

A PUBLICATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM



# Pathways

*Across America*

SUMMER 2021

## AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

*National Scenic and  
National Historic Trail  
organizations and partners  
share reactions*

242 ACRES CONSERVED ON NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

LEWIS AND CLARK JUNIOR RANGER BOOK

FIRE WATCH ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

ENDANGERED PLACES ON HISTORIC TRAILS

VETERANS HEAL ON WARRIOR EXPEDITIONS

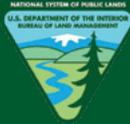
# Pathways Across America

*Pathways Across America* is the only national publication devoted to the news and issues of America's national scenic and historic trails. It is published quarterly by the **Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS)** under cooperative agreements with four Federal agencies.

**Department of Agriculture (USDA):**  
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

**Department of the Interior (DOI):**  
National Park Service (NPS)  
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

**Department of Transportation (DOT):**  
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



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## ABOUT US

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that connects member nonprofit trail organizations and Federal agency partners to further the protection, completion, and stewardship of the 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails within the National Trails System.

## STAFF

**Executive Director:** Valerie Rupp  
**Operations Coordinator:** Felicita 'Lis' Wight  
**Program Coordinator:** Cara Yendrzeski  
**Communications and Development Manager:** Craig Baker  
**Contractors:**  
Mike Dawson, FHWA Cooperative Agreement Project Manager  
Don Owen, FHWA Cooperative Agreement Technical Contractor  
Gary Werner, Special Projects  
Liz Wessel, Fundraising and Special Projects

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Carin Farley • Bureau of Land Management  
Christopher Douwes • Federal Highway Administration  
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## CONTACT

Partnership for the National Trails System  
100 M St. SE #700 • Washington, D.C. 20003  
202.963.2910 • [www.pnts.org](http://www.pnts.org) • [admin@pnts.org](mailto:admin@pnts.org)



## BUILDING COMMUNITY

# National Trails System

Congress passed the National Trails System Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 2, 1968. Today, the National Trails System is composed of 11 National Scenic Trails (NSTs), 19 National Historic Trails (NHTs), over 1,300 National Recreation Trails (NRTs) including 21 National Water Trails, and more than 2,000 Rail Trails. These trails provide outdoor recreation opportunities, promote resource preservation and public access, and encourage the appreciation of the great outdoors and America's history and cultural diversity.

## PATHWAYS NATIONWIDE FOR DISCOVERY, LEARNING, AND UNDERSTANDING

**Strengthening communities** through heritage and ecotourism, public involvement, and community collaboration.

**Enhancing access** to natural areas and historic treasures through innovative interpretation and outreach efforts.

**Facilitating public-private partnerships** for preservation of history, natural environments, and human health through outdoor recreation.



## SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS

- Authorized by Congress
- Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **Partnership for the National Trails System**
- Total 55,000 miles through 50 States and the District of Columbia in wild, rural, suburban, and urban areas, connecting with every distinct ecological area or biome in the country
- Connect and travel through 70 wildlife refuges, 80 national parks, 90 national forests, 100 BLM field office areas, over 120 wilderness areas, numerous State and local parks, trails, and other protected areas, and 100 major urban areas
- Nearly 1 million hours of volunteer labor to build and maintain annually

## RECREATION TRAILS

- Designated by Secretary of Interior or Secretary of Agriculture
  - Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **American Trails**
  - Total 29,000 miles through 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico
- [www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org)

## RAIL TRAILS

- Part of 1983 amendment to National Trails System Act
  - Stewardship facilitated by the nonprofit **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**
  - Total 22,000 miles through 50 States and the District of Columbia, and 8,000 miles in progress
- [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)



Click the National Trails System tab to view a map and learn about our partners:

[www.pnts.org](http://www.pnts.org)



## KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE



## PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

### 11 NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS

The National Scenic Trails (NSTs) represent some of the most magnificent long-distance hiking trails anywhere in the world. Virtually every major ecosystem in the country is traversed by a NST, including deserts, temperate rainforests and deciduous forests, tundra, mountains, prairies, wetlands, and rivers. NSTs offer natural corridors for wildlife preservation and unspoiled views, and they create fitness and outdoor leadership opportunities for all ages.

- Appalachian NST
- Arizona NST
- Continental Divide NST
- Florida NST
- Ice Age NST
- Natchez Trace NST
- New England NST
- North Country NST
- Pacific Crest NST
- Pacific Northwest NST
- Potomac Heritage NST

### 19 NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

The National Historic Trails (NHTs) may be foot or horse paths, travel routes, roadways, or a combination of several modes of travel designated as a route retracing a part of American history. Many NHTs have interpretive centers and regular events to immerse you in the past. While historic trails may run through urban and suburban settings, they also boast wilderness and hiking opportunities as beautiful and diverse as the NSTs.

- Ala Kahakai NHT
- California NHT
- Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT
- El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT
- Iditarod NHT
- Juan Bautista de Anza NHT
- Lewis and Clark NHT
- Mormon Pioneer NHT
- Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) NHT
- Old Spanish NHT
- Oregon NHT
- Overmountain Victory NHT
- Pony Express NHT
- Santa Fe NHT
- Selma to Montgomery NHT
- Star-Spangled Banner NHT
- Trail of Tears NHT
- Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT

### Cover Photographs

#### FRONT

A bend in the Missouri River as seen from the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Photo courtesy Bob Wick.

