Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) believes in an America where active transportation is not pushed to the sidelines. It is our belief that rail-trails and other multi-use trails are critically important to enhancing the health of America's environment, transportation, economy, neighborhoods and people. We commit to this vision through three main avenues: supporting trail building, encouraging trail use and fighting to protect dedicated trail funding at the federal, state and local levels.

In 2013, RTC published several valuable reports on the usage, economic impact and feasibility of trails in the United States. These reports demonstrate the importance of trails within their communities and provide inspirational models and replicable tools for other communities across the country. Chief among these publications was our rails-with-trails report—the first publication of its kind in more than 10 years—which showcases the benefits of these safe and growing dual-purpose corridors.

An exciting highlight of the year was the launch of our inaugural Opening Day for Trails, which aimed to motivate and inspire people to use their local trails. And we continue to enhance our popular trail-finding website, TrailLink.com, which recently won an award for excellence.

We finished off the year with a smashing legislative success; through hard work and perseverance, all but one state opted to keep the Recreational Trails Program for another year. The program provides unparalleled funding for trails across the country and is a critically important piece of the active transportation movement.
More than 30 years after the nation first began to embrace the rail-trail movement, leading to the creation of more than 21,000 miles of rail-trails—a burgeoning cousin, rail-with-trail, is now promising to take hold as the next phase in active transportation.

In October 2013, RTC released the most comprehensive report on the topic in longer than a decade, titled *America’s Rails with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocates on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors*. This report examined the characteristics of 88 rails-with-trails in 33 states, based on surveys and 20 years of data collection, study and analysis.

Currently, rails-with-trails account for an estimated 10 percent of the nation’s 1,800 rail-trails and claim space in 42 states. And their numbers are increasing; rails-with-trails have grown 308 percent between 2000 and 2014, from 61 to 188 known projects.

“Railroads are less likely to abandon their property these days, and that is typically one of the major ways that communities have been acquiring corridors,” says Kelly Pack, RTC director of trail development and author of the report. “As railroads hold on to their property rights, and at the same time, as communities demand more active-transportation networks, the solution in many communities becomes rail-with-trail. And we want to help these communities develop them in the most efficient ways possible.”
In addition to the growth of rails-with-trails in the U.S., the study found that—

1. **They are growing along local and regional transit corridors:** Currently, 15 percent of active rails-with-trails identified are located adjacent to mass transit corridors.

2. **They are safe:** The report found that out of thousands of fatalities on railroad corridors in recent decades, there is only one known fatality involving a trail user on a rail-with-trail.

3. **They are insurable:** The vast majority studied reported being insured by an existing local umbrella policy, similar to most rail-trails and greenways.

*Ameria's Rails-with-Trails* is already serving as a crucial tool to advance policies and practices supporting rail-with-trail development. In September 2013, RTC convened a groundbreaking meeting of trail groups, railroad and transit agencies, and local, state and national public leaders to address key issues preventing rail-with-trail projects. The report served as a major source of information and discourse for the proceedings, which led to two main pieces of consensus: 1) rails-with-trails may serve as both a safe and effective means of helping to manage non-motorized transportation along railroad corridors; and 2) more research is needed on the safety record of rails-with-trails versus active railroad corridors.

RTC anticipates that the data within the report will be an incredibly valuable tool for fostering relationships and promoting rail-with-trail-friendly policies in the future.

“This report will help us engage with many communities and bring them to the table, helping to spur discussions about how we can advance this work across the country,” adds Pack.

A copy of this report is available for free download at [railstotrails.org/railwithtrail](http://railstotrails.org/railwithtrail).
Pennsylvania Mini-Grants Program

Everyone remembers the big stuff—but sometimes it’s the little things that need our extra attention to ensure a safe, clean and thriving network of trails. With this in mind, RTC awarded more than $32,000 in matching mini-grants to six local trail groups and municipalities in Pennsylvania through a program supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. These grants supported repair and improvement projects—including signage, surface-improvement, accessibility and infrastructure enhancements—along 100 miles of trails in five counties.

The Five Bridges Trail in Jefferson County is a terrific example of how these grants can make a difference. In 2013, the Tricounty Rails to Trails Association rehabilitated five bridges along this trail (once known as the Mill Creek Trail).

Following the abandonment of the former Pittsburgh and Shawmut rail corridor, the bridges would receive little to no maintenance for some 35 years. By 2012, two had received just enough attention to make them stable for pedestrians; however, three were severely rotting and unsafe for trail use.

All this changed in the spring and summer of 2013 when, armed with a $7,000 mini-grant, Tricounty volunteers secured and rehabilitated all five crossings—completely replacing the old railroad ties and installing 10-foot-wide decks, rub rails and handrails.

