

Bring the Next TrailNation Summit to Your Region

Expected Spring 2028

Location TBD – Host Region RFP Now Open



Host the 2028 TrailNation Summit

The TrailNation Summit is more than a conference—it's a transformational gathering where we come together to catalyze trail network development

- **Highlight regional innovation, partnership and advocacy** to 500+ attendees
- Showcase your existing or emerging **multiuse trail network** with urban, suburban and rural connections
- Participate in Summit planning as trusted coalition members of the local Host Committee



Showcase Your Region

- Elevate your region's visibility as a **trail and outdoor recreation destination**
- Dazzle participants with the **can't-miss cultural amenities** that make your region a compelling place to visit
- Feature the **people and partnerships** critical to successful regional collaboration
- Celebrate **creative places and cultural landmarks**



Content That Connects The Dots

Immersive sessions center skill building.

- **Keynotes** tackle the challenge and opportunity of the moment in conversation with national leaders
- **World Café** yields timely conversations on critical and emerging topics across 25+ tables
- **Master Class sessions** dive deep into the skills needed to accelerate trail network development



Build Relationships To Build Trail Networks

Peer connections elevate the “aha” moments.

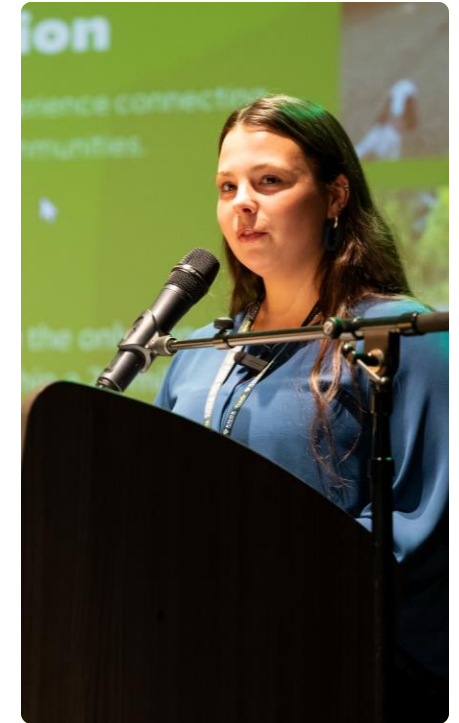
- **Field trips** emphasize the importance of coalition building
- **Cohorts** create intentional, lasting community
- **Evening activities** offer space for connection and meaningful fun



Helping the Movement Meet the Moment

Program emphasizes the challenge and opportunity of now.

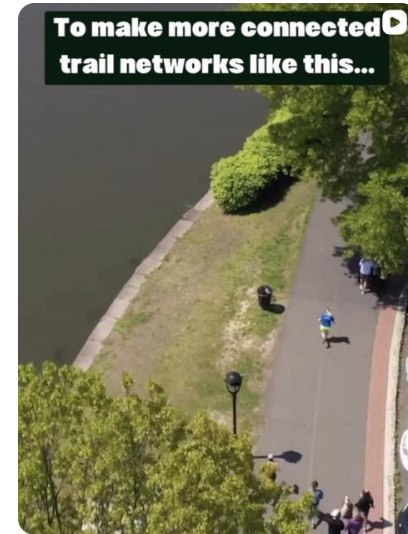
- Participants leave feeling energized and inspired, with **clear action plans**
- Speakers reinforce the importance of **collaborative partnerships**
- Host region **showcases diverse projects** and approaches for all to learn from and adapt



Amplify For Further Impact

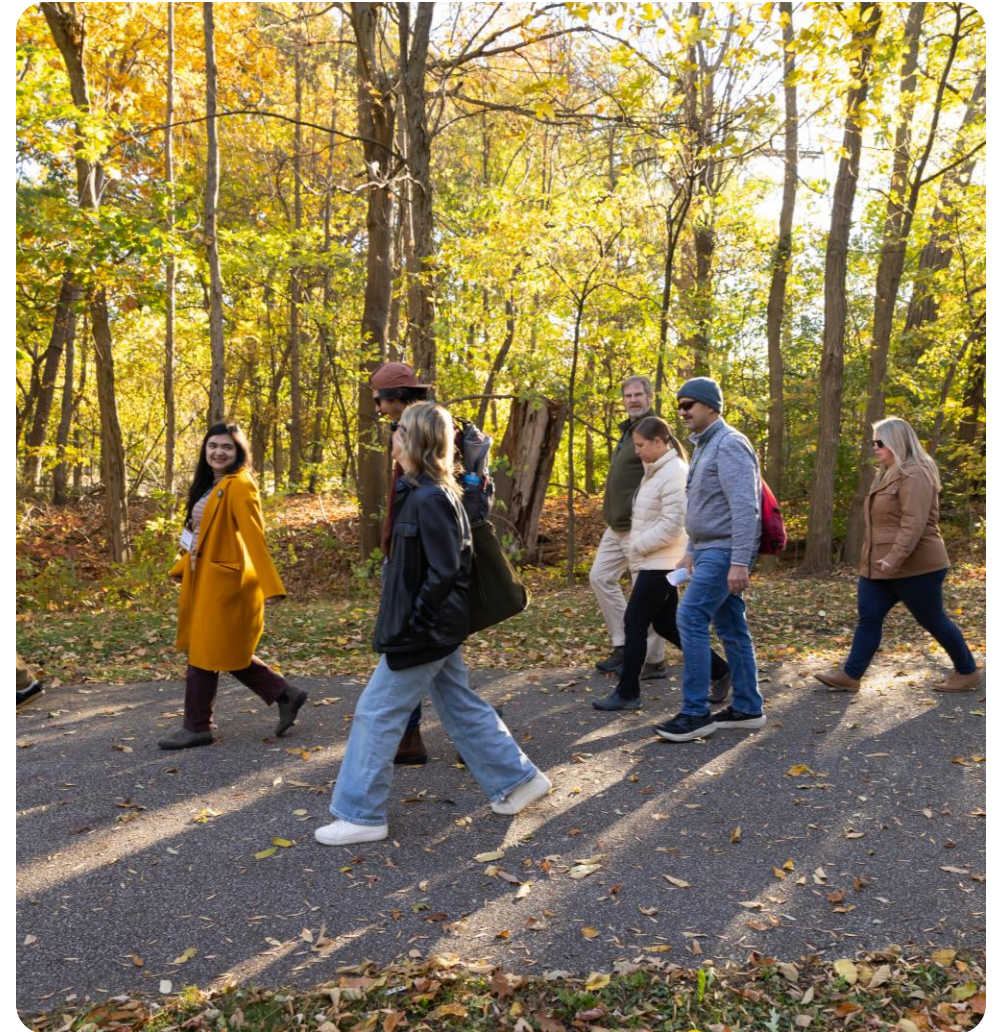
RTC's digital platforms elevate the TrailNation Summit beyond the event walls—highlighting the region as a national model for trail network development.

