



# SUMMIT

for

# ARIZONA TRAILS

## **Summit 2020 Summary**

*February 21-22, 2020*

*Cottonwood, Arizona*



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## Introduction

The inaugural **Summit for Arizona Trails** was held at the historic Community Club House in Cottonwood, Arizona on Friday, February 21 and Saturday, February 22. The Summit was organized by a small, volunteer committee made up of trail managers and users.

Over 100 advocates, planners, users and managers from across the state came together to network and discuss shared challenges and opportunities. It marked the first such event in 12 years. The Summit brought together two dozen organizations, ten local governments, several small locally owned businesses and five state or federal agencies. Among the participants were five scholarship recipients – young people from the across the state engaged in trail stewardship.

The following summary contains a record of the topics and discussions covered over the course of two days.

## DAY 1 (AFTERNOON)

### Opening

#### Welcome

A spirited welcome was provided by local hosts - City of Cottonwood Mayor Tim Elinski and Yavapai County Supervisor Tom Thurman, both also Leadership Council members of the Verde Front sustainable recreation collaborative.



#### Summit Overview

Wendy Lotze with the Arizona Trail Association, on behalf of the Summit organizing committee, provided an overview of the Summit. She explained the intent of the Summit as the beginning of a much larger effort to foster collaboration and cooperation across the trails community in Arizona. It was the culmination of numerous smaller, separate conversations among trails professionals and advocates who recognized a need to come together to share ideas and to leverage the larger community to help individual as well as cross-cutting, statewide efforts. Arizona is naturally poised to be a national leader in trail recreation. The process of getting there will require lots of hard work.

#### Meet and Greet: Getting to Know Our Larger Trail Community

Participants then had the opportunity to get to know others at their tables through a dynamic round robin sharing: 1) name and affiliation, 2) what brought you here, and 3) what recent work are you proud of.



# What Trails Bring to Our Communities and How to Make it Happen

Presentation by Mila Besich, Mayor of Superior and Executive Director, Legends of Superior Trails

See posted presentation [here](#).



## Elevating our Trails Community, Part 1: Trails Café on Priority Topics

In this first of two in depth discussion opportunities, participants each selected three of the following topics, prioritized in the pre-summit survey. In three rounds of small group work sessions, participants brainstormed and documented on a single large topic sheet (see photo) their current efforts, challenges, successes, and cool ideas for the future.

### Topics

1. Recruiting and managing volunteers
2. Navigating the planning/permitting process
3. Outreach and promotion
4. Trail construction and maintenance techniques
5. Diversity and inclusion
6. Cross-jurisdictional trail planning
7. Statewide trail advocacy
8. Trails and the environment
9. Fundraising
10. Emerging trends



## 1. Recruiting and managing volunteers

### Current Efforts

- Campground hosts with waiting list of 200
  - Arizona State Parks and Trails share the opportunities across the state with counties
- Prescott – with too many volunteers, many retirees – have events during the week, over the hill gang gets 800-1000 hrs. per year - use your location to your advantage and assess the kinds of volunteers you have, meet people where they are
- Arizona Trail Association (ATA) – volunteer vacations
- Training for ATA volunteers – learn all the skills, feel competent going in “Trail Skills Institute” – learning opportunities through training modules
- Community volunteer network (Verde Valley) – maybe a municipality gets a volunteer that doesn’t have an opportunity, but the network allows them to get that volunteer into a community opportunity elsewhere (with County, FS, etc.)
- Framework that allows volunteers to be entry level and have the ability to move up to a more detailed/technical job – upward mobility (maybe with incentive)
- Weekend trail construction projects and trail steward maintenance program (with proper training)
- Taking advantage of local universities/high schools to get kids outside and using trails/taking care of trails (natural resources, sustainability, stewardship, etc.)
  - Utilizing internships
  - Community service requirement – using this to get kids involved and get work done
- Pathways (not a straight line, more like bubbles) program through volunteering for those that typically wouldn’t
- Skills trade (trail skills for nutrition information exchange)
- Involving youth with developing bike parks/ramps – making it kid/youth friendly, feeding them, creates more ownership and stewardship

### Challenges

- Proper training for volunteers and leaders
- Older age of volunteers tends to be more reliable
- Capacity to manage volunteers, run events – strategy: look to Volunteers of Outdoor Colorado, training (education, empowerment, back-up, the right tools)
  - Cost to administer the processing the event, administer grants – these aren’t readily funded
  - Some want to volunteer, but need a small stipend/incentive to have it be worth it
- Recruiting college age volunteers – flyers, email
  - Having a website and forum, reaching out to groups on FB
- Volunteer recognition
- Trying different strategies to engage a wide variety of users that relate to nature differently
  - Finding what people are passionate about (picnic area, community areas, etc.), maybe using a phased approach
- Volunteerism is a privileged place to be – some aren’t in a place to use those skills for free
  - Strategies: shuttle to take folks to trails (not using a personal car), offering food, family friendly, framing it as a parent child bonding
- Increasing motivation, new incentives to engage youth and start them

