



NATIONAL WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE

Building a wilderness stewardship community

NWSA NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2021

Join NWSA!

Membership in the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance comes in two forms: individual or organization memberships.

Individual memberships show your support for the mission and purpose of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and association with the greatest people on earth - wilderness stewards. Any donation over \$25 per year qualifies you as an NWSA member for Workshop and discounts and subscription to the *International Journal of Wilderness*

Organization memberships entitle your group to apply for NWSA Grant programs, provide access to toolboxes and educational materials tailored to support wilderness stewardship organizations, and participation in review and comment efforts on industry wide-issues led by NWSA.

All members have access to NWSA services and support, including volunteer workshops, webinars and Workshops, many at no or reduced cost.

A membership in NWSA is a wise investment for the future of wilderness stewardship. Collectively we are stronger than individually.

wildernessalliance.org/donate

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE 2021 WILDERNESS AWARDS! SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS

ROANOKE: HERE WE COME!

NATIONAL WILDERNESS WORKSHOP 2021 WILL BE THE REAL DEAL.

Zoom is handy, but seeing friends in the flesh is dandy. After 2020, how nice will it be to get together in a real place with real people?

The 2021 National Wilderness Workshop will be in Roanoke, Virginia, November 15 - 18. The theme for the Workshop is "Advocating for Stewardship - Tips, Tools and Practical Techniques for the Wilderness Steward."

If the budget says "No travel," this year is taking lessons learned from the virtual conference of 2020. Much of the Workshop will also be available online.

"We'll do at least two full days of virtual sessions," said Randy Welsh, NWSA

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More of the above. Less of the below.



2021 WSP AND TRAILS GRANTS ANNOUNCED

NWSA Executive Director Randy Welsh recently announced selections for the National Forest Wilderness Stewardship Performance Partner Funding Program as well as National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partner Funding for 2021

TWENTY-FIVE WSP GRANTS.

"We are pleased to be able to fund all the WSP project proposals that were submitted this year," said Welsh. "These projects will substantially

contribute to wilderness stewardship efforts in the wilderness areas where they occur. Nearly 1,000 volunteers will be engaged and over 35,000 volunteer hours are expected to be completed during this field season."

The application period for this program ended April 9, 2021. The review took place between April 10th and April 27th. A summary of key program statistics for the proposed and selected submittals follows.

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About NWSA

Our Mission:

The mission of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is to develop a growing network of volunteer-based organizations to provide stewardship for America's enduring resource of wilderness.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to see each wilderness area within the National Wilderness Preservation System adopted by a wilderness stewardship organization dedicated to protecting and nurturing the area's character and values. We envision effective partnerships between community-based, non-profit wilderness stewardship organizations and all government agencies charged with the management of our national wilderness areas.

Our Goal:

Our goal is to improve wilderness stewardship and create an allied constituency for wilderness by connecting stewardship organizations with each other, linking our efforts and experiences, directing groups to resources, and fostering new organizations.

Our Objectives:

- Identify wilderness stewardship groups nationwide in order to determine the present level of support.
- Through our website and other resources, share knowledge, experience and expertise among local, regional and national stewardship organizations.
- Provide new groups with start-up models of different structures, help them anticipate the questions that typically arise as groups form, and connect them with people who have built successful organizations.
- Sponsor national and regional gatherings of stewardship groups.
- Provide grants to help stewardship groups accomplish on-the-ground projects benefiting wilderness
- Help foster a culture within governing agencies that values volunteer-based wilderness stewardship organizations and has the means to give them effective support.

FROM THE CHAIR

ANDREW DOWNS



In 1933, a year after the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club was founded, Benton MacKaye, the dreamer behind the Appalachian Trail, said: "A realm and not merely a trail marks the full aim of our efforts." Two years later he would help found The Wilderness Society and further describe the realm and a path toward its protection. I'm excited to welcome you all to Roanoke this fall and to show how the A.T. and Wilderness are entwined historically, in practice, but most of all as we advocate for Wilderness Stewardship. The A.T. is a resource built and protected by volunteers – one of the great case studies of stewardship advocacy in American History and a perfect backdrop for the National Wilderness Workshop. I look forward to seeing you all and providing a hearty greeting when you arrive. Welcome to the Realm.

NWSA MEMBER ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

Serving the hiking public since 1927



Since we will be near the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's bailiwick come November, it's more than appropriate to feature this 94-year old group in the newsletter. They are also one of the 2021 Trail Stewardship Partner Funding grantees.

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) is founded on volunteerism and public service to outdoor enthusiasts in the Mid-Atlantic region. The club was formed in November 1927 to survey and construct hundreds of miles of the Appalachian Trail,

Eight men, including Myron Avery, met and formed the PATC in Washington, D.C. to build a section of the Appalachian Trail (AT) and support the proposed Shenandoah National Park. Myron Avery was the 1st President and held the post until 1940.

