



# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

## Your voices moved mountains in Washington D.C.

What a year 2018 was for American Hiking Society! You may have sensed that a change in leadership has brought more than just a flashy new website, but also a deeper shift in our mission, sharpening our focus on what matters most: you, the hiking community.

That is why, in 2018, we [made it easier than ever](#) for you to connect with your Senators, Representatives, and the federal government through [postcards](#), petitions, calls, and [emails](#). American Hiking members alone contacted their Members of Congress thousands of times in 2018 and directly helped to make permanent the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) in early 2019. Also, AHS made certain that you would be able to vote during the midterm elections for the candidates you felt would best represent your interests, as hikers, through our comprehensive voter education campaign: [Vote Public Lands](#). In short, your voices moved mountains in Washington DC.

You made a difference to public lands out on the trail too. [In 2018 alone](#), American Hiking volunteer programs (Volunteer Vacations, Alternative Break, and National Trails Day®) improved 36 national parks, 51 national forests, 12 national wildlife refuges, and even more BLM sites and state and local parks to the tune

of \$3.3 million in volunteer labor and 4,185 miles of trail (that's 1.7x the distance from New York City to Los Angeles). That astounding feat was just the beginning. AHS volunteer programs triple their investment by creating lifelong advocates for the hiking community, bolstering our advocacy programs with authentic experiences, and building the next generation of outdoor leaders.

None of AHS's efforts will achieve sustainable change without empowering the next generation and both addressing roadblocks to and harnessing the opportunities of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the outdoors. So, in 2018 we launched the inaugural class of [NextGen Trail Leaders](#): diverse, rising stars in outdoor leadership who serve as activist ambassadors for AHS all year and gain invaluable professional development opportunities in return, including joining us for [Hike the Hill](#)®. A Historically Black College and University participated in AHS's [Alternative Break](#) program for the first time. We signed Diversify Outdoors' [Outdoor CEO Diversity Pledge](#). We shared an Outdoor Industry Association "[Together We Are a Force](#)" award with Teresa Baker (of [African American Parks Experience](#) and [Diversify Outdoors](#)), Vasque, and Patagonia for the #HikeLikeAGirl

campaign. We fielded volunteer crews that were, in total, majority female. And throughout 2018, we purposely evolved our marketing, messaging, target audience, and partnerships to connect with, showcase, and amplify the work of more diverse, inclusive, and younger hikers.

We know you've felt these changes, because you were with us every step of the way -through donations, contacting your representative, working on a Volunteer Vacation, or attending a National Trails Day® event. With you at our side in 2019, outcomes for the hiking community will only become even more impactful. We're well past the trailhead. Thanks for your help getting us here!

Hike on,



*Bradley Ellis, Esq.*

Bradley J. Ellis, Esq.,  
Board Chair



*K E Van Waes*

Kathryn (Kate) Van Waes  
Executive Director



# 2018 NATIONWIDE IMPACT

**2,220+**  
Messages  
Sent to Congress

**2 MILLION +**  
People Reached Through  
Social Media Advocacy

**53%**  
Female Volunteer  
Crews

**National Park Entrance Fee Hike Reversed**

**\$3.3 MILLION**  
Volunteer  
Labor Value

**4,185**  
Trail Miles Improved

**\$27.6 MILLION**  
Increase in Federal  
Trail Funding

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## PUBLIC LANDS IMPROVED BY AHS PROGRAMS IN 2018

**36**  
National  
Parks

**12**  
National  
Wildlife Refuges

**51**  
National  
Forests

**15**  
BLM  
sites

**104**  
State  
Parks/Forests

**86**  
Municipal  
& County Parks



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# A LEADER IN SERVICE TO THE OUTDOORS

## COLLEGE ALTERNATIVE BREAKS: Building Trails Overcoming Challenges

### In Their Words

“ I have had trouble venturing outside of my comfort zone. Trying so many different things while on the trip has definitely made me more thirsty to explore new hobbies & activities.”

- Paige P., Alternative Break Participant

“ The trail maintenance was not only vital to the park, but it was a vehicle that helped each student individually find some strength in themselves.”

- Ron Griswell, NextGen Trail Leader, NC A&T Trip Leader

“ Since I’m from inner city DC and go to school in Greensboro, I have never seen a clear night sky, so being at James River State Park and experiencing the night sky full of stars was astonishing. I wish I could have gotten a picture, but the memory will forever be ingrained in my mind.

Personally, I learned that I should never let my mind limit my physical capabilities. I talk myself out of physically challenging things because I don’t see myself as strong or capable, but within a week, I hiked over 20 miles (possibly even more) and that’s something that I never thought I could do, even in a month.

