




# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

## THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR HIKERS





## Hike Your Outdoors

 Cover: Mark Going

Dear Supporters:

American Hiking Society has deep roots in the outdoors, in volunteer stewardship, and in experiencing nature through hiking. As the national voice for hikers, we engaged hundreds of thousands of people coast to coast in 2015 to demonstrate that hiking our nation's trails offers Americans from all walks of life boundless opportunities to enjoy nature, renew themselves and establish a lifetime of fitness. We activated hikers across the country and collaborated with many partners through our Hike the Hill and other advocacy efforts to ensure the protection of hiking trails and public lands for future generations. We produced our national report, *Hiking Trails in America: Pathways to Prosperity* to bring national attention to the economic benefits of trails and the hiking community. American Hiking and its Alliance of Hiking Organizations continued as the primary force to ensure funding for trails, preservation of natural areas, and protection of the hiking experience.

Across all fifty states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, our National Trails Day<sup>®</sup>, Volunteer Vacations and college Alternative Breaks stewardship programs marshalled 25,243 trail volunteers (a 13% increase from 2014) working on 526 trail projects. Under American Hiking Society's banner, these trail volunteers contributed more than 110,000 service hours to hiking trails, valued at \$2.6 million in sweat equity. "Get Out and Give Back" was heard loud and clear from hikers, college students and trail stewards across the nation this past year. Since 1998, our National Trails Fund has awarded \$658,000 in trail grants to worthy trail partners, again demonstrating the important philanthropic role American Hiking and its supporters can play in addressing the growing backlog of trail maintenance projects.

Because of the dedication of our board and staff, Alliance members, corporate, government and individual members and supporters we will leave a positive and enduring hiking and outdoor legacy for future generations. To

our new members and supporters, as well as those who have hiked the trail with us before, thank you. Together we will remain steadfast in our commitment to protect the places you love to hike and increase the participation and enjoyment of hiking by all Americans.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Miller, Ph.D.  
President



Jennifer Chambers  
Chair, Board of Directors

**\$2.6 MILLION**

in volunteer trail  
stewardship "sweat equity"

**1,771**

miles of trail maintained



**2015  
NATIONWIDE  
IMPACT**

**176,543**

participants at National Trails Day®  
and Volunteer Vacations

**61**

week-long  
Volunteer Vacations  
and Alternative Break projects

**2,329**

National Trails Day®  
activities nationwide

**9**

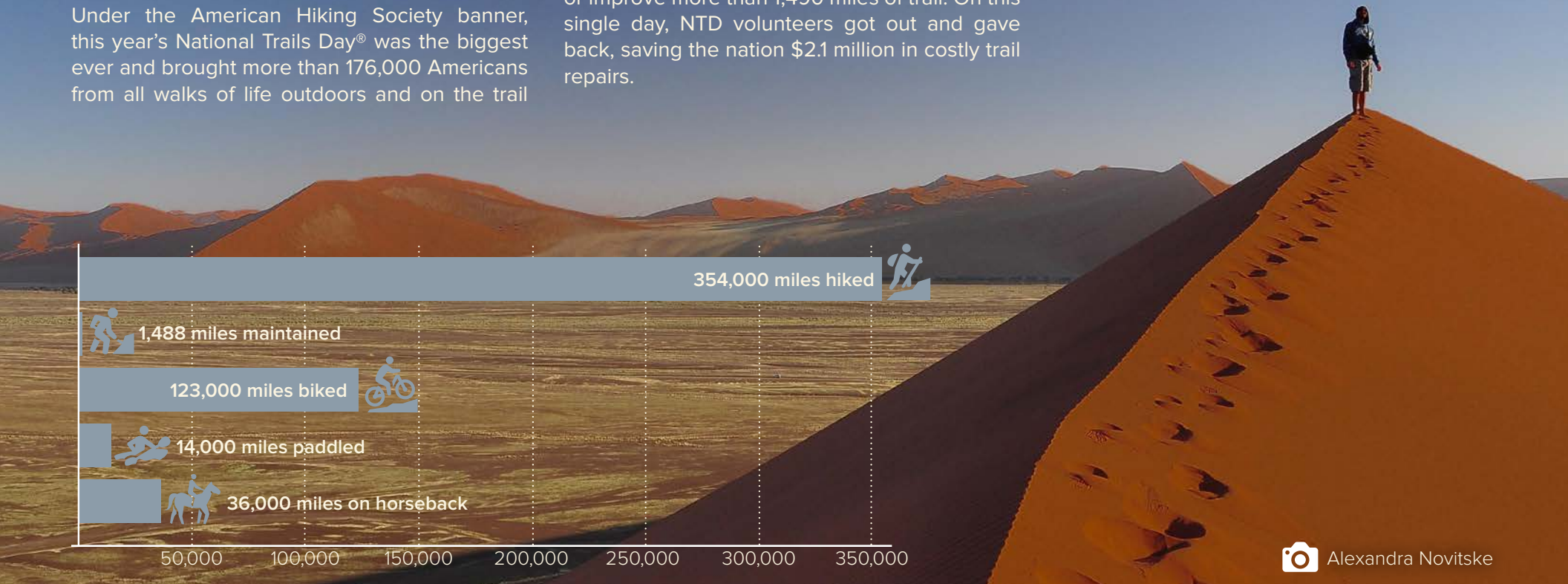
National Trails Fund and  
Superior Trails Grants awarded  
**(Worth over \$70,000)**

