



National Recreation Trails

NRT NEWS

FALL 2002

News and resources for National Recreation Trails managers

Photo contest for NRTs will highlight diversity of trails

American Trails is sponsoring a contest for photographs of National Recreation Trails across the country. We will provide awards in several categories and show off entries on the NRT Web site. The goal is to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and to make more Americans familiar with these great trails. We're looking for good photos of trail users as well as features of interest, signs, special facilities, management issues, construction and volunteers.

The deadline is June 30, 2003, to give four seasons of photography for entrants. Entries may be displayed on the Web site in the meantime. You may use digital formats (JPEG or TIFF) or slides or quality prints. Digital images may be e-mailed if attachments are under 1.5 mg. Otherwise please mail a CD (not CD-RW) or 100 mg. Zip disk to American Trails. Prints, slides, and photos will be returned if postage and a mailing label are enclosed. Please limit entries to 10 photos per person and identify the NRT as well as the specific location on the trail.

By entering the contest you are giving us permission to use the photos on the Web sites of the NRT Program, American Trails, and the National Park Service, as well as their non-commercial publications. If you have questions about the contest, contact American Trails at (530) 547-2060 or NRT@AmericanTrails.org.

New NRTs announced by U. S. Secretary of Interior

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton and National Park Service Director Fran Mainella attended a May 31 preview of National Trails Day to promote the use of trails as "pathways to health." Gathering at the C & O Canal National Historical Park, Norton designated 26 new National Recreation Trails in 16 states.

The Interior Department officials were joined by **Congresswoman Connie Morella**, park superintendent **Doug Faris**, American Hiking Society Director **Mary Margaret Sloan**, and other recreation leaders from the local, state, and private sectors.

"Our celebration is twofold because partnerships build trails and trails build healthy Americans," said Secretary Norton. "Promoting trails for health is part of a larger effort by the Bush Administration to promote community partnerships aimed at encouraging physical fitness."

Earlier this summer, **Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson** made a call for greater physical activity by Americans in light of a new Centers for Disease Control & Prevention study showing that obesity-related hospital costs increased threefold over the past 20 years. The NRT program is just one effort at publicizing the role of trails in improving fitness in America.

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General James A. Van Fleet Trail State Park

This 29-mile converted rail-trail is one of the new National Recreation Trails designated in 2002. It provides recreation and wildlife viewing while serving as a natural habitat corridor connecting the cities of Mabel and Polk City. This trail is one of three state park-managed trails and passes through the Green Swamp "Area of Critical State Concern," a 322,690-acre wetland area. Trail activities include, walking, biking and in-line skating.



Events celebrate America's

The Schuylkill River Water Trail maps recreation sites

As part of the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area and Pennsylvania Heritage Corridor, this 142-mile water trail provides recreational opportunities throughout five counties along the historic Schuylkill River. It is home to many natural features including scenic vistas, waterfalls, and wetland areas. In addition to these natural features, the trail also provides recreation for people who enjoy activities like camping and kayaking.

The development of the trail began in 2000 when the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission entered into an agreement with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association to develop a river-long, seamless water trail from the headwaters to Philadelphia.

Community meetings were held to gather information about potential access points, camping opportunities, points of interest (historical and natural) and river navigation information including portages around dams.

The Schuylkill River Water Trail Guide was developed to provide people with information on accessing the river, and discovering its heritage and natural treasures.

The guides are available through the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, and an order form can be downloaded from their Web site:

www.schuylkillriver.org/maps/water_trails.asp



Mineral Belt Trail interprets Colorado mining heritage

Leadville's Mineral Belt National Recreational Trail is moving into its next phase of development with the new interpretive signs. The 12-mile trail circumnavigates the City of Leadville and Colorado's largest National Historic Landmark District. The trail traces the full circle of Leadville's fabled mining history, from the first gold strikes, through the halcyon days of the silver boom and bust, right up to the present day reclamation efforts. The trail makes use of old mining roads and the grades of three railroads that forged their way through tortuous mountain passes to Leadville

The new signs will include 26 etched anodized aluminum signs, comprised of historic photos and text commemorating significant individual sites along the trail. Funding for building of the signs was provided through a \$7,500 EPA Superfund Redevelopment grant, with installation by volunteers from the Mineral Belt Trail Committee and its "Adopt a Trail" program. Also, 14 pieces of historic mining equipment, donated by ASARCO Mining Company, will be placed at strategic points along the trail.

