



rails-to-trails conservancy

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Experts Point to Safe Spaces Away From Busy Streets, Like Trails, As Essential to Inspiring People to Be Active

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy reports that people nationwide logged more than 812,000 minutes of outdoor physical activity on Celebrate Trails Day, emphasizing the importance of trails in supporting healthy communities

WASHINGTON—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation’s largest trails and active-transportation advocacy organization, today announced results from its latest survey of outdoor trail use and physical activity. Findings show the impactful role the nation’s trails can serve in helping Americans become more physically active—whether they’re taking part in recreational activities or swapping a car trip for a short walk or bike ride.

RTC surveyed people across the country who took part in [Celebrate Trails Day](#) on April 23 and found that, on average, participants spent more than 65 minutes being physically active outside on the trail. The time spent on the trail contributed significantly to the recommended [150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity adults should get each week](#). Combined, participants logged over 812,000 minutes of physical activity on Celebrate Trails Day.

“Over the past few years, we’ve seen millions of additional people flock to trails and outdoor spaces across the country. People continue to share that they’re getting outdoors more than they did before the pandemic and that these moments outside on trails have made a difference to their health and well-being,” said Ryan Chao, president of RTC. “Celebrate Trails Day gives us an opportunity to showcase the impact of trails on our quality of life and our communities, while inviting even more folks to join us on trails. They help us to be active, whether it’s getting out to have some fun on a Saturday morning, or swapping out the car with a trip on foot or by bike for an errand.”

The majority of trips taken in this country are within a [20-minute bike ride or less](#), and more than 1 in 4 trips are within a 20-minute walk or less. On Celebrate Trails Day, one quarter (24%) of participants reported swapping a short car trip for a walk or a bike ride to their destination, typically using trails.

In addition, more people reported being physically active for 30 minutes or more on Celebrate Trails Day than a typical day (83% compared with 75%), underscoring the importance of programming and events in providing additional motivation to be active and the role of trails in encouraging physical activity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 25% of Americans are inactive and that increasing our physical activity is [one of the best things we can do for our health](#). A [new finding](#)

[from the Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) recommends parks, trails and greenways as infrastructure interventions that increase physical activity. These improvements, however, need to be combined with community engagement to increase awareness, expand programs and enhance access.

“Being physically active can immediately help people feel better, reduce the risk of anxiety and improve sleep,” said Ken Rose, MPA, physical activity and health branch chief in CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. “Making it easier for everyone to be physically active is one of the best investments communities can make. This includes strategies such as improving access to parks, trails and greenways with safe street crossings, expanding public transportation routes to stop at these sites, and offering structured programs and events to promote social interaction.”

Nearly 200 partner organizations and over 11,500 people from 50 states and the District of Columbia reported taking part in Celebrate Trails Day. Participants said they marked the annual observance by bicycling (53%), walking or running (51%), enjoying nature (28%), volunteering (7%) or birding (7%). Survey results for Celebrate Trails Day represent 1,572 responses gathered via SurveyMonkey between April 20 and May 2, 2022. Active minutes were calculated based on 1,035 responses to the Celebrate Trails Day survey and a calculation of an average number of 60 active minutes spent among event participants.

Creative ideas for getting outside, [photo](#) and [video content](#) for use with credit to RTC, and direct access to RTC’s free trail-finder website and app, [TrailLink.com](#), can be found on RTC’s [Celebrate Trails Day website](#). RTC is encouraging people to continue to use the nation’s trails to build routine physical activity into their day-to-day lives and to connect with [CDC’s Active People, Healthy Nation campaign](#) for resources to help more people meet physical activity guidelines.

Celebrate Trails Day is the annual celebration of the spring trail season, recognized on the fourth Saturday in April. The national celebration is organized by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong. RTC is dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Follow #CelebrateTrails on social media for updates and connect with RTC at [railstotrails.org](#) and [@railstotrails](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Active People, Healthy Nation is a national initiative led by the CDC to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027. Learn more at [cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation](#).