

2026

Celebrate Trails Day: An Overview of the Celebration + Ways to Engage



California's Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail

THE NATION'S LARGEST TRAILS, WALKING AND
BIKING ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

Our Mission

We are building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors.



Washington D.C.'s Met Branch Trail

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



INFRASTRUCTURE

We will proliferate the development of trail and active transportation networks nationwide.

INVESTMENT

We will grow public funding to create, connect and maintain trails, while improving the effectiveness of those resources and creating new opportunities for investment.

EQUITY

We will catalyze the development of community-driven trail and active-transportation networks with the aim to increase trail use and the proximity of trail networks to underserved and under-resourced communities.

PARTICIPATION

We will encourage and inspire more people to use trails across the country, hastening a culture shift where communities demand trail systems as essential for their well-being and the well-being of the places they live.

Trails are essential to people, places and the planet

90%

of people say that it is important that everyone have access to trails.

88%

of people say that tax dollars should be spent on maintaining and improving trails.

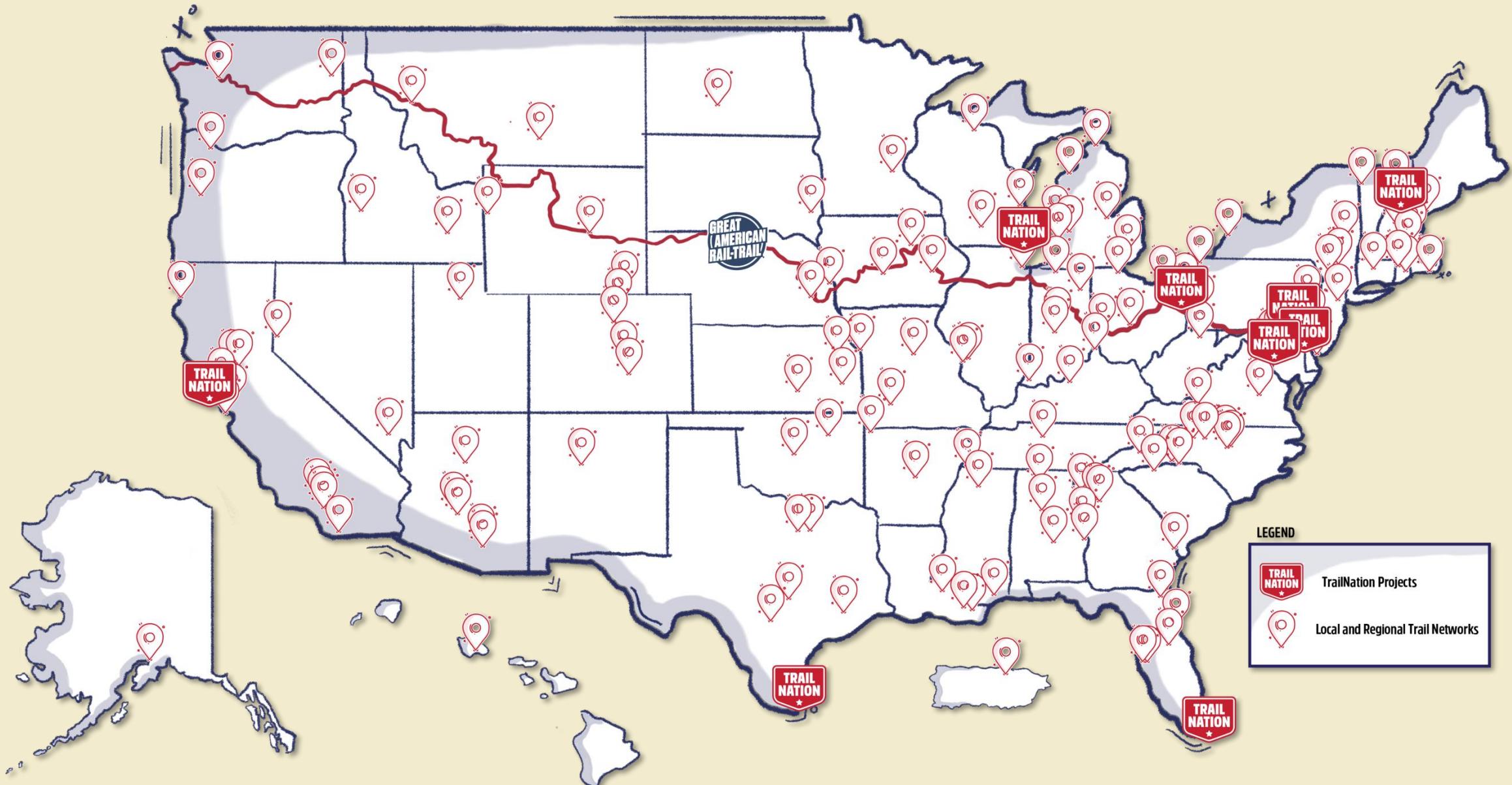
61%

of people say they would like to spend more time on the trail.



%

People agree that trails encourage **more physical activity** (89%); **local business and economic opportunity** (66%); and **provide transportation** options where they live (58%).



Activating Space Matters

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions combined with additional interventions, **such as structured programs or community awareness**, to increase physical activity.