### Successes

- Feed ‘em!
- Preparation in advance to make the most of 2 hrs. of time (the tools lined out; the expectations are set).
- Volunteer recognition – end of the year party and individual recognition
  - Decals for more hours logged (Tonto Recreation Alliance - TRAL)
    - Stickers for 8 hrs., cozies for more and t-shirts/hats

- Slideshow of accomplishments for viewing
- Tangible outcomes that people can see at the end of a volunteer event
- Volunteer vacations – ATA
- Training for ATA volunteers – learn all the skills, feel competent going in “Trail Skills Institute”
- Drop-in volunteer events, group events and adopt-a-trail events (on a webpage, newsletter, etc.)
  - Strategic recruitment – reaching out to specific organizations and they find more volunteers
- Providing varied opportunities for different abilities (trail work, organizational help, cooking, etc.)
- Using online groups for recruiting: meet-ups, Facebook and other social media

### **Cool Ideas for the future**

- Advertise events as family friendly - be strategic in advertising events (e.g. parent/kid paired events)
- Leverage partners for incentive for volunteer crew leaders (e.g. gift card for fuel)
- Better recruitment from high school/college
- Competition events for logging hours – if there is a competition, people are more likely to do it!
- Transportation/shuttles to volunteer events (increase youth engagement and families with a single car)
- Guided recreation after volunteer work – for people who don’t have mountain bikes, but want to do trail work, bike demos
  - Leverage partners (e.g. bike shop)
- Bigger celebration for end-of-the month if you have come to 4 events (swag and band, food, etc.)
  - E.g. First volunteer event you get a bandana, after 100 hours you get a day pack

## **2. Navigating the planning and permitting process**

### **Current Efforts**

- Flagstaff Trails Initiative
- Observatory Mesa - City of Flagstaff and Coconino National Forest collaboration
- Tusayan Community Trails Plan
- State Parks Planning Efforts (Arizona Trails Plan)
- Marana Recreation Master Plan
- Circle Trail-Verde Valley
- Monte Carlo Trails-Nogales
- Sun Corridor Trail
- Maricopa Trail-Lake Pleasant to Hassayampa
  - Hassayampa to White Tanks

### **Challenges**

- Understaffing
- Constant changes in process from one agency to another or one part of an agency to another (this includes just staffing changes within one office)
- Length of plans to reach “on the ground” results
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process/archeology internal review bottlenecks
- AZ State Land Department’s current policy to not allow any new trail right of ways
  - Access
  - Lack of participation
  - Cost
  - Lack of law enforcement

### **Successes**

- Funding for trail adjacent to Camp Verde Sports Complex
- 80-acre land exchange with Coconino National Forest/Yavapai County
- Legends of Superior Trail

- Expedited NEPA process with Tonto National Forest for Maricopa Trail
- Dedication of easements from private landowners (City of Prescott/Yavapai County)
- Greater Prescott Trails Plan
- Verde Front
  - Verde trails and access
  - Partnerships
  - Non-traditional partners
- Yavapai County development has had trails as part of their development plans

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

- Arizona State Committee on Trails (ASCOT) funded NEPA team for projects around the State (State Parks grant, Recreational Trails Program (RTP))
- Third party, independent NEPA team (could be contractor or other)
  - Consolidated NEPA process=Once complete, ready for signature at all agencies involved
- ASLD discussion with the Governor - trails not a “fad” but an economic generator.
- State legislation (constitutional amendment) to make trails and recreation an approved use of ASLD lands-easier to get ROW/easements

## **3. Outreach and promotion**

### **Current Efforts**

- Summit for AZ Trails
- Verde Front sustainable recreation collaborative
- Rim Country Trails
- Flagstaff Trail Initiative (FTI)
- Various other community collaborative efforts
- Advertising / Encouraging dispersed use of lesser known areas / trails
- Knowledge Sharing
- Local Community Conversation
- Educational Signage
- Promoting Leave No Trace (LNT) and Tread Lightly ethics
- AZ State Office of Tourism
  - Outreach to local organizations / chambers / businesses for their needs / suggestions
  - Promoting LNT
  - Governor’s conference on State Tourism (July 2020)
  - Working on a High / Low season balance with communities
- Mountain Town Hall – Central Arizona Conservation Alliance program / Public Land Education topics

### **Challenges**

- Not understanding goals
- Messaging publications in multiple languages
- Balance economic development with resource protection and resource management
- Copyrights – need for public domain efforts
- Messaging not consistent across various boundaries
- Lack of coordination between municipalities / govts in educational messaging
- Severe lack in underserved / diverse community inclusion
  - Difficulties in bringing underserved to the table although efforts made
- Federal land agencies employees transient / revolving door
  - Slows progress
- Lack of trust in government agencies
- Access and abutment issues adjacent to or through private lands

- Lack of knowledge sharing
- Lack of lodging infrastructure – Come to Superior! Advertise Widely! Know, where do I stay? Lack of lodging
- Making time for presence in communities
- Keeping trails safe, quiet, clean
- Creating a culture of outreach and promotion
- Financing
- Distressed Communities
- Dispelling Stereotypes and perceptions
- Exclusive use micro cultures – mountain biking community of Sedona
- User group conflict – motorized vs non-motorized, biker vs equestrian
- Lack of signage
- Lack of printed materials
- Lack of resources
- Lack of resource management

