



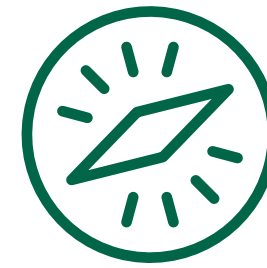
BRAND GUIDE

Version 1.0

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Think of this brand guide as our compass.

These guidelines keep us oriented on our mission and vision in a consistent and unified way. The content in this guide will help us connect and communicate more effectively with our supporters and the hiking community we serve.

Keep this guide handy. Don't let it get buried with that stale trail mix at the bottom of your pack. Frequently referencing it will keep us on trail and on-brand.

A person with dreadlocks, seen from behind, is looking out over a vast, scenic mountain range. The mountains are covered in dense evergreen forests, with some rocky peaks visible in the distance. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a red headband.

OUR MISSION

Empowering all to enjoy, share,
and preserve the hiking experience.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where everyone feels welcome in the American hiking community and has permanent access to meaningful hiking, including urban, frontcountry, and backcountry opportunities. We will achieve this vision by empowering all communities to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience; advocating for the protection and expansion of hiking spaces; fostering trail stewardship; and collaborating with partners whose strengths are complementary.



OUR CORE VALUES

1. We Are Hikers

We share our love of hiking. We achieve our mission through uniting the diverse hiking community.

2. Hiking Matters

We believe in hiking's transformative power: It boosts mental and physical health, engenders respect for ourselves and our surroundings, and creates and strengthens a sense of community.

3. Trails Are for Everyone

We believe that everyone should feel welcome as a hiker on all trails. Hiking offers low-threshold access to a positive outdoor social activity available to all.

4. We Share the Trail

We collaborate with partners that complement our strengths and weaknesses, rather than competing. We convene, amplify, and lead, rather than direct.

5. Hiking Inspires Sustainability

We protect the places we love. Because hiking directly engages hikers with their surroundings, it invites deeper personal connections with that land, leading to a commitment to care and advocate for its health and preservation.

WHERE OUR JOURNEY BEGAN

It all started at a US Senate hearing in 1975.

A few dedicated hikers traveled from across the country to testify on behalf of the hiking community regarding the Appalachian Trail Oversight Bill. After the hearing, William Kemsley, founder of Backpacker Magazine, and Jim Kern, founder of the Florida Trail, saw the need for a national trails organization to speak for the hiking community on Capitol Hill.

Powerful industries had people in Washington advocating for favorable policy. No one represented the growing hiking community. The following year, in 1976, Kemsley and Kern assembled a small group of hikers to establish American Hiking Society to fill the void and advocate for hikers.

The vision for a hiking advocacy organization quickly expanded to include trail service. In 1978, American Hiking Society merged with the National Hiking and Ski Touring Association and inherited the Volunteer Conservation Corps program which became Volunteer Vacations.

Over the years, our programs and advocacy work have expanded and evolved. Still, the vision to advocate for and protect the places hikers love remains at the heart of American Hiking. Advocacy and trail service are the signposts that keep us oriented as we guide and support the hiking community.

“Everyone thought someone else would take care of the foot trails.”

William Kemsley, Jr.

co-founder of American Hiking Society

founder of Backpacker Magazine

PERSONALITY

Our brand personality is how we express our values in a personable way. When speaking on behalf of American Hiking, envision a trusted and experienced hiking companion with the following characteristics:

Inviting (but not fake or pushy)

We're a diverse community that wants to share our love of hiking with everyone. We welcome anyone curious about the outdoors or who enjoys spending time in nature. We are better together, so we strive to be approachable, friendly, and encouraging.

Knowledgeable (but not a know-it-all or elitist)

Like a good hiking guide, we're trustworthy and reliable, and we're in the business of empowering people to feel confident when they hit the trail and speak up for the places they love to hike. We enjoy sharing what we know; we meet people where they are and walk alongside them as they grow. We communicate concisely and straightforwardly without using hiker or policy jargon.

