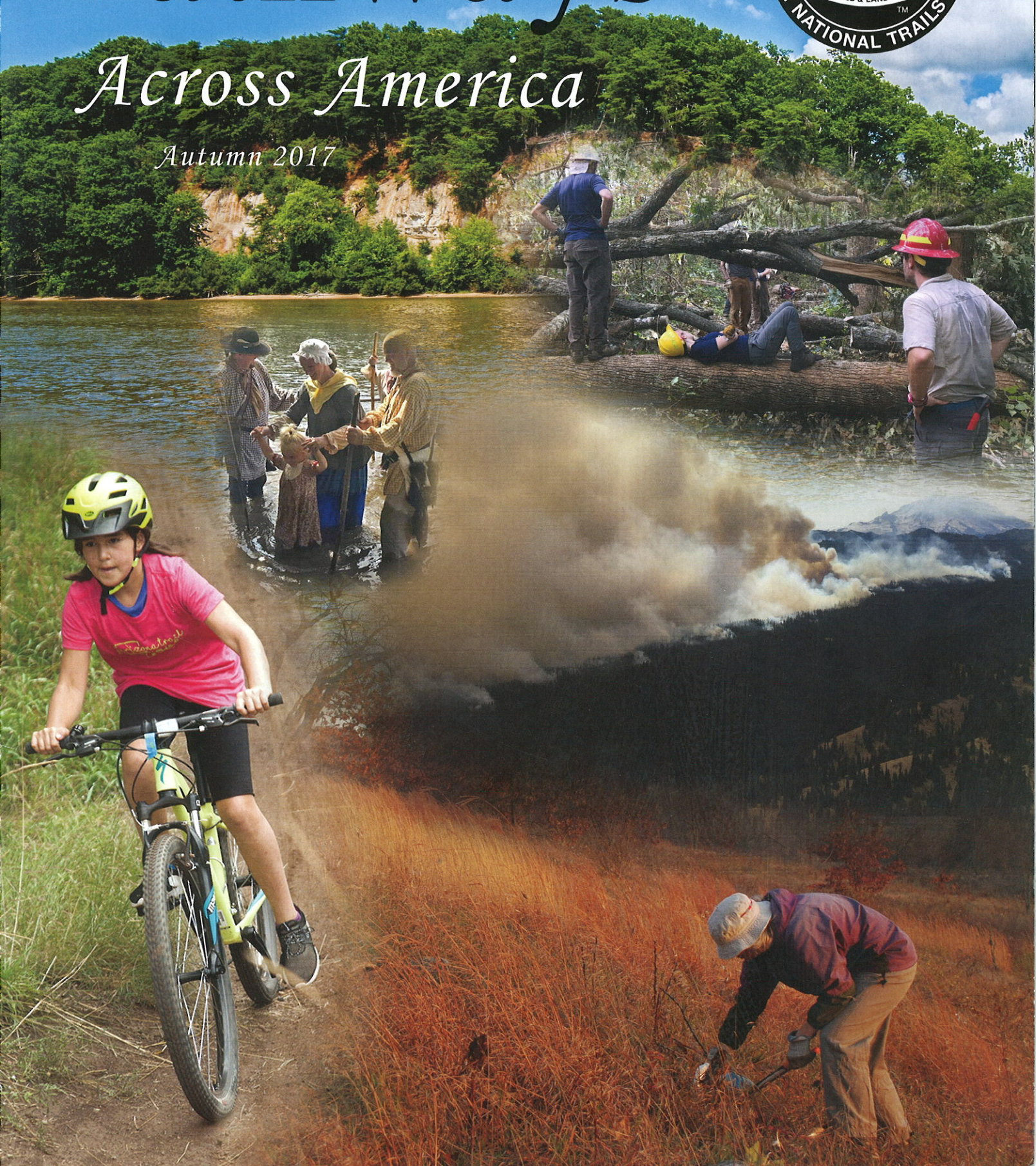


A Publication of the Partnership for the National Trails System

Pathways

Across America

Autumn 2017



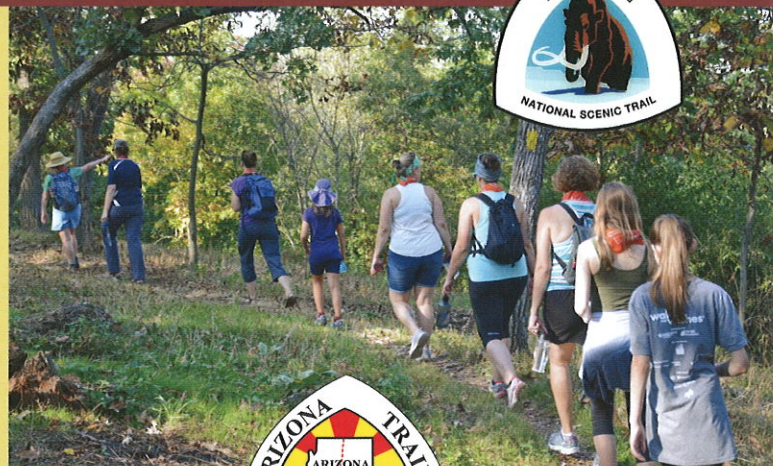
Ice Age, Arizona trails get REI Force of Nature grants

Adapted from an August 23, 2017 news release from REI

As part of its commitment to create access to the outdoors for all, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) has invested \$1 million in organizations across the country that are creating opportunities to connect women and girls to nature. Among them are two nonprofits that represent the Ice Age and Arizona national scenic trails.

In May, REI launched an expansive, consumer-facing effort called Force of Nature to advance gender equity in the outdoors and encourage millions of its members to embrace the outdoors as “the world’s largest level playing field.” As part of the effort, REI committed \$500,000 to three national, women-focused nonprofits with whom it already had a relationship, including Camber Outdoors, GirlTrek and the YMCA’s GOLD initiative. It also launched the \$500,000 Force of Nature Fund, which extends the co-op’s existing work with women-focused nonprofits into new territory. Over 500 organizations responded to REI’s open call for submissions, and REI selected 26 to receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance received a \$15,000 grant to launch Trailtessa retreats, designed for women and girls to experience adventure, freedom, and a new way to be while exploring the rugged beauty of the Ice Age NST. The Arizona Trail Association’s Seeds of Stewardship program received a \$20,000 grant to launch Gear Girls, a girls-only club that uses mountain biking, trail work, and snowsports to build confidence, outdoor competence, character, and community in young women grades 4-8.



On two national scenic trails in particular, girls and women are becoming more of a #ForceofNature thanks to REI grants.

(Photos courtesy (top) Samantha Haas and (above) Hailey Hagerty)



Appalachian Trail Conservancy leadership changes

Adapted from Appalachian Trail Conservancy news releases, website, and article in Summer 2017 A.T. Journeys



Suzanne Dixon



Ron Tipton