Celebrate Trails Day event | Photo by Anya Saretzky

Source: <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/news/cpstf-recommends-park-trail-and-greenway-infrastructure-interventions-increase-physical-activity.html>

Celebrate
Trails
Day

powered by **rails to trails conservancy**

Save the date: April 25, 2026

Coming soon to
a trail near you!



More than a day outside

Hosted on the fourth Saturday of April, Celebrate Trails Day is the annual springtime celebration of America's trails. Started by Rails to Trails Conservancy in 2013, the celebration encourages people to get outside and enjoy the nation's exceptional trails and trail systems.



It's a day of joy and impact—and an invitation to experience the potential of a nation connected by trails.



It's an opportunity to celebrate and build support for the spaces that make it possible for us to walk and bike as part of our day-to-day lives.



Hundreds of events take place nationwide, with people and local organizations taking part in every state.

How it's celebrated on trails around the country.



Photo by Geoff Creary

Self-Directed Outings

RTC has free resources to help people find trails near them and trail-use tips and ideas. RTC's TrailLink platform is your guide to America's trails.

Group Events

RTC and our partners bring the celebration to communities across the country through all types of events.

The Opportunity

Create new connections within and between communities

Infuse advocacy in new ways—funding, engaging elected leaders

Highlight infrastructure connected networks, gap-filling

Showcase stories that illustrate the many ways trails help people and places thrive

Amplify the power of multiuse trails to transform communities.

Celebrate a monumental year.

2026 is a milestone moment for the nation—America's 250th birthday and RTC's 40th anniversary.

