

 Robert Lamb recommends the list:
[Top 5 Sci-fi Weapons that Might...](#)

One Click, and You're In!
[Sign In](#) | [Join](#) | [Sign in using Facebook](#)

Search HowStuffWorks and the web

Submit Query

[Video](#) | [RSS](#) | [Random](#)

Home [Adventure](#) [Animals](#) [Auto](#) [Communication](#) [Computer](#) [Electronics](#) [Entertainment](#) [Food](#) [Geography](#) [Health](#) [History](#) [Home & Garden](#) [Money](#) [People](#) [Science](#)

[Outdoor Activities](#) [Survival](#) [Destinations](#)

Home > [Adventure](#) > [Outdoor Activities](#) > [Adventure Sports Clubs & Networks](#)

[Next Page](#)

How the American Hiking Society Works

by Meredith Bower

[Print](#) [Cite](#) [Feedback](#) [Share](#) [Recommend](#)

Inside this Article

1. [Introduction to How the American Hiking Society Works](#)
2. [Joining the American Hiking Society](#)
3. [Benefits of the American Hiking Society](#)
4. [Lots More Information](#)
5. [See all Adventure Sports Clubs and Networks articles](#)

Winding its way over more than 2,000 miles (3,219 kilometers) from Maine to Georgia, the Appalachian Trail is one of the nation's best-known footpaths. Protecting that long, gorgeous walk in the woods united the three men who ultimately founded the American Hiking Society in the mid-1970s.

The early 1970s saw its share of cultural change. In addition to the women's and the antiwar movements, the United States saw its first environmental movement [source: [Kemsley, 2006](#)]. Interest in backpacking took off, as did the popularity of snowmobiles, dirt bikes and off-road vehicles. Hikers found themselves jockeying for space with the riders of motorized sport vehicles on foot trails in national, state and local parks.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate was considering the Appalachian Trail Oversight Bill, legislation that would protect the future of the famous trail. Despite the interest in the environment at the time, it was difficult to rally support for hiking, as groups such as the Audubon Society, Sierra Club and National Wildlife Federation were involved with bigger projects [source: [Kemsley, 2006](#)].

Up Next

- [How the American Alpine Club Works](#)
- [How to Read a Topographic Map](#)
- [How to Use a Flare Gun](#)
- [What exercises will prepare me for hiking?](#)

Hiking Society became an official entity. Since its founding more than 30 years ago, the group has pursued three distinct paths, each of which ultimately helps to promote and protect U.S. foot trails. They are:

- Volunteerism and stewardship
- Policy and advocacy
- Outreach and education

Keep reading to find out how to join the only conservation-based, recreation organization in the United States.

Adventure Videos



[More Adventure Videos »](#)



© iStockphoto.com/jcarillet

The American Hiking Society aims to protect and promote U.S. foot trails, like the A-T. If the group had its way, you'd be out hiking right now instead of reading about it.

However, three men -- William Kemsley Jr., founder of Backpacker magazine, Jim Kern, founder of the Florida Trail, and Paul Pritchard, executive director of the Appalachian Trail Conference (now known as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy) -- did go to Washington, D.C., to testify on behalf of the trail. Here, it became clear to the trio that there was a need for a national trails organization. Within months, they formed the **American Hiking Society**.

In October 1976, with a board of directors in place and certified designation as a nonprofit organization, the American

TOYOTA moving forward

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Build & Price a Toyota Model

4Runner [Go](#)

TOYOTA moving forward

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Robert Lamb recommends the list:

[Top 5 Sci-fi Weapons that Might...](#)

[Next Page](#)

One Click, and You're In!
[Sign In](#) | [Join](#) | [Sign in using Facebook »](#)

Inside this Article

- 1. [Introduction to How the American Hiking Society Works](#)
- 2. [Joining the American Hiking Society](#)
- 3. [Benefits of the American Hiking Society](#)
- 4. [Lots More Information](#)
- 5. [See all Adventure Sports Clubs and Networks articles](#)

Search HowStuffWorks and the web

[Home](#) | [Adventure](#) | [Animals](#) | [Auto](#) | [Communication](#) | [Computer](#) | [Electronics](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Food](#) | [Geography](#) | [Health](#) | [History](#) | [Home & Garden](#) | [Money](#) | [People](#) | [Science](#)

[Company Info](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Careers](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Visitor Agreement](#) | [RSS](#) | [HSW Tools](#)
[HowStuffWorks](#) | [HSW Brazil](#) | [HSW China](#) [博闻网](#)
 © 1998-2009 HowStuffWorks, Inc.

[Video Center](#) | [Maps](#) | [Consumer Guide Auto](#) | [Consumer Guide Products](#) | [Make HSW your homepage](#)

[Discovery Communications, LLC](#) | [Discovery Channel](#) | [TLC](#) | [Animal Planet](#) | [Discovery Health](#) | [Science Channel](#) | [Planet Green](#) | [Discovery Kids](#)
[Petfinder](#) | [TreeHugger](#) | [Military Channel](#) | [Investigation Discovery](#) | [HD Theater](#) | [FitTV](#) | [Turbo](#) | [Discovery Education](#)

ATTENTION! We recently updated our privacy policy. The changes are effective as of Thursday, October 30, 2008.
 To see the new policy, click [\[here\]](#). Questions? See the policy for the contact information.