#### INSIDE

**Left:** Students hike near San Francisco Peak in Northern Arizona. Photo Credit: Arizona Trail Association

**Center:** Father and daughter walking toward the cannons at Fort McHenry. Photo Credit: John Lam

**Right:** Barred owl on the Pacific Crest Trail. Photo Credit: Tyler Fox

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View more photos and full versions of each article:  
[www.pnts.org/new/category/pathways](http://www.pnts.org/new/category/pathways)



When reading this issue of *Pathways Across America*, I noticed a refreshed and palpable energy in the National Trails System. This energy is not new, it is long nurtured by many people, including many of you reading this issue of *Pathways*.

As we emerge from pandemic-related shutdowns, public interest in outdoor recreation continues to skyrocket. National Scenic and Historic Trails are abuzz with activity and programs, both in-person and online, showing us that the 'crash course' many of us had in virtual engagement over the past year and a half will help expand our reach and raise awareness for the National Trails System over the long term. Currently, an unprecedented number of trails seek feasibility studies or designation as National Scenic and Historic Trails, indicating a recognition of the value of trails as avenues for connecting people with nature and with stories that demonstrate the diverse and rich history and heritage associated with lands.

New government and community initiatives, some highlighted in this issue, are drawing increased attention to public lands. These initiatives present opportunities for the National Trails System to connect gaps in Trails and to increase trail accessibility and stewardship. They also challenge us to do the work to ensure



a National Trails System that is conveniently accessible, engaging, and welcoming for all. This will take sweat equity, listening, learning, and so much more.

Time and again, National Scenic and Historic Trails across the nation show their resourcefulness and flexibility to change to meet the recreation needs of a growing population, just as intended in the National Trails System Act of 1968. Since the passing of the Act, National Trails have proven that they are much more than spaces for outdoor recreation. Undoubtedly, the story and the role of National Trails will continue to evolve to engage

more people and add greater value to each of our lives.

We at the Partnership are excited and grateful to be a part of the incredible story of the National Trails System.

Yours in partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Rupp". The signature is fluid and cursive.

# 2021 PNTS Trail Apprentice: Chase Gregory Expands Programming Career

*This column shines a light on rising leaders in public lands and outdoor recreation who participate in PNTS' Trail Intern Grants or Trail Apprentices Program.*

*Trail Intern Grants are distributed to help Trails nonprofits hire interns to further their missions and expand their capacities. The Trail Apprentices Program (TAP) is a career exploration program that helps up-and-coming and aspiring outdoor professionals aged 18-28 network and discover pathways to have careers in or hold leadership positions within National Trails nonprofits.*



*Photo courtesy of Chase Gregory.*

When Chase Gregory signed on to PNTS' Trail Apprentice Program (TAP), he had one goal—to network with at least one other computer programmer who worked in outdoor recreation. Not only did he meet that goal, but his participation actually led to the expansion of his personal business.

Chase discovered his love for the outdoors at the age of 14 while spending his summers working at a Boy Scout Camp in upstate New York. In the offseason, he spent as much time as he could hiking around his hometown of Jamestown, New York, including on the 400-plus-mile portion of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) that overlaps with the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT). It was during one of these hikes that Chase saw a flier advertising an opportunity to volunteer for the FLT's IT and Web Development Committee.

After volunteering for more than a year, Chase had proven himself as an up-and-coming leader at the FLT. The Trail's Executive Director, Quinn Wright, then approached Chase about joining the NCNST's new Next Generation Coalition. Chase jumped at the opportunity and became one of the original members of that program when he signed on. Impressed by his drive and computer programming ability, Quinn then offered Chase a contract to build a digital database for the FLT.

Eager to turn his volunteer experience into employment, Chase accepted the position. It was while working on this project that Chase learned of PNTS' Trail Apprentice Program (TAP). He applied and was accepted to the program as a member of the 2021 TAP cohort.

As part of the TAP programming, Chase attended a presentation about a computer program that tracked the relative economic value of interest points on trails by looking at foot traffic. Chase arranged a one-on-one meeting with the creator of that program and this led him to discover a set of new tools that helped inform his work on the FLT. That meeting also connected him with an opportunity to procure his second database contract, this time with the National Democratic Redistricting Committee.

According to Chase, his custom FLT database is now one of the most robust tools in use anywhere in the National Trails System. Built using open-source software, the advanced database integrates with programs like Quickbooks and Eventbrite, and it even tracks land ownership across the state of New York, parcel by parcel. "I've always thought that the trails have been lacking in (technological) development," Chase says. "And I've always felt that, if we were to upgrade the infrastructure of trails technologically, we'd be able to save hundreds of thousands of dollars by automating some of the administrative work... The less clicks that our office users have to do, the better."

Today, Gregory is working to put the final touches on the FLT database, though he says that the program is already saving hours of administrative time a week for FLT employees. He also still works with the NCNST Next Gen program and the FLT's IT and Web Development Committee as a volunteer.

Of his experience with the TAP, Gregory says it "was really awesome." He says that he would encourage any young professional with an interest in trail work to get involved with the program, if possible, adding that it's a great way to "find your particular niche inside of the trail system that will really help the trail in a positive light."

## About Us



### MISSION

To empower, inspire, and strengthen public and private partners to develop, preserve, promote, and sustain the National Scenic and Historic Trails.

### VISION

PNTS envisions a world-class system of National Scenic and Historic Trails that preserves natural and cultural values and provides recreational benefits for all.

### PURPOSE

To promote and support the efforts of National Scenic and Historic Trail organizations, to secure public and private resources, and to serve as a collective voice for policy and action that supports National Scenic and Historic Trails.

