



2017 ANNUAL REPORT





📷 Jane Weber

This has been a pivotal year for American Hiking, with a change in our leadership and a changing of the guard in Washington. Fresh off a 2016 celebration of 40 years of protecting the places you love to hike, we knew in 2017 that we were up to the challenge of continuing that mission, even as public lands came under threat. We knew that we needed to strengthen our impact and be an even louder voice for all hikers, so that Washington would hear your views, so that new trail users could find their passion, so that you could hit the trail in peace and let us deal with the politics of protecting it. We were up for the challenge.

- ▶ Our stewardship programs amounted to more than \$3.2 million in sweat equity;
- ▶ We mobilized over 20,000 volunteers; and

- ▶ We worked to firmly re-establish the Trails Caucus, collaborating with members of Congress from both sides of the aisle and the federal government in support of the hiking experience.

AHS is only as strong as its members—we are such an effective national voice for hikers only because you have our back. Your support, including your voice, is vital to ensure that our hiking “viewsheds” remain unadulterated; that our trails, from our favorite urban walking paths to those that get us to our favorite climbing and hunting spots, remain accessible and maintained; and that the next generation appreciates the underrated value of wielding a pulaski or even just a trash bag. So we encourage you to follow us on social media, join your local trail organization (over 200

of them are AHS Alliance members), or help organize a National Trails Day® event. And, as always, let us know how we can continue to be even better every year.

We’re looking forward to sharing the trails with you in 2018!



Jack Hess
Chair, Board of Directors



Kathryn (Kate) Van Waes
Executive Director



\$3.2 MILLION

Value of Volunteer Labor Building & Maintaining Hiking Trails

1,014

Miles of Trail Maintained

**2017
NATIONWIDE
IMPACT**

123,456

Participants at National Trails Day® and Volunteer Vacations

50

Week-long Volunteer Vacations and Alternative Break Projects

1,492

National Trails Day® Events Nationwide

\$19,540

Awarded in National Trails Fund Grants

2017 NATIONAL TRAILS DAY®



123,000
People Participated
at an Event



1,492
Events in
All 50 States



20,300
Trail
Volunteers



295
Stewardship
Projects



\$2.6 Million
Value of Volunteer
Labor



786
Miles of Trail
Built or Maintained



293 Million
Media Impressions
Worth \$2.7 Million

Saturday, June 3, 2017 marked the 25th annual American Hiking Society's National Trails Day®. Individuals from sea to shining sea headed outside together to hike, bike, paddle, and give back to the trails they cherish. More than 1,000 individuals and organizations coordinated recreational and stewardship activities to help get more people out on local trails. People of all ages enjoyed America's magnificent trails system in every corner of the country, from urban parks to wilderness.



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Federal Partners



2017 VOLUNTEER VACATIONS

 **50**
Total Projects

 **456**
Volunteers

 **225**
Miles of Trail
Built or Maintained

 **13**
College
Stewardship Projects

 **18,240**
Volunteer Hours
(or 760 Days)

 **\$440,314**
Value of
Volunteer Time

 **1.3 Million**
Trail Users with
Improved Trail Access



© Ryan Nelson

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PROTECTING OUR NATION'S TRAILS

Since 1976, American Hiking Society has worked with Congress, federal agencies, and many recreation and conservation partners on policy issues and legislation to ensure funding for trails, preservation of natural areas, and protection of the hiking experience. In 2017, AHS developed an Electric Bicycle Policy to create a formal stance as federal land managers address policy issues regarding the growing electric bike industry.

AHS also worked to firmly reestablish the Trails Caucus in the 115th Congress. The co-chairs are Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR), Fortenberry (R-NE), Nolan (D-MN), and Costello (R-PA). There are currently a total of 28 members of the Caucus: 8 Republicans and 20 Democrats.

Key advocacy efforts in 2017 included:

- ◆ Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Reauthorization Act (H.R.502 /S.896/S.569)
- ◆ North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act (H.R.1026/S.363)
- ◆ National Scenic Trail Parity Act (H.R.1424)
- ◆ Protecting amendments to the Wilderness Act By Opposing “Wheels Over Wilderness” Bill (H.R. 1349)
- ◆ Forest Service National Strategy for a Sustainable Trail System



2017 HIKE THE HILL®

📷 Tobias Mrzyk

Advocates from across the nation joined American Hiking Society and the Partnership for the National Trails System in hiking the Hill and making the case for the preservation of trails and the conservation of public lands. Trails advocates from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii made the journey to Washington, DC, learning about trail issues and meeting with legislators and federal agency executives to discuss the protection and creation of trails.