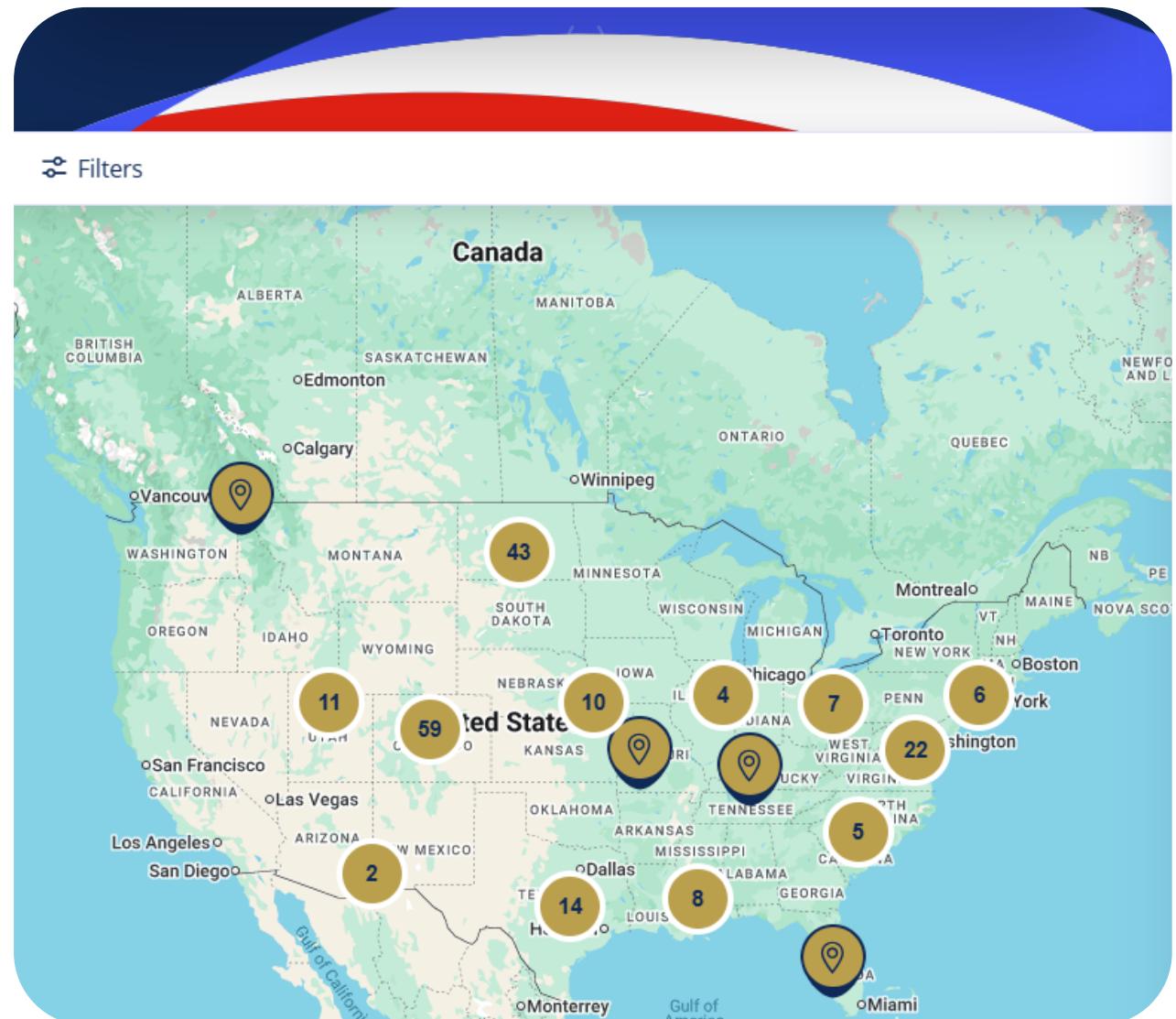
Maximizing 40 Years of Joy and Impact

2026 marks RTC's 40th anniversary—creating even more opportunities to highlight trails!

RTC's 40th

Uniting America By Trail Since 1986





Source: america250.org/calendar/

Infusing Advocacy

To meet the moment, we're planning to make this year's celebration the biggest and best yet, creating the brightest possible spotlight for the nation's trails and the many ways they benefit our lives.

Include elected officials. Invite decision-makers to experience the impact of trails in their community, building more support for your projects.

Generate grassroots advocacy. Have a postcard-writing station, a chance to sign a petition, or a sign-up form so they can stay involved.



Roselle Park Mayor Joseph Signorello and Councilmember Jay Robaina at a Celebrate Trails Day 2025 event, NJ | Photo by Upendra Sapkota

Designing Engaging Activities

Listen. Keep an open mind and gather feedback about the ways people are using or want to use the trail.

Consider, what's the best fit? You don't need to always reinvent the wheel—planning recurring programming can be powerful.

Communicate. Manage expectations and let the public know what is happening.

Get into the community. Meet people where they are by engaging in events happening “off trail” and in locations that are important to the audience you serve.