## WHAT'S NEW AT PNTS

# PNTS and Bell's Brewery Encourage You to "Go Where the Trail Leads You"

The co-branded awareness campaign will take place this September and October.

Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) is teaming up with Bell's Brewery this September and October for a co-branded trails awareness campaign called "Go Where the Trail Leads You."

The promotional campaign between Bell's Brewery and PNTS will look to drive current trail enthusiasts and Bell's more-than 500,000 fans and followers on social media and online to learn more about trails, and will invite them to visit, volunteer with, and support trails near them. To encourage as many people as possible to participate, Bell's Brewery will make a \$5 donation to PNTS up to \$15,000 for every hour pledged at [BellsBeer.com/trails](https://bellsbeer.com/trails).

The promotion will also feature a dedicated webpage featuring trail facts and figures, links to the PNTS website where people can learn more about trails, as well as ways for individuals to engage with the trails near them. We encourage you to pledge your



Courtesy Bell's Brewery.

time and share social media and email promotions for the campaign to raise awareness for trails and encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to pledge their time, as well.

The "Go Where the Trail Leads You" campaign came about in part because of the brewery's founder's love of trails. As an avid hiker and outdoorsman, Bell's Founder and CEO, Larry Bell, is dedicated to ensuring that his company serves as a model for sustainable production practices and environmental stewardship. Bell is currently participating in the North Country Trail Association's Hike 100 Challenge.

PNTS is grateful to Bell's Brewery for shining a light on our work and the trails we love and support.



Learn more and make your pledge at:

[bellsbeer.com/trails](https://bellsbeer.com/trails)

## PNTS WORKING GROUPS

# PNTS Expands Forums for Member Exchange

There are myriad challenges associated with working for a National Scenic or Historic Trail. But what if there was a place to workshop ideas with other trail professionals who have dealt with similar challenges? In 2017, the Volunteer Program Working Group was formed to do just that. This informal group of PNTS members gathers quarterly to highlight recent successes, dive into issues, and learn from one another. Sessions typically include a feature presentation on projects or programs by a group member followed by Q&A and discussion. Those who have participated in the Volunteer Program Working Group have space to connect with others and discuss successes and challenges on topics, such as adapting volunteer-related activities and programs in response to Covid-19, using databases and volunteer management platforms, volunteer onboarding and training best practices, and much more.

Working Group participants have found tremendous value in learning and sharing with colleagues, especially learning from organizations that offer "outside-the-box" takes on many topics. Arizona Trail Association Volunteer Program Manager Wendy Lotze regularly participates in the Volunteer Program Working Group. She points out that "...long-distance trail systems have a highly specialized set of challenges and opportunities," and says that working with other trails professionals to solve common problems "is a tremendous relief". Lotze says that she was "amazed at the diversity of backgrounds and expertise" in the group and that "Being able to draw

knowledge and experience from each other has made the experience well worth the time invested."

The Working Group welcomes ideas for discussion and new members to enhance exchange. This group sets its own priorities around resource and idea sharing. Benefits of sharing and discussion include learning how to approach challenges in new ways and feeling heard and understood about the challenges you face.

This flexible, online program model has inspired PNTS to launch additional forums for member exchange for other priority topics within the National Trails community. In Spring 2021, PNTS organized its first forums on trail operations and next generation program management. The most recent Trail Operations Forum included a discussion on strategies to address issues with National Trail funding and cooperative management.

PNTS Working Groups provide trail professionals with valuable opportunities for peer exchange and discussion, along with the chance to gain new understanding on common issues faced by trail organizations. Together, this opportunity to reflect and share with a group of like-minded professionals—and to find ways to avoid "reinventing the wheel"—is immeasurable.



For more info on PNTS working groups please visit:

<https://pnts.org/new/working-groups/>

## Thru-Hiking Like a Warrior

“Warrior Expeditions” provide post-combat healing on National Trails.

Once an obscure bit of outdoor-industry jargon, the term “thru-hike” has become increasingly common in the American lexicon. As the demand for access to outdoor recreation continues to rise and social media makes it easier to follow the adventures of long-distance hikers than ever before, the concept of thru-hiking is making its way out of obscurity and onto the bucket lists of a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts.

Most trails enthusiasts would at least be familiar enough with the phrase “Warrior Hike” to recognize it as a term referring to a thru-hike completed by a military veteran after their term of service. Few, however, realize that the concept of the “thru-hike”—and perhaps the existence of the entire National Trails System, itself—actually started with one combat veteran’s search for post-service peace of mind.

In 1948, WWII veteran Earl Shaffer became the first person to hike the entire length of what we know today as the Appalachian Trail. According to Shaffer, one of his motivations for this first-of-its-kind, 2,000 mile thru-hike was a desire to “walk the Army out of (his) system.” Over 70 years later, the veteran-led nonprofit Warrior Expeditions continues to harness the healing powers of nature and long-distance hiking, biking, and paddling to help combat veterans transition from their wartime experiences to civilian life.

Warrior Expeditions was founded in 2013 by Marine Corps combat veteran Sean Gobin after he experienced his own post-combat healing while thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. One of Warrior Expeditions’ primary goals is to teach veterans to use the outdoors as a long-term coping strategy for mental and physical health issues arising from their military service.

