

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

PROTECTING THE PLACES YOU LOVE TO HIKE



Our sustained commitment to hiking and the great outdoors would not be possible without our supporters. We thank our individual and Alliance members, our partners, and our corporate, foundation, and government supporters for their tireless dedication and generosity. Together we will continue to excite, recruit and educate future hiking enthusiasts from all walks of life to ensure a lasting hiking and outdoor legacy for all Americans.

cover photo: Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation
inside photo: Alexander Milligan

A SUSTAINED COMMITMENT TO HIKING

photo: David J. Kennedy

Dear Supporters:

Under the American Hiking Society banner in 2014, we sharpened our efforts to promote hiking trails, their surrounding natural areas and the hiking experience for Americans of all walks of life. Through advocacy, volunteer stewardship, outreach and strategic public-private partnerships we increased support for hiking trail protection and helped unify hiking, recreation and conservation actions across the nation. We continued to stand up for the interests of hikers, seeking solutions to secure a lasting natural legacy for this and future generations.

Our work today and our ambitious plans for the future help build on our proud outdoor heritage and American Hiking Society will continue to be your voice, protecting the places you love to hike. The sustainability of trails and the availability of quality hiking experiences are genuinely at risk. This past year we repeatedly pushed back against extreme threats to hiking trails, natural areas and the hiking experience. We activated hikers across the country and collaborated with strategic partners to ensure that hiking trails and natural places are cherished and preserved for future generations.

Trails provide tremendous value to society. The health and economic benefits of hiking represent a paramount opportunity for families and individuals nationwide. American Hiking continues to elevate hiking as a fundamental activity for vitality and health by protecting and promoting accessible and cost-effective trails. We continue to build a hiking community that is teeming with people who know and understand nature, love their trails, and hike and explore the natural world—from urban to backcountry settings—on their own terms.

Across all fifty states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, our National Trails Day®, Volunteer Vacations, and College Alternative Breaks stewardship programs marshalled 22,249 trail volunteers working on 496 trail projects. These trail volunteers contributed more than 132,000 service hours to hiking trails, valued

at more than \$2.7 million in ‘sweat equity.’ America’s hiking community truly “walks the walk” and has been in the vanguard when it comes to volunteer service. The 2014 National Trails Fund awarded a total of \$20,000 to 10 trail organizations located all across the country. In total, our National Trails Fund has given out a total of \$588,000 since 1998, demonstrating the philanthropic role American Hiking and its supporters can play in addressing severe trail budget shortfalls.

Our sustained commitment to hiking and the great outdoors would not be possible without our supporters. We thank our individual and Alliance members, our partners, and our corporate, foundation and government supporters for their tireless dedication and generosity. Together we will continue to excite, engage, and educate future hiking enthusiasts from all walks of life to ensure a lasting hiking and outdoor legacy for all Americans.

Embark on a trail to a healthier, more connected and meaningful lifestyle. Hike.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Gregory A. Miller, Ph.D.
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Chambers". The signature is cursive and written over a white background.

Jennifer Chambers
Chair, Board of Directors

\$2.7 MILLION

in volunteer trail
stewardship "sweat equity"

1,645

miles of trail maintained

144,449

participants at National Trails Day®
and Volunteer Vacations

**2014
NATIONWIDE
IMPACT**

57

week-long
Volunteer Vacations projects

2,113

National Trails Day® activities

10

National Trails Fund grants awarded
(Worth over \$20,000)

A NATIONWIDE ADVENTURE: NATIONAL TRAILS DAY® BRINGS AMERICANS TOGETHER ON THE TRAIL



National Trails Day proved to be a reunion for Jim Hall and his friend, Betty Pike. Says Hall, “[Betty] went to grammar school with me... It was my first time seeing her in 20 years!” The pair, along with other hikers, explored the Pine Mountain Trail in Georgia.

(Photo by Jim Hall)



Spanning 2,400 acres of open space, Colorado’s William Frederick Hayden Park requires constant care and maintenance. On National Trails Day, over 100 volunteers, staff, and partners joined together to help reroute a section of the “Box o’ Rox Trail,” a heavily-used section of the park.

(Photo by Lydia Lawson)

2014 NATIONAL TRAILS DAY SPONSORS



GIVING BACK WITH VOLUNTEER VACATIONS



Why become a crew leader?

