



For Immediate Release:

October 25, 2017

CONTACT:

Andrew Dupuy, drew@railstotrails.org, (c) 512.619.1418

Dozens of Ohio State Legislators, Citizens Demonstrate Power of Connecting Statewide Network of Trails

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the Ohio Trails Partnership organize celebration on the Scioto Greenway Trail to launch "Year of the Trails"

COLUMBUS—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy gathered dozens of state legislators and citizens at the "Trails for All Ohioans" event Wednesday on the Scioto Greenway Trail, just blocks from the Ohio Statehouse, to demonstrate the power that trails and connected trail networks have in bringing economic, health and transportation benefits to the state. The event was the official launch of the "Year of the Trails," marking the legislature's support for connecting trail segments and filling gaps to create more complete trail networks for active transportation and recreation.

"Today, we saw firsthand that trails can unite us. Seeing elected officials and citizens come together to celebrate trails and the amazing benefits that trails bring to everyone who lives in Ohio is inspiring," said Brian Housh, Midwest Policy Manager at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. "As we embark on the 'Year of the Trails,' the entire trails, tourism and active transportation community in Ohio is optimistic about what we can accomplish with this unprecedented bi-partisan support for trails from the state's legislators."

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy organized the event in support of the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus, a new group of more than 20 state legislators co-chaired by Senators Sean O'Brien (D-Bazetta) and Steve Wilson (R-Maineville). The Caucus, which brings together bipartisan legislators from the state House and Senate, advocates for development, maintenance and preservation of Ohio's non-motorized trails. Participants at the Caucus's inaugural session in May included the Buckeye Trails Association, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the Ohio Horseman's Council and the Ohio Travel Association.

"Whether hiking, cycling, running, horseback riding, or paddling, almost every Ohioan has enjoyed our state's wonderful trails system at some point in their life. Add that to the many economic benefits of Ohio's trails, and making sure those trails are developed and preserved for years to come is an issue that people on both sides of the political aisle can agree upon," said Senator O'Brien, Caucus Co-Chair.

"Ohio's impressive trails system is something that ought to be admired and appreciated by all Ohioans. I am proud to raise awareness and promote the longevity of our state's extensive trails network," said Senator Wilson, Caucus Co-Chair.

Following the “Trails for All Ohioans” event, attendees walked to the Statehouse to educate new legislators about the importance of continuing funding for the Clean Ohio Fund, a longstanding program that supports trails, preserves farmland and conserves open space in the state.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 160,000 members and supporters, is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. RTC has field offices in Florida, Ohio, California and Pennsylvania. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.