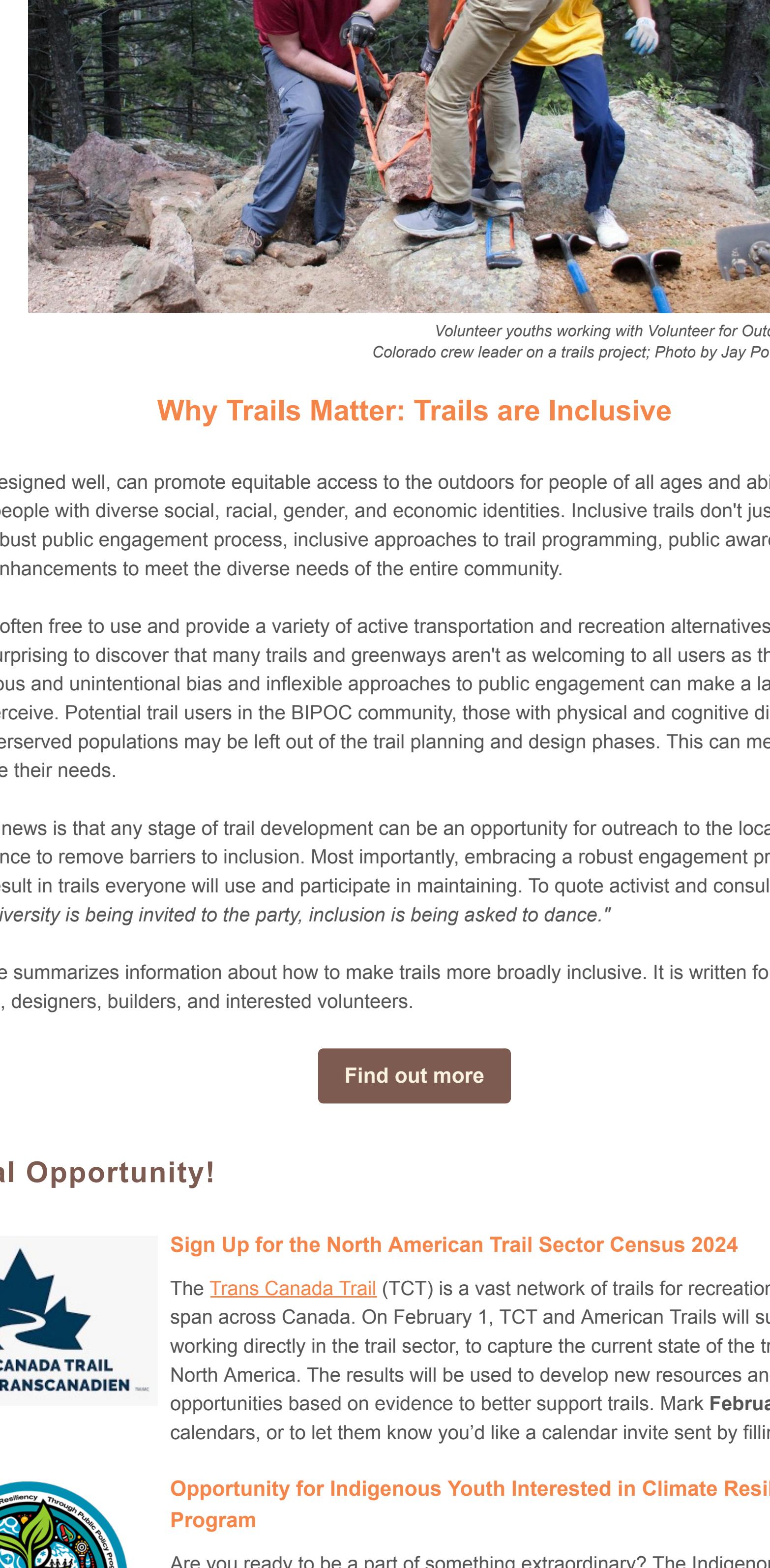


TRAIL TRACKS

January 2024



Volunteer youths working with Volunteer for Outdoor Colorado crew leader on a trails project. Photo by Jay Poules

Why Trails Matter: Trails are Inclusive

Trails, if designed well, can promote equitable access to the outdoors for people of all ages and abilities, bringing together people with diverse social, racial, gender, and economic identities. Inclusive trails don't just happen. It takes a robust public engagement process, inclusive approaches to trail programming, public awareness efforts and trail enhancements to meet the diverse needs of the entire community.

