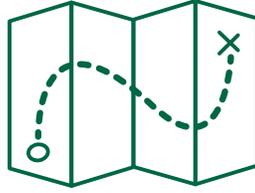




AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY'S
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY®

2019 Event Host Guide



9 STEPS TO PLAN A SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL TRAILS DAY® EVENT

National Trails Day® (NTD) events can be as simple as organizing a trail cleanup, hike, ride, or paddle trip on your favorite trail, or you can go all out by coordinating a volunteer trail service project with a local land manager or even a large community trail festival. This guide will walk you through the nine-step process of planning a successful NTD event, regardless of the scale or size of the event you are planning.

1. Clarify Your NTD Goal: Before diving into the details of event planning it's a great idea to write down your desired outcome for your National Trails Day® event. A clear objective will help the planning process. Possible goals could include:

- ▶ Introduce your trail to community members who are unaware of it
- ▶ Lead 4-7 participants on their first nature hike
- ▶ Remove litter from the most heavily used sections of trail in your community
- ▶ Clear 2 miles of an overgrown trail
- ▶ Clean out 50 water bars or drainages
- ▶ Educate 10-15 trails users about Leave No Trace ethics
- ▶ Raise enough money to build a new foot bridge
- ▶ Increase membership to your club by 5 people
- ▶ Register 150 runners for a trail race

My NTD goal: _____

2. Envision Your Target Participants: Based on your goals, what type of participants will help you reach your goal? Your target participants could include:

- ▶ Families with young children
- ▶ Adult volunteers
- ▶ Individuals with limited access to trails
- ▶ People new to hiking/bicycling/birding etc.
- ▶ Nature photographers
- ▶ People outside your existing network

My target participants: _____

3. Choose Your Activities: Select appealing activities for your target audience that will help you reach your NTD goal. Any muscle-powered trail activity or outdoor education activity can be registered as an NTD event. Your event can include one activity or many activities. Check the box for each activity you'll include or write in unique activities:

- Trail cleanup
- Day hike
- Trail service project
- Trail run
- Mountain bike ride
- Paddling trip
- Activities for children
- First aid or "Leave No Trace" demos
- Outdoor photography clinic
- Educational exhibits and learning projects
- Birding trip
- Other: _____

4. Find an Ideal Event Location: When choosing an event location, consider the following:

- ▶ Accessibility - How easy will it be for your target participants to get to your event? If your community has public transportation, consider locations near public transit stops.
- ▶ Terrain - With your target audience in mind, select trails to suit their skill level.
- ▶ Approval - It is advised to seek approval from the land manager/owner to host an event at the desired location. Certain areas have restrictions on usage and group size. If you don't know who manages the land, start by contacting your local parks & recreation department.

My first choice event location: _____

A possible backup location: _____

5. Evaluate Possible Partnerships: Many of the most successful NTD events are collaborative events organized by two or more organizations. (Everything's more fun shared with friends!) Partnering with other organizations can help expand your event's reach and adds helping hands on the day of the event.

Here's an example, partner with an active run club and a local brewery for a "trails and ales" event. Volunteers clean up a trail they run on each week and meet up at the brewery afterwards. Perhaps local businesses could promote the event and provide products and services for a raffle at the end of the event, sounds fun right?

Consider partnerships with the following:

- Land managers/owner
- Outdoor/conservation groups
- Local breweries
- Outdoor retailers
- Climbing/Fitness gyms
- Run clubs
- Youth or senior groups
- Chamber of commerce
- Meetup groups (meetup.com)
- Health/wellness organizations
- Tourism office
- Small Businesses
- Parks and Rec Department

People and organizations I'll reach out to: _____

6. Define the Logistics: you might want to elicit help for some of the following tasks, if they are applicable for your event. Write down people who will be willing to help with various possible tasks:

- ▶ Event Promotion/Marketing: _____
- ▶ Signage and parking: _____
- ▶ Participant sign in: _____
- ▶ Event introduction: _____
- ▶ Tool coordination: _____
- ▶ Activity leaders: _____
- ▶ Rainy day plan: _____
- ▶ Other: _____

7. Gather Resources: based on your event activities you may want to create a list of items you will want for your event. If you don't have access to specific items, consider partnering with organizations who might help supply event materials. Use the following list to help brainstorm what you will need; simple NTD events may not need much:

- Event signage
- Sunscreen and bug repellent
- Snacks and water for participants (or they can bring their own; encourage reusable water bottles)
- Sign-in sheets, handouts, liability waivers, pens, clipboards

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- Raffle items and giveaways
- Trail maintenance tools
- Personal protective equipment, if doing trail work
- First aid kit
- Tables, chairs, sun/rain fly
- Supplies for kids' activities
- Audio/visual equipment for presentations
- Clean up materials – trash bags, and trash cans
- Other: _____

8. Promote Your Event: American Hiking Society develops promotional resources to help event hosts promote their event at the local level. Links to the promotional materials will be emailed to all registered event hosts and posted on the [NTD event host webpage](#) before April. The following are a few resources included in the promotional kit, check the resources you think you'll use:

- Social media sample posts
- Images, graphics, and logos
- Sample blog posts/email copy

Best ways to communicate with my target participants: _____

9. Register Your Event for FREE: the NTD website receives hundreds of thousands of views, so it's important that all events are registered at AmericanHiking.org/national-trails-day/add-event. American Hiking Society highly encourages all events to be **registered by May 1** to benefit from increased web traffic the month leading up to NTD.

Registering an event will take about ten to fifteen minutes to complete. After creating a host login you will have the ability to edit your event details at any point leading up to NTD.

Now that your event is registered you will receive additional time-saving tips, updates, reminders, and resources via NTD email updates. If you have further questions, or if you have ideas about how AHS can better support NTD event hosts, please reach out to Wesley Trimble at WTrimble@AmericanHiking.org.



Protecting the Places You Love to Hike.