# Record Number of Americans Hit the Trail on National Trails Day®

Celebrated on June 6, 2015, American Hiking Society's 23rd annual National Trails Day® encouraged all Americans to get outside, get active and experience the myriad opportunities for outdoor recreation that trails afford. Now 23 years strong, NTD is one of the nation's largest outdoor initiatives and serves as the premier celebration of our nation's incredible trails system.

Under the American Hiking Society banner, this year's National Trails Day® was the biggest ever and brought more than 176,000 Americans from all walks of life outdoors and on the trail

at more than 2,300 NTD events across all 50 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and Canada. America's trails do not build nor sustain themselves. Trail volunteers work year-round to ensure trails are safe and accessible to the public, and NTD is a time when their collective power is harnessed in remarkable ways. Over 24,700 NTD volunteers contributed their time and 'sweat equity' on 456 trail projects to build or improve more than 1,490 miles of trail. On this single day, NTD volunteers got out and gave back, saving the nation \$2.1 million in costly trail repairs.



Alexandra Novitske

## 2015 National Trails Day® Sponsors



## Federal Partners



# 2015 VOLUNTEER VACATIONS:

## By the Numbers

**61** Total Trail **PROJECTS** **13 COLLEGE** Stewardship Trips

**283 MILES** OF TRAIL BUILT or maintained  
(Equal to the width of NY State)

**543**  Volunteers

**21,720** Volunteer hrs.  
**NEARLY 2.5 YEARS**

**\$501,080** INVESTED IN **SWEAT EQUITY**

**Improved Trail** access for more than **1.3 MILLION** Trail users

## Alternative Break: Students Improve Trails Across the Country

Started in 2008, Alternative Break is a series of trail stewardship projects designed specifically for college aged students. The program has expanded significantly since its first year and continues to be a vital connection between park land managers in need of volunteers and students eager to give back over their spring break. In 2015, American Hiking engaged 130 students in trail stewardship projects, spanning across 5 states. The boots-on-the-ground impact these student stewards make is noteworthy, but the friendships and memories made in the process are unforgettable.



One of those participants was Anna Gilmore, from Northeastern University, and she shared what made her Alternative Break memorable for her.

**What made you sign up for your first Alternative Break?** I had a pretty strong background in environmental service projects already, and I was looking for something a little unusual. I grew up in a hiking family, and when I found AHS, it felt like a perfect fit for me!

**What is the most rewarding aspect of participating on an Alternative Break to you?** The thing I appreciate most on AHS trips

is the level of investment in me as a volunteer, both by AHS and the project hosts. The pre-trip information that AHS sends out is super helpful. From the moment we arrive on site to the moment we leave, the project hosts are incredibly welcoming and accommodating. They spend an enormous amount of their own time making sure that we have a great experience, even though we're there to serve. I always feel so appreciated!

**What is the most memorable/favorite experience you have had on an Alternative Break?** My favorite moment was getting the first bench installed along the John Nichols trail in Sanborn County Park, CA. Learning new skills and making a tangible impact are always great, but it was such a learning moment for our group. Not only would the benches make the trail accessible to more people, but the wood was "rescued" from some trees that had to be cut down under a power line. The way the park staff approached this challenge really embodied the social justice connection between sustainability, environmentalism, and access to resources.