Trails are often free to use and provide a variety of active transportation and recreation alternatives. Therefore, it may be surprising to discover that many trails and greenways aren't as welcoming to all users as they might seem. Unconscious and unintentional bias and inflexible approaches to public engagement can make a lack of inclusion hard to perceive. Potential trail users in the BIPOC community, those with physical and cognitive disabilities, and other underserved populations may be left out of the trail planning and design phases. This can mean that trails don't serve their needs.

The good news is that any stage of trail development can be an opportunity for outreach to the local community, and a chance to remove barriers to inclusion. Most importantly, embracing a robust engagement process is more likely to result in trails everyone will use and participate in maintaining. To quote activist and consultant [Verna Myers](#), "Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance."

This article summarizes information about how to make trails more broadly inclusive. It is written for trails managers, designers, builders, and interested volunteers.

[Find out more](#)

Special Opportunity!



Sign Up for the North American Trail Sector Census 2024

The [Trans Canada Trail](#) (TCT) is a vast network of trails for recreational activities that span across Canada. On February 1, TCT and American Trails will survey those working directly in the trail sector, to capture the current state of the trail sector across North America. The results will be used to develop new resources and funding opportunities based on evidence to better support trails. Mark **February 1** on your calendars, or to let them know you'd like a calendar invite sent by filling out [this form](#).



Opportunity for Indigenous Youth Interested in Climate Resiliency Program

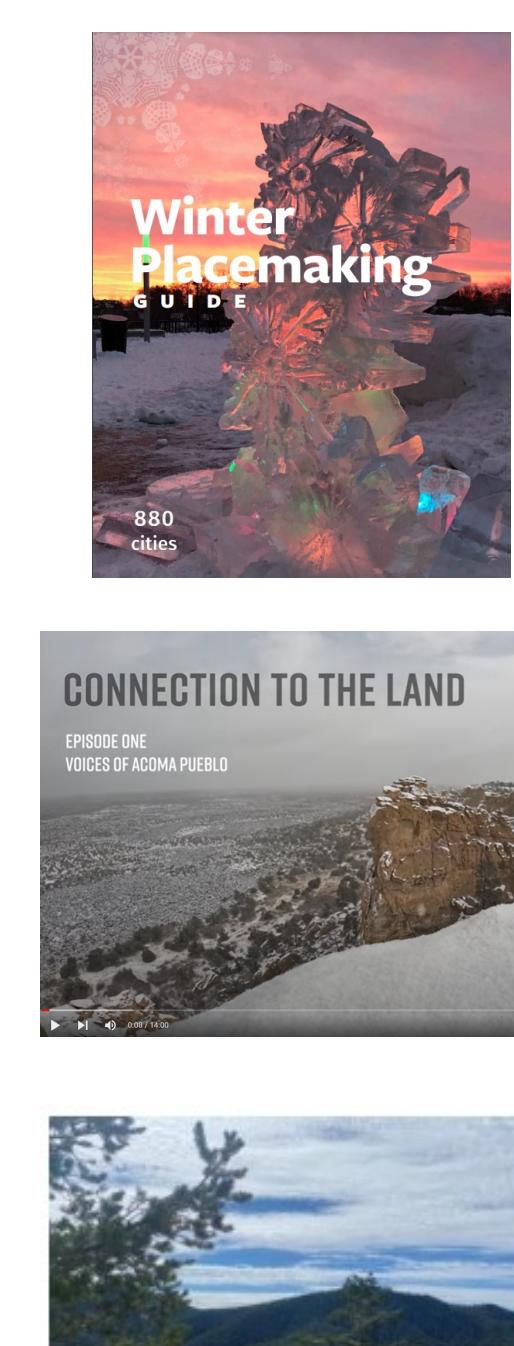
Are you ready to be a part of something extraordinary? The Indigenous Youth Climate Resiliency Through Public Policy Program is your chance to make a real difference in the fight against climate change. If you're Indigenous, between 18-30 years of age, and based in the United States, this is your opportunity to step up and lead. Applications close **January 19**. [Find out more](#)

