10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge

NWSA Webinar

March 2021
Presentation Overview

• USFS and trail program overview
• 10-Year Trail Challenge
  – What, Why, How, Who, and Where
• Crosscut saw program updates
Forest Service Structure – levels of the agency

1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2. National (Washington Office or WO)
3. Region (Regional Office or RO)
4. Forest, Grassland, or Area (Supervisor’s Office or SO)
5. Ranger District
Forest Service Structure – decision-making authority

- Secretary of Agriculture
- Chief of the Forest Service
- Regional Forester
- Forest or Grassland Supervisor
- District Ranger
Relevant Laws & Regulations

• Laws
  – Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act (1960)
  – Wilderness Act (1964)
  – Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968)
  – National Forest Roads and Trails Act (1964)
  – National Trails System Act (1968)
  – National Environmental Policy Act (1969)
  – Cooperative Funds and Deposits Act (1975)
  – National Forest Management Act (1976)
  – Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (1974)
  – Public Rangelands Improvement Act (1978)
  – National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (2016)
  – Great American Outdoors Act (2020)

• Regulations
  – 2001 Roadless Area Final Rule (36 CFR Part 294)
  – Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212), Subparts A, B and C
  – 2012 Planning Rule
• 191 million acres of managed land
• 9 regions
• 154 national forests and 20 grasslands
• 600 ranger districts
• 159,000 miles of National Forest System trails
National Forest System Trails
Shared Stewardship & Sustainability
Key Components of the Challenge

- Achieve Sustainable Trails (4.1-4.4)
- Promote Cross-Program Integration (5.3)
- Meet Data Standards (6.3)
- Support Outdoor Recreation Economy (3.3)
- Increase Outreach and Use Ethics (3.4)
- Expand Use of Service and Job Corps (3.5)
- Invite Shared Partner Leadership (1.5)
Why we need a Trail Challenge

- More work than we can complete each year
- Emerging trends and drivers straining the program
- Missed opportunities & unrealized benefits
- In many areas, trail visitors, volunteers, and partners do not reflect local demographics.
- Burdensome data collection and reporting processes.
Current Condition
Common focus, shared knowledge & skills, increased capacity, more sustainable trails, more benefits to communities.
Trail Challenge Structure

- National partner coalition formed
- Trainings and toolboxes dev’d
- Staff, partners, leadership engaged

Phase 1 (2020~2023)

Phase II (2024~2027)

- Trail sustainability and workforce capacity assessed
- Gaps & ways to address them identified

Phase III (2028~2030)

- Trails program is professionalized: Institutional knowledge, high level of skill, strong relationships, common focus, closing the gaps, resilient, forward-looking
Trail Challenge Structure

**National Elements**

- A. Establish a Trails Advisory Group (Trail Strategy Action 1.4)
- B. Evaluate Trails Program/Workforce (Trail Strategy Action 2.2)

**Unit Elements**

- C. Achieve Sustainable Trail Systems (Trail Strategy Actions 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)
- D. Promote Cross-program Integration (Trail Strategy Action 5.3)
- E. Meet Trail Data Standards (Trail Strategy Action 6.3)
- F. Support Outdoor Recreation Economy (Trail Strategy Action 3.3)
- G. Increase Outreach and User Ethics (Trail Strategy Action 3.4)
- H. Expand Use of Service and Job Corps (Trail Strategy Action 3.5)

**Partner Elements**

- I. Invite Shared Partner Leadership (Trail Strategy Action 1.5)
- J. Invite Trail Endowment (Trail Strategy Action 4.5)
Trail Challenge Structure & Progress Tracking

**National Elements**

- A Establish a Trails Advisory Group (Trail Strategy Action 1.4)
- B Evaluate Trails Program/Workforce (Trail Strategy Action 2.2)

**Unit Elements**

- C Achieve Sustainable Trail Management Standards (Trail Strategy Action 2, 4.3, 4.4)
- D Promote Cross-program Collaboration (Trail Strategy Action 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
- E Meet Trail Data Standards (Trail Strategy Action 2.3, 4.3, 4.4)
- F Support Outdoor Recreation (Trail Strategy Action 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
- G Increase Outreach and Use (Trail Strategy Action 3.4, 3.5)
- H Expand Use of Service and Infrastructure (Trail Strategy Action 3.5)

**Partner Elements**

- I Invite Shared Partner Leadership (Trail Strategy Action 1.5)
- J Invite Trail Endowment (Trail Strategy Action 4.5)

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**Tracking Progress:**

- 12 Outcomes
- 20 Metrics
- Field staff (and partner) survey
- Online dashboard & annual accomplishment reports
Trail Challenge Efforts:

- Online toolboxes
- Develop & deliver trainings
- Improve data & reporting systems
- Assess workforce capacity & trail conditions
- ID gaps & take action
- Partner coalition
Toolbox Prototype

Trail Challenge Toolboxes

Tools & Resources
The Trail Challenge toolboxes are online resources to support units, partners, and volunteers to implement the Trail Challenge. A communication toolbox contains standard resources for communicating about the Trail Challenge. Each element also has a toolbox of related resources such as templates and "how-to" documents.

Data Standards Toolbox

Element E. Meet Trail Data Standards

Units meet data standards and publish trail data, in part, to share information about National Forest System trails with the public. Sharing trail information widely can make these public spaces known to a larger audience and presumably more diverse audience. Greater awareness has the potential to foster new trail stewards as well.

As part of meeting annual metrics on trail data standards, units will enter enough information about National Forest System trails into the Enterprise Data Warehouse to meet "management-level" standards for trail data. Publishing to management level includes many of the annual information trail standards and efforts are ongoing to add important information about our trails to the public through the Interactive Visitor Use Map. Increasing annual trail information, such as trail usage, environmental factors, and trailhead logs will likely be emphasized in the next phase of the Trail Challenge.

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<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>How to Report</th>
<th>Where to Report</th>
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<td>Units working with GIS managers to publish trail data to management-level</td>
<td>Units: Infra trails module and the Enterprise Data Warehouse</td>
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Resources
- Trail Challenge O&M dashboard
- Trail Challenge O&M: Mapping
- Trail Data Publication Status Summary

Feedback

Please send the Forest Service trail management program your comments or suggestions about improving this toolbox.
Dashboard Prototype

10-Year Sustainable Trail Stewardship Challenge

158,952 Miles of Trail
What the units will do

- Continue to maintain and improve data
- Engage with communities
- Assess trails and workforce, identify gaps and ways to close those gaps
- Use the Challenge as a tool to plan & implement GAOA projects
How Partners & Volunteers Can Engage at the Local Level

• What skills, expertise & resources can you contribute?

• Assist with trail data collection and reporting.
  – Get trained as a trail bridge inspector, sawyer certified.
  – Collect trail condition data.

• Help coordinate volunteer activities or adopt-a-trail programs.
How Partners & Volunteers Can Engage at the Local Level

• Seek additional funding for projects
  – Grant writing
  – NEPA (contract specialists)

• Serve as a volunteer ranger to help educate trail users on proper trail etiquette.

• Work with your local unit to help them understand community priorities for trails
  – Host a community event to facilitate communication between agency staff and the community regarding priority trail needs.
Trail Challenge

Key Points

A set of tools & ongoing way of doing business

Goals: increased capacity, improved trail conditions

The guidebook is a living document

Benefits the entire trails community
For more information:

• Online Resources: https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/trails/10YTC
  (The toolbox and dashboard will be available from this link by late spring)

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