

MEETING PURPOSE: Get to know the National partners engaged in trails, promote open communication, and discuss opportunities for working together going forward.

TARGET AUDIENCE: National level partners with whom we work, or could work with, in the future.

MEETING AGENDA:

Time (EST)	Topic	Lead
1300-1315	Welcome and Introductions	Tracy Tophooven, <i>Assistant Director Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources</i> Brenda Yankoviak, <i>National Trail Program Manager</i>
1315-1335	Overview of the National Trail Program- Why we're here and what we do.	Brenda Yankoviak Jeff Mast, <i>Assistant National Trail Program Manager</i> Meckenzie Helmandollar-Powell, <i>Trails Specialist</i> Pete Duncan, <i>Chainsaw and Crosscut Saw Program Manager</i>
1335-1415	Open Discussion/Q&A- What's on your minds? What questions or comments do you have about the Forest Service trail program?	Trail Partners
1415-1430	Working Together- Discuss ideas and opportunities for working together going forward	Brenda Yankoviak

NOTES

USFS Presentation: See Slide Deck for the following:

- Overview of Forest Service Position in Government and Structure (ppt slides)
- Decision making authority overview
- Overview of Regions including USFS Trail Staff-Regional Trail Program Leads in each region, Trails Advisory group representative in each region
- What we believe
- What we do
- FY21 Program of Work

Open Forum Discussion

Question- When will the 10-Year Trails Shared Stewardship Challenge guidebook be rolled out?

Answer- Thank you to the many partners that reviewed the guidebook. Based on suggestions, the guidebook was most recently reviewed by the Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion office of the Forest Service. We anticipate having the guidebook ready to share by the end of February or early March. This roll-out will be accompanied by discussion sessions with partners, agency staff and leadership.

Question- How can we help to get this work (10-year challenge) done?

Answer- We see using the Trail Challenge as a tool to help us accomplish priority trails work including work associated with the Great American Outdoors Act (and other priorities). After internal discussions, you will see more coordinated efforts to reach out to partners. Some regions have begun already and may have additional suggestions for how to work together.

Region 5 Trails Program Manager, Garrett Villanueva response: We are working on developing a community vision for sustainable trails. We hope to use the challenge to roll out additional trail work priorities, growing our capacity to manage a sustainable trail system is the goal.

Region 6 Trails Program Manager, Zach Jarrett- The focus in Region 6 has been connected to determining priorities for shared stewardship. We developed a regional trail strategy in 2020 and have recently completed 10 partner-led listening sessions to identify priority areas to focus our collective efforts.

Region 2 Trails Program Manager, Chad Schneckburger-R2.-We recently rolled out a Regional Trail Strategy in Fall of 2020 that had a tremendous amount of partner engagement. We plan to step down the regional strategy to the Forest and District levels by working closely with partners to help identify priorities across the region.

Comment and Question- It's great to see what is happening in these regions. How can we encourage other regions to follow?

Tracy Tophooven-Something we can do, and intend to do, is to share out success stories from regions that are leading the way. We also intend to provide tools and templates to support the other regions.

Comment and suggestion- Daylighting a concern that some ranger districts do not seem to acknowledge the trail stewardship act or acknowledge partners that endeavor to help. Suggest some sort of "booster" effort to ensure the messaging gets distributed throughout the chain of command.

Meckenzie-initial phase of challenge is Launch and Learn, but as the challenge goes forward, the expectations for implementation of the challenge will increase.

Brenda's note: Trails Stewardship Act implementation is a high program priority for FY21 and beyond. Our efforts under the Challenge- to better engage volunteers and provide better communication, training and toolboxes- will directly support requirements of the Trails Stewardship Act and help us better engage partners in trail maintenance activities.

Comment and suggestion- Appreciation expressed for seeing the National Recreation Trails (NRTs) called out explicitly. We'd like to engage the FS in reinvigorating the NRT's. We'd love to see one trail in every region recommended as an NRT every year.

Brenda Yankoviak- Thank you. There are many opportunities for improvement in the NRT program. This is on our radar and we have plans to look at those opportunities. This year will be working on updating the NRT information on the website and taking a fresh look at NRT's.

Comment and Request- American Trails is working on a video to promote Trails and the 10-year trail challenge. Mike Passo is looking for great stories and characters for the video. Please connect with Mike Passo to share your stories mikepasso@americantrails.org

Question- Now that we've gone through 2 rounds of GAOA projects identification process, what lessons learned, or ideas/suggestions do you have to continue that success of getting trails prioritized?

Answer- Garret Villanueva, Region 5 Trails Program Manager, we are encouraging folks to look at more landscape-level project proposals. We are taking an approach that looks at the deferred maintenance needs for the full connected experience; from road to trailhead to trail.

Answer- Brenda Yankoviak, WO Trails Program-We do not have a formal way of integrating partner letters of recommendation into the GAOA project selection process. But it is important and doesn't hurt to express partner support of trails and a desire for GAOA funds to be used on trails. Thank you for your support.

Response to earlier comment: Pete Duncan- Saw Program Coordinator-Regarding Line Officer engagement. There is a fair amount of turnover in the line officer ranks and, in some cases, it is just lack of fully understanding the policy and ability to work with partners on things such as saw qualifications. Work with Pete if you are finding this is a barrier and he can help with sharing the trail/saw related policy/guidance.

Comment- International Mountain Bike Association expressed they are a very willing partner. The organizational goal is "more trails close to home". They look for strategies and innovations that maximizes everyone's trail experience and have extensive expertise in trail planning and design. They are excited about the future. IMBA also clarified they are independent from the bicycle industry.

Comment- Brenda Yankoviak-Thank you! Part of the goal of this meeting is for cross pollination and encouraging groups to work with each other.

*Question for the group from Brenda Yankoviak-*What do you need/expect/want from the WO trail program? How can we show up best for you?

Answers-

Access to leadership. This opportunity to talk directly to you is huge. We appreciate the updates. We appreciate our partnership and knowing who is in the various positions.

Thank you for this forum. Additionally, we would take any information you could provide us that we can share out with our members. Tap us. We are here to help.

Question- Is there a newsletter that provides regular updates, particularly at the regional level?

Answer- We are not aware of any regional newsletters, but the Washington Office Trails staff will be publishing an annual trail accomplishment report starting this winter.

Closing: Thank you all. Please let me (Brenda Yankoviak) know if there are additional folks that should be added to the partner community list.

Jeff Mast-We are planning to host this partner forum semi-annually, we really appreciate your engagement.

Pete Duncan- Great to work with all of you.

Other: Link for National Forest System Trails Stewardship Grant Funding program:
[Http://www.wildernessalliance.org/funding_programs](http://www.wildernessalliance.org/funding_programs).