### **Successes**

- National Park Service (NPS) Find Your Park campaign
- Every Kid in a Park
- Partnering with universities
- LOST – Uses Facebook
- REI
- Aravaipa Running
- Coconino Trail Riders (CTR)
- Flagstaff Bike Organization (FBO)
- Sedona Verde Valley National Geographic Geotourism
- Leave No Trace / Tread Lightly – via publications / specific sites
- Maps / Signage at portals
- Timing specific messages
- AZ Tourism event page

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

- Create one large outreach and promotion network (Summit for AZ Trails?)
- City / County / State Parks to offer and advertise something similar to NPS – Find your Park / Every Kid in a Park – offer free entry and programs
- Create and promote a “wine trail,” multi-use non-motorized passing through vineyards with facilities – hitch rails, bike racks, hike and bike site (not just a walk through downtown or driving tour)
- Grow communication between marketers, businesses, land managers, city, and county as it relates to tourism and recreational opportunities
- Get to a place where there is marketing and regional buy-in
- Support and promote an atmosphere of inclusion for diversity
- Better, more consistent, signage and advertising campaign for trailheads and to disperse people
- Adopt other successful efforts – knowledge sharing and working together
- Standardizing messaging across jurisdictional lines, businesses etc. – share with smaller organizations
- Use social media and be consistent on messaging

## **4. Trail construction and maintenance**

### **Current Efforts**

- Design and build trails for most intense use and “lowest common denominator” for user groups

- More private contractors available
- Careful design and trail maintenance of heavily used trail for equestrians in sandy soils- intensive use of structures
- National Trails Day - could be better attended, better advertised, and could happen more often, but used as a springboard for volunteer efforts

### **Challenges**

- Maintenance back logs are not improving and are an ongoing issue
- Paying for new trails is easier than paying for maintenance, which is a lot more challenging
- Accessible trail guidelines and access to those guidelines can be difficult, trail surfacing products for accessible trails are confusing
- Volunteer efforts who are qualified to work on their own (without direct oversight from land managers) can only work in the “box” of what they are allowed to do, and is limiting
- Finding areas to focus on that need high priority trail work- relates to up to date and accurate info for trail projects (apps, technology, maps)
- Trail building and maintenance does not get promoted enough to trail users/public, needs more marketing
- Recruitment of volunteers on a consistent basis
- A reliable way to prioritize projects for volunteers (apps, technology)
- Trails with light use and difficult access - how to deal with these?
- Post fire effects on trails, added erosion, more downed trees and widow makers (increased hazards for trail workers)
- Blind spots on trails - solutions:
  - Slow down users before blind spots/blind corners
  - Add obstacles in order to slow traffic and prevent collision
- Access to information to access trail needs in remote locations
- User group conflicts
  - Equestrians and mountain bikers
  - Sight lines or lack thereof
- Non-existent or smaller agency crews

### **Successes**

- Education campaigns for trail etiquette - Sonoran Desert Preserve, Prescott
- ATA stewardship program for maintenance on a regular basis
- Volunteer efforts to reduce and address maintenance backlog
- Volunteer led adopt-a-trail programs to work on trails
- Big increase in sustainable trail knowledge across the state
- The Black Canyon National Recreation trail is nearly done, built in 8 years instead of 30 years as predicted
- Tonto Recreation Alliance efforts
  - Availability of State Parks funding for maintenance
  - Hire two employees to run program
  - Use volunteers who, in the last 5 years, signed and maintained 3,000 miles on the Tonto

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

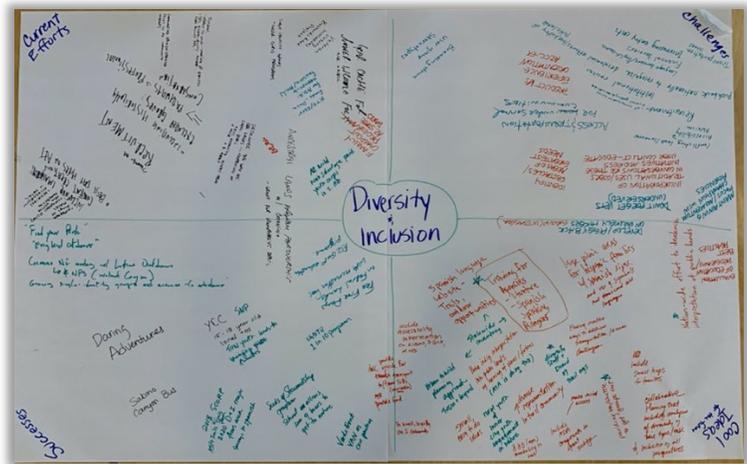
- When constructing trail with equipment, work with the land, exaggerating natural drainage and thinking about all users
- 2-foot wide trail machine (mini ex), light footprint for trail building
- National Off Highway Vehicle Coordinating Council (NOHVCC) has a program that trains sawyers, take chainsaw on maintenance runs to clear trees from both motorized and non-motorized trails in Flagstaff area, reduces maintenance requirements for land managers
- Hilti rock drills that suck dust through drill bit, all but eliminating dust for trail workers