Source: <https://www.railstotrails.org/trail-building-toolbox/programming-events/>



Celebrate Trails Day 2025 event in Baltimore | Photo by Kate Foster

Planning Tips

- Confirm necessary permits, reservations, and/or insurance coverage
- Prepare with first aid and an inclement weather plan
- Partner with community groups on an event (including businesses!)
- Ensure inclusive access: price, location, mobility, restrooms, opportunities to rest
- Spread the word. Promote early and often!
- **Amplify impact by participating in larger observances and national days, such as Celebrate Trails Day!**



Celebrate Trails Day event in IL | Photo by Douglas Monieson

Event + Programming Ideas

Self-Directed

- Games: Scavenger Hunts, Bingo, I-spy
- Self-guided walks, runs or rides
- Art and history walks that follow interpretive signage
- Geo-caching, letterboxing, plogging
- Photo safari

Organized

- Cleanups and maintenance days
- Group hikes, walks, rides, runs, races, yoga and meditation
- Biodiversity counts (e.g., BioBlitz) and guided nature walks (birding)
- Trailside festivals with local businesses, community groups, artisans
- Guided tours
- Education opportunities: wilderness survival, camping, stewardship, bike repair

By the Numbers:



MORE THAN **33,000** People
PARTICIPATED IN **275+** Celebrations
HOSTED BY **375+** Partners
ACROSS **49 States, Washington, D.C**
AND **Puerto Rico**

Direct Impact:



More than 3.4 million active minutes
spent outside on Celebrate Trails Day in 2025.*



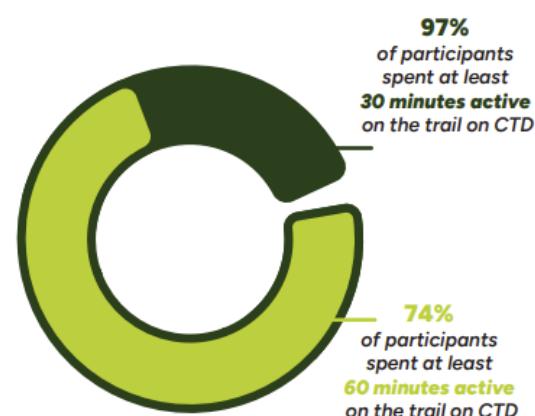
104 active minutes per person
spent outside on Celebrate Trails Day.*

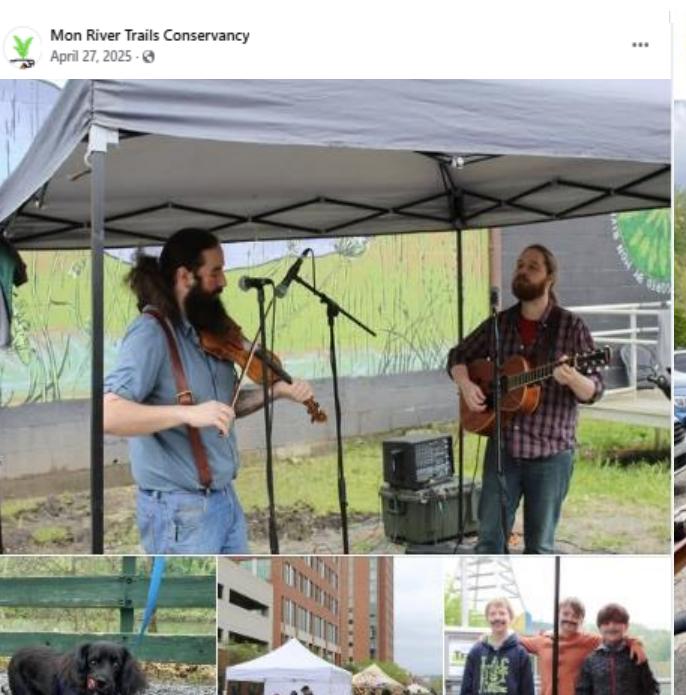


\$1.3 million estimated total spent
for Celebrate Trails Day, with an average of \$41 spent by respondents
who indicated that they visited a business on or to prepare for
Celebrate Trails Day.*



97% of people agree
that using trails makes a difference for their mental health and well-being.







