

V. CONTINUING THE VISION



A. WHY ARE TRAILS IMPORTANT?

Using trails is one of America’s fastest growing recreational activities. In the Arizona State Parks Trails 2000 Survey conducted by Arizona State University, it was determined that more than 90% of the state’s population uses trails, and nationwide the American Hiking Society reports almost one-third of Americans, more than 67 million, went hiking in the year 2000. In fact, the USDA Forest Service is predicting steep increases in participation in backpacking and hiking, including an 80% increase in hiking in the Southern and Pacific Coast areas, over the next 50 years.

Recreational trail use is often associated with backcountry areas and camping, but as trail use grows and more trails are developed near population centers, communities are recognizing the economic, social and health benefits of trails. These benefits include improvements to physical and emotional health and quality of life, increased property values, reduction of traffic congestion and air pollution, heat island mitigation, and increased city revenues, to name a few.

As a means of transportation, the development of a trails and greenway infrastructure is essential to enable people to utilize non-motorized means of travel to work, school, or shopping. This will not be realized, however, unless the appropriate land use and infrastructure are present. Current low rates of non-motorized trips appear to exist not because of lack of desire, but rather because of the lack of infrastructure that supports non-motorized trips. Green infrastructure, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, and greenways provide the infrastructure that makes non-motorized trips not only possible, but also enjoyable.



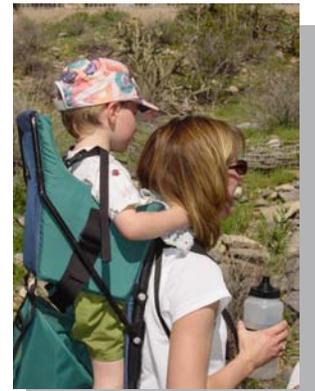
A neighborhood trail in the Mescal Park area.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Trail use does not cause air pollution, noise pollution, or traffic congestion, and consumes few natural resources. Motor vehicles, on the other hand, are major consumers of limited energy resources, and are a major source of noise and air pollution in the United States.

But in spite of growing concern over this trend, only about 3 million of over 80 million bicyclists in the US commute by bicycle to work on a regular basis. This is less than 1% of all commuters in the United States. Many factors influence America’s commuting public on non-motorized trails, and most people who want to use trails for commuting are not able to make safe connections to their destinations in nearly all of America’s urban environments.

Promoting trail use as a means of transportation is more than “just a good thing to do.” The potential environmental, economic, and social benefits are enormous, considering that the 1% of bicycle commuters in the US saved 17 million barrels of oil in 1990. If the 1980 Department of Transportation’s report, “Bicycle Transportation for Energy Conservation,” had been implemented over the past decade, roughly 200 million barrels of oil would have been saved.



Scottsdale trails are for all ages

CLEAN AIR

Each new car produced in the US (in compliance with every federal standard) emits over 100 pounds of pollutants into the air every year. Walking or bicycling to work



Equestrians have a long history of using Scottsdale's trails



Trail winds through lush Sonoran Desert vegetation

instead of driving, would result in the reduction of up to 2.0 grams of hydrocarbons, 20 grams of carbon monoxide, and 1.6 grams of nitrogen oxides for every mile traveled. Clearly, trail use can contribute to solving today's air pollution problems, especially in Arizona's climate.

Just how realistic is non-motorized trail use for commuting to work? More than half the population of the nation lives within 5 miles of the place they work, which requires less than 30 minutes of bicycling. Some individuals live within 1 or 2 miles and could walk to work. If just 2% of the US workforce living within 2 miles of a transit route were to use mass transit or use a trail to get to work, 120 million gallons of gasoline could be saved every year. Imagine the dramatic reduction we would realize in the amount of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides we are now breathing!

If trail use can improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and improve health, then why don't more people do it? The answer lies in the fact that the majority of commuters want safer routes and better facilities at work to store bicycles and change clothes. Communities that rank high in many surveys in the quality of life and physical environment are changing their commuting standards by implementing master planning for trail connectivity, safer environments, and partnering with businesses to encourage workers to commute. Cities such as Madison, WI, Gainesville, FL, Boulder, CO, Eugene, OR, Davis, CA, Minneapolis, MN, Pittsburgh, PA, and Arlington, VA are all addressing the air quality of their communities by making it easier for people to get to their destinations using trails instead of motorized streets.

HEALTH BENEFITS

A Japanese study of 2,211 senior citizens linked longevity to access to walkable green spaces such as parks and tree-lined streets. Living in areas with walkable green spaces positively influenced the longevity of urban senior citizens independent of their age, sex, marital status, baseline functional status, and socioeconomic status. Greenery-filled public areas that are nearby and easy to walk in should be further emphasized in urban planning for the development and re-development of densely populated areas in a mega city.

Here in the US, people have recently begun to recognize the tremendous benefits of trails as a resource to improve the health of our nation's citizens. With strong urging from the U.S. Surgeon General's office in Washington, DC, community leaders are now looking at their trail systems as having value far beyond their ability to provide recreational experiences and transportation linkages.

Recent research shared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, has prompted recommendations to promote health and to prevent disease, injury, disability, and premature death through increased physical activity. According to their recent publication, "The Guide to Community Preventive Services," a community's access to trails and trail systems can directly and positively impact our nation's rapidly rising obesity epidemic, as well as reduce the health problems associated with many chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart attacks.