“Most of the work was really done by two guys, Paul Boboige and Dave Leske, who gave generously of their time and who really knew what they were doing. And they got the right equipment to make it happen,” says Pat Tomes, program manager for RTC’s Northeast Regional Office.

By the end of summer 2013, the volunteers had donated more than 400 labor hours to the effort, which resulted in all five bridges being made safe for public use and being returned to a beautiful state.

“Basically, they made the trail usable; they opened it up as a usable route to traverse the wider corridor,” says Tomes, adding that the trail will eventually connect to the Redbank Valley Rail Trail and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, leading to the Great Allegheny Passage.

“The Tricounty bridge project was a great impact for a small dollar amount,” adds Tomes.
In May 2013, RTC honored Fred Schaeffer of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., with a Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champions Award for 2013, in recognition of his pivotal role in taking New York’s Walkway Over the Hudson from an unlikely hope to a spectacular success.

When he first learned of the fledgling idea to convert the neglected Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge into a public pathway, the plan was little more than a pipe dream. But Schaeffer defied doubters and cynics, building a wealth of community support for what he knew would be a tremendous asset for the region.

With support from the nonprofit, Walkway Over the Hudson, Schaeffer spearheaded the fundraising, advocacy and planning efforts that led to the walkway’s successful opening in 2009.

The Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champions Award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the rail-trail movement through their work, volunteerism or support—in short, people who have gone above and beyond in the name of trails.

“Fred’s determination and vision galvanized a true grassroots effort,” says Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart, executive director of Walkway Over the Hudson. “Nearly 2 million people have visited Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park since it opened in October 2009, clearly demonstrating the walkway’s powerful and lasting impact on all of us.”
In January 2013, RTC’s Northeast Regional Office released a feasibility study for the completion of the 150-mile Liberty-Water Gap Trail, which would involve the construction of a final—and vital—six-mile extension of the trail from Portland, Pa., to Delaware Water Gap. Most notably, the proposed extension would connect trail users to the world-renowned Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and travel along one of the most scenic, and historic, river corridors in America. Learn more at railstotrails.org/delawarewatergap.

The only organization to track railroad abandonments nationally, RTC has helped U.S. communities “railbank” thousands of miles of corridors for trail use since 1995 through its Early Warning System (EWS) program.

Through EWS, RTC is the first to notify communities of pending abandonments filed with the federal Surface Transportation Board and often helps mobilize efforts at the local level, making EWS a critical initiative in national rail-trail development.

In fiscal year 2013, more than 40 miles of rail corridor in six states were successfully railbanked by communities in West Virginia, Missouri, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, South Carolina and North Dakota that had initially learned of the abandonments through EWS, and took action.
The D & L T rail, a 165-mile rail-trail in eastern Pennsylvania, generates an annual economic impact of more than $19 million in the communities through which it passes. That was the finding of RTC’s D & L T rail user survey and economic impact analysis, published in December 2013 and supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The D & L survey is the seventh in a series of RTC reports documenting the economic impact of rail-trails in the Northeast. That work began in 2006 when Carl Knoch, trail development manager for RTC’s Northeast Regional Office, developed a methodology for collecting data from trail users and extrapolating a statement of estimated annual impact.

Since then, RTC has been able to apply the methodology to individual trails in the Northeast and develop reports for regional trail managers. These reports become very succinct tools, which assist trail managers in soliciting continued support from community leaders. Of course, each trail is unique; some bring in dollars on a daily basis while others may realize a seasonal impact. Regardless, every trail surveyed can document a positive economic impact, with trail users spending money in the communities they are visiting.

During the summer and fall of 2012, RTC’s Midwest Regional Office participated in a study focusing on trail user numbers and spending patterns for six trails across Illinois. The research, led by local nonprofit Trails for Illinois, culminated in the October 2013 publication Making Trails Count, which arms state trail planners and advocates with the hard data they need to make the case for trail building.

For the first time, the study put quantifiable data behind what had been seen anecdotally for years: There is a huge demand for walking and biking infrastructure all over the state. Some key pieces of data to emerge from Making Trails Count include the following:

- 35 percent of trail users reported spending money at restaurants and bars during their visit to the trail.
- The average amount of all purchases during a trail visit was $30.40 per person.
- 32 percent of trail users expected to spend more than 150 minutes on the trail that day cycling, running and walking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity for adults.
Heralding the warmer weather and beginning of spring, RTC launched its first-ever Opening Day for Trails in 2013 on the last Saturday of March. The new annual event, which marks the ceremonial beginning of trail season around the country, is designed to raise awareness of local trails and encourage trail use.