By the time Shenandoah National Park was created and the AT was completed, both in 1937, PATC was maintaining a network of trails in the region, as well as publishing maps and guidebooks. PATC also started constructing cabins and shelters for members and the hiking public during this period.

PACT has evolved into four chapters taking care of 240 miles of the AT between central Pennsylvania and Waynesboro, Virginia. In addition to the trail itself, PATC also maintains cabins and shelters in that section. The chapters are Blue Ridge, North, South Shenandoah Valley and Charlottesville.

PATC's trail region continues to grow along with more cabins and shelters, maps and guidebooks — the tradition on which the club was founded endures — volunteerism and public service. Learn more about their history, mission and volunteers at pact.net.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

RANDY WELSH



What is community? The people we interact with? The individuals we rely on? The groups we learn from? The special people we play in nature with? The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance views the wilderness stewardship community as all of these things. Our goal is to “build a wilderness stewardship community” where the groups and individuals represented share a

common vision of a thriving, sustainable wilderness resource supported by the volunteers, organizations and agencies working together.

I’m happy to report that NWSA now represents a total of 60 organization members, our highest yet. But there are still many more groups to bring into community. We are strongest when we work together, learn from each other, and support each other.

This year NWSA has also exceeded \$750,000 in funding to groups through our Challenge Cost Share Program with the USDA Forest Service. Twenty-five

Wilderness Stewardship Performance projects are underway along with forty eight National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partner projects. These projects expand organizational capabilities while performing needed wilderness and trails work on the National Forests. Has your group participated?

This November NWSA will host the National Wilderness Workshop in Roanoke Virginia. Our theme this year is “Advocating for Stewardship: Tips, Tools, and Practical Techniques for the Wilderness Steward”. We plan to be in person as a community to share and learn from each other, and

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Funding, from page 1

Organizations Requesting Funds: 25

Amount Requested: \$ 242,610.74

Funds to Be Distributed: \$242,000 (approximately \$200,000, plus \$40,000 carry over from 2020;

Types of WSP Work to be Completed:

Recreation site inventory, solitude monitoring, invasive species inventory and eradication, livestock grazing, Agency actions, water monitoring, trail assessment, and wilderness education. All contribute to Workforce Capacity WSP Element.

Proposed Timeline: Work to be Completed between May and December, 2021.

Organizations Receiving Funding in 2021 Include:

- Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation
- Ascend Wilderness Experience
- BCHA Motherlode Chapter
- Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation
- Del Norte Trails
- Friends of Nevada Wilderness
- Friends of the Inyo
- Great Old Broads
- Cascade Volcano Chapter
- Idaho Conservation League
- Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance

- John Muir Trail Wilderness Conservancy
- New Mexico Wild
- Roaring Fork Outdoors Volunteers
- Save Our Canyons
- Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation
- Sitka Conservation Society
- Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards

- Upper Gila Watershed
- Ventana Wilderness Alliance
- Western Colorado University
- Western Slope Conservation Center
- Wild Arizona
- Wilderness Institute
- Wilderness Workshop
- Wyoming Wilderness Association

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WSP FUNDING BY THE NUMBERS

Region	Proposed/ Selected	Region	Proposed/ Selected	Region	Proposed/ Selected
Region 1	3	Region 2	6	Region 3	3
Region 4	6	Region 5	6	Region 6	1
Region 8	0	Region 9	1	Region 10	1
Two project that each span two Regions: 4 and 5; 2 and 4					

Value added by Grantees	Total from Projects Proposed
Cash Match (dollars)	\$240,089.93
In Kind Match (dollars)	\$567,535.82
Number of Volunteers	873
Number of Volunteer Hours	21,441
Number of Staff	94
Number of Staff Hours	14,185
Number of Crew/Interns	3
Number of Crew/Intern Hours	750



NWSA PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Clockwise from top: The People's Choice Category winner was submitted by Jonathan Patt. Melissa Harbert's submission won in the Scenic Category. Tom Thomas submitted the winner in Traditional Skills Category. Holly Christiansen sent the Stewardship In Action winner. Jonathan Patt won Before and After.



NWSA 10TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTO CONTEST GARNERED GREAT IMAGES

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of NWSA, wilderness group staff and volunteers submitted a nice mixture of pictures in five categories: Before and After, Scenic, Traditional Skills, Stewardship in Action and People's Choice.

The top photo in each category received a matte-finish metal print of their photo, including the photographer's name, the category and the NWSA logo.

It was a challenge to pick (what we thought were) the best, but we

couldn't declare them all winners. Below are some more great entries.