- Private trail builders in AZ provide a lot of experience and are cost effective, Bauer Built Trails and Flagline Trails are prime examples

## 5. Diversity and inclusion

### Current efforts

- Family camp out program – AZ State Parks
- Gear cache for lower income (American Conservation Experience and AZ Conservation Corps)
- RTF/OHV funds – Push for ADA appropriate facilities/trails
- Saguaro National Park recruitment
  - Including historically excluded groups.
  - Pathways – professional conservation
- Inclusive imagery, content creation – Best day hikes on AZT
  - Indigenous names of places
  - Indigenous history from native perspectives
- Decolonize the way we see lands – happening on local level
  - AZ Conservation Corps removing quotes from J. Muir and E. Abby
- Ancestral Lands Program Partnership with Coconino
  - Grant for Humphreys Trail
- AZ Wild – high shortage paid youth corps in Southern AZ
- Veteran hiking initiatives – Bastards Road Project
- Tucson Urban to Wild – looking at equity and access
- Trail accessibility for blind people
- Single-identity groups – Gear Girls Program
- Empowering Spanish speaking folks to be community leaders



### Successes

- Daring adventures
- Sabino Canyon bus
- “Find Your Park”
- “Every kid outdoors”
- Coronado National Forest working with Latino Outdoors and National Park Service (Walnut Canyon)
- Growing singular identity groups and access to outdoors
- YCC Saguaro National Park, 15-18 year olds, local education; Tohono O’odham youth lead to bringing families
- LGBTQ 1 in 10 programs
- Seeds of Stewardship program – school allows use of buses to get to nature
- 2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Arizona State Parks and Trails. 2020 Trails Plan
  - Diversity & Inclusion major focus area
  - Surveys in Spanish
- Verde Front – Yavapai-Apache Nation as a core partner
- AZEC provide vehicle for transport to/from Sells and provide food
- Fee free pass on federal lands with recreation fees
- Arizona Game and Fish education programs

## Challenges

- Maintaining focus/momentum; champion within agencies
- Don't forget vets (underserved)
- Incorporation of traditional uses/users in conversations re: these initiatives; address user conflict; educate
- Conflicting laws/land uses; accessibility; ableism
- Recruitment – of conservation corps, and overall getting folks outside
- Institutional racism
- Transportation issues
- Pushback nationally to recognize decolonial efforts; the history of public lands
- Language barriers – English-centric
- Financial barriers
- Increasing entry costs
- Product vs. experience orientation (AZCC-EX)
- Identify obstacles/areas of greatest needs
- Breaking down user group stereotypes

## Cool ideas for the Future

- Include accessibility information on kiosks, signs, maps
- Spanish language website: trails, outdoor opportunities
- Training for agencies – literature, Spanish speaking rangers
- Statewide inventory
- Urban to wild planning approach – Tucson and beyond
- Small, easy to do ideas
- Rural youth and inner-city youth engagement in nature
- Diverse representation in trail community
- Bring indigenous interpretation into public lands, e.g. naming of places/features (ATA is doing this)
- Diversity on staff and board of trail organizations
- Include American with Disabilities Act (ADA) components in grant seeking
- Create varied access (re: ADA)
- Find inventive ways to address transportation/access challenges
- Include small loops for families
- Collaborative planning that includes analysis of diversity of trail types/ease and inclusion of all perspectives
- Nation-wide effort to decolonize interpretation of public lands
- Large picnic areas for Hispanic families with Spanish signs, and use of symbols that transcend all languages
- Evaluation of education programs/best practices
- Develop/piggyback on unlikely hikers' groups
- Be honest, be gritty, use "I" statements

## 6. Cross-jurisdictional trail planning

### Current efforts

- 2020 statewide trails plan, AZ State Parks - March 11<sup>th</sup> out for comment, travel cost estimate study to accompany this.
  - Data is applicable beyond AZ State Parks. Trail management priorities, concerns, demographics, visitor flow matrix.
  - Will inform on the ground planning.
  - Large survey across the state (random survey – statewide). 5014 random, 4576 public, land managers less engaged in the survey

- Verde Front recreation collaborative
  - Adapted from the “string of pearls” approach in Grand Junction. Everyone is represented and at the table.
  - Trails is a working group of the Verde Front - “if it benefits one, it benefits all”
  - River Recreation is another working group – river access points and signage, standardized signage and maps, interpretive signs, safety, etc. River signs are being adapted to trails now.
  - Leadership Council provides overall leader engagement of the Verde Front and brings together local government and land managers
- Sun Corridor Trails – Las Vegas, NV to Douglas, AZ
  - Connecting circle trails systems. Also includes the Black Canyon Trails, also included part of Sedona, and Flagstaff,
  - Different from the AZ trail, as this connect major metro systems. Stay in each community.
  - Leadership structure is that counties are in charge. Tom Thurman is chair. Tentative alignments are set.
  - Getting a feasibility study done now
- Prescott Circle Trail
- San Tan Regional Park – cooperative
- North Valley Outdoor Network – bring north Phoenix groups together to discuss challenges, includes a trail connectivity network
- Montezuma trail crossing ¼ mile with 3 jurisdictions links monument with upper trails to the south. National Park Service/Forest Service/Yavapai County right of way. Still on hold.
- Flagstaff Trails Initiative
- Mount Elden Dry Lake Hills planning process (Flagstaff, Coconino National Forest)
- Verde Trails and Access Plan
- Greater Prescott Trails (collaborative trails planning and prioritization; now successful implementation)
- North Valley Outdoor Network (NVON)