During the public campaign, more than 2,000 people pledged to head out on their local trail on Opening Day, and we received great photos from participants through our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Flickr channels.

**TrailLink.com Wins Award**

With more than 24,000 miles of accurate trail maps now vetted and available, TrailLink.com is playing a critical role in both encouraging and satisfying the growing need for opportunities to ride, walk, skate or run for recreation or transportation. In addition to maps, the website provides a forum for trail users to share photos and trail reviews and suggest edits to trail descriptions, increasing the accuracy and value of this unparalleled database.

In May 2013, the website was recognized with an award for its overall excellence at the California Trails and Greenways Conference. The award gave credit to TrailLink.com as a powerful resource for providing useful, up-to-date information about trails around the country.

More than 4.5 million unique visitors used the site in 2013. By helping connect people with nearby trails, RTC’s free trail-finder website is directly boosting trail user numbers and awareness of options for walking and biking, which in turn boost the level of support for continued investment in this infrastructure.
RTC’s Work in Compton

The City of Compton in Los Angeles County has been a key focus of RTC’s Western Regional Office since the 2009 initiation of RTC’s Urban Pathways Initiative (UPI). A community with significant economic challenges, East Compton’s adult obesity rate was estimated at nearly 40 percent, the highest in L.A. County.

RTC targeted Compton not only for its obvious need, but because of its existing Compton Creek Bike Path, a 5.3-mile trail running through the center of the city that provides access to schools, parks, and residential and commercial areas. Our community assessment identified key safety improvements needed for the trail, and through our programmatic work, we have promoted it as a resource for active transportation worthy of stewardship and beautification efforts.

Highlights of our programmatic work in Compton in the past year include two major Walk to School Day events, each drawing an estimated 600 to 800 youth and adults. Compton’s new mayor eagerly embraced the events, greeting the students and calling for healthy active living during the kickoff. Other RTC-sponsored events included a trail cleanup and bike ride as part of the regional Big Sunday day of service, and the Creek 101 bike ride/watershed education tour that we led in partnership with Heal the Bay.

Critical to the success of our Compton work has been our close partnership with Hub City Teens, a program for at-risk youth, some of whom were trained by RTC as Trail Ambassadors. Hub City Teens Trail Ambassadors now conduct regular trail cleanups on their adopted section of the trail, lead regular walking groups along the trail, share creek-related educational materials at community events and serve as role models for younger children in the community.
Under the current federal transportation law (MAP-21), each year, governors can opt out of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP)—one of the top national funding sources for rail-trails and other pathways—and divert these trail-user funded dollars to other transportation projects, like highways.

Together with our coalition partners and the support of thousands of RTC members and advocates, we worked tirelessly throughout the summer of 2013 to make sure governors were aware of how important the RTP program is for building healthy communities and strong economies before the opt-out deadline of Sept. 1.

For more than two decades, RTP has funded the construction, maintenance and development of thousands of miles of trails and related facilities across the country. These trails in turn help fuel an outdoor recreation economy of more than $640 billion nationwide, satisfy the growing need and demand for safe alternative-transportation corridors, and preserve some of our most cherished historical places and beautiful spaces.

The effort paid off; 49 states (all except Florida) and the District of Columbia chose to remain in the Recreational Trails Program for 2014.

Last fall, funding for trails took an unusual turn in California when Governor Jerry Brown signed into law an unprecedented integrated funding program. The change rolled most existing state and federal sources of funding for trails, walking and biking into one fund to be known as the Active Transportation Program (ATP).

ATP will combine federal Transportation Alternatives, Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Safe Routes to School program funding, along with state funding sources for walking and biking infrastructure, into a single, annual $129-million fund. The Brown Administration believes streamlining the process for financing walking and biking projects will reduce administrative inefficiencies and enable greater state and local control.

RTC’s Western Regional Office led a broad coalition of trail supporters to victory in preserving RTP, which the Brown Administration had intended to cancel. The trails community came out in force, and we successfully turned the Administration around on the importance of both recreational trails and trails as transportation, connecting neighborhoods to schools, work and transit. The evidence is overwhelming that communities with greater access to trails, bike lanes, greenways and places of active transportation and recreation are healthier, are economically stronger and avoid many of the severe downsides of a transportation system dominated by roads.
In 2013, the Partnership for Active Transportation developed the federal policy platform Safe Routes to Everywhere. The platform sponsors include RTC along with the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, America Walks and LOCUS. The key message: Supporting active transportation should be a national priority because it provides affordable mobility, promotes public health through physical activity and cleaner air, and creates jobs and community vitality. To realize these benefits to the nation, the platform calls on the federal government to: (1) increase federal investment dedicated to safe active-transportation networks; (2) use innovative financing to leverage the private value of infrastructure to stretch limited public dollars and accelerate projects; and (3) integrate health concerns into transportation decisions, and active transportation opportunities into health policies.

