



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 4, 2023

**CONTACT:** Patricia Brooks, [patricia@matchmapmedia.com](mailto:patricia@matchmapmedia.com), 202.351.1757

## **Nationwide Celebration Showcases Community, Climate and Well-Being Impacts of Trails**

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy reports hundreds of organizations and thousands of people took to the trails on Celebrate Trails Day, illustrating the shared role of infrastructure, programming and investment in encouraging people to be active.*

**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. The findings illustrate the role that access to safe places to walk, bike and be active outside, such as multiuse trails, serves in encouraging Americans to be more physically active, especially when paired with events and activities—and alongside investments to connect and maintain this infrastructure.

[Celebrate Trails Day](#), which the organization facilitates annually on the fourth Saturday of April, invited thousands of people across the country to get outside on trails in their community for events and activities that encouraged physical activity, stewardship, community engagement and opportunities to swap out a routine car trip for a walk or a bike ride, helping to lower their individual carbon footprint. Many of the more than 120 events that took place aligned with emerging trail and active transportation networks across the country, creating an opportunity for communities to learn more about the infrastructure developments and to experience the benefits of creating connected trail and active transportation systems.

“Events like Celebrate Trails Day showcase the impact of safe, connected walking and biking infrastructure while serving as a call to action, encouraging more people to discover the trails in their community and become part of the movement to prioritize this infrastructure as essential to the nation,” said Ryan Chao, president of RTC. “When trails are connected, their benefits are magnified—use increases by as much as 80% and they become fundamental to people’s everyday lives, whether that’s for recreation, transportation or as way to build deeper connections in the community.”

RTC reported that more than 13,000 people participated in [Celebrate Trails Day](#) on April 22, 2023, and that those who did spent an average of 96 minutes being physically active outside on the trail. The time spent on the trail was 20 minutes more than they report being active on a typical day. In total, participants in Celebrate Trails Day logged more than 1.3 million minutes of physical activity. This underscores the impact of park, trail and greenway infrastructure interventions—combined with additional interventions, such as events and programming in these spaces—to increase awareness, enhance access and encourage participation as outlined in [recommendations by the Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) to increase physical activity.

A collection of factors contributed to the increased physical activity reported on Celebrate Trails Day, including organized activities like group rides, walks and clean-ups. After participating in Celebrate Trails Day, people agreed that trails and open spaces are important (96%) and that trails contribute to the well-being of a community (96%). They also indicated that using trails makes a difference to their personal well-being (95%) and many say they plan to use trails as part of their day-to-day routine (78%),

like going to the store, school, work or for exercise. In addition, the majority reported that having access to trails helps them to be physically active (82%) and that participating in events or activities on the trails motivates them to be physically active (95%), demonstrating the lasting benefits of engaging communities on trails.

“Safe trails promote better physical, mental and social health by encouraging people to make physical activity part of their day,” said Ken Rose, MPA, physical activity and health branch chief in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. “Trail networks that connect people to parks, schools, shopping and healthcare facilities make it easier for people to walk, bike or roll to their everyday destinations. This is an important way to increase physical activity in our communities.”

Celebrate Trails Day comes this year at a time of unprecedented opportunity for trails, walking and biking. Demand for trails continues to surge according to a recent opinion poll commissioned by RTC. One quarter of Americans (24%) say they’re using trails more than they did in the past year and two-thirds of people (62%) say they’re interested in using trails more than they do now. At the same time, the CDC reports that only about 1 in 4 adults fully meet the physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities and that increasing our physical activity is one of the best things we can do for our health.

Connected trail and active transportation infrastructure provides safe, convenient walking and biking routes that make it possible for more people to build physical activity into routine, everyday activities, like getting to work or school or running errands, which delivers health, climate and economic benefits. The increased demand and enthusiasm for trails is paired with historically high funding for trails and active transportation infrastructure, in part made possible by the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. RTC is working to accelerate the investment in connected trail and active transportation systems nationwide, and working to ensure that programs like the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program have the necessary support to more quickly connect the nation’s trail and active transportation systems.

Survey results for Celebrate Trails Day represent 1,747 responses gathered via SurveyMonkey between April 22 and April 30, 2023. Active minutes were calculated using the total number of reported participants in Celebrate Trails Day, 13,367, and the average time reported spent on trails on Celebrate Trails Day.

Celebrate Trails Day is made possible because of the support of RTC’s [partners and sponsors](#).

*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](http://railstotrails.org) and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

*Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup> 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](https://cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation).*