Down-to-Earth (but not dull or unemotional)


Quite literally—the trail grounds us—which keeps us humble and reminds us to embrace all of our humanity as a community of hikers. As such, we convey a spectrum of emotions according to the circumstance. Our joy of hiking can easily translate to heart-felt sincerity or lighthearted humor.

VOICE

We are a prominent voice *of* (not *for*) the hiking community—part of a collective. We work to amplify the voices within the community, especially of underrepresented identities. When we talk about hiking, conservation, and corresponding policy and legislation we speak as experts with the intent to inform and empower hikers across the country.

Remember, American Hiking is the guide, and hikers are the protagonists of the stories we tell.



A photograph of two hikers walking on a dirt trail through a lush green forest. The hiker on the left is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, while the hiker on the right is wearing a bright blue long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, a red beanie, and glasses. Both are wearing backpacks and using trekking poles. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees and dense green undergrowth.

Everything we do invites hikers
to join something bigger than themselves
by advocating for and conserving
the places we all love to hike.

BRAND TERMINOLOGY

1976

The year American Hiking Society was incorporated as an organization.

501(c)(3)

Our tax-exempt status. American Hiking Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our tax status limits how we advocate and how we engage with sponsors. Reach out to the Head of Finance for questions about our tax status.

Alliance of Hiking Organizations

Our organizational membership program is a network of trail groups, hiking clubs, land trusts, and other organizations that promote and protect hiking trails, trail lands, and the hiking experience.

Alternative Break

American Hiking Society's Alternative Breaks started in 2008 and are volunteer trail stewardship projects in America's parks and forests designed specifically for college student groups and young professionals. Part volunteer work project, part kick-back outdoor vacation.

Ambassadors

A dormant initiative initially designed to create a network of hiking experts, leaders, content creators, and, most importantly, passionate advocates of the hiking experience.

American Hiker

Former quarterly publication AHS mailed out to members, discontinued at the end of 2018.

American Hiking Society

American Hiking Society should not be referenced as "the American Hiking Society". Use our full name in the first mention. Following mentions can be abbreviated as American Hiking (used for all our social handles) or AHS. Never refer to the organization as "the Society".

Corporate Sponsors

Partner brands who support AHS and our programs with an annual agreement and a financial contribution above a specific dollar amount.

Crew Leaders

Volunteers who act as liaisons between AHS staff, the project host, and the crew. They do not need to be an expert trail builder to take on the role of Crew Leader, but they do need to have prior group volunteer experience, have good communication and organizational skills, and be a flexible team player.

Executive Director's Council

American Hiking's major donor program including supporters who give \$500 or more annually.

Hike the Hill®

Our annual advocacy week is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and [Partnership for the National Trails System](#) started in 1997 to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders.

Hike the Hill® is a registered trademark of American Hiking Society and should include the "®" (PC shortcut with NumLK Alt+0174) after the term.

BRAND TERMINOLOGY (Cont.)

Leave No Trace

A [nonprofit organization](#) and seven defined principles to minimum impact for anyone visiting the outdoors.

National Trails Day®

Taking place on the first Saturday in June, American Hiking Society's National Trails Day® is a day of hundreds of public events aimed at advocacy and trail service. NTD was first celebrated in 1993 in honor of the 25th anniversary of the National Trails System with the goal of giving millions of participants a positive trail experience.

National Trails Day® is a registered trademark of AHS. As such, National Trails Day® must always be written with a “®” (PC shortcut with NumLK Alt+0174) after the term. Upon its first mention, National Trails Day® must be ascribed to American Hiking Society through the official verbiage: “American Hiking Society's National Trails Day®”. Additional references to National Trails Day® in the same document may be written as “National Trails Day®” or “NTD”,

National Trails Day® Event Host

Individuals, trail clubs, federal and local agencies, land trusts, and businesses who organize and freely register their event for National Trails Day®.

NextGen Trail Leaders

Rising stars in the outdoor community and the voice of young hikers who take part in a yearlong program of advocacy and stewardship to protect public lands.

Membership

AHS transitioned from a member-based organization to a donor-centric organization in 2021, so individuals who contribute to AHS are called donors or supporters.

Paperless Trail

Our monthly e-newsletter which is sent to more than 30k email subscribers.