I enjoyed the work, travel, and interaction with fellow volunteers so much that I knew I wanted to continue participating in Volunteer Vacations as long as I was able. I like new experiences and challenges and being a crew leader offers just that with every trip. New location, crew, project, logistics. Plus, it never feels bad to open someone else's eyes to a love of trails.

Was there a point when you remember really making a difference with the work you were doing?

My very first VV was in Cumberland Gap SP, TN. We approached our project - a washed out logging road, barely passable, with three foot deep ruts and blow-downs galore. It was nearly unrecognizable as a trail. By the end of day one we had cleared it of obstacles, shored up the bank and dug fresh tread for nearly 1/8th of a mile. Walking that "new" trail back down to the trailhead and turning around to see our single day's work gave me an overwhelming sense of accomplishment, purpose, and appreciation that I knew I had to keep going. That was the exact moment that I was hooked. By day three we met our first hikers and it really sunk in that we were out there for a reason - perhaps offering a healing or learning experience for someone else.

Final thoughts...

After 13 Volunteer Vacations, I've just started my second season on the south district trails crew at Great Smokey Mountains National Park. I wouldn't have this awesome job if I hadn't found my love for trail work through American Hiking Society.

Not only is Michelle Richardson a United States military veteran, she is also a Volunteer Vacations veteran, having completed 13 different Volunteer Vacations as both a participant and a Crew Leader. We had the chance to catch up with Michelle on her experience as a VV Crew Leader, and her newfound love of trail work and community.

What made you want to get involved in an American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacations?

At the end of 2010, I was fresh out of the military with no job, no real plans, and a bleak outlook on life in general. I wanted to do something rewarding and physically demanding that would allow travel and offer anonymity. I saw these trips as a sort of therapy, an opportunity to heal and start again.

What was your first trip as a Crew Leader?

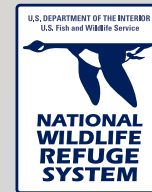
My first crew leader experience was in October 2012 on the Buffalo River in Arkansas after four trips as a crew member.



2014 VOLUNTEER VACATIONS SPONSORS



2014 FEDERAL PARTNERS



PROTECTING OUR NATION'S TRAILS

American Hiking Society is the voice for America's hikers in the halls of Capitol Hill. We strategically allocate our resources to work on the most pressing issues that our country's trails face on a daily basis. Some of the issues we worked on this past year range from trail preservation projects such as the North Country Trail route adjustment, health and wellness focused issues such as supporting the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act, and even preparing for future disasters affecting wild places by supporting wildfire suppression legislation.

In 2014, American Hiking has shown unwavering support in reinstating the funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We issued action alerts to our hiking community and submitted testimony to Congressional subcommittees. We've made behind the scene advances as well as public drives via our social media platforms to gain as much support as possible to encourage Congress to fund LWCF at the same level of funding as previous fiscal years. Furthermore, American Hiking staff worked closely with the North Country Trail Association in an effort to get the North Country NST Route Adjustment Act passed without deal-breaking amendments by leading an effort to gain a critical senator's support.

The urgency of gaining support from hikers across the country in response to the Land and Water Conservation fund led to American Hiking running a campaign to raise funds so we could continue our advocacy efforts on the Hill. We urged the hiking community to help us ensure the next Congress acts on legislation to protect our nation's trails and the lands around them so we can all access and discover the outdoors. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to keep putting time and resources into fighting for our trails.

Other issues American Hiking advocated on are the following:

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act

National Scenic Trails Parity Act

Reauthorization/Recreational Trails Program

Wildfire Disaster Funding Act

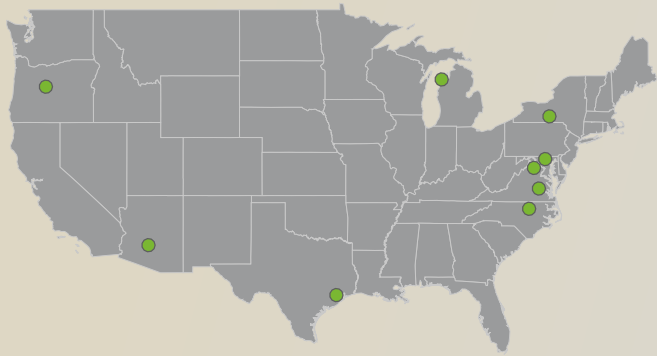
Healthy Kids Outdoors Act



DEDICATED TO OUR NATION'S TRAILS

American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund is the only privately funded, national grants program dedicated solely to building and protecting hiking trails. Created in response to the growing backlog of trail maintenance projects, the National Trails Fund has helped hundreds of grassroots organizations acquire the resources needed to protect America's cherished hiking trails. To date, American Hiking Society has funded 192 trail projects by awarding over \$588,000 in National Trails Fund grants.