## Challenges

- Cross jurisdictional challenges include permitting, State Lands issues
- Time and money from land management agencies, not enough
- Trying to seek common ground across jurisdictions is hard
- Personalities are different across jurisdiction, different interest levels, etc.
- Get different answers for the same question
- Personnel changes, especially at the Federal Level. Makes relationships hard and is not good for efficiency, or perhaps they aren’t even interested.
- Law enforcement for trails, inappropriate use in some places
- Agency approval happens at different rates and changes over time.
- Nimby landowners
- Trailheads: cost a lot and often don’t meet the needs of all rec users, e.g. Equestrians need more space than is often provided
- Heritage clearances - due to capacity (not necessarily a funding issue)
- Securing easements
- Particular recreation users can get pushed out due to other recreation users and trails conditions
- Law enforcement for trails and appropriate use

## Successes

- Getting attention at Regional levels
- Leveraging partnerships and funding
- Partnerships have a greater chance of getting work done instead of just planning.
- AZ State Parks is funding feasibility analysis at a regional scale

- When it's motivated/supported/initiated by communities
  - Can also work when municipalities push – Just commitment/leadership is what is needed
- Larger scale planning can help, if you bundle it right

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

- Continuation of connecting trails between communities.
- Trail lovers go buy private land to enable access
- Not profit partners for Heritage – like Verde Valley Archaeology group
- Can Red Rock Pass fund type of income fund an archaeologist?

### *Additional discussion on long distance trails*

- Legacy of biking in AZ
- Gravel biking is up
- Credit Card tours are desired
- Apps like Strava are increasing this need
- Not just for athletes but for families as well

## **7. Statewide trail advocacy**

### **Current Efforts**

- Statewide birding trail
- Heritage Fund Legislation to fund trails
- ASCOT
- Verde Valley Circle Trail
- American Trails
- 2020 Trails Plan
- Sun Corridor Trail
- Mogollon Rim Trail
- PLIC Public Lands Information Center

### **Challenges**

- Access to trails (physical accessibility, access to trailheads, remote nature of system)
- Lack of staffing capacity and travel management on federal lands
- Lack of access to information/training on how to “do” trails
- Thinking east/west instead of north/south - embracing efforts outside of the Interstate corridor
- Money for planning efforts and staff
- Tribal involvement - lack of understanding of potential of a recreation economy
- Too much information on the internet - no way to filter

### **Successes**

- This Summit=over 100 participants
- Statewide trail inventory map
- Arizona Trail
- Rural/recreation/tourism trail economy conferences (e.g., Trail Town)
- Visitor flow matrix/travel cost estimate study
- Rogers Lake National Area

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

- Tribal Trails Communities
- Trail systems linked to urban population centers to increase access and equity
- Cultivate state legislative champions
- Third party (business) involvement - investment from the business community
- SCT/AZT Loops and connectors

- Revise AZ State Land Department in constitution; get support from beneficiaries and real estate community; circle back to the original effort
- State office of outdoor recreation - statewide funding sources drawing from tourism taxes

## 8. Fundraising

### Current Efforts

- Mountain bike events
- International Mountain Bicycling Association Trail Accelerator
- Taking advantage of mitigation options locally (mines)

### Challenges

- Lack of communication among cities and towns
- Multiple organizations competing for the same funds – consider joining forces with existing groups instead of creating new groups
- Getting funding from non-profits to the Forest Service
- Differences and inequalities between urban and rural communities
- Non-profit indirect funding difficult to get
- Facebook and how to get younger people to join groups to work on issues and volunteer

### Successes

- APS gave the Grand Canyon \$1 million
- Phoenix canalscape
- Lots of local groups and initiatives
- AZ Trail for and In a Day – volunteers do a section/portion and get others to sponsor them
- Communicating with major donors and asking them for \$\$ - Redrock Trail Fund
- Lots of ideas from Redrock Trail Fund – redrocktrailfund.com

### Cool ideas for the Future

- Start an Arizona trail fund
- Statewide trails organization and funding
- Turn social events into fundraising events
- Ask manufacturers for % discount on product if you belong to organized groups -
- State office of outdoor recreation
- Easy trailhead signage for people to donate
- Trail care
- Recreation tax to fund statewide fund
- Should statewide effort but government led or private?
- Using iron rangers to collect donations at trailheads with recommended amount
- Ask AZ Mining Association to back outdoor rec funding – lobby legislature if needed
- Go to large corporations for contribution based on quality of life initiatives

## 9. Emerging Trends

### Current Efforts

- E-Bikes
- Types of Trails (e.g., Bike Parks and Lifted and Tilted Trails)
- Connectivity (urban, rural, National Forest)
- Developing social trails into managed trails
- Technology
  - Using Technology for Good