Position Statements

Official statements the AHS board has adopted for key policies and issues.

Public Lands

Any land now owned by the federal government (i.e., the citizens of the United States). American Hiking acknowledge many public lands have been stolen from Indigenous peoples.

Summit Club

The group of AHS donors who contribute each month

Ten Essentials of Hiking

The gear list AHS recommends every person take on every hike. It's also our [highest traffic web page](#).

Volunteer Vacations

Week-long adventure service trips organized by AHS across the country, beginning in 1974. Volunteer Vacations foster public land stewardship and provide volunteers the opportunity to give back to the trails they love, meet new people, and have a great time doing it.

Crews consist of 6-15 volunteers accompanied by a crew leader. Trips involve backpacking or day hiking and accommodations vary from primitive campsites to bunkhouses or cabins. Tools and supervision are provided by the project host.

VISUAL IDENTITY

LOGO

Our logo is made up of two elements: the AHS “boot” and the wordmark set in Clearface Heavy. The lock-up between the “boot” and the wordmark should never be altered or separated. The logo only appears in black, white, or the official American Hiking Green.

When printing products with one to three spot colors with a design which doesn’t include one of the three approved colors, the logo color may appear in one of the spot colors.

[Download our logo](#)



COLOR

Proportion of Use

White

HEX: #FFFFFF
RGB: 255, 255, 255
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0

American Hiking Green

HEX: #006647
RGB: 0, 102, 71
CMYK: 100, 0, 30, 60
Pantone: 342 C

Black

HEX: #000000
RGB: 0, 0, 0
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100

Notes on Color:

- ▶ Avoid extensive use of white body text on photos or on green and black backgrounds.
- ▶ Green text is not used on a black background and vice versa.
- ▶ Use black sparingly as a flood or background color.
- ▶ Do not use tints and shades of American Hiking Green to create new colors, though, gradients containing AHS Green can be used as a background.
- ▶ The website also uses the following gray tones: #eaeaea, #cccccc, #aaaaaa.

TYPOGRAPHY

Primary Fonts:

VENEER

Use for program wordmarks and headings

[Download Veneer](#)

Proxima Nova

This is our primary font. Use the regular font style for body text.

[Download Proxima Nova](#)

Proxima Nova Condensed

Use for photo credits, captions, and fine print. Available on Type Kit for Adobe Creative Cloud users.

Montserrat (web font)

A [Google font](#) alternative to Proxima Nova to use when Proxima Nova isn't available. We use Montserrat as our web font. We use the regular (400) weight as body text.

Arial or San Serif

Use for email in CiviMail and Gmail or your preferred email client.

Notes on Type:

- ▶ Text should be left-aligned whenever possible. Left aligned text is easier to read than centered text for paragraphs.
- ▶ Center-aligned can be used for headings, short sentences, and phrases.
- ▶ Take care when pasting text on web pages, because the document formatting can override the website text defaults.
- ▶ Avoid using all caps except when using Veneer font.

EMAIL

Email is our primary communication method for external contacts. It's important for staff to use a consistent email signature block to provide a unified, professional look throughout American Hiking communications. For additional information on email use at American Hiking, please reference the email section of the [Digital Hygiene](#) document.

[Signature Template](#)

Sample signature for emails sent from your American Hiking email account:

First and Last Name, Credential

Official Title | Pronouns (optional)



email@americanhiking.org

301.565.6704x7XX



Empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience

8403 Colesville Rd, Suite 1100, Silver Spring, MD 20910

[Support American Hiking Society with your gift today.](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY

The hiking experience and the landscapes we traverse are beautiful.

Photos are the quickest way to connect with our community on an emotional level, and it's essential the photos we use share the joy of hiking in genuine and meaningful ways.



Photography

Key Considerations

Authentic

Avoid using stock photos or photos that seem staged or unrealistic. Prioritize candid moments over posed shots.

Hikers and Volunteers

Reflect visible diversity including BIPOC, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, and people from low income communities, people with all body shapes and types, and non-traditional family structures (i.e. same gender couples, interracial families, multi-generational families, and chosen families).