To do this, veterans are first outfitted with full gear, equipment, and clothing. They attend a training session at the start of their journey and are shadowed for the first few days on the trail by a seasoned hiker and representative of the organization to ensure their safety. Veterans are also grouped together at the beginning of their journeys to promote camaraderie and support. Warrior Expeditions also coordinates overnight stops approximately weekly in trail towns along the course of each Warrior’s three-to-six-month-long trek. Community volunteers—often veterans’ organizations,

trail association members, or other outdoor enthusiasts—provide logistical and moral support. Veterans receive monthly resupply stipends and all needed gear replacement along the way.

The results are life-changing. Since the beginning, Warrior Expeditions has worked with psychologists to track the mental health benefits of extended outdoor expeditions. In pre- and post-expedition mental health surveys, veterans consistently show significant improvements in physical and mental well-being, including meaningful decreases in anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms. A common participant sentiment is that the experience is like “hitting a reset button.”

Warrior Expeditions has launched Warrior Hike programs on six National Scenic and Historic Trails (Appalachian, Arizona, Continental Divide, Pacific Crest, Florida, and Ice Age) as well as the Buckeye Trail in Ohio and Mountains to Sea Trail in North Carolina. To accommodate veterans who may be unable to hike long distances, the organization also launched Warrior Paddle on the Mississippi River and Warrior Bike from Washington DC to Washington State.

Close coordination with trail organizations and agencies has been important to successful programming. “We have great collaborative relationships with trail alliances and associations across America,” says Sean Gobin. “They’ve provided us with trail data, connected us to community supporters, and have been instrumental in helping our veterans find peace and healing outdoors.”

Warrior Expeditions is currently working on expanding the reach of their outdoor therapy programs through the development of an online platform that will share training methods and serve as a way for veterans to connect in their local communities through outdoor activities.



For more information on Warrior Expeditions’ programs, including how your organization can work with them on interpretive programming and/or hosting Warrior Expeditions on your trail, visit [WarriorExpeditions.org](http://WarriorExpeditions.org) or contact Angela Miller at [amiller@warriorhike.org](mailto:amiller@warriorhike.org).



**Above:** A group of “Warrior Hikers” poses at the Continental Divide NST’s Southern terminus after a successful expedition; **Below:** Two Warrior Hikers on the Ice Age NST. Both photos courtesy of Warrior Expeditions.



## ‘America the Beautiful’ on National Trails

National Trails and Public Lands Advocates react to the Biden Administration's call for conservation.



Photo of the Connecticut River from the New England NST courtesy Bart Smith.

On May 6, 2021, a 24-page report called “Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful” outlined a vision of a locally led, voluntary, nationwide effort to “conserve and restore the lands and waters upon which we all depend, and that bind us together as Americans”. The report was submitted to the National Climate Task Force by the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the White House’s Council on Environmental Quality to provide initial recommendations on how to advance an inclusive and collaborative conservation vision following President Biden’s Executive Order 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.”

A central recommendation of that report was a call to “join together in pursuit of a goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030”. In addition to this call-to-action, the “America the Beautiful” report lays out eight core principles that should be adhered to while pursuing that goal, including “Honor(ing) Tribal Sovereignty and Support(ing) the Priorities of Tribal Nations,” creating jobs and supporting healthy communities, using “Science as a Guide,” and “Honor(ing) Private Property Rights and Support(ing) the Voluntary Stewardship Efforts of Private Landowners”.

What follows are reactions to this report from a few organizations and partners representing a cross-section of National Trails System stakeholders.

"As the nation’s first all-water National Historic Trail, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail provides a framework to achieve large landscape conservation as it connects national wildlife refuges, national parks and trails, and significant Indigenous sites such as Werowocomoco, a place of Indigenous leadership and ancestral homeland on Virginia’s York River. A national 30 x 30 conservation goal will contribute to the ongoing conservation efforts happening in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and it will also help to ensure that the Chesapeake Trail, and the associated Indigenous sites and history, will be preserved and recognized for the benefit of this and future generations."



**Joel Dunn, President and CEO**  
Chesapeake Conservancy

"These actions are a firm and decisive step toward a healthier environment and improved access to our nation’s special places for all communities and for all people. The America The Beautiful Initiative is a powerful opportunity to begin to address the historic inequities that have existed not only in where accessible green spaces are located—but who they are protected for. Community engagement is an integral part to this goal if it is to be successful. We must let them define what we are building for our collective future from the start, because failure to do this is simply not an option for any of us who wish to see the planet and all of our people thrive in the future."



**Teresa Ana Martinez, Executive Director**  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition

(continued from previous page)

"No one will argue with the statement included in the America the Beautiful report, "...[that] nature is essential to the health, well-being, and prosperity of every family and every community in America." As conversations begin to take place on how best to achieve the lofty goals included in that report, we must remember that language matters.

In working with our private landowners along the National Trails System, the approach to conserving 30% of the land and waters by 2030 may be seen by some as the first step to an implied land-grab.

Some of the concerns that have been expressed include loss of private property; infringement on private property rights (such as forcing landowners to open property for access to trails, hunting, fishing, etc.); and a subversive attempt to take land out of production, resulting in shifting the tax burden to others through higher property taxes or added taxations. The mere mention of "30 x 30" may be met with distrust and the fear of a hidden agenda to control natural resources, economies, and free choice. In some cases, this distrust and fear could lead to fractured relationships with our National Trails landowners.

As we move forward in these discussions, remember that the exuberance felt and expressed by some for the "30 x 30" initiative is not always met with that same attitude. As we develop plans and/or materials we must always remember—language does matter."