 Rich Wright

### 2015 Volunteer Vacations Sponsors



### Agency Partners



# HIKING TRAILS IN AMERICA

## *Pathways to Prosperity*

AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY | JUNE 2015

### American Hiking advocated for and lobbied Congress on the following:

- ▶ The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act
- ▶ The National Scenic Trails Parity Act
- ▶ The National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act
- ▶ The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)
- ▶ The North Country Trail Route Adjustment Act
- ▶ Against passage of various bills that would allow for the unchecked construction of gas pipelines through National Parks
- ▶ The Complete America's Great Trails Act

## Protecting Our Nation's Trails

Since 1976, American Hiking Society has worked with Congress, federal agencies, and many recreation and conservation partners on policy issues and legislation to ensure funding for trails, preservation of natural areas, and protection of the hiking experience. In 2015, American Hiking had the following successes:

1. American Hiking produced and distributed the ***Hiking Trails in America: Pathways to Prosperity*** report, bringing national attention to the economic benefits of trails and the hiking community.
2. The new Congress, fresh off the campaign trail, had a chance to learn about a different kind of trail during AHS' annual Hike the Hill: hiking trails! From February 8-12, 2015, advocates from all over the country came to DC to participate in Hike the Hill, a joint effort by AHS and the Partnership for the National Trails System. Throughout the week advocates met with agency officials from the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, to discuss issues affecting hiking trails and address various concerns regarding public lands and recreation.
3. American Hiking spent countless hours and effort lobbying for the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – one of the most critical land protection programs for trails. While Congress allowed LWCF to lapse, after much effort by advocates, they reauthorized the Fund through the end of fiscal year 2018 and even provided a 50% increase for fiscal year 2016 funding over fiscal year 2015.
4. Additionally, in a huge victory for the trails community, the Recreational Trails Program was successfully included in the new 5-Year Transportation Bill. This was a noteworthy victory considering the powerful interests that specifically targeted this program for removal from the bill.

## 2015 National Trails Fund Grant Recipients

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 199 trail projects by awarding over \$608,000 in National Trails Fund grants.

The 2015 National Trails Fund awarded over \$20,000 to 7 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.



**Ice Age Trail Alliance**  
Cross Plains, WI



**Tahoe Rim Trail Association**  
Stateline, NV



**Wilmington Trail Club**  
Wilmington, DE



**Sheltowee Trace Association**  
Livingston, KY



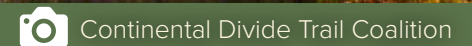
**Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado**  
Denver, CO



**Montana Wilderness Association**  
multiple cities, MT



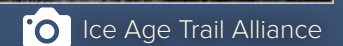
**Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers**  
Basalt, CO



## 2015 Michelob Ultra Superior Trails Grant

Through its Superior Trails program, Michelob ULTRA teamed up with American Hiking to award two trail organizations each a \$25,000 grant to improve, maintain, and protect their trail. From September 1-October 31 votes were cast across the country deeming the Ice Age Trail National Scenic Trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail as the two winners.

“We know that Michelob ULTRA drinkers are active, outdoor adventurers who love to celebrate a great journey with a great beer,” said Edison Yu, Vice President, Michelob ULTRA. “Through our partnership with American Hiking Society, we’ll be able to spruce up two scenic trails in order to encourage more of these people to get outside and create some superior moments of their own.”





# Engaging with Our Members

**Membership Spotlight: Joan Carter**, member and Volunteer Vacations participant since 1997, monthly supporter since 2010, Fort Collins, CO

## Why did you join AHS?

I remember picking up a brochure in an REI store in 1997 while on a trip out West. A hiking enthusiast, I felt it was time to lend financial support to the protection and restoration of trails and I joined. After reading about the service projects around the country, I ended up driving cross-country to my first Volunteer Vacations project in the Grand Canyon in 2000.

## What experiences growing up sparked your passion for hiking?

Hiking with my family in Yosemite at age 10 was a perfect introduction to a spectacular park far removed from the heat and congestion of the Los Angeles area.



 Joan Carter

## What do you feel you gain as a Volunteer Vacation/AHS volunteer?

I gain an appreciation of how valuable our public lands are, and how it puts the responsibility for vigilance on us, the taxpayers. And I've gained a deep admiration, when working for and with the forest service rangers, state park rangers, and BLM managers, for the work they do on behalf of the outdoors-loving public.

## What is your favorite trail or park to hike in?

Hands down: Yosemite National Park and Arches National Park; my favorite trail is Eagle Creek in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

## What is the best piece of advice you would give to other hikers?

Be open to suggestions, flexible when conditions change, and quick to offer help in every occasion

## What makes monthly giving appealing to you?

Once I am committed to the purposes and mission of an organization like AHS, I have no excuse not to be part of a membership base to sustain the means of this endeavor moving forward.