“

To me, being able to get out on trails close to where I live and when I'm going on a longer adventure is important because it provides me a sanctuary for decompression.

On these protected paths, I can lower my defenses and feel truly safe, allowing me to remain present, relax completely, and clear my mind. This mental reset ensures I return home more centered and emotionally available for my family.”

@Bicycle_Nomad at a Celebrate Trails Day event

How To Get Involved

PARTNER

Let RTC know you're participating as a partner so we can share resources and help provide visibility for your celebration.

PROMOTE

Help spread the word about getting outside on Celebrate Trails Day—encourage your community to join an event or go on a self-directed trail outing.

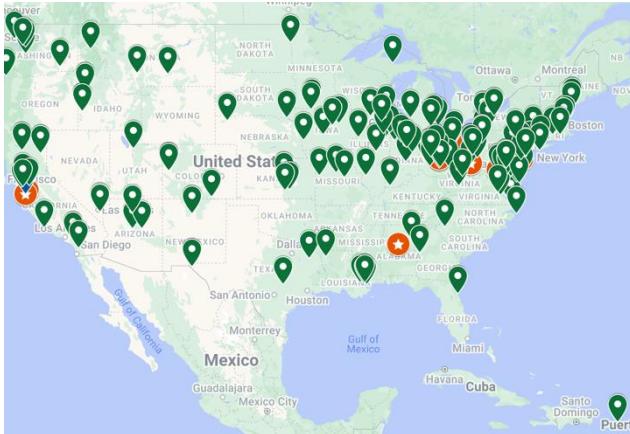
PLAN

Organize a ride, cleanup, community festival or other type of programming that invites people to experience the trail.

PARTICIPATE

Share how you and your community are participating in the celebration. Capture the moment and share it on social media and your other communications channels + take RTC's survey to help us show how people participated and the nation impact of the celebration.

Supporting your celebrations



Visibility for your celebrations

RTC posts an interactive map on our website to help the public find events and local opportunities to engage in Celebrate Trails Day, plus gets the word out on our email, earned media, and social media channels. View the 2025 map: <https://rtc.li/celebrate-trails-day-2025-map>



Helpful Resources

RTC provides helpful resources, from sample language and shareable graphics to tips to weave advocacy into your Celebrate Trails Day plans. Explore our partner resources: rilstotrails.org/celebratetrailsday/toolkit



Promotional Materials

RTC makes available materials to our partners to help promote their celebrations. Sign up to partner updates to make sure you don't miss the opportunity to request materials.

Timeline Overview



January

- Sign up to be a Celebrate Trails Day partner and get email updates
- Jan: Partner Toolkit section of the website launched, includes event intake form and information about any available event materials and resources
- Plan and prepare for your celebrations, including applying for any needed permits + consider inviting local electeds and community partners

February

- **Late February: Deadline for partners to request free event materials**
- RTC promoting celebration to national audience—highlighting info about ways to participate and giveaway offerings
- Continue preparations for your celebrations, including applying for any needed permits + consider inviting local electeds and community partners. Share event plans with RTC for visibility on Celebrate Trails Day map.

March

- At least 1 month out: RTC posts Celebrate Trails Day map online. We strongly recommend submitting events before 3/25 to maximize their visibility in RTC's promotional efforts
- Reminder to share event info, explore resources and spread the word using toolkit.
- RTC promoting celebration to national audience—highlighting info about ways to participate and giveaway offerings
- Materials to support CTD events prepared for production

April-May

- Early April: RTC heavily promotes celebration and events planned around the country
- Requested materials arrive for Celebrate Trails Day partners
- **April 25: Celebrate Trails Day!** Have fun and share how you're celebrating on social media @railstotrails and using #CelebrateTrails
- Take RTC's impact survey—the findings will be shared with our partners and the public in May.

You're Invited!

Learn more and sign up:

Celebrate Trails Day website

RailsToTrails.org/CelebrateTrailsDay

Email our team about Celebrate Trails Day

Events@RailsToTrails.org





Questions?

Reach out: Events@RailsToTrails.org