

STATE OF THE TRAILS



Pony Express National Historic Trail

Photo Credit: Bart Smith

2019 PROGRESS REPORT

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), in collaboration with the nonprofit trail organizations and Federal agency partners that represent the 30 national scenic and historic trails, has been enhancing the data collection process for annual State of the Trails reports since 2018, the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System.

The intent of this report is to briefly capture the range and variety of resources, values, connections, and benefits the National Trails System provides to the nation. Some of the information, including the number of miles and historic sites permanently protected, is tracked irregularly or with varying degrees of certainty. PNTS will continue to collect and provide information trusting that the data will become more complete over time.

In 2019, Congress passed the largest public lands bill in a decade through a bipartisan effort, offering the prospect of significantly enhancing our effort to preserve the natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources along the national scenic and historic trails. The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act includes, among many provisions:

- Permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF);
- Authorization of the North Country National Scenic Trail Route Adjustment Act (which authorizes the Minnesota Arrowhead reroute and extends the trail's eastern terminus into Vermont, connecting with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail);
- Authorization of the Eastern Legacy Extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (which extends the trail by 1,200 miles and adds Indiana to the National Trails System map).

2019 NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAIL ADVANCES

14,128

miles of trail maintained, including:

188
miles of new trail built to close gaps

94
miles of trail reconstructed



- **96%** on public land within management areas dedicated*
- **4%** on land and/or easements acquired*

* to preserve the trail and associated resources



13,695
people engaged in **1,749** trail maintenance and new construction activities

NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAIL CONNECTIONS



50 States and D.C.

100+ BLM land management areas

230+ Major urban areas and Trail Towns

390+ National parks, forests, wildlife refuges, nationally designated wilderness areas

74% of the U.S. population lives within a **1 hour drive** of a national scenic or historic trail

Source: Based on 2010 U.S. Census Data

2019 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMS

216,676 people were engaged through programs, including:

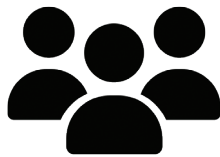
53,341 school-age children (K-12)

10,506 young adults (ages 18-25)

1,548 youth service or conservation corps participants

6,210 programs were conducted, including:

645 involving traditionally under-represented children/adults

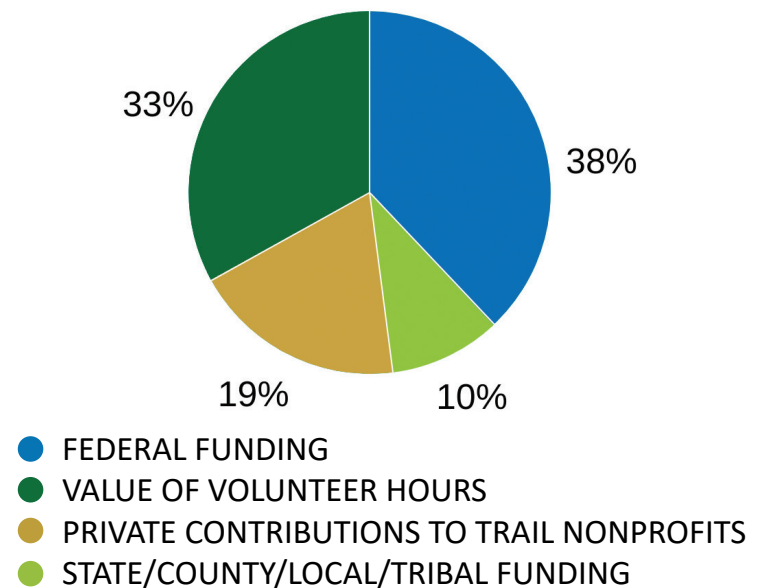


14 benefiting veterans

Source: Estimates collected through Partnership for the National Trails System survey based on programming operated by Federal and nonprofit trail partners in 2019.

2019 NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM PUBLIC/PRIVATE TOTAL VALUE

\$75,603,770



Source: Estimates collected through Partnership for the National Trails System annual Gold Sheet reports and Congressional appropriations.

37 intern grants totaling over \$330,000 have been awarded to national trails since 2018, matched by in-kind and Federal and nonprofit funds for a combined

\$1 million value

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Transforming** the national scenic and historic trails from a collection of premier trails into a national public lands system like the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System or the National Wilderness System.
- **Completing** the trails on the ground—closing the gaps in the scenic trails and preserving and interpreting all the “high potential sites and segments” along the historic trails.
- **Growing** all of the national trail organizations to greatly enhance their capacity and resources and that of the Federal trail agencies to be able to fully develop and sustain the National Trails System.