- Citizen science apps – trail management
- Research based advocacy
  - Economic based
  - Erosion issues
- Bikes in wilderness
- Co-Management with Indigenous People - with Co-Benefits and Co-Vision
- User Specific Trails
- Bark Ranger Program
- NPS – Audience Centered Experiences
- “Don’t ride on wet trails” – mountain biking outreach via Social Media
- LNT Digital – Information
  - Responsible GeoTagging, other LNT messages and principles
- Bike Park

### **Challenges**

- Social Media
  - Unauthorized apps, etc.
  - Geotagging
- Population Growth
  - Leave No Trace
  - Density of Trail Users
- How/Where
  - User Specific Trails
- Misinformation
  - Ex: Bikes and Wilderness
  - Via Social Media
- Decrease in Federal Funding
- Technology
  - Finding/Using Social Trails and Getting Lost
- Trail Stewardship
- Popularity of Mountain Biking
  - Fastest Growing Sport
- NPS Interpretive – Audience Centered Experiences
  - Bringing up controversial topics and conflicting perspectives
- “One Wheels” – Electric/Motorized skateboards w/ one wheel
- Co-management
  - Bucking the status quo
- Bikes in Wilderness
  - Wedge between non-motorized users
- E-bikes
  - Land Management
  - User Conflict
  - Integration
  - Enforcement/Safety
  - Education
  - More people outside

### **Successes**

- User Specific Trail - good examples to pull from
- Co-Management
  - Bears Ears

- Navajo Nation/Glen Canyon Rec Area – Mountain Bike Recreation Plan – Eco-Tourism
- Book Resource
- Bikes/Wilderness
  - Montana Example
- Be Cool Campaign – Tucson
  - Less user Conflicts
- Arizona Office of Tourism Leave No Trace Campaign
  - Reaches more people
  - Has expanded to all user groups
- Latino Outdoors “Vamos Afuera”/ “Outdoor Afro”/ “Hecho” – Identity based groups
  - Inclusivity and diversity in Outdoors
    - Stewardship and Leadership
- Promoting Safety
- Bark Ranger Program
- National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) - Getting kids outside on bikes

### **Cool Ideas for the Future**

- Tell the Whole Story – Decolonize
- Combined Multi-Use Trails and Specific Use Trails
  - Loops – Primary Multi-use/Offshoots Special Use
- Technology
  - Utilize to Inform users of “Best Use Time”
    - Suggestion to balance heavy user groups timing
  - Social Media/Mapping Trails Technology
    - How to best use?
- Citizen Science – Research to Inform Management
- More Kids Outside
- E-bikes - Getting more people outside
- Bringing diverse groups together for conversation
- Bike parks on crappy land
- Building trails on tribal/non-tribal land
  - CAZCA – “Sonoran Insiders Program”

### **Evening Networking**

Many participants reconvened at a local brewery (THAT Brewery) for informal networking.

## DAY 2 (MORNING)

### Learning from our Neighbor – Statewide Success in Utah

Tom Adams, Chief Operating Officer Petzl and former Director, Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation

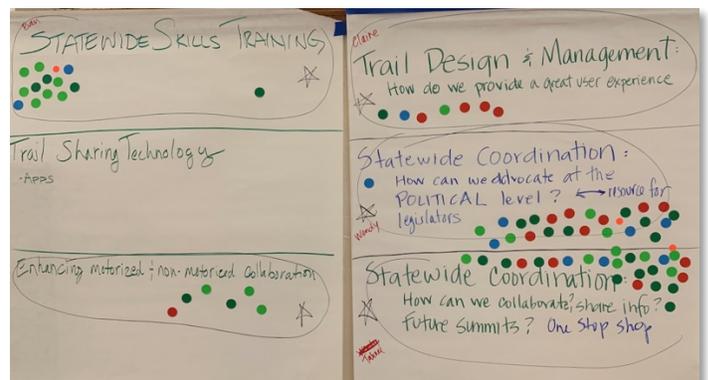
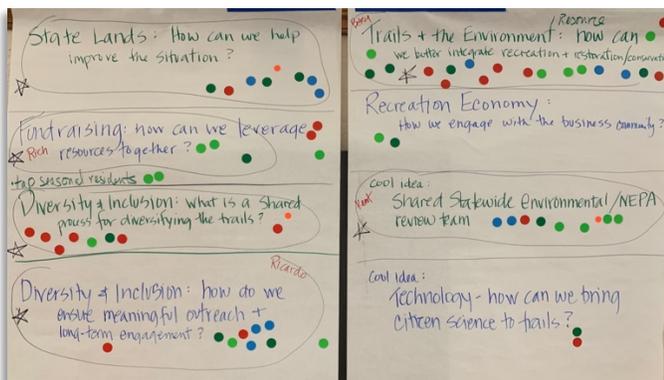
In an informal question and answer format, Adam Milnor (National Park Service) and Tom discussed a number of topics:

- The role of the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation including grant making, facilitating statewide collaboration, convening recreation interests through the Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit, and engaging with legislators and elected officials are topics related to outdoor recreation.
- Exemplary community-led recreation and trail management projects in Utah that could serve as models for Arizonans
- The perspective and operating mindset of the recreation industry, especially in regard to philanthropy and supporting community projects;
- Ways to communicate the importance of trails and recreation, including the use of economic and health data;
- The need for coordination with the tourism sector and tourism marketing in light of the impact of the Mighty Five campaign and subsequent efforts.