Movement

Stories require action, so avoid static images. Choose an action shot over a group of people looking at the camera.

Faces

Smiles are gold, but fake smiles are inauthentic. People connect better with photos that show faces, not to mention shots from the front are often more flattering than shots of people facing away from the camera. Though, some silhouette shots can help people visualize themselves in the scene.

Landscapes

Remember to include frontcountry and backcountry images from various ecosystems across the US. Avoid landscapes that are clearly from other countries.

People

Beyond a conservation organization, we help connect people with the landscape, so give priority to photos with people.

Connection

Show a variety of experiences and connections to outdoor spaces.

Inspiration

The photos we use should inspire people of all identities to slip on their shoes and go for a hike.

Power Dynamics

Evaluate perceived power dynamics such as who is leading and who is following and who is performing technical work.

Cultural Appropriation

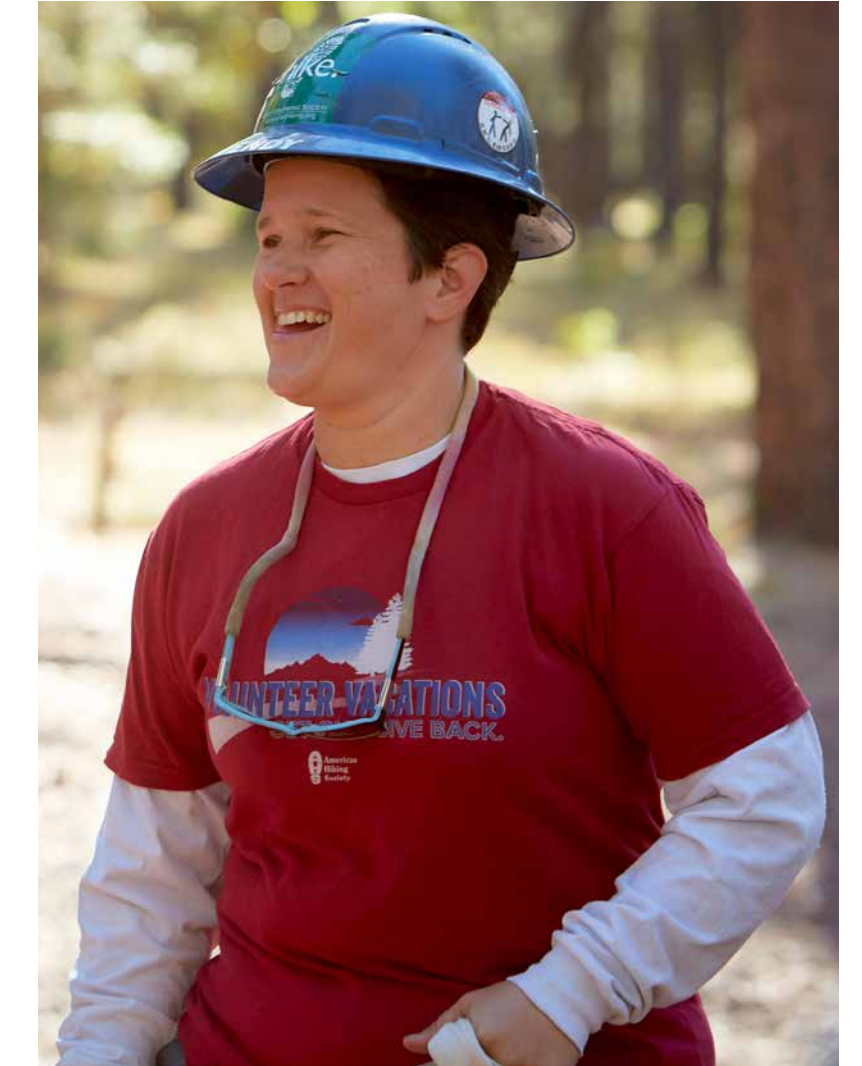
Avoid imagery that adopts exotic element or under-represented communities without acknowledging and honoring the original meaning.

Credit

Provide photo credits when feasible. [Use the camera icon](#) with the photographer's name.



Wesley Trimble



Ryan Nelson



Irene Ogeto