The 2014 National Trails Fund awarded a little over \$20,000 to 10 trail organizations located all across the country.



L.L.Bean

L.L. Bean is a proud supporter of American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund. They have given hundreds of thousands of dollars in support of the National Trails Fund.



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CONNECTING WITH OUR MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: KATE WAITE

American Hiking Society loves connecting with our members. Every single one has a story to tell about when and why they started hiking, and why they continue to do so. AHS recently had the chance to talk to new member Kate Waite about her experience thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail (AT), and uncovered a touching story about how she met her beau on the trail in North Carolina, the significance of snacking on Little Debbie's Oatmeal Pies, and forming bonds to last a lifetime. Kate is not a pro-athlete; she's just an everyday hiker who wants to be able to enjoy the trails today, tomorrow, and for years to come – just like the rest of us. Here is part of her story:

Q: What is your favorite hiking memory?

A: Climbing the coveted Beehive in Acadia National Park. It became a rite of passage in our family – you had to be 10 in order to hike this mountain. Despite its mere 0.8 miles to the top, it packs many formidable punches in the form of iron rungs, exposed cliffs, and one fearful grate. Reaching the top meant a celebration of Little Debbie Oatmeal Pies, cheese and crackers, and Gatorade.

Q: What made you decide to become a member of American Hiking?

A: Someone put me on the right mailing list and some info about you guys ended up in my mailbox. I hadn't heard of AHS before, but I've been trying to give back in whatever financially meager way I can to trail organizations since finishing the AT. I read your mission, I saw your sponsors, and I saw that you're based out of Silver Spring (where my brother lives), and thought – this looks cool. A t-shirt and subscription to Backpacker Magazine are good selling points, too! I had already joined AHS, but wanted to learn more about the organization, so stopped in person when visiting my brother most recently. The staff was teeny tiny, but the passion was big. They took time out of their day to chat with me, answer questions, and share information. Mountains, hiking, backpacking, and now long distance hiking have had a profound impact on my life. As such, I realize the importance of connecting with and supporting organizations who aim to maintain and strengthen trail systems and protect land so they are always available, open, and as undeveloped as possible. The benefits and payback occur as soon as you step into the woods and take a deep breath.

Read the rest of Kate's spotlight on our website at www.americanhiking.org/blog/member-spotlight-kate-waite/



photo by Kate Waite

MEMBERSHIP: BY THE NUMBERS

\$229,413 in 2014 membership dues revenue which is a 10% increase in revenue over 2013 (\$207,823), with a 92% second year renewal rate (same as in 2013) and a **67% overall membership renewal rate** (compared to 60% in 2013)—our highest overall renewal rate since 2002 (77% renewal).

5,721 members as of December 31, 2014.

Member Demographics

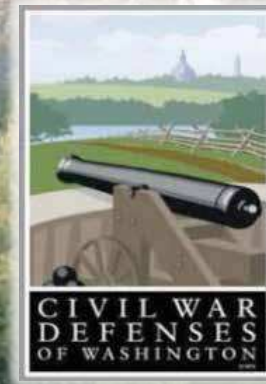
Annual Income		Age	
>\$150,000	12.1%	< 25 yrs	1.5%
\$100,000 - \$150,000	23.0%	25 - 35	9.5%
\$70,000 - \$99,999	23.4%	36 - 49	24.1%
\$50,000 - \$69,999	21.3%	50 - 65	51.5%
\$30,000 - \$49,999	12.9%	> 65	13.4%
< \$30,000	7.3%	Education	
Gender		Master or PhD	43.4%
Male	65%	College Degree	37.0%
Female	35%	High School	19.6%

photo: Krysti Sabins

- Hike through History -

On July 12, 2014, American Hiking Society and the National Park Service (NPS) led a “Hike Through History” to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens. The hike was part of a three-day Civil War 150th Anniversary Commemorative event highlighting Fort Stevens’ role in preventing the Confederates from capturing Washington. Over 200 National Park Service employees and volunteers were on hand to host events, including historical reenactments and the ceremonial firing of one of the fort’s cannons.