Funding and Legislation



The League of American Bicyclists Community Spark Grants

The League of American Bicyclists is delighted to announce its third year of [Community Spark Grants](#) to support the growing number of local grassroots changemakers and organizations across the country working to improve their communities through bicycling. The program will award \$1,500 to 15 projects. The deadline to apply is **February 1** at 5:00 pm ET. [Find out more](#)



In-Person Hike the Hill® in Washington, DC February 11-15, 2024

Celebrating its 27th year, [Hike the Hill®](#) is a joint effort between American Hiking Society and Partnership for the National Trails System to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders including trails funding, public lands management and conservation, equitable access, and other top priority issues that sustain trails and improve access to public lands. [Find out more](#)



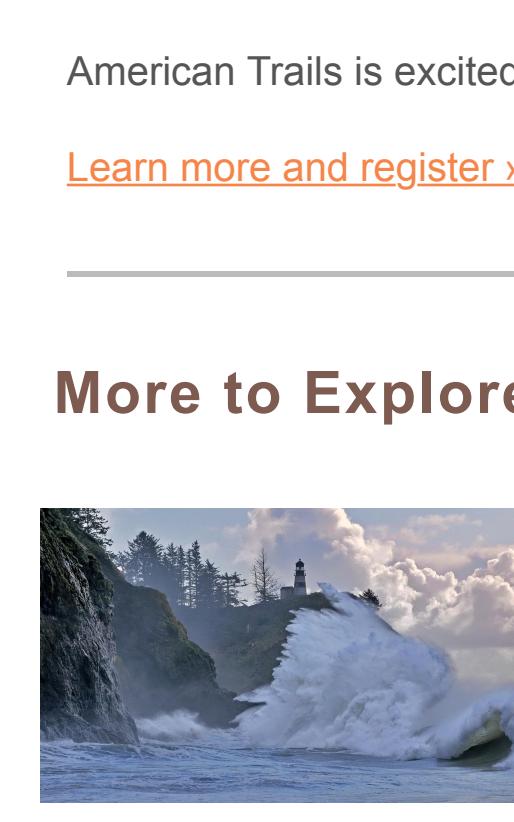
Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$1.5 Billion Available through the 2024 RAISE Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity for \$1.5 billion in grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for 2024. The popular program helps communities nationwide carry out projects with significant local or regional impact. Applications are due **February 28** through [Grants.gov](#). [Find out more](#)



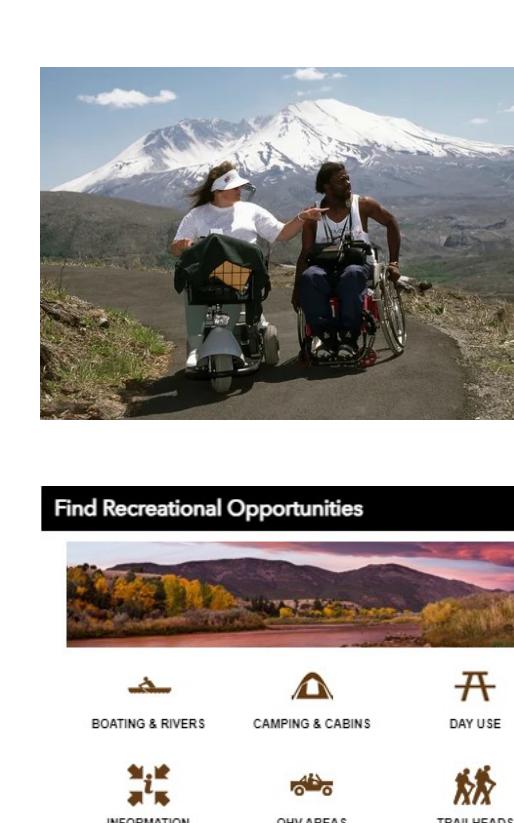
NEEF and USFS Announce New Veterans and Nature Grant