A new program, Active Community Environments (ACEs), is an initiative sponsored by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion to support walking, bicycling, and the development of accessible recreation facilities

in our nation's communities. ACE encourages community access to pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments and promotes physical activity through trails and partnerships between public health practitioners and public parks, recreation, transportation and planning departments to promote healthy physical activity.

These types of collaborative efforts can directly expand the inherent value of trails to every community in the nation. A synthesis of the literature on the relationship between physical activity and community design points to the need of responsible community leadership to plan ahead for the health benefits their trails systems can bring to their citizens.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

An organized trail system is a desirable amenity and can contribute to the economic vitality of a community. A trail can guide both visitors and residents through diverse natural ecosystems, neighborhoods, and past interesting shops, enticing restaurants, and many other urban and suburban businesses. Revenue generated from trail-related recreation and sports activities provides substantial income and employment opportunities.

Outdoor recreation is a booming business. The leisure industry today, at \$311 billion annually, is almost the size of Australia's gross national product. In 15 years, consumer spending on recreation and entertainment has increased from 6.5% of total consumer spending to 10.5%. And trails alone have been experiencing a substantial upsurge of use in urban areas. Surveys of communities throughout the US that have created trails and linkages to destinations in their communities all report businesses along trail corridors have experienced increases in excess of 25%.

B. FUNDING AND FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are many sources of funding available for trails and trailheads, bridges, underpasses, recreation equipment and furnishings, shelters, watering devices, lighting, accessibility features, signage, and other trail amenities. Some of these funds are available from government and agency sources and others are available from the private sector. Developers, associations, foundations, corporations, trails organizations, private companies, and individuals often participate in the process of funding segments of trails or entire trail systems and trail amenities.

Opportunities for project funding for trails and the creation of new trail funding partnerships have never been greater than they are in this first decade of the new Millennium. The sources for this funding are very broad based, and it is vital to "cast a large net" to maximize and utilize this wide variety of available funding resources.

FUNDING SOURCES

Some funding sources provide 100% grants, while others require matching funds and/or in-kind matching resources, and some funds are directed toward supporting specific user-group recreational opportunities, such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, physically challenged individuals, youth, seniors, and health-oriented activities. The following is a summary of several free funding information centers:

THE FOUNDATION CENTER – An independent national service organization established by foundations to provide an authoritative source of information on foundations and corporate giving. The New York, Washington, DC, Atlanta,



A chance encounter along a shaded trail



Memorable experiences are made



Man's best friend is welcome on trails as long as they are leashed and cleaned up after

Cleveland and San Francisco reference collections operated by the Foundation Center offer a wide variety of services and comprehensive collections of information on foundations and grants. All five Center libraries have FC Search: The Foundation Center's Database on CD-ROM available for patron use at Phoenix Public Library, Information Services Department, 1221 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004, (602) 262-4636.

SONORAN INSTITUTE CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE TOOLS - This organization offers a website with a Directory of Programs that provide funding from various national and state sources that can provide matching funds and project grants for trails programs. <http://www.sonoran.org/cat/search.asp>

THE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE - Outdoor business giving back to the outdoors - The Conservation Alliance is a group of 57 outdoor businesses whose collective contributions support citizen action groups and their effort to protect wild and natural areas where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. The Conservation Alliance, through annual membership dues, provides these groups the necessary funding to complete their projects to protect, restore, and educate. www.outdoorlink.com/consall

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT CENTER - Supporting the environmental movement from the grassroots up – The Environmental Support Center's goal is to improve the environment in the United States by enhancing the health and well being of these organizations.

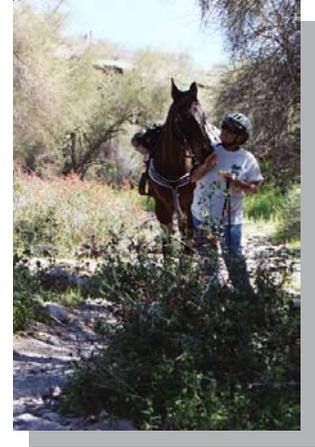
ARIZONA STATE PARKS HERITAGE FUND - A source of funding for new trail construction in the state of Arizona, with required matching funds from land management agencies. Monies for this program are derived from proceeds set aside from the Arizona Lottery.

LAND CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT TRUST AND THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM, which help to maintain existing trails and recreational facilities, provide financial resources for preserving open space, and allocates approximately \$50 million in funding annually to state agencies. In Arizona these funds are administered by Arizona State Parks.

C. CONCLUSION

Do trails improve a person's life? Do they make a community better? An ever-increasing body of research and information answers both these questions with a resounding yes. Does use of trails improve a person's health and wellness? Yes! Do trails provide an alternative to driving your car? Yes! Do trails provide connections to nature and your neighbors? Yes! Do trails improve the quality of life of a community and help economic development efforts? Yes!

With such strong evidence of the benefits of community trails and strong citizen support in Arizona and Scottsdale, the commitment to providing trails and an improved quality of life in Scottsdale demonstrates the civic leaders' interest in, and the importance of, providing these benefits to the community and its citizens. This Trails Master Plan provides Scottsdale for the first time, a comprehensive look at the existing status of the City's trail infrastructure, from its physical condition to the policies and procedures that put it in place. Most importantly, it provides meaning, structure, direction and guidance to those that will use it and those that will implement its many features beginning immediately upon its approval and continuing for many years.



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