The second phase will install wayside exhibits at selected overlooks and information kiosks at the six trailheads to display trail maps, event information, historic interpretation, trail information and advisories, and "rules of the trail." The kiosks and exhibits are funded through a \$73,000 Colorado Historical Society Grant, Lake County funds, and volunteer contributions.

A Mineral Belt Trail Guide is available for \$2 from www.leadvilleusa.com/Chamber/coupon.htm or from the Leadville/Lake County Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 861, Leadville, CO 80461



NRT NEWS is the publication for managers and supporters of National Recreation Trails, published by American Trails in partnership with the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. If you have an interesting story about your NRT, good photos to share, or volunteers to praise, please let us know. Thanks! —Stuart Macdonald, NRT NEWS editor.

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Trail supporters celebrate New NRT designations

In addition to inclusion in the National Trails System, each of the 26 National Recreation Trails (see list at end of article) received a certificate of designation and National Recreation Trail markers. Throughout the country there are now more than 800 National Recreation Trails in every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, totaling more than 9,000 miles.

Following the designations, Secretary Norton presented the first certificate and plaque representing the Baltimore and Annapolis Trail Park to David Dionne, Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks Trails Superintendent, and Elizabeth Wyble, Anne Arundel County Trails President.

After the presentation, hikers from the American Hiking Society, National Recreation and Parks Association, Student Conservation Association and home schooling students joined the Secretary for a short walk along the C&O Canal towpath and the adjacent Capital Crescent Trail.

Like the new recreation trails, the 185-mile-long towpath and Capital Crescent Trail are examples of partnerships and of the many different kinds of trails in addition to those in the National Trails System. The canal, for example, is a national historical park administered by the National Park Service. The National Park System includes 763 miles of paved trails and more than 12,000 miles of unpaved trails. (Moreover, Interior's Bureau of Land Management maintains 11,000 miles of trails.) The Capital Crescent trail is managed in a partnership between the National Park Service and Montgomery County, Maryland.

"These trails exist today because of the conservation successes of individuals and groups that sought to make a difference," said NPS superintendent Faris. Thousands of individuals on a great variety of land and water trails around the nation participated in the 10th annual National Trails Day celebration. For example, an event at Grand Canyon National Park marked the opening of the first four miles of the planned Grand Canyon Greenway, which will total 73 miles of scenic hiking, biking and wheelchair paths on both rims of the Grand Canyon. Some of the newly honored national recreation trails also had events— such as a canoeing and kayaking "sojourn" on the Schuylkill River Water Trail in Pennsylvania.

The National Trails System Act of 1968 encourages the Secretary of the Interior to recognize such existing community trails that qualify as additions to the National

Trails System. The Act promotes enjoyment and appreciation of trails while encouraging greater public access. National Recreation Trails are components of the National Trails System. In addition to recreation trails, the system includes national scenic, national historic, and side or connecting trails. The national scenic and national historic trails may only be designated by an Act of Congress, while national recreation and side or connecting trails are designated by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.

The National Recreation Trail program is nonregulatory and basically provides technical assistance and support for outreach efforts. The National Park Service and USDA Forest Service jointly administer the program with help from a number of other federal and nonprofit partners— notably American Trails, which hosts the National Recreation Trail Web site at www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails. Applications are based on diverse partnerships, and trails have already been designated on federal, state, local, and privately owned land throughout the country.

The new National Recreation Trail Designations are:

- Air Line State Park Trail - South (CT)
- Baltimore and Annapolis Trail Park (MD)
- Central Canal Towpath (IN)
- Gateway State Trail (MN)
- General James A. Van Fleet State Trail (FL)
- Hay Creek Trail (ND)
- Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail (OR)
- John Wayne Pioneer Trail (WA)
- Lake Wobegon Trail (MN)
- Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Trail (SD)
- Lower Cache River Trail (IL)
- Monon Rail-Trail (IN)
- New River Trail State Park (VA)
- North Fork Crow River Trail (MN)
- Pacific Northwest Trail (WA)
- Pleasant Run (IN)
- Port Royal Sound Adventure Trail (SC)
- Poudre River Trail Corridor (CO)
- Sacramento River Trail and Sacramento Rail-Trail (CA)
- Schuylkill River Water Trail (PA)
- Silver Comet Trail (GA)
- Suncoast Trail (FL)
- The Rivanna Trail (VA)
- TNT Motorsports Park (SC)
- White River "Wapahani" (IN)