80 hikers came out to enjoy the tour, as participants ranged from curious locals to visiting hikers from across the country. Starting at Battery Kemble (a former Union Army defensive site during the war), hikers traveled over five miles along the Civil War Defenses of Washington (CWDW) Trail, a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST). The hike was led by American Hiking Society’s President Greg Miller, who acted as both a trail guide and historian, escorting the group and explaining the significance of the area during the 1860’s.

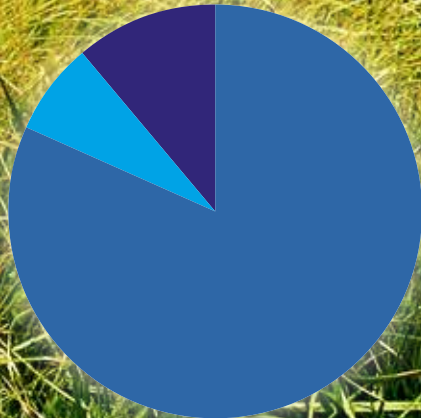
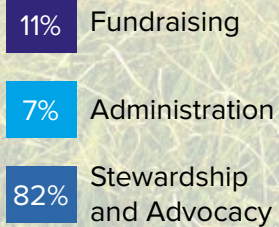


2014 FINANCIALS

INCOME



EXPENSES



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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The donors listed on the following pages generously contributed \$500 or more in fiscal year 2014. American Hiking Society gratefully acknowledges their commitment to protecting the places we all love to hike.

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YOU CAN GIVE AT WORK.

Thank you to the many donors who contributed to American Hiking Society last year through corporate, state, city and county workplace giving campaigns. If you are a federal employee, you can support our work by designating **#11784** on your pledge sheet during the **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**.

Backpacker's Pantry is a proud supporter of American Hiking Society. Their contributions over the past 13 years provides the necessary backbone support for American Hiking Society's work to protect hiking trails, their surrounding natural landscapes, and the hiking experience. American Hiking Society represents millions of hikers who are committed to beautiful places to hike and who believe that the preservation of hiking trails and their environments is important and a worthwhile legacy to leave future generations. We thank Backpacker's Pantry for being a part of this legacy.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



BACKPACKER'S PANTRY

AN INTERVIEW WITH RODNEY SMITH, BACKPACKER'S PANTRY PRESIDENT:

"I want to thank AHS for all of the amazing work they are doing. It is a great privilege to be able to help them in this mission to save, restore and conserve our national, state and local trail systems. I especially want to thank all of the members of AHS for taking time and money and putting those resources to work for the benefit of all of us U.S. citizens and the world really."

What is your favorite hike or favorite park to explore? I have to say Rocky Mountain Park as it is only 40 minutes from my house. My family loves going to the park to watch the elk bugle in the fall. But really if I had to say which park blew me away it would have to be Sequoia National Park. We are so blessed in this country to have so much public land. BLM, National and State forests, National Park and Regional Parks are all such amazing resources for all of us we need to conserve and expand these resources.

Given all the economic and social problems our country faces today, why should recreation and trail conservation be given attention? I really feel more than ever we need access to the outdoors for everyone as it makes us all feel better and makes us realize we don't have to be hooked into the internet to have an amazing experience. It can be as--- simple as walking down a trail. Protection of the existing trails, expansion of trails systems and protection of our national and state parks and wilderness then becomes a national health issue - both mental and physical health. We as a society need those spaces to explore and connect to our environment and ourselves.

Why help American Hiking Society? AHS is an amazing organization that focuses on a very important issue to me and my company—trails. Their work in Washington D.C., on the trails, getting new members/advocates that want to protect trails is critical. I come from a family that believes that it is every generation's responsibility to try to make things better for the next. What AHS provides and does on a daily basis is critical for our National Trail System and that is why Backpacker's Pantry is a long term supporter.



photo: Rodney Smith

Thank you to our supporters

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is renowned as the only national voice for the more than 44 million Americans who hike. Today our members continue to stand by us to expand our support. More than 500,000 citizens are committed to promoting and protecting hiking and America's vast network of trails financially. We thank each and every one of our members for their dedication to our mission of protecting hiking trails for future generations.



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