The goal of this grant is to increase engagement of veterans' communities in understanding the physical and mental health benefits of time in nature and provide opportunities for physical and mental health-focused outdoor activities at U.S. Forest Service sites and other public lands (including state and local sites). Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. PT on March 1. [Find out more](#)



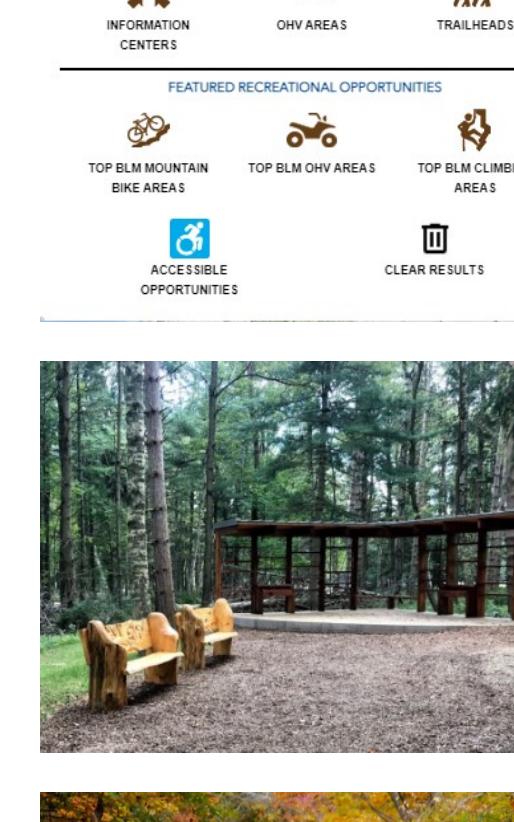
Forest Service Significantly Expands Co-Stewardship Investments with Tribal Nations

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on December 6 ways the Biden-Harris Administration is fulfilling long-standing Tribal requests for USDA to support and better partner with Tribal Nations in empowering Tribal food sovereignty and co-stewardship of federal lands and waters. [Find out more](#)



Strengthening Tribal Consultations and Nation-to-Nation Relationships

The Tribal Relations Program strives to enhance relationships between the Forest Service, Tribes, ANCs, non-federally recognized Tribes, and Native Hawaiians, as well as American Indian, Alaska Native, and other Indigenous individuals, communities, inter-Tribal organizations, enterprises, and educational institutions, thereby improving the agency's ability to foster effective partnerships and respect Tribal sovereignty. [Find out more](#)