Additional NRT nominations were made for trails in the jurisdiction of the USDA Forest Service:

- Maah Daah Hey Trail (ND)
- Lake Almanor Trail (CA)
- Eagle Lake Trail (CA)

Monon Trail study reports on trail user attitudes

The Monon Trail in Indianapolis, Indiana, was just designated as a National Recreation Trail this year. In November, 2001, a detailed study of the trail and its users was completed, which we feel provides a good snapshot of trail benefits and concerns.

As part of the Indiana Trails Study of six different projects, the Monon Trail in Indianapolis was chosen to represent urban trails. The study included analyses of trail use, effects of trails on neighboring property, and economic impacts to determine negative and positive factors arising from trail development and trail conversion in Indiana.

Study Methodology

A major part of the study was to look at trail user attitudes, which we are presenting in this excerpt. The questions of most interest to trail managers included:

- who is using the trails
- how the trails are used
- how the trails are accessed
- opinions regarding management issues such as safety, security, maintenance, and signage

The project also looked the effects of trails on neighboring property including property value, damage, vandalism, salability of the property, and the underlying attitudes toward trail development.

To gather this information, a survey of trail users was completed by stopping trail users during one week each in July and August, in four locations, and over 3 periods in a day. The survey was designed with two stages; adult users were asked if they would participate in a short interview followed up by a more extensive mail survey.

Trail Counts

Estimates of traffic on the Monon Trail were done with the assistance of infrared trail counters in September and October of 2000. Monthly use totalled 55,148 and 45,606 respectively. Average daily trail traffic counts indicated:

- Highest use was on Saturdays in September and on Sundays in October.
- The other weekend days had second highest average traffic.
- Weekday traffic was higher in the beginning of the week and generally tapered off toward Friday.

The highest traffic recorded for a single hour on weekends was 554 in September and 635 in October, or 9 to 10 persons per minute. The highest weekday hour was 472 in September and 447 in October, or approximately 7 to 8 persons per minute.

Impacts on health and fitness

It is important to note that the trail was seen by trail users as a very important part of an active lifestyle. A large number of trail users who were surveyed used the trail for health and exercise (70.7%) or recreation (22.5%) purposes.

Those trail users who did start to participate in their chosen activity because of trail construction (21.4%) and are more active in their chosen activity after trail construction (82.1%), added about 3 hours more activity time to their schedule per week.

Having a nearby place to exercise is often cited as a spur to regular physical activity, and proximity to

this trail is a decisive factor in trail use. The vast majority of trail users surveyed were apparently local residents who felt the trail was very important to their activity level and continued participation. Nearly 80% indicated the trail was important to their chosen activity, with 30% indicating the trail was extremely important.

Trail users indicated they used the trail frequently, with 100 trail visitor days on average. Over 38% of users reported they used the trail in excess of 120 days in the past year. Percentages of modes of travel observed were:

Walk	49.9%
Bicycle	23.2%
Run/jog	14.4%
Skate	2.6%

Trail User Attitudes and Lifestyles

Monon trail users overwhelmingly indicated they were satisfied with the trail and their view of Indianapolis, as a city or community, was positively affected by the trail. Almost 97% of trail users indicated this high level of satisfaction and positive view of the area making their overall attitude toward the community more favorable.

Trail users were enthusiastic about their desire to spend more time on the trail. Nearly 85% of responding trail users indicating some degree of desire to spend more time on the trail. Reflecting this enthusiasm, over 70% of the trail users responding to the follow-up survey indicated they are attached, to some degree, to the Monon trail.

Finally, trail users indicated an understanding of the greater public benefits of greenways and trail development. Those greater public benefits of significant importance as expressed by trail users included positive impacts to health and fitness, public recreation, aesthetic beauty and community pride.