**Joanne VanCovern, Manager**  
*Santa Fe Trail Association*

"The Next 100 Coalition applauds the Biden Administration's efforts to advance equity and access for all communities as part of its ambitious conservation goal to conserve 30 percent of the U.S. lands and oceans by 2030, an inclusive and bold vision for safeguarding America's lands, water, and wildlife as part of the America The Beautiful Campaign.

President Biden's call for a "whole of government" approach to advancing racial and social justice for communities of colors across the country extends to the work of the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, NOAA, and all other land and ocean management agencies. The principles and areas of focus outlined in the report titled "Conserving and Restoring America The Beautiful" are central to advancing equity in access to all the benefits of conservation for communities of color and demonstrate a commitment by these agencies to answer the President's call for racial justice and social justice.

Communities of color and other historically marginalized communities are hopeful that this ambitious goal is an opportunity to advance their conservation priorities and an investment into their communities under the Biden Administration to the creation of new parks, jobs, and other opportunities that better serve communities of color, urban communities, Native and Tribal communities and provide equitable access to all the benefits of the outdoors."



*Statement from Next 100 Coalition*

"The Biden Administration's America the Beautiful initiative is a first step in implementing ambitious and important goals for climate, conservation and environmental justice, and the report rightly highlights the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to achieving these goals. The successful campaign for full, permanent funding of LWCF shows that conservation is a bipartisan issue that brings people together.

'The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of many tools available to communities working with landowners to meet their conservation and outdoor recreation needs,' said Lesley Kane Szyzal, Chair of the LWCF Coalition. 'We applaud the Administration for bringing together a coalition of stakeholders including local community voices, Tribes, businesses, conservation and recreation groups, environmental justice advocates, and many others for this critically important conservation effort. While LWCF has touched nearly every community in America, we know that there is so much more to do to address the impacts of climate change, keep forests as forests, protect water, wildlife, and our way of life. We look forward to working with the Biden Administration in their efforts to meet the promise of its conservation initiative,' said Kane Szyzal.



*Statement from LWCF Coalition*



For a link to the full "America the Beautiful" report and links to content dispelling false information about the content of that report, visit [pnts.org/new/america-the-beautiful](https://pnts.org/new/america-the-beautiful).

## North Country Trail Association Helps Secure 242 Acres on the Minnesota-Wisconsin Border

With help from partners, NCTA preserved a mile of trail and eliminated a nearly one-mile-long road walk.

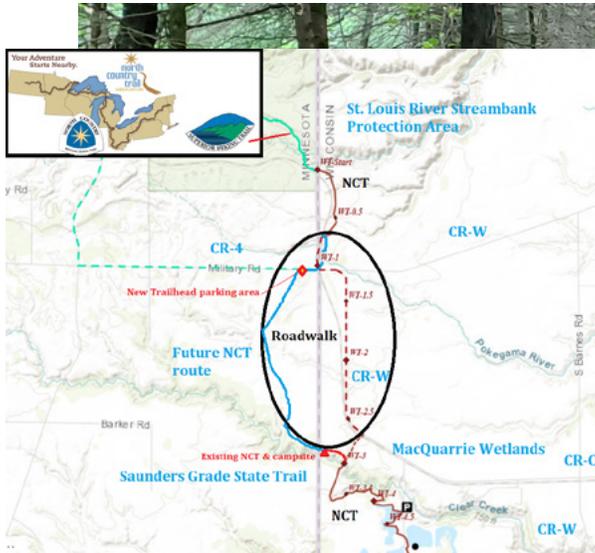


Photo courtesy NCTA Regional Director Matthew Davis;  
Map of the area courtesy NCTA.

One landowner's reticence to provide an easement or sell to the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) put a kink in the National Park Service's planned route for the Trail on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border.

As a result, after exiting an area known as the MacQuarrie Wetlands, NCNST hikers were forced to trace a former railroad bed that was converted into a multi-use recreational trail known as the Saunders Grade State Trail for a short stint before beginning a less-than-scenic, three-quarter-mile-long walk along a railroad service road, including one crossing of a busy railroad at the state line.

Bill Menke and Peter Nordgren, two members of the North Country Trail Association's (NCTA) Brule-St. Croix Chapter, have been working for more than a year to obtain an easement from Enbridge Inc., an energy company that owns a portion of the land in the area as part of an oil pipeline, to get the NCNST to an off-road trail for a portion of that road walk. Those negotiations are still in process and, even with that easement in place, much of the road walk would have remained unless another option came to light.

In the spring of 2019, Nordgren noticed a "For Sale" sign on a 242-acre piece of property on the Minnesota side of the state line that offered a potential solution to their continuity problem. Initial listing prices were high, so NCTA contacted potential partners on both sides of the state line to gauge interest in working to secure the property. Through this outreach, they identified Greg Bernu, Land Commissioner of Carlton County, MN, as a collaborator.

Like NCTA, Carlton County, MN was unable to purchase the property at the listed asking price. Bernu worked with NCTA to identify and recruit Pheasants Forever, a grantmaking conservation partner, to provide funds. Pheasants Forever is a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, MN that is "dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail and other wildlife."

Pheasants Forever awarded a \$312,650 grant to NCTA and Carlton County following their submission of a joint proposal.

NCTA and Carlton County also provided \$7,500 each to meet the required financial match for the award to purchase the land. The land is now held and managed by Carlton County, MN. Ultimately, the project conserved over 240 acres of habitat, watershed, and watershed and permanently protected a full mile of The North Country Trail. Once the work on that section of Trail is complete, the project will redirect Trail users from the three-quarter-mile-long walk along a road to a safer and more scenic trail on forested lands.