Scenic Category by Peter Sbraccia



Stewardship in Action by Jeremy Lynch



Scenic Category by Emelie Traub



Stewardship in Action by Peter Sbraccia



Stewardship in Action by Jeremy Lynch



Before and After by Peter Sbraccia

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Lend your leadership skills to the cause!
NWSA is seeking new board members.

Workshop, from page 1

Executive Director. “Not every session will be available in the virtual world, but we plan to have at least one or two each hour.”

The Workshop is produced in partnership with the Society For Wilderness Stewardship, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, USFS George Washington - Jefferson National Forest, the Virginia Wilderness Committee and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

The workshop will feature two general plenary sessions and a host of concurrent sessions all around the theme of advocating for wilderness stewardship. General sessions will provide understanding about the uniqueness of



Virginia’s wilderness areas, the challenges of stewardship in these areas, and how they provide transformative experiences for wilderness users. Updates on national wilderness issues will also be presented.

Concurrent sessions will provide more detailed presentations around wil-

derness science, wilderness management issues, wilderness stewardship and volunteer steward advocacy and engagement. Several sessions are planned to continue to grow and expand the wilderness community around issues of diversity, inclusion, and justice.

Speakers come from many different communities and offer varying viewpoints that you won’t want to miss. In addition there will be field trips to local wilderness areas and high use sites along the Appalachian Trail. New this year is the opportunity for an advocacy field trip to Washington DC.

The final program will soon be available at wildernessalliance.org as well as wildernessstewardship.org

Funding, from page 3

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PARTNER FUNDING

NWSA, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, is also pleased to announce 48 funded projects. Over 2,700 miles of National Forest System trails will be maintained this year through the National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partner Funding Program. These trail projects are more important this year than ever before. Land management agencies like the Forest Service are welcoming unprecedented numbers of visitors to recreate on National Forest System trails and more communities nationwide are discovering the emotional, physical, and economic benefits of outdoor recreation. The projects also offer opportunities for volunteers and organizations to participate in trail stewardship in many different ways.

Projects for the 2021 field season were selected through a collaborative process by the National Wilderness

Stewardship Alliance, American Trails, American Hiking Society, Back Country Horsemen of America, International Mountain Bicycling Association, American Motorcyclists Association, and the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council.



Trail Stewardship Partner Funding keeps the crosscuts rocking.

Photo by Jonathan Patt

For the past 5 years, the Trail Stewardship Partner Funding Program has helped the Forest Service carry out the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act of 2016 and the National

Strategy for a Sustainable Trail System. The program has provided grant funding to trail stewardship organizations to achieve more sustainable National Forest System trails and trail systems that are socially relevant, economically viable, and that support ecological resiliency.

Highlights of the program include over \$2,156,000 million in matching cash contributions and over \$3,870,000 million in in-kind volunteer labor and equipment contributions. The past 117 funded projects have facilitated over 12,200 volunteers and staff maintaining over 4,650 miles of trail. That’s a 6:1 return on the investment of public funds. Tens of thousands of trees have also been cleared, hundreds of signs have been replaced, and thousands of drainage features have been cleaned and repaired through these volunteer and partner efforts.

This year, even bigger results are anticipated. The \$547,000 funding projects

will generate an estimated 2,709 miles of trail maintained by over 6,700 volunteers and staff; contributing \$1,144,779 in cash and \$2,521,086 in in-kind contributions.

Trail Stewardship Partner

Funding 2021 Key Facts

Return on investment from cash and in-kind contributions: 7:1

92 proposals received, totaling over \$1,000,000

48 projects funded, totaling \$547,689

Projects selected in 8 of 10 USFS regions. Four projects spanned multiple regions.

Proposed Timeline: Work to be completed between May and December 2021

“We were able to fund more than half of the projects which contained over 80% of the potential accomplishments from all the projects submitted,” Welsh said. “We look forward to a lot of wonderful volunteer engagement and trail maintenance work to be completed this summer and fall.”

USDA Forest Service National Trail Program Manager Brenda Yankoviak adds that, “Investing in the Trail Stewardship Partner Funding program has proved to be an excellent way to meet the goals of the National Forest

System Trails Stewardship Act and the National Strategy for a Sustainable Trail System—to increase the collective capacity to maintain trails and increase the number of sustainable trails.”