Hike the Hill® kicked off on Sunday, February 12, with a day of briefings on topics such as current legislative issues, federal funding for the National Trails System, and informative briefings from federal agencies including the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

On Monday, the real work began as advocates visited with legislators and their staff in both the Senate and the House as well as with federal agency partners. Among the issues discussed with legislators, were:

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Reauthorization and Funding: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is critical to protecting trails and the lands around trails.

Attendees advocated for reauthorization of the program, full funding for the program as a whole and specifically for parts that would affect trail lands in the Collaborative Landscape Proposal.

Federal Agency Funding: Advocates supported adequate funding for the National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish & Wildlife Service, as well as the Recreational Trails Program within the US Federal Highway Administration. Sufficient staffing for these agencies that manage thousands of miles of trails as well as funding to help leverage all the volunteer efforts is critical to ensuring trails stay safe and open.

Wildfire Suppression Funding: The US Forest Service and the National Park Service are forced to take funding from programs (such as trail maintenance) and put it towards fire suppression as suppression is seldom even remotely satisfactorily funded. This continued underfunding of such a crucial activity wreaks havoc in the budgets of both agencies. The advocates relayed a compelling case from those on the ground about why a fix for this funding issue is urgent.

The National Scenic Trails Parity Act: This bill would make the Ice Age Trail, New England Trail, and North Country Trail units of the National Park System, assisting in the management of these Congressionally-designated long-distance trails.

The North Country Trail Route Adjustment Act: As a Congressionally-designated National Scenic Trail, the North Country Trail requires an Act of Congress to amend the original route Congress approved years ago which turned out to be unfeasible. This Act would allow the trail to connect via a northern route in Minnesota as well as connect it to the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail in the east.

The House Trails Caucus: Members of the Trails Caucus are among our best trails champions in Congress. Advocates informed Members about the Caucus and requested their participation in this group.

American Hiking Society sends a big “thank you” to all who participated, who helped make it a success, and who joined our efforts to ensure that the places we love to hike will be maintained for tomorrow and protected for generations.

2017 NATIONAL TRAILS FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

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

cherished hiking trails. To date, American Hiking Society has funded 217 trail projects by awarding over \$698,000 in National Trails Fund grants.

The 2017 National Trails Fund awarded over \$19,000 to eight trail organizations located all across the country.

L.L.Bean

L.L. Bean is a proud supporter of American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund. They have given hundreds of thousands of dollars in support of the National Trails Fund.



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Idaho



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Washington



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California



Victor Hiking Trails
New York

2017 OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

50th Anniversary Short Films

In collaboration with the National Park Service, AHS led a project to create a series of 1–2 minute short films to highlight unique trails stories to celebrate the 50th anniversaries of the National Trails System and Wild Rivers System. AHS led the coordination and the work schedule for the project, working with the videography firm, the working group, and the advisory group.



I Stand for What I Stand on

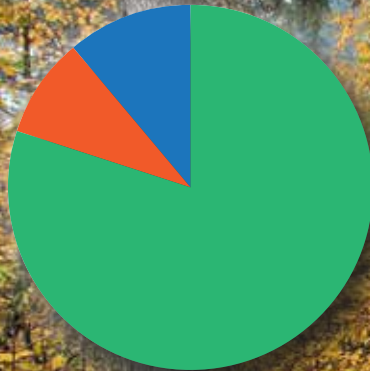
As an advocacy and fundraising campaign, AHS launched the “I Stand for What I Stand on” campaign to activate members and social media followers to join the national movement of outdoor lovers who know the value of keeping our lands wild and our trails open.



2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

Expenses

- 11% Fundraising
- 9% Administration
- 80% Programs



Income

- 51% Individual
- 13% Registration and Sales
- 9% Gov. Grants
- 27% Corporations
- 1% Foundations



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Thank you to the many donors who contributed to American Hiking Society last year through corporate, state, city and county workplace giving campaigns. If you are a federal employee, you can support our work by designating **#11784** on your pledge sheet during the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).



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Thank you to our supporters

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is renowned as the only national voice for the more than 37 million Americans who hike. Today our members continue to stand by us to expand our support. More than 500,000 citizens are committed to promoting and protecting hiking and America's vast network of trails financially. We thank each and every one of our members for their dedication to our mission of protecting hiking trails for future generations.

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