The NCTA is currently at work building the new section of Trail and they anticipate that their work on the project will come to an end in late 2022.

### Project Quick Facts:

**Area secured:** 242 acres

**Trail preserved:** 1 mile

**Road walk removed:** ¾ mile

**Funding partners:** Pheasants Forever; Carlton County, MN; NCTA

**Land manager:** Carlton County, MN

**Cost of Acquisition:** \$327,650  
(\$312,650 grant + \$15,000 match)

## Fire Watch on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Two brush fires on the AT within two weeks have officials and land managers on alert.



Firefighters examine the damage of the East Mountain Fire. Photo courtesy Cosmo Catalano, Jr.

On April 30, 2021, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) announced a 7.4 mile trail closure in Virginia near the popular hiking destinations of Dragon’s Tooth and McAfee Knob as a result of a fire burning in the area. The fire was contained quickly and the section of trail was reopened the following day.

Two weeks later, on Friday, May 14, another blaze erupted near the Appalachian Trail (AT), this time in the Clarksburg State Forest of Massachusetts. This fire spread more rapidly as a result of dry conditions and high winds, ultimately charring roughly 950 acres in what came to be recognized as the state’s largest fire in more than two decades.

Though the so-called “East Mountain Fire” crossed the AT, the trail was never officially closed. Still, the ATC issued an alert about the fire via its website and on social media, and firefighters posted in the area warned hikers to avoid the trail. It took more than 120 firefighters from 19 different departments working around the clock to contain the fire and, by Tuesday, May 18, the suppression efforts were reduced to “mop-up” operations.

According to ATC Northeast Senior Regional Director, Hawk Metheny, the blaze had little effect on recreation as it came just before peak season for hikers. Further, the overnight campsites in the state of Massachusetts were still closed due to Covid-19 precautions through the end of May. This made it unlikely that any overnight campers would have been in the area at that time—a stroke of luck since the most notable damage resulting from the fire was the destruction of a single tent platform near the AT in an area known as the Sherman Brook Campsite.

The East Mountain Fire burned close to the ground, consuming dry debris, brush, and leaf litter in its path, but it never spread to the forest crown. Still, Metheny says that the increase in fire

incidents along the AT is a potential cause for concern. Metheny, who has worked in AT management for 30 years, says that, 20 years ago, a forest fire on the Appalachian Trail “was a very rare thing.” And, though he points out that it’s not the same level of threat faced by trails out west (for reference, according to the National Interagency Fire Center, there were 71 active fires burning in the US as this story was being written and all were in States located west of the Mississippi River), he says that the AT is “seeing an increase” in fires in the last several years and that closures of the Trail due to fire have become more-or-less an annual occurrence.

Some of the increase in forest fire frequency on the Trail may be a result of climate change, Metheny says. He says that the snow melt this year happened more quickly than usual, leading to an early start for the spring fire season. Metheny also points out anecdotally that he’s seen fewer soaking rains in the New England forests than in previous years, which may be leaving the forests dryer and

therefore more susceptible to fires.

Since the vast majority of fires near the AT are caused by humans, Metheny says that the ATC’s preventative measures are focused primarily on educating campers about campfire bans and the proper use of cookstoves. They are also working to make sure local firefighters are aware of the most direct routes by which they can access different points along the AT in the event that a fire does occur. And, though the land managers along the AT have never had to resort to employing prescribed burns in the off-season as a way to reduce fuel and prevent larger fires, Metheny says that the notion is “on the table” and “something we’ll continue to discuss.”



A fallen birch tree was charred but not consumed by the East Mountain Fire. Photo courtesy Cosmo Catalano, Jr.

## National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2021 'America's Most Endangered Places List' Includes Sites on NHTs



A family outside the Trujillo Adobe. Credit: Spanish Town Heritage Foundation. © National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) has announced its Most Endangered Places List for 2021 and, out of 11 sites included this year, it includes important sites on two existing, and one proposed, National Historic Trails (NHTs): the Selma to Montgomery NHT, and Old Spanish NHT, and the proposed Route 66 NHT. This is the 34th year that NTHP has put out such a list and, of the over 300 sites listed in that time, 95 percent are still preserved—a remarkable record of success for the program. Below you will find the NTHP's short descriptions of the three sites that are on existing or proposed NHTs.

### Trujillo Adobe: Old Spanish NHT, Riverside, CA

Constructed in 1862 by the Trujillo (pronounced true-HEE-yo) family, and today the oldest known building in Riverside, the Trujillo Adobe (pictured above) tells the story of migration and settlement in inland southern California. Lorenzo Trujillo, who originally settled in the area when it was still part of Mexico, was a Genízaro—one of many Native Americans who were captured, sometimes held in slavery, sometimes baptized and raised by Spanish colonists. Trujillo led many expeditions as a scout across the Old Spanish Trail, enabling immigrants to settle inland California, and his home became the beating heart of a community known as La Placita de los Trujillos, Spanish Town, and Agua Mansa.

The Adobe is now deteriorated and fragile, protected only by a wooden structure (also in need of repair) that hides the Adobe from view. Local advocates hope to transform the Adobe into a cultural and educational site to recognize and take pride in the multiple cultures that shaped and continue to define the region.

### Selma to Montgomery March Campsites: Selma to Montgomery NHT, Selma, AL



Photo courtesy NPS.

In March 1965, as thousands of Civil Rights demonstrators marched from Selma to Montgomery to campaign for full voting rights, three African American farm owners along the 54-mile route courageously offered their properties as overnight camp sites for the marchers, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, and Congressman John Lewis. These families are among those who Dr. King called the “ordinary people with extraordinary vision” as they risked their lives in support of the Civil Rights movement.

