual State Trail Administrators meeting following the 2019 International Trails Symposium in Syracuse, New York. Based on input, American Trails is looking at the logistics of adding individual state overviews to the database website.

Learn more at www.recreationaltrailsinfo.org
ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

In 2019, American Trails had a presence at ten trail-related conferences across the nation. We were able to attend five of those conferences in person, and sent printed materials to five more.

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council Annual Conference

American Trails eNews

We have added banner advertisements into our eNews format giving advertisers a new way to engage with our readers and followers.

We currently have over 17,000 email contacts that we send our monthly eNews to, as well as information on webinars and other policy and trail announcements.

American Trails Magazine

Our last printed issue of the American Trails Magazine was the Spring 2019 issue. We have moved our new content and articles to a solely digital format to bring more information to more people.
ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

Social media platforms:

Our Facebook page has 8,800 likes, and has grown steadily throughout the year, up from around 7,170 likes in the beginning of 2019. American Trails uses this platform to inform the public of not only our own programs, but programs and news throughout the trail world.

Our Facebook group, "Trailworkers of America," has 182 members from across the country where trail workers can engage with each other, ask questions, and share their own news.

We have 4,294 Twitter followers and growing.

We have 735 Instagram followers and growing.

We have 104 LinkedIn followers and growing.

Other engagement:

In 2019 American Trails took part in an "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) on Reddit. AMA allows the public to directly ask questions and engage on a topic with field experts. We had 733 likes, and dozens of questions from the general public about the current state of trails in America. This was the first time American Trails had participated in public engagement of this kind using Reddit.

American Trails held our second annual costume contest in October, where participants from all over the country sent in pictures of themselves in costumes on trails.
Mike Passo, Executive Director

Candace Gallagher, Director of Operations

Mike is the Executive Director of American Trails. Mike has also served as the Executive Director of the Professional Trail Builders Association, and has led groups of all abilities on sea kayak and canoe expeditions. Based out of Bellingham, Washington, Mike has conducted an extensive study of outdoor developed areas nationwide to determine the cost implications of construction according to proposed ADA standards, and a Congressional study on improving access to outdoor recreational activities on federal land. Mike is excited to help renew American Trails efforts to break down the silos in our trails community and work hard to articulate the impact of the trails industry.

Favorite Trail: Lumberjack Trail, Wisconsin
Favorite Quote: "The thing to remember when traveling is that the trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast and you miss all you are traveling for." - Louis L'Amour
Favorite Work Memory from 2019: The END of the 2019 International Trails Symposium! We pulled together a group of diverse trail leaders and strategized on how we can all build, fund, and research a stronger trails industry. Very inspiring.

Candace is the Director of Operations for American Trails and has been with the organization since 2006. Based in Redding, California, she oversees the American Trails staff and daily operations, working closely with the Executive Director and Board of Directors. Candace also serves as the Webinar Coordinator for the Advancing Trails Webinar Series and handles all logistics and exhibitors for the International Trails Symposium. Candace attended Arizona State University where she received her B.A. in Communication in May of 2005.

Favorite Trail: Chilnualna Falls to Buena Vista Lake in Yosemite National Park, California (where she got engaged)
Favorite Quote: "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." - John Muir
Favorite work memory from 2019: Attending the 2019 International Trails Symposium is always my favorite thing to do during ITS years! Being able to see the many people that I email and talk to on the phone throughout the year is a highlight. I thoroughly enjoy having a drink at a Happy Trails Hour with the attendees, presenters, exhibitors, and volunteers, along with my staff, after a long day of hard work.
Kayla joined the team in December 2017. Kayla attended National University to obtain her Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources. Kayla is based in Redding, California and got promoted from Administrative Assistant to HR and Administrative Coordinator in June 2019. In her spare time she and her family love being outdoors. They love hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and riding their ATVs and snowmobiles.

**Favorite Trail:** Whiskeytown Falls Trail, Whiskeytown, California

**Favorite Quote:** “To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles.” – Mary Davis

**Favorite work memory of 2019:** Being able to be a part of hosting the International Trails Symposium in Syracuse, New York. I was able to meet most of the wonderful attendees that I helped along the way of the Symposium planning. It is great to be able to put a face to the names. It was a successful event and I am thankful to be a part of the American Trails team!

Taylor started with American Trails in January 2018 as the Communication and Media Specialist. Taylor currently lives in Dallas, Texas, which is also where she attended the University of North Texas receiving her degree in History.

**Favorite Trail:** Cedar Hills State Park, Cedar Hills, Texas

**Favorite Quote:** “When I do good I feel good, when I do bad I feel bad.” – Abraham Lincoln

**Favorite work memory of 2019:** Working with the Emerging Trail Leaders at the 2019 International Trails Symposium, and having a great celebration dinner with the whole group.

www.americantrails.org
Thank you to all of our members, partners, sponsors, advertisers, and trail friends for another great year!

Contact us at:
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For more information on American Trails and all of our programs visit www.americantrails.org.