Engineered Excellence

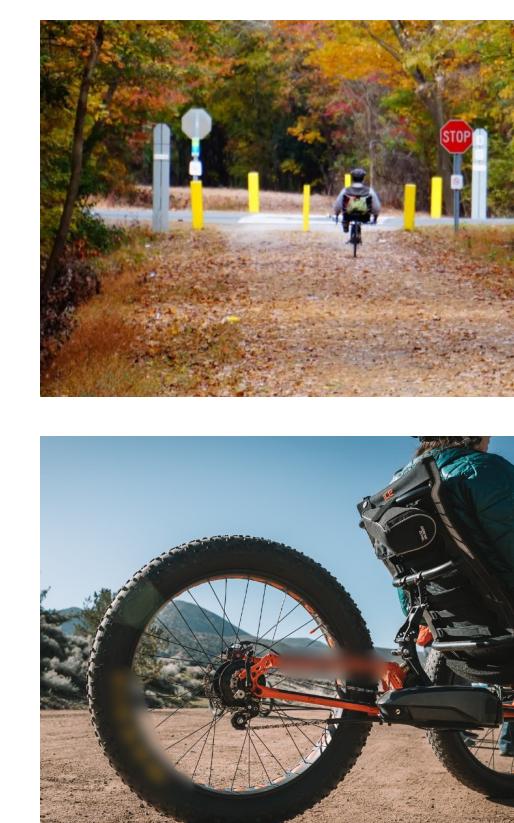
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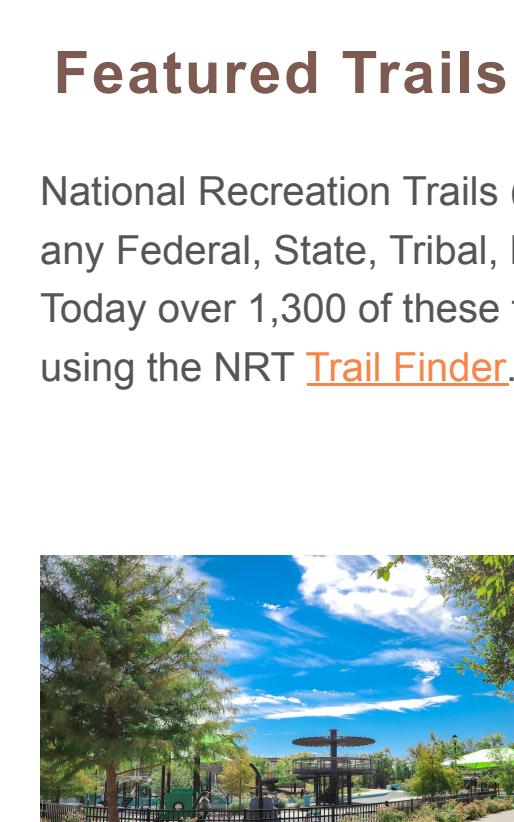


Proposals and Awards Requests



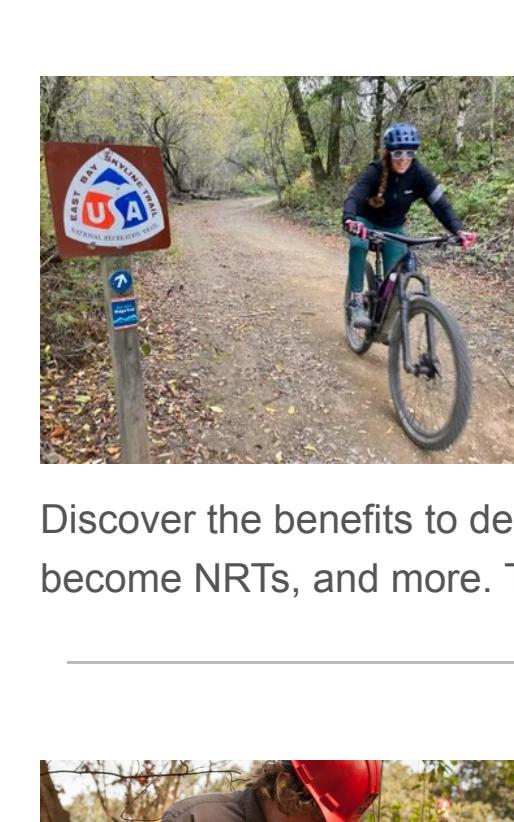
Call for Proposals: 2024 World Trails Conference in Ottawa, Canada

The 2024 World Trails Conference call for speaker proposals is officially open! The [World Trails Network](#) invites you to submit a proposal to present on the theme of Connecting People, Places, and the Planet at the 2024 World Trails Conference, hosted by [Trans Canada Trail](#). With this theme, the conference will explore the profound bonds that link humanity to the natural world and develop a new understanding of how our trails impact the environment, communities, and each other. [Read the Speaker Guidelines](#). Proposals may focus on research, data, projects, stories, or initiatives and are due **January 31**. [Submit a proposal](#)