Today, several of these sites—the David Hall Farm and Robert Gardner Farm—are still proudly owned by the same families and are situated along the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, but their incredible stories remain largely untold. Many of the farm properties now need stabilization, repair, and interpretation to expand the narrative of this significant landscape in Civil Rights history and share the stories of these families, whose tremendous bravery helped to change American history.

(continued from previous page)



Threatt Filling Station in Luther, OK. Photo cropped from original. Credit: Melodibit, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36327953>

## Threatt Filling Station and Family Farm: Proposed Route 66 NHT, Luther, OK

The entrepreneurial Threatt (pronounced THREET) family first sold produce from their 150-acre family farm outside Luther, Oklahoma, in the early 1900s, and over time expanded their offerings to include a filling station (built in 1915), ballfield, outdoor stage, and bar. The filling station was the only known Black-owned and -operated gas station along Route 66 during the Jim Crow era, making it a safe haven for Black travelers. The farm also reportedly provided refuge to Black Oklahomans displaced by the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

The Threatt family still proudly owns the property and envisions revitalizing this site in time for the 2026 Centennial of Route 66, starting Route 66's second century off with a more representative narrative of the legendary "Mother Road." But they need partners and financial support to fully restore the filling station and bar and do justice to its stories of Black entrepreneurship and travel.



See NTHP's List of the 11 Most Endangered Places in America at: [savingplaces.org/stories/11-most-endangered-historic-places-2021](https://savingplaces.org/stories/11-most-endangered-historic-places-2021)

## Outreach

by Caitlin Campbell, Visual Information Specialist

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

# Lewis & Clark NHT Junior Ranger Activity Book Engages Kids of All Ages



A Park Ranger swears in a group of Junior Rangers at the Lewis and Clark Trail Headquarters in Omaha, NE. Photo courtesy NPS.

The Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger program is now available at more than 30 locations in 13 States across the country. To earn a Junior Ranger badge, kids work on an activity book that engages them where they are and connects them to the national Lewis and Clark Expedition story. To make the program relevant to sites along all 4,900 miles of trail, planning and community input were essential.

First, Trail officials asked a small group of National Park Service interpreters with Tribal affiliations for general input. Considerations included identifying the intended audience; examining how needs would vary across multiple public land agencies, State parks, county parks, Tribal heritage centers, and museums; the overall goal of the program; and, finally, identifying the program's key messages.

Next, employees of the Lewis and Clark Trail created a "book map," which assigned key messages and activities to each booklet spread. This rough outline streamlined review and prevented big late-stage changes

that could undo graphic design and illustration efforts. Trail staff wrote and designed the booklet inhouse.

Ten locations across the Trail served as test pilots to review and provide feedback on the Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger activity booklet's first draft.

Meanwhile, Trail staff developed innovative elements to boost engagement and accessibility for all. Online read-along videos narrate the activity pages and audio-describe them to non-sighted participants. A new Native Names webpage allows participants to hear indigenous names of plants and animals. Custom 3D tactile maps of the Lewis and Clark Trail help non-sighted participants understand the trail route. The team also developed an Online Partner Toolkit for host sites.

The Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger program launched on National Trails Day 2021. Participants and host sites have reported high engagement. As kids fill-in-the-blanks, they're learning about tribal homelands. As they decode messages, they're seeing expedition members' diverse backgrounds and skills. This innovative, accessible program is showing kids that the Lewis and Clark Trail story is for everyone—just as planned.



Credit: Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, Sioux City, IA.



For more on the Lewis and Clark NHT Junior Ranger Book, including where to find them, visit:

[www.nps.gov/lecl/learn/kidsyouth/beajuniorranger.htm](https://www.nps.gov/lecl/learn/kidsyouth/beajuniorranger.htm)

# National Trails System Council Update

2021-22 marks a year of transition for the National Trails System Council.

As many of you know, the National Trails System Council (formerly known as the Federal Interagency Council on Trails) is in the middle of a transition year for many reasons. One is that new staff assuming National Trails System (NTS) leadership positions in the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service came into place between August and November 2020, replacing the previous Council leadership. There's also a new administration, the continued global pandemic, and several other new people and NTS partnership opportunities developing as we look ahead to the next century of the System.

Change and transition bring opportunity, and the Council is taking incremental steps to leverage this opportunity. During the current year, the Council is focusing on three primary goal areas: communication, training, and data. The Council is also continuing to support the existing National Trails Administrators Roundtable to stimulate consistency and best practices in trail administration and activities across the 30 Congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails.

This year, the Council is activating the National Recreation Trails Roundtable to explore best practices and consistency in the recognition of this class of trails that are recognized by the Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior. And, based on the initiative of National Trail Administrators, the Council is activating the Connecting and Side Trails Task Force to begin exploring best practices related to identification of this class of trails.

The Council meets at least four times annually. Two of those meetings focus on informational sharing with partners. In addition to the agencies listed earlier, other Federal Council members include the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Highway Administration, and other invited Federal agencies. The next Council informational meeting with partners is planned to be held virtually at the end of August.

For more information on the Council, please feel free to review the current interagency Memorandum of Understanding that describes it, or reach out to John, Carin, Brenda or other agency members for more information.