Survey Question: *Indicate how satisfied you are with the trail and its management. Indicate how satisfied you are with the following issues with a 1 being not at all satisfied and 7 being extremely satisfied.*

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Mean Satisfaction Rating</u>
Natural surroundings	5.82
Quiet settings	5.82
Trail Maintenance	5.77
Adequate access points	5.65
Rough trail surface	5.60
Maps, signs, and trail information	5.56
Proximity to home/office	5.53
Personal safety	5.52
Parking facilities	5.31
Safe road/stream intersections	5.13
Historic points of interest	5.08
Narrow trail width	4.99
Trail vandalism	4.90
Crowded conditions, congestion	4.60
Adequate ranger/safety patrols	4.57
Reckless behavior of trail users	4.43
Drinking water and toilet facilities	3.84

Trail User Problems/Safety Opinions

Nearly 95% of trail users indicate a feeling of safety, to some degree, while on the trail. Only about 5% of trail users expressed an opinion that the trail was unsafe or very unsafe. A significant percentage of users indicated that bike patrols and clean paths would increase their feelings of safety on the trail.

While there was a high level of satisfaction with the trail, and it is clearly an important part of many people’s lives, trail users also cited a number of problems. Most of the dissatisfaction seems to be related to the Monon Trail’s heavy use plus a lack of toilets and water.

Survey Question: *Which one item listed above do you feel is the most important problem on the trail?*

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Drinking fountains/toilets	23.7
Reckless behavior	19.3
Congestion	11.9
Safety	9.6
Road Safety	8.1
Vandalism	6.7
Width	5.9
Maintenance/dog feces	5.2
Access	3.0
Safety patrols	2.2
Signage	2.2
Proximity	1.5
Natural surroundings	0.7

Types of problems encountered with other trail users:

Not Courteous	28.5%
Blocking the Trail	26.1%
Too Fast	25.5%
Interfering	7.9%
Too Slow	0.6%

Again, the sheer popularity of the trail led 69.4% of trail users to indicate the trail is congested or very congested. However, 75% said they would not stop using the trail because of these problems.



Trail Demographics

Responding trail users were from a wide variety of trades and occupations reflective of the economy of Indianapolis. Generally, they described themselves as white, non-Hispanic, college educated users earning \$40,000 or more per year.

A small percentage of trail users reported a disability such as a learning impairment, visual impairment, or mobility impairment.

Trail Neighbor Opinions

Monon trail neighbors generally have a positive attitude toward the trail and feel it has improved the quality of their neighborhood. Trail neighbors were also satisfied with the public benefits provided by the trail. In addition, homeowners are supportive of the trail and generally feel it has increased the value and salability of their property.

In general, problems experienced by trail neighbors have decreased since development of the trail for public use. The majority of trail neighbors are also trail users, and use the trail approximately 3 days per week, especially during spring, summer and fall.

The Monon Trail Report and five other reports that are part of the Indiana Trails Study are available as downloadable PDF files on www.AmericanTrails.org (click on “Resources & Library” and select “Studies of Trail Use.”)



Monon Trail Report: a A Study of the Monon Trail in Indianapolis, Indiana, was funded by the Indiana Department of Transportation, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. The work was completed by Indiana University: the Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands and the Center for Urban Policy & the Environment.



National Recreation Trails

Trail Marker Sign Order Form

*Red, White & Blue signs are of logo as pictured above on a white field,
mounted on aluminum, with four corner holes for mounting.*

Please send the following trail marker signs for our National Recreation Trail:

_____ Small (4" X 4") Signs at \$5 each = _____

_____ Large (8" X 8") Signs at \$12 each = _____

(includes shipping and handling)

Order Date _____ Contact Name _____

Organization _____

Shipping Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____ Website _____

If paying by credit card: _____ Visa _____ Mastercard

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____ Name on Card _____

Signature _____

Please Make Checks Payable to: **American Trails**
P.O. Box 491797
Redding, CA 96049-1797

Credit Card Orders may be faxed to: (530) 547-2035 For Information call: (530) 547-2060

Community of Trails

National Trails Day gives NRTs promotional boost

National Trails Day is held the first Saturday in June each year. Several National Recreation Trails used the occasion to show off their projects to both media and the public. Here are some good examples of trail events featuring NRT designations:

Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Trail (Pierre, SD)

A Trail Walk was held to celebrate the improvement of a section of trail between Farm Island Recreation Area and Griffin Park, and to honor **Dave Bonde, American Hiking Society Volunteer of the Year** for South Dakota. Participants received free sports bottles.