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has selected Suzanne Dixon as its new President and CEO, following Ron Tipton’s announcement to retire at the end of 2017. She begins her position on December 11, 2017, and will lead the organization in its mission to maintain, protect, and celebrate the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Dixon served key roles in the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), most recently as its Senior Director of Regional Operations in Texas, and she is also on the board of directors for the Waco Mammoth Foundation. Dixon is excited to step into the role that Tipton held since 2013 and be an “ambassador and collaborator” with communities along the trail to protect and celebrate its recreational, economic, and cultural significance.

“Her success in protecting the values of the National Parks, along with her expertise in fundraising, advocacy, and programmatic growth, will be a great asset for the ATC and the greater Appalachian Trail community,” said Sandra Marra, ATC board of directors chair.

Tipton, who has spent more than 40 years of his career as an advocate for public land preservation and national park protection, has been part of the advocacy and/or management teams of The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, World Wildlife Fund, and the National Parks Conservation Association. He began his career at the National Academy of Sciences and with the House Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Subcommittee. He has also served as Senior Vice President for programs and policy at NPCA and been a member of numerous recreation and trails organizations.

His involvement with the Appalachian Trail began in the 1970s, and for the last four years he's helped lead and grow the ATC by:

- Getting a five-year strategic plan approved by the board in 2014
- Increasing the ATC operating budget from \$6.4 million in 2013 to \$9.6 million for 2017 and growing full-time staff from 48 to 58
- Expanding ATC’s role in managing the trail to address the growing number of long-distance, weekend, and day hikers
- Advancing new initiatives to protect large landscapes and to broaden the trail’s relevancy to attract young and diverse populations

The Partnership for the National Trails System welcomes Dixon and thanks Tipton for his work with the ATC.