Organizations Receiving NFS

Trail Partner Funding in 2021

American Endurance Ride
Arnold Rim Trail
Ascend Wilderness Experience
Back Country Horsemen of America
Gila Chapter
San Joaquin-Sierra Chapter
Virginia Highlands Chapter
Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation
Camp Grier
Colorado Fourteeners
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Cottonwood Canyons Foundation
Durango Trails
Enchanted Circle Trails
Friends of Panthertown
Friends of Pathways
Green Mountain Club
Headwaters Trail Alliance
Idaho Trails Association
LaVeta Trails
Love in Motion, Puerto Rico
Mammoth Lake Recreation
Mountain Bike the Tetons
National Forest Foundation - Gunnison

Nevada County Woods Riders
New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors
Northeast Tennessee Economic Development
Overland Mountain Bike
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Roaring Fork Outdoors Volunteers
Routt County Riders
Santa Fe Fat Tire Society
Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation
Silver Threaders Club
Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists
Source One Serenity
Toulomne River Trust
Tucson Off-Road Cyclists
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon
Washington Trail Association
White Mountain Trail Collective
Wild Alabama
Wild Arizona
Wildlands Restoration
Wounded Soldiers and Families
Yavapai Trails
Yosemite South Gate Trails

To learn more, contact NWSA Executive Director Randy Welsh, randy@wildernessalliance.org or 801-808-2167 or visit wildernessalliance.org/funding_programs

TRAIL STEWARDSHIP PARTNER FUNDING FOR 2021

Region	Proposed	Selected	Region	Proposed	Selected	Region	Proposed	Selected
Region 1	5	3	Region 2	17	11	Region 3	15	9
Region 4	16	7	Region 5	20	8	Region 6	6	4
Region 8	11	7	Region 9	7	3	Region 10	1	0

Details	Projects Proposed	Projects Selected	% of Total Proposed in Selected Projects
\$ Match (dollars)	\$1,512,382	\$1,144,779	76%
In-Kind Match (dollars)	\$3,067,285	\$2,521,086	82%
# of Volunteers	7,441	6,504	87%
# of Volunteer Hrs.	105,211	89,135	85%
# of Staff/Crew	383	203	53%
# of Staff/Crew Hrs.	56,006	39,139	70%
Miles of Trail Maintained	3,126	2,709	87%

Director's Message, from page 3

to gain skills in practical stewardship advocacy for the wilderness areas we all love. Some participants will even go to Washington DC to practice what they learn. Read more about the Workshop and its opportunities for connecting with the wilderness community in this newsletter and at wildernessalliance.org.

To prepare for November, NWSA will host a series of pre-workshop webinar trainings to discuss wilderness stewardship advocacy and provide learning in the art of meeting with agency and Congressional members and staff, developing an ASK,

rules about lobbying, and other advocacy topics that will prepare you to better support your local areas and organization efforts. Once a month from July – November members of the wilderness stewardship community will share their expertise and knowledge with you. This is another example of community in action.

As the pandemic ebbs, be sure to reach out to your local communities. More people are visiting wilderness than ever before. Now is the time to approach them about stewardship. Sharpen your messaging, cast a wider net of volunteer involvement, and reach

out to those who have been under-represented in the past. Growing our community will bring bigger benefits of understanding, collective strength, and opportunity to protect and enhance the wilderness resource.

So, what is community? It's all of us, working together, learning together, playing together. We are excited that we anticipate being able to do all of these things together in person this year. Stay safe, enjoy those around you, and most of all support your community.

See you down the trail.

Randy Welsh

NATIONAL WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP AWARDS NOMINEES SOUGHT

The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, in partnership with the Society of Wilderness Stewardship, is pleased to announce that applications for the National Wilderness Stewardship Awards open on June 15th.

Every organization has unsung heroes that should be recognized for valuable contributions to wilderness stewardship. Now is the time to nominate them.

The wilderness stewardship community is filled with ordinary people doing extraordinary work in some of America's most amazing and remote landscapes. Unfortunately, their work often goes unnoticed, leaving Wilderness to suffer as a result. By showing others examples of meritorious work by every day wilderness stewards, we can build a more sustainable wilderness stewardship community for the future.

This awards program will allow organizations and partners to nominate a steward, organization, or Federal land agency whom they feel has demonstrated outstanding ability in the following categories:

Wilderness Rising Leader Award

To recognize young wilderness stewards who have demonstrated out-

standing potential to lead the stewardship community into the future.

Wilderness Stewardship Champion of the Year Award

To recognize an individual wilderness steward that has demonstrated outstanding ability to steward their wilderness areas.

Wilderness Stewardship Organization of the Year Award

To recognize a wilderness stewardship organization that has demonstrated outstanding ability to steward their wilderness areas.

Wilderness Agency Partner of the Year Award

To recognize an agency employee or unit which has demonstrated outstanding ability to work with wilderness stewardship organizations to improve the stewardship of their wilderness areas.

Nominations will be accepted through October 1st, with the awards being presented at the National Wilderness Workshop in Roanoke this November.



The 2020 Wilderness Rising Leader was Jesse Furr (left) of New Mexico Wild. His plaque was presented in Covid-safe fashion by NWSA board member Zack Bumgarner.

Additional information about these awards, including application materials, may be found on the NWSA website at www.wildernessalliance.org/awards. Questions about the awards program may be addressed to NWSA Executive Director Randy Welsh, randy@wildernessalliance.org, or call 801-808-2167.