Schuylkill River Water Trail (Schuylkill Haven, PA)

A ceremony was held on June 1 to celebrate the trail's NRT designation and kick off the 4th annual Schuylkill River Sojourn, a seven-day journey down the river to Philadelphia. **Congressman Tim Holden** attended to present the NRT plaque to the Schuylkill River Greenway Association.

Lake Wobegon Trail (Stearns County, MN)

The Third Annual Caramel Roll Bike Ride invited participants to ride, hike, or in-line skate on the trail. In order to register, participants stop at a local restaurant and buy a caramel roll. On June 22, as part of the opening of another section of the trail, **Congressman Oberstar** presented **County Board Chair, Don Otte**, with the NRT plaque.

Poudre River Trail Corridor (Greeley, CO)

On June 29, there was a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the newest 1.5 mile section of the trail and to recognize the NRT designation.

Mineral Belt Trail (Leadville, CO)

Celebration of the NRT designation was scheduled for September 21 in the midst of the fall colors and to unveil interpretive signs depicting the mining and cultural history along the trail.

New River Trail State Park (Foster Falls, VA)

A concert was held in the park to celebrate National Trails Day and the NRT designation. A local band provided old time mountain music for 4 hours, while NRT t-shirts and posters were given as door prizes.

Indy Parks Greenways (Indianapolis, IN)

On June 1, **Rory Robinson** of the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program presented the city of Indianapolis certificates designating four of the Indy Parks Greenways as National Recreation Trails. Receiving these certificates were **Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, Indy Parks Director Joe Wynn and Indy Parks Greenways Director Ray Irvin.**

We hope all NRT managers will consider an event to celebrate their trail in 2003. We'd like to hear about your ideas for trail events! For information on the National Trails Day program visit www.americanhiking.org or call (301) 565-6704.

National Trails Day



National Trails Symposium is a great training venue

Don't miss the largest trails partnership event of 2002! American Trails and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways & Trails are proud to host the 16th National Trails Symposium in Central Florida, November 10-13. The program will feature state-of-the-art trail information, technologies, trends, and new initiatives. Meet a variety of knowledgeable people working on trails today, including advocates, agency representatives, land managers, designers, planners, technicians, vendors, developers, and enthusiasts. Learn about successful partnerships among agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and individuals.

For the latest information and on line registration for the National Trails Symposium, visit www.AmericanTrails.org.



Does your NRT have a Web site?

We are seeking internet addresses for all National Recreation Trails that have a Web site or a Web page that is part of someone else's site. Check the trails page for your state at www.AmericanTrails.org (click on "America's Trails state by state"). If we don't have a link to your site, please send the address and site name to NRT@AmericanTrails.org.

Use the NRT logo to blaze your trail on land or paper

One of the most effective ways of highlighting your trail's status as a National Recreation Trail is to install colorful NRT logo signs right on the trail. The signs are available for a reasonable price in two convenient sizes. The logo may only be used on designated NRTs, and sale of the logo, or use of the logo, for the production of saleable materials, is prohibited without written authorization from the U. S. Department of the Interior.

The red, white and blue signs show the NRT logo on a white field, mounted on aluminum, with four corner holes for mounting. Two sizes are available: small (4" X 4") or large (8" X 8"). The NRT logo can also be combined with your own artwork on a trail head display, on a trail-side sign, or in maps and publications. Contact American

Trails for information on obtaining the artwork.

The logo is also available for use on Web sites. Visit www.AmericanTrails.org/NationalRecreationTrails to see the on line logo. You may copy the logo directly from the Web site. A larger version is on the NRT home page and a smaller one may be found on the application information page. Again, the logo may only be used for the Web site of a designated NRT, or to promote the NRT program. If you have questions on the Web logos, please contact Stuart Macdonald at mactrail@aol.com.

For the aluminum signs, an order form is included in this issue of NRT NEWS on the enclosed sheet for your convenience. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to show the world that your trail is one of America's great trails!

For more information call American Trails at (530) 547-2060 or e-mail NRT@AmericanTrails.org.

For more info on the National Recreation Trails Program

Current NRT program information can be found at: www.AmericanTrails.org/NationalRecreationTrails American Trails serves as the lead nonprofit in collaboration with the National Park Service and partner groups.

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