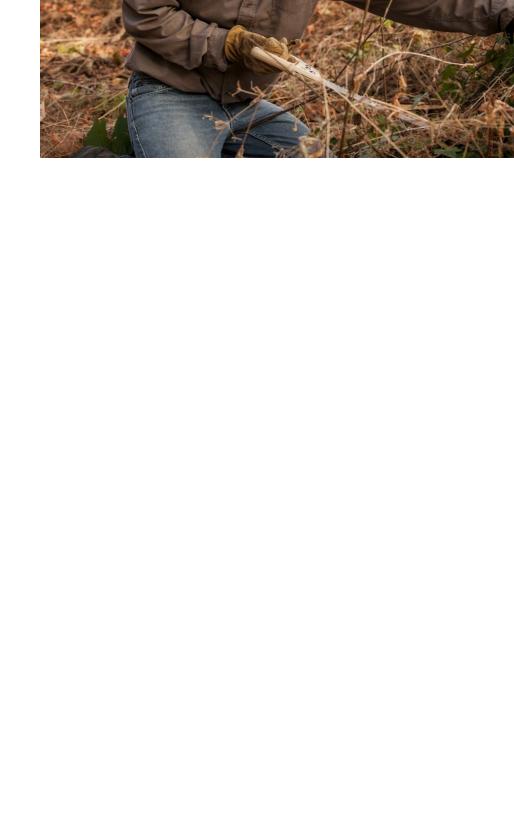
The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) Nominations for Individual Service and Project Excellence Awards

SORP is currently accepting nominations for the 2024 Awards. These awards will be presented at the National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC) in South Lake Tahoe, Stateline, Nevada in May. The awards aim to recognize exceptional achievements in outdoor recreation planning, management, research, and policy. The two awards open for nominations are the Individual Service Award and the Project Excellence Award. The deadline for award submissions is **February 1**. [Find out more](#)



Registration for NORC is now open as well!

The goal of NORC 2024 is to present a program that is solutions-forward and equity-centric. View the [draft program schedule-at-a-glance](#). The majority of field workshops are included in the registration fee and are first come first serve. Take advantage of the early registration discount and register by March 15! [Find out more](#)



California Trails & Greenways Call for Awards Nominations

The Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for outstanding projects, programs, and people for recognition at California Trails & Greenways 2024 in Lake Tahoe. This program is an opportunity to bring acknowledgment and appreciation to individuals, organizations, and agencies who have made exceptional contributions to trails and greenways during the 2023 calendar year. Award nominations are due **February 2**. [Find out more](#)



ASLA 2024 Conference on Landscape Architecture

In 2024, the American Society of Landscape Architects proudly marks its 125th anniversary! Submit your visionary presentations and be a part of the dialogue that will define the next era of our profession by **February 22** at 12:00 p.m. PT. [Find out more](#)

Move United Education Conference

Move United is seeking athletes, sports providers, and sports professionals to develop and deliver the curriculum at the Move United Education Conference in Phoenix, Arizona April 22-24, 2024. **April 8** is the application deadline for poster sessions or vendor exhibits. [Find out more](#)

Resources

Age and Dementia Friendly Design Considerations for Physical Infrastructure

This document by the Advisory Council on Dementia友好的Physical and Infrastructure Team of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Senior Services was created to assist anyone involved in designing buildings and outdoor spaces across the Commonwealth. [Find out more](#)

Winter Placemaking Guide

See ways to create inclusive public places for community members during the winter months. [Find out more](#)

Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Stewardship Efforts into the 21st Century

Recently, new resources were released to increase awareness of Indigenous History and Tribal perspectives in landscape studies. The Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) partnered to create two public resources: a Cultural Landscapes Training Path tool and the first installment of the "Connection to the Land" film series. [View the video](#)

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Inclusionary Trail Planning Toolkit

This report will discuss how community organizations can principles and practices can help to achieve community engagement. Section Three of this report outlines a common outreach methods and emphasizes the importance of leveraging existing community-based resources. [Find out more](#)

Equitable and Inclusive Trail Building Toolkit

Trail profile signals and trail layers alike can play a role in making trails more inclusive and equitable. Trail-to-Trails Conservancy provides helpful resources and strategies for advancing equity in trail development and access across the country. [Find out more](#)

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