### Elevating our Trails Community, Part 2: Action Planning

Based on the outcomes of Day 1, participants dot voted on their top two topics of interest for action planning. The results of the dot voting and final prioritized topics are below.



Participants then worked on initial action plans for the selected topics through two rounds of in-depth brainstorming discussions.

### Prioritized Topics

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Statewide skills training            | 6. State Lands                |
| 2. Motorized-nonmotorized collaboration | 7. Fundraising                |
| 3. Trail design and management          | 8. Diversity and inclusion    |
| 4. Statewide coordination (political)   | 9. Trails-environment         |
| 5. Statewide collaboration              | 10. NEPA/environmental review |

## 1. Statewide skills training

### **What could we do together?**

- Regional coordination – Trainings, Curriculum development
- Development of statewide training nonprofit
- Information contact network - Email list? Facebook group?
- Shared supply of trail crew tools
- Identify skilled volunteers/crew leaders/trainers willing to volunteer time
- Shared recognition of trainers/crew leaders (Crew leader of the year?)
- Flow chart/checklist/decision tree for partner orgs/individuals who want to do work on public lands
- Initial steps...
  - Compile online list of available resources
  - Directory of people/orgs who offer trainings - What/where
  - Consolidated job hazard analysis/waiver resources (online)
  - Lobby state parks for more training dollars
  - Lobby state parks for streamlined funding application process for training
  - Develop list of approved training contractors to access state training \$
  - Develop training website/Facebook group
  - Develop YouTube training videos

### **Who needs to be engaged?**

- Summit attendees
- trail/advocacy orgs
- Government officials and land managers
- Conservation Corps
- Trail builders/professionals
- Volunteers
- Potential funders
  - Identify large \$ donors who could provide seed money
- Educational community
  - Colleges
  - High schools
  - Environmental education centers
- Restoration community (Sierra Club, Borderlands, Audubon, etc.)
- Restoration consultants (ex: Strategic Habitat Enhancements in Tucson)

### **What skills are needed?**

- Risk management
- Regionally appropriate build/maintenance skills
- Certifications (crosscut, chainsaw)
- Train the Trainer

- Medical skills
- OSHA compliance
- Environmental restoration skills
- Nonprofit issues – Formation, Fundraising, Insurance
- Grant writing
- GIS/mapping skills
- Protecting cultural resources
- What permissions are needed to do trail work?
- Legal issues

#### **What existing resources are already available?**

- Arizona Trail Association trail skills institute
- US Forest Service sawyer training (Xcut, chainsaw)
- National Park Service sawyer training
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado training resources
- Utah online course (mentioned at Summit)
- CA State Parks training curriculum
- Utah Master Builder cert program
- National Conferences (e.g., PTBA, American Trails)
- IMBA trainings
- National Trails Training Program (NTTP)
- NOVAC off-road training

## **2. Enhancing motorized-nonmotorized collaboration**

- Arizona State Parks 2020 trails plan is seeing results that suggest that the respondents are more accepting of mixed-use trails than in the past
- There is clearly more money available for motorized trail construction and maintenance than non-motorized
- We should look for cooperative efforts for construction of mixed motorized / non-motorized trail development
- We should try to break down barriers between the motorized and non-motorized communities. Look for opportunities to collaborate even on day to day activities.
- It might be easier to get acceptance of multiuse trails if they are built and advertised as such from the beginning.
- Long distance multiuse trails may have lower user conflicts and we should look at these opportunities. Some are in the works in Flagstaff and Prescott.
- Use the combination of Arizona State Committee on Trails and Off Highway Vehicle Advisory Group to share ideas for motorized / non-motorized cooperative efforts.
- To reduce user conflicts, call together collaborative groups of all user types when planning
- Look at varied times of use and days of use by different user types for higher use trails
- Develop consistent trail signing about multiuse etiquette and expected user types
- Pull together groups of many types of users to collaborate on design and designation of trails uses for recreational trail development projects
- For events like National Trails Day look for more opportunities for collaboration between motorized and non-motorized user communities. Work on each other's trails.

