

10 Ways to Save Trails

Get involved and protect the nation's trails for the future.

America's public lands are one of the nation's great achievements. Each year people from the United States and around the world make millions of visits to America's national parks and forests and many more millions visit other federal, state and local parks and open spaces.

Nearly every visit has something in common—trails. People experience our public lands on trails—whether walking on short nature paths to overlooks or waterfalls, or taking wilderness excursions. Trails are such a continual thread woven through our public lands that they are often taken for granted. But unlike nearly every other public resource, trails are largely the product of volunteer labor.

Here are some ways that you can pitch in and help save America's trails:

1. **Take a hike!** Explore paths “less traveled” and observe the status of trails. If you're not out enjoying trails, you won't feel the strong pull to save them.
2. **Volunteer locally.** Trails require a lot of maintenance throughout the year. Begin by protecting the trails in your region - contact your local trails group to find out more. Check out American Hiking Society's Alliance members in our “Partners” section for a club near you.
3. **Adopt Leave No Trace ethics.** While the increasing number of recreational enthusiasts has raised awareness of trails, some of these newcomers are unaware of how small acts can have large impacts on the natural world. Leave No Trace is dedicated to building awareness, appreciation, and respect for our wilderness areas. Practice and share your Leave No Trace knowledge!
4. **Sign up for AHS Advocacy Alerts.** While American Hiking Society is your voice on Capitol Hill, sometimes it helps to have others speaking up with us. Sign up for our action alerts and take action to let Congress and other government officials know that you think trails are worth preserving and protecting. We only e-mail when your input is truly needed!
5. **Celebrate National Trails Day[®].** National Trails Day is a nationwide celebration of trails that takes place the first Saturday of every June. Hundreds of thousands of people participate in thousands of events nationwide. National Trails Day is a great time to celebrate recent accomplishments, raise public awareness of trails, recruit new volunteers and members, and inform the public of the health and many other benefits of trails.



6. **Support trails economically.** Make informed consumer choices. By supporting the numerous manufacturing companies and stores who are linked with environmental recreation and preservation groups, you will help protect trails.
7. **Make your voice heard locally.** Attend public meetings when they affect your local parks and hiking destinations. You can frequently find these meeting notices on the parks' and forests' websites.
8. **Encourage the next generation to get outside.** Getting a child interested in hiking will ensure that he or she will want to save the beautiful places they hike as an adult. The more children who begin hiking today, the better the prospects for our trails in the future.
9. **Take a Volunteer Vacation.** American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations offer a unique opportunity to experience and give back to trails. No experience is required – just a willingness to get dirty and meet some of the most awesome people ever! Whether you want to stay in a cabin tucked in the woods or go on a wilderness backpacking adventure, there's something for everybody.
10. **Join American Hiking Society.** Trails are the result of hike-minded people, clubs, and businesses who pledge their support at both the local and national level. Become an AHS member and join the only national effort to protect the places you love to hike.

