

EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCE WE'VE MADE

Since 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has served as the national voice for the rail-trail movement.

As the country's largest trails organization, it's our job to speak up for trails, showcasing their power in bringing incredible benefits to communities and elevating the passionate work of trail supporters and advocates across the nation. Our vision of a nation where trails connect everyone, everywhere, inspires our big ideas and guides us as we advocate, mobilize, collaborate, support, protect and speak out for trails.



WE ADVOCATE ...

for transformative investments in trails, walking and bicycling at the federal, state and local levels. To date, \$20+ billion in federal funding has supported 40,000+ projects via Transportation Alternatives and the Recreational Trails Program. In FY 2021, our advocacy alongside partners in 17 states yielded \$1.35 billion in state funding and a more than doubling of federal funding for trails, walking and biking.



WE MOBILIZE ...

people across the United States to advocate for safe walking and biking infrastructure in their communities and beyond. In FY 2021, 51,000+ messages were sent to decision-makers from grassroots trail supporters—including 33,000 to federal officials. This advocacy has yielded billions of dollars for trails and active transportation, and generated the political will needed to accelerate the development of equitable, accessible trail networks nationwide.



WE COLLABORATE ...

with national organizations; federal, state and local agencies; public leaders; and grassroots advocates to create and connect trails and expand the trails movement. Our work in FY 2021 with hundreds of partners led to major advances in policy, funding and engagement for trails and trail development. Collectively, we raised \$146+ million in public and private funds in support of TrailNation™ and Great American Rail-Trail® projects, which span 27 states and more than 11,000+ miles.



WE PROTECT TRAILS ...

by continuing to lead the national effort to shape the legal framework around rail-trails and defend them in the courts. Since 1983, we've been involved in 60+ legal cases, including landmark state and federal cases that have laid the groundwork for the national trails movement.



WE SUPPORT TRAIL BUILDERS ...

by providing best-practices and trail planning resources, technical support and capacity-building grants to rural, suburban and urban communities seeking to connect their trail systems and create joyful, vibrant, equitable and inclusive public spaces. Since 2008, we've awarded \$2.4+ million in the form of 332 trail development grants to 243 organizations in 34 states and Washington, D.C. We provide resources and information to more than 7,000 professionals working on trail network development nationwide.



WE SPEAK OUT ...

about the transformative power of trails, encouraging their use and generating demand. In FY 2021, we connected more than 10.5 million people to trails via TrailLink.com™ and engaged millions of people in loving and supporting trails via our #CelebrateTrails and #TrailMoments campaigns, and our national storytelling platforms.



Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
IMPACT REPORT
FY 2021

CONNECTING AMERICA BY TRAIL

Today, more than 40,000 miles of rail-trails and multiuse trails exist nationwide. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's (RTC's) focus is on linking these corridors—creating equitable, accessible trail networks that connect people and places in ways that deliver powerful outcomes.

Trails transform communities in many ways, strengthening economies, providing balanced and equitable transportation choices, promoting health and protecting our environment. As we forge ahead, our eyes are fixed on connecting America's walking and biking infrastructure and ensuring trails are at the heart of healthy, thriving communities.

Here's a look at RTC's flagship initiatives—TrailNation™, the Great American Rail-Trail® and TrailLink.com™—enduring projects that provide the inspiration, insight and opportunity to connect America by trail like never before.

TrailNation™

At RTC, we believe that communities are healthier and happier when trail networks are central to their design. That's why, through our TrailNation program, we're committed to connecting trails and building comprehensive trail systems that bring people together and get them where they want to go. In eight places across the country—places that are diverse in their geography, culture, size and scope—RTC is investing in projects and partnerships that demonstrate what is possible in all types of places when 21st-century trail networks are central to our lives. These TrailNation projects take an innovative approach to how trails and active transportation systems are built—from concept to implementation—proving the power of trails to create healthy, thriving communities, and redefining what it means to build trail networks and what trail networks can mean for people and places. Learn more: trailnation.org.



Great American Rail-Trail®

Picture yourself ... pedaling across the entire country on a safe, seamless and scenic pathway—or walking a local trail that connects along historic routes. Imagine the incomparable experience of exploring America's heritage by trail—its potential, its beauty and bounty, its people and places. Consider the economic opportunities and the benefits for communities along the route of a multiuse trail—the Great American Rail-Trail, or “Great American”—that stretches more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State. The Great American is RTC's most ambitious trail project to date and will be the nation's first cross-country multiuse trail, uniting millions of people along its route. Today, the Great American is more than 53% complete, but there are still more than 1,700 miles left to fill in. To get it done, RTC is providing the national leadership and on-the-ground support—the work to organize people, plans and ideas; trail planning and community engagement; and the advocacy and marketing that is necessary to complete the Great American Rail-Trail. Learn more: greatamericanrailtrail.org.



TrailLink.com™

RTC's trail-finder website, TrailLink.com, leads the country in promoting trail use and satisfying the growing demand for trails for recreation and active transportation—to date cataloguing more than 40,000 miles of multiuse trails. RTC reaches more than 10 million people annually through the TrailLink website and mobile apps (iOS and Android), connecting people across the country with the trails and the outdoor experiences they love. Learn more: traillink.com.



To read the full report of RTC's accomplishments and impact in fiscal year 2021 (Oct. 1, 2020–Sept. 30, 2021), visit railstotrails.org/impactreport2021.

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