- **Social platforms** emphasize everything from registration kickoff to wrap-up and event lives streams, bringing to life the impact and hard work of the event (70K+ impressions, 4% engagement rate in 2025)
- **RTC's website** serves as a resource hub leading to the Summit, and a space for ongoing learning
- Gain **earned media opportunities** through partnership with RTC and trusted media partners
- **Capture testimonials** about why trails are essential—fueling future storytelling.



The 2025 Highlights

- **Nearly 400 partners** engaged throughout the Summit.
- **6 sectors represented:** trail groups; advocates; local, regional planning, state agency staff; tourism and economic development.
 - 14% represented regional planning, tourism and economic development organizations, or state agency staff
- **Participants came from 40 states**, representing communities of every size.
 - 38% of attendees represented interconnected metropolitan regions
 - 17% of attendees represented small towns, rural or Tribal communities



Who Was There

Summit participants came from 40 states, representing a diversity of organizations, sectors and communities of every size.

39%

identified their work as serving **interconnected metropolitan regions**

17%

serve Tribal, rural or small towns

14%

Represent regional planning, tourism and economic development organizations, or state agency staff

6

Sectors represented: trail groups; advocates; local, regional planning, state agency staff; tourism and economic development

What Participants Had to Say

75 registrants, representing 20% of Summit attendees, participated in our post-event survey.

95%

of respondents rated the **overall quality** of the Summit as excellent (75%) or good (20%).

96%

are very (68%) or somewhat likely (28%) to **apply their new knowledge to their work**

97%

are very likely (77%) or somewhat likely (20%) to **engage in future RTC events**, either in-person or virtual.

95%

describe their cohort experience as very (68%) or somewhat positive (27%). 75% are likely to **follow up with new connections.**



“

It was an honor to speak on a national panel at the TrailNation Summit hosted by the Rails to Trails Conservancy. There were attendees from 40 states, and I enjoyed talking about Sweet Trails Alabama and all of the momentum in Alabama surrounding trails and outdoor recreation. We are on the move!”

Alabama State Senator Andrew Jones



The Summit's format was both innovative and refreshingly old-school. Each attendee received a printed workbook with space for notes from every session. In an age of apps and live social media feeds, the simple act of putting thoughts on pen to paper felt grounding.

I fully embraced the workbook. It quickly became my conference bible. It wasn't just a place to jot down what I heard, but a companion for reflection, capturing ideas that will evolve into future Tom on the Trails posts and my work on trails. Sometimes, handwriting makes ideas stick in ways that notes in the cloud never can."

Tom Bilcze, Ohio to Erie Trail Board President

Participant Insight

Joy Matters: “Besides making those new friends, and sharing our dreams and difficulties, the connection with Damien D’Anna was a great opportunity. He was so patient as we were all clamoring for his ear like a presidential press conference. I left the event Refreshed, Inspired and filled with the often overlooked JOY. **Joy to the World, the Trail is coming!**”

Practical Learning Wins: “The mobile tour was the best part of the conference because **you could see and learn from the people who worked on the projects** that were implemented.”

Quick Touchpoints Build More Connection: “It was all very good but I really liked the World Cafe. It allowed us to **quickly hear what others cared about** and follow up with them later in the conference.”

Targeting Geography Builds Relevance: “I liked the structure, and I liked that being in a consistent subgroup helped make connections with new people easier. Some of the case studies were also **more relevant given the targeted geographic scope**”

Shape the 2028 TrailNation Summit

- **Submit a proposal to host** the 2028 TrailNation Summit
 - Highlight your region and trail network to leaders from across the country
 - **Proposals due by 11:59 p.m. EDT on May 8, 2026**
- Sponsor the TrailNation Summit to **expand your reach to a national audience** of 500+ professionals and advocates working to create and connect trail networks across the country.

Learn more at www.railstotrails.org/summit.