Furthermore, the Partnership established an advisory committee to endorse the platform and to help grow the movement by influencing decision makers on a national level. These members include: Richard Jackson, M.D. (UCLA Fielding School of Public Health); Wade Henderson (Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and Leadership Conference Education Fund); Ted Eytan, M.D. (KP Center for Total Health); Greg Cox (San Diego County Supervisor); Marc Berejka (REI); Roxanne Blackwell (American Society for Landscape Architects); Sarah Jo Peterson (Urban Land Institute); Lee Fisher (CEO for Cities); and Howard Frumkin, Ph.D. (University of Washington School of Public Health).

In 2014, the Partnership aims to release and gain congressional support for the platform, as well as build the movement at the state and local level by forming strong coalitions and engaging constituents to advocate for state and local policy. For more information, visit the Partnership’s website at partnership4at.org.

**REVENUE**

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Grants and Contracts</td>
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<td>Corporate Sponsorship</td>
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**EXPENSES**

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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Net Income from Operations: $301,936
Non-operating Income*: $250,187
Change in Temporary Restricted: $670,468
Total Change in Net Assets: $1,222,591
Net Assets, Beginning of Year: $3,295,900
Net Assets, End of Year: $4,518,491

* Non-operating income represents realized and unrealized gains and losses on investment of restricted assets.
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is a nonprofit organization as qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Codes.
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people.

**STAFF** Reflects staff members at the end of fiscal year 2013

Keith Laughlin, President

**Policy and Trail Development**
Kevin Mills, Senior Vice President of Policy and Trail Development
Jim Brown, Trail Development Manager
Marianne Fowler, Senior Vice President of Federal Relations
Eli Griffen, Trail Development and TrailLink Coordinator
Tracy Hadden Loh, Ph.D., Director of National Transportation Alternatives Clearinghouse (NTAC) and Research Director
Kristina Jones, Healthy Communities Manager
Kelly Pack, Director of Trail Development
Liz Thorstensen, Vice President of Trail Development

**Development and Communications**
Mary O’Connor, Vice President of Development and Communications
Milo Bateman, Manager of Membership Operations
Ben Carter, Senior Director of Development
Ryan Cree, Manager of Online Campaigns
Brian Gerhardstein, Online Media Manager
Jake Lynch, Marketing and Media Relations Specialist
Katie McKinney, Major Gifts Officer
Barbara Richey, Graphic Designer

**Finance and Administration**
Cindy Dickerson, Chief Operating Officer
Elton Clark, Human Resources Manager

Irma Joseph, Senior Staff Accountant
Roxana Kiely, Controller
Glenda Owens, Customer Service and Office Administrator
Tim Rosner, GIS Specialist
Frederick Schaedtler, Senior Director of TrailLink.com and Technology Marketing
Laura Stark, TrailLink.com Coordinator and Staff Writer

**Florida Office**
Ken Bryan, State Director

**Midwest Regional Office**
Rhonda Romano, Regional Director
Eric Oberg, Trail Development Manager

**Northeast Regional Office**
Tom Sexton, Regional Director
Akram Abed, Camden Region Manager
Carl Knoch, Trail Development Manager
Patricia Tomes, Program Manager

**Western Regional Office**
Laura Cohen, Regional Director
Barry Bergman, Trail Development Manager
Rayna Gordon-Hellman, Program Assistant

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Reflects board members and their affiliations at the end of fiscal year 2013

**Chip Angle**
Angle Associates, Guilford, Conn.

**Kathy Blaha** (Secretary)
Kathy Blaha Consulting, LLC
Miami, Fla.

**Robert M. Campbell, Jr.** (Treasurer)
Malvern, Pa.

**Mike Cannon**
REI, Seattle, Wash.

**Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr.**
Detroit City Council Member
Detroit, Mich.

**Matthew Cohen**
Stoel Rives, LLP, Seattle, Wash.

**David Ingemie**
SnowSports Industries America, McLean, Va.

**Katherine Kraft, Ph.D.** (Vice Chair)
Princeton, N.J.

**Gail Lipstein**
Malvern, Pa.

**Rue Mapp**
Outdoor Afro, Oakland, Calif.

**Charlie Marshall**
Pottstown, Pa.

**John Rathbone**
Norfolk Southern Corp., Norfolk, Va.

**Guy O. Williams** (Chair)
G.O. Williams & Associates, LLC
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