## Membership: By the Numbers

**Individual Members in 2015: 5,319**

**Alliance Members in 2015: 217**

**New Members in 2015: 1,554**

**New Alliance Members in 2015: 16**

## 2015 Social Media: By the Numbers

**As of December 31, 2015 the total numbers followers on the AHS social media channels grew to:**

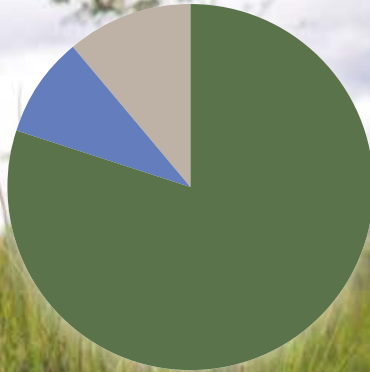
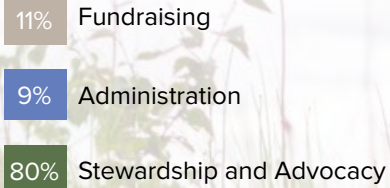
**Facebook: 170,904**

**Twitter: 32,425**

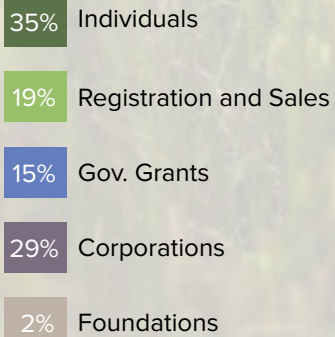
**Instagram: 22,505**

# 2015 Financials

## Expenses



## Income



## Board of Directors

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Jennifer Chambers, Chair  
Scott W. Beckett, Vice Chair  
Tom Johnson, Secretary  
Kimball Simpson, Treasurer  
Larry Luxenberg, At Large

## Directors

Amy Csink  
Jane Daniels  
Kathleen Fitzpatrick  
Carolyn Hartfield  
Jack Hess  
Howard Kern  
Dennis Lewon  
Danielle Piscatelli  
Jeff Senterman  
Al Sochard  
Kevin Thomson

## Ex-Officio

Gregory A. Miller, Ph.D. President



## ***Special Thanks To Our Contributors***

The donors listed on this page generously contributed \$500 or more in fiscal year 2015. American Hiking Society gratefully acknowledges their commitment to protecting the places we all love to hike.

### **President's Council**

#### **\$5,000 & Above**

Ann Myers Williams

#### **\$1,000 to \$4,999**

Anonymous

Anonymous

Hilton Bakker

Scott Beckett

Ann Marie Cullen

Brian Cvelbar

Jane & Walt Daniels

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Kim Simpson & Kate Donaghue

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Anonymous

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Mark Cohen & Leigh Scott  
Amy Csink  
Emma Dieter  
Lisa Dunham  
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Daniel Gray  
Jack Hess  
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Dennis Lewon  
Larry & Frieda Luxenberg  
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Barney Mann  
Shannon O'Donovan  
Aaron Percy  
Mike Pittsley  
Bob Weggel  
Hugh Zimmerman

### **Alliance of Hiking Organizations**

#### **\$500 & Above**

Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Beijing Walking Athletic Association  
Pacific Crest Trail Association

### **Corporate and Foundation**

#### **\$50,000 & Above**

Michelob Ultra

#### **\$20,000 to \$49,999**

Columbia Sportswear  
L.L. Bean

#### **\$10,000 to \$19,999**

Adventure Medical Kits  
Eddie Bauer  
Hi-Tec Sports USA, Inc.  
REI  
Therm-a-Rest  
The North Face Company  
Vasque Footwear

#### **\$500 to \$9,999**

Backpacker's Pantry  
Brooks Range Mountaineering  
Equipment  
Globe Pequot Press  
Klean Kanteen  
Kurgo  
Leatherman Tool Group, INC  
LED Lenser  
LEKI  
LOWA Boots  
Menasha Ridge Press  
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Save the Redwoods League  
The Morningstar Foundation  
Tilley Endurables  
Wildland Trekking  
Your True Nature, INC

### **Agency Partners**

America's State Parks  
Bureau of Land Management  
Federal Highway Administration  
National Park Service  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service

### **In-Kind Donors**

Adventure Medical Kits  
American Park Network  
Backpacker  
Brooks Range Mountaineering  
Equipment  
BUFF, Inc  
Chum/Beyond Coastal  
Columbia  
Eddie Bauer  
Falcon Guides  
Goal Zero  
Klean Kanteen  
Leatherman  
LED Lenser  
Leki  
Osprey  
Menasha Ridge Press  
Sea to Summit  
Therm-a-Rest

### ***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).



American  
Hiking  
Society

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### 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.

### Thank You to Our 2015 Corporate Sponsors and Agency Partners