**National Park Service (Current Chair):**  
*John Cannella, National Manager, National Trails System & National Wild and Scenic Rivers System*  
 • (505) 660-5480 • john\_cannella@nps.gov

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*Carin Farley, Program Lead for the National Scenic and Historic Trails* • (505)263-9586 • cfarley@blm.gov

**U.S. Forest Service (FY 2022-23 Chair):**  
*Brenda Yankoviak, National Trail Program Manager*  
 • (720) 618-0262 • brenda.yankoviak@usda.gov

View the Interagency Memo of Understanding here:  
[https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/upload/National\\_Trails\\_System\\_MOU\\_2017-2027.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/upload/National_Trails_System_MOU_2017-2027.pdf)

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

### We Welcome:

**Randy Moore, Forest Service Chief**



Photo courtesy USDAFS.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the appointment of Randy Moore as the 20th Chief of the USDA Forest Service on June 28, 2021. Moore, who served as Regional Forester in the Pacific Southwest Region in California since 2007, is the first African American to hold the position.

**Doug Neighbor, Superintendent Natchez Trace Parkway**



Photo courtesy NPS.

National Park Service (NPS) acting Regional Director Pedro Ramos announced the selection of Douglas "Doug" Neighbor as the new superintendent of Natchez Trace Parkway, Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site, and Tupelo National Battlefield. Neighbor is a 30-year NPS veteran.

**Lindsey Steinwachs, USDAFS Pacific Crest Trail Administrator**



Photo courtesy USDAFS.

The USDA Forest Service selected Lindsey Steinwachs as the new Pacific Crest Trail Administrator. She has a Master's Degree in Parks and Resource Management and several years of experience working in National Forests along the trail, including serving as a recreation officer in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada.

### We Bid Farewell to:

- **Laurie Potteiger:** Retired as Appalachian Trail Conservancy Information Services Manager after 33 years of service.
- **Bridget Likely:** Stepped down as New England National Scenic Trail Planner with the Appalachian Mountain Club.
- **Roger Peterson:** Retired as USDA Forest Service Public Affairs Specialist for the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail after 35 years of service.

Submit 'Comings and Goings' at your organization for publication in Pathways' print or online versions to: [communication@pnts.org](mailto:communication@pnts.org)

Find more 'Comings and Goings' and links to features at:  
<https://pnts.org/new/summer-2021-comings-and-goings>



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# Star-Spangled Banner NHT's 'Roving Ranger' Brings the Trail to You

Trail will focus on underserved communities with their new "mobile visitors' center".



*The Chesapeake Roving Ranger—the inspiration behind the SSBNHT's new mobile visitors' center—has found success in engaging new Trail audiences. Credit: NPS / Patrick Smith*

The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail (SSBNHT) is creating a mobile visitors' center to appear at various Trail partner sites and public events throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. The mobile center—made up of a retrofitted step van similar in size and style to a delivery truck—will provide many of the functions of a standard visitors' center and be a place for visitors to interact with an NPS ranger, pick up brochures about the Trail, and participate in educational and interpretive programs.

The inspiration for this project came from the Chesapeake Roving Ranger—the mobile visitors' center created for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (CJSCNHT) in partnership with Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and the Chesapeake Conservancy. In three years, the Chesapeake Roving Ranger went to 78 events and engaged over 11,000 people.

The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail has purchased a truck and will soon begin transforming it from the standard manufacturer's design into an eye-catching and welcoming vehicle. The first step is the design, fabrication, and installation of a full, four-color exterior vehicle wrap (a large vinyl decal applied directly over paint) that features beautiful imagery to highlight the Trail's interpretive themes, natural landscapes, and recreational activities. The design will identify the visitor contact station, reinforce the National Park Service Brand, and increase awareness of the Trail. The second step will be the design and fabrication of the van's cargo space, which will involve the creation of cabinets, shelves and drawers, lighting and electrical systems, solar panel and power supply, and the installation of a pop-up window. The goal is for the truck to be ready by summer 2022.

It has become clear that there is a need for National Trails to 1) directly engage under-resourced communities and 2) actively remove barriers to learning about important events in American History from varied and diverse perspectives. This mobile visitors' center will allow the National Park Service to travel to individuals who live and work along the SSBNHT but may not have the means or opportunity to experience and engage with the Trail firsthand. This mobility will enable representatives of the SSBNHT and its partners to both increase accessibility to SSBNHT resources and expand its reach to a wider and more diverse audience.

To learn more about the mobile visitors' center projects at both the CJSCNHT and the SSBNHT, contact Kate Marks at [kate\\_marks@nps.gov](mailto:kate_marks@nps.gov).



Find links to learn more about how the CJSCNHT and two National Recreation Areas use mobile visitor centers to engage communities at:

<https://pnts.org/new/SSBNHT-Roving-Ranger>



*Pathways Across America*  
Partnership for the National Trails System  
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## Event Calendar

[www.pnts.org/new/events/](http://www.pnts.org/new/events/)



*Event dates/details are subject to change.*

Sept 13 - 16	38th Annual OCTA Convention	Elko, NV	<a href="http://octa-trails.org/convention-information">octa-trails.org/convention-information</a>
Sept 23 - 25	Santa Fe Trail Association Symposium – 200th Anniversary Commemoration	La Junta, CO	<a href="http://2021sfts.com">2021sfts.com</a>
Sept 25	National Public Lands Day	National	<a href="http://neefusa.org/npld/">neefusa.org/npld/</a>
Nov 1 - 4	PNTS Virtual National Trails Workshop	Remote	<a href="http://pnts.org/new/our-work/workshops">pnts.org/new/our-work/workshops</a>

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