I will also be taking more chances to go out into nature and inform others on how important it is to take care of the world around us, before it’s too late.”

- Asia H., Alternative Break Participant

### The Pledge

For 25 years, National Trails Day® has united the trails community with the goal of connecting more people to trails and public lands. To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System, we wanted to do more in 2018, so we set a goal to improve 2,802 miles of trail, the distance across the U.S. **And people from coast to coast rallied in a big way to improve almost 4,000 miles of trail!**



# EMPOWERING TRAIL ADVOCATES



The Land and Water Conservation Fund is essential for protecting, preserving, and expanding our nation's trails. Please ensure this vital program does not expire.

Please renew the L.W.C.F.

Working as a Volunteer trail crew on the Badlands today inspired me enough to write to you in encouragement! ☺

SARAH  
First Name

OR  
State

97702  
Zipcode



## AHS NextGen Trail Leaders

The inaugural class of AHS [NextGen Trail Leaders](#) brought together inspiring rising stars in the outdoor community. Through AHS, NextGen Trail Leaders served as activist ambassadors, championing the protection of public lands and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion on the trail.

# VOTE PUBLIC LANDS

In the lead up to the 2018 midterm election, AHS launched a comprehensive campaign to educate voters on key public land issues and provide tools for engagement with candidates.

## National Trails Day®

American Hiking Society distributed over 1,000 postcards to National Trails Day® participants to express their love of trails and ask for support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). American Hiking Society then hand-delivered hundreds of returned postcards directly to Members of Congress at a bipartisan rally for the LWCF.

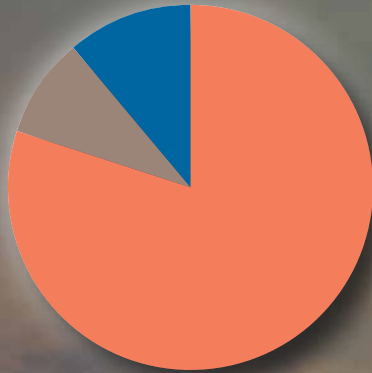
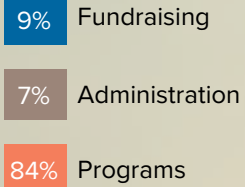
## 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System

AHS celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System with a year-long awareness campaign to promote the protection and completion of these national treasures.

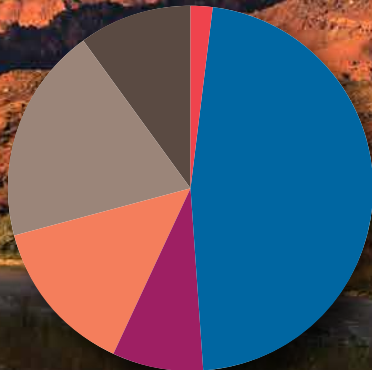
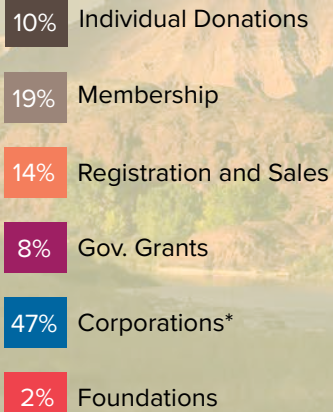


# 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

## Expenses



## Income



## 2018 Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

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Bradley J. Ellis, Esq., Vice Chair  
Jeff Senterman, Secretary  
Kevin Thomson, Treasurer  
Dennis Crowley, At Large

### Directors

Melissa Avery  
Sarah Baker Morgan  
Jane Daniels  
Maria Erickson  
Kathleen Fitzpatrick  
Sally Kidd  
Ryan King  
Dennis Lewon  
Larry Luxenberg  
Bruce Mathews  
Saveria Tilden

### Ex-Officio

Kate Van Waes, Executive Director

\*Includes in-kind donations.

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

The donors listed on this page generously contributed \$500 or more in 2018. American Hiking Society gratefully acknowledges their commitment to protecting the places we all love to hike.

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LEKI

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Eddie Bauer

Menasha Ridge Press

Merrell

Nature Valley

Osprey Packs

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Swiftwick

Vasque

## **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).



8605 Second Avenue  
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910  
 Info@AmericanHiking.org  
 AmericanHiking.org  
 1-800-972-8608

**Thank you to our supporters**

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience. We thank each and every one of our members for their dedication to our mission.

📷 Latino Outdoors on National Trails Day® photo by NextGen Trail Leader Maricela Rosales



Thank You to Our 2018 Corporate Sponsors and Agency Partners

