



# STATE OF THE TRAILS



Seeds of Stewardship middle school participants during a trail maintenance project in October 2020. Photo credit: Daniel Snyder

## 2020 PROGRESS REPORT

Each year, Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) works in collaboration with the nonprofit trail organizations and Federal agency partners that represent the 30 national scenic and historic trails to compile the State of the Trails Report, a snapshot of the range and variety of resources, values, connections, and benefits the National Trails System provides to the nation. This is a work in progress. 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.

2020 was a year of great challenges and progress for the National Trails System. During the COVID-19 pandemic, more visitors sought outdoor activities for socially distanced recreation, leading to a great increase in trail use. Meanwhile, many trail organizations and federal workers pivoted some or all of their operations to remote work,

limited or prohibited access to visitors' centers and opted to change, reduce or temporarily cease volunteer activities to ensure the safety of visitors, staff and volunteers. Also, several trails were affected by devastating wildfires that left a significant mark on invaluable public lands and habitats.

There was much to celebrate as well. For example, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was passed by Congress with bipartisan support. GAOA, arguably, is the most significant trails and conservation legislation in decades. It secures permanent funding for the Land & Water Conservation Fund and provides funding for deferred maintenance for facilities—including trails—within the National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Districts. These resources have potential to greatly advance goals to complete and maintain the National Trails System. tional Forests and Bureau of Land Management Districts.

**69%** of the U.S. population lives within **60** miles of a national scenic or historic trail

*Source: Based on 2020 U.S. Census Data*

## 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

## 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.

Trail Organizations and Federal Partners saw a

**274%** increase in engagement

thanks to newly developed virtual programs, events, and activities put in place due to Covid-19 restrictions.

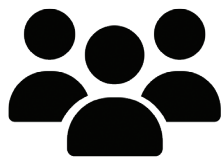
## 2020 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMS

**809,816** people were engaged through programs, including:

<b>131,951</b>	<b>106,257</b>	<b>123</b>
school-age children (K-12)	young adults (ages 18-25)	youth service or conservation corps participants

**2,621** programs were conducted, including:

**215** involving traditionally under-represented children/adults



**22** benefiting veterans

Source: Estimates collected through PNTS survey based on programming operated by Federal and nonprofit trail partners in 2020.

## PNTS PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

**50** intern grants totaling over \$459,000 have been awarded to national trails since 2018, matched by in-kind and Federal and nonprofit funds for an approximate

**3:1** return on investment

## 2020 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS, VOLUNTEER HOURS, AND VALUE

**\$ 25,646,499**

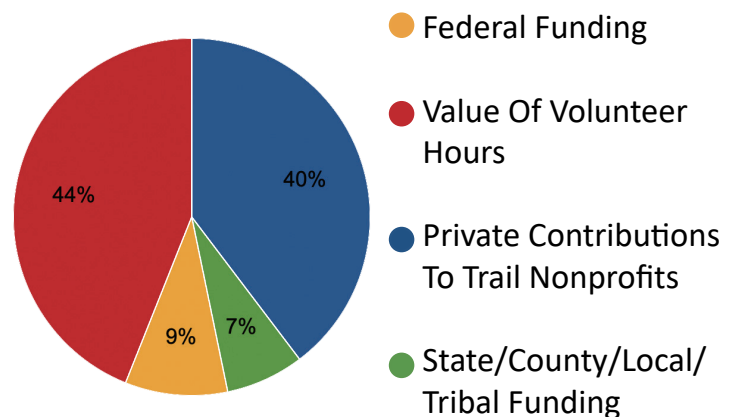
**13,816** active volunteers worked

**942,886** hours

Note: Value of volunteer time calculated using the national 2019 value of volunteer time (\$27.20/hour) by the Independent Sector.

## 2020 NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM PUBLIC/PRIVATE TOTAL VALUE

**\$ 58,352,411**



Source: Estimates collected through PNTS annual Gold Sheet report.

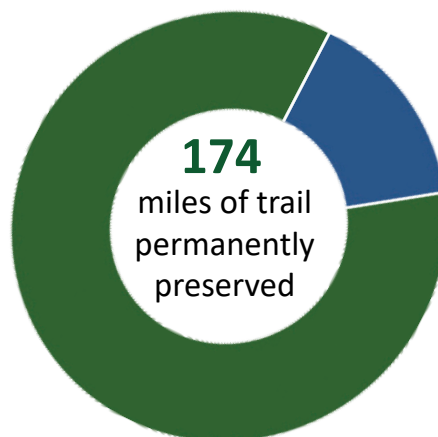
## 2020 NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAIL ADVANCES

**11,988**

miles of trail maintained, including:

**61** miles of new trail built to close gaps

**60** miles of trail reconstructed



- **15%** on public land within management areas dedicated\*
- **85%** on land and/or easements acquired\*

\* to preserve the trail and associated resources



**8,591** people engaged in **1,324** trail maintenance and new construction activities