#### **Requests:**

- Schedule joint ASCOT / OHVAG meetings more often and invite user groups to discuss joint motorized / Non-motorized project opportunities
- Call to all summit attendee groups to look for even small opportunities to work collaboratively across motorized / non-motorized lines

### 3. Trail design and maintenance

#### What Can We Do Together?

- Combine various skills levels/expertise/specialists – and TRAIN for those (Crew Leader type training?)
- Identify usage – and user groups; plan trail design accordingly
- Create Trail and Trailhead Design Standards (to share)
- Planning Functions – trail design should be sufficient for all user groups (equestrian use was specifically called out)
  - Identify dangerous potential conflict zones on trail corridors; consider possible re-routes or alternate routes for different users

#### Initial Steps

- Market trail efforts, so the larger community is aware
- Identify roles of volunteers and user groups
- Master Planning of Trails
  - Agency Planning and Design
  - Public Outreach and User Input
  - Don't forget NEPA and Mapping of trails

#### Who Needs to be Engaged?

- Land Managers
- Legislators (funding source)
- Volunteer Groups
- User Groups – can help educate other users on sustainable trail standards
- Professional Trail Contractors

#### Other Thoughts/Comments:

- Don't forget the trail users "total experience" when planning/building trails – think of it from a specific user standpoint
- Establish/maintain positive relationships between the user groups and management agencies
- There is a need for a Sustainable Trail Standard in Arizona (Make this standard part of a grant review or grant process?)
- It would be great to have data regarding the cost of maintaining planned (sustainable) trails versus historical/social (usually not sustainable) trails
- Concern regarding ebikes and equestrians sharing the same trails – should be planned for, especially due to the silent nature of ebikes that could easily startle equestrians.

### 4. Statewide coordination (political)

Important discussion about the "size of the tent" - we want to have a broad coalition, but not so broad that the voice of trail advocates and enthusiasts is lost.

#### Action Items

- **Build a caucus** at the state level as well as regionally and locally.  
Begin to identify elected and appointed officials who are:
  - **Already the champions** - who is already passionate about trails and ready to be a part of a trails caucus? What support can we provide them?
  - Who is **on board but not yet a champion** - they nod in agreement but haven't shown a tendency to act. How do we move them to the champion category?

- **Who is hiding behind a barrier**, such as a perception that trails don't have broad support or that there are traditions or rules that block their approvals? How do we move the barriers from their path and begin to move them toward the "on board" category?
- **Who is themselves a barrier** because of a disagreement on principal or stance (for example opposing public lands access or funding for recreation)?
- **What committees should be concentrated on?** Spend effort on key votes.

How can we find a **common ground to cultivate a relationship?**

- Get to know the "target" very well - **what are their buttons?** Where do our interests and theirs overlap even if it is completely unrelated to trails? If we find that, we can make the connection there and then move into other areas.
- **"Legislative get out on the trail day"** - get their families and kids involved. Tie into National Public Lands Day or National Trails Day if convenient.
- Create a **statewide product and a marketing strategy**
- **Invite them to the next Summit: Entice** rather than invite - offer something that they want in order to bring them to the table, even for those who are already champions.
- Create a legislative toolkit - "Message House"
  - This can have information on the same people discussed in the caucus conversation, even if a caucus has not been created yet. What are their **key issues?**
  - Also have a **list of stakeholders** and their key issues. Something easily shared. Identify where the legislators and stakeholders connect already and where they could connect for mutual support
  - Gather **supporting data/studies/information** including the economic value of trails and public health impacts. The information is already out there!
  - Include **educational materials about advocacy** - give new organizations help with representing their interests and everyone help representing the community.
  - Include information from **efforts in other states**, good examples and alternative models.
  - Distribute a **periodic legislative update** on trail-related topics.
  - Include **social media** content, tags and guidelines
  - Where does this Politically Engaged clearing house fit? Who keeps it, maintains it and distributes? Is that something the Summit is involved in?
- Create a statewide product - something that sells
- Ways for the **average citizen (not employee of a trail org) to have impact:**
  - **Become active in existing government outreach efforts**, even if they're not directly related to trails. This helps build coalitions and introduces you to other boots on the ground.
  - **Volunteer** in other communities/user groups - broaden your own reach.
  - Tag legislators/organizations in social media
  - Get to know your local reps. If you can, at all levels. Don't underestimate the power of a good legislative aide!



## 5. Statewide collaboration

### Summits

- How often: Twice a year or annual
- Location: Rotate location with a local host
  - A way to get local legislators involved/supportive

- Visit local trail projects
- Could piggyback on other events as a way to both get more participants, make it easier time/cost on participants, and strategically leverage support of those at the main event
- Format:
  - Driven by participant interest
  - Hear about what partners are doing
  - Some structure/agenda
  - Interactive, foster dialogue and peer to peer sharing
  - This year's format was great, and had a good mix of actionable and bigger ideas
  - Messaging about the summit needs to be clearer/easier
  - Next year: info about camping and carpooling would be helpful
- Cost: The low cost of this year's summit was good
- Participants: who was missing at this summit
  - Agencies - State Land Department, BLM, more USFS
  - Areas of state with good trail planning/systems like Rim Country and Yuma
  - Tribes
  - Businesses
  - Guiding companies
  - Motorized
  - Birders
  - Climbers
  - Municipal government
  - AZ Association of Livable Communities
  - Superstitions Land Trust
  - Conservation organizations that could have interest like TNC
  - Outdoor Afro and other diversity-oriented organizations
  - NICA (competitive high school mountain biking teams' national org)
  - Pinal Partnership for Open Space and Trails Committee
  - Youth organizations like Boy Scouts
  - Vitalist (health)
  - Local First Arizona
  - Media
  - Funders
- Scholarships
  - Helpful to have offered scholarships
  - State Parks can offer funding
  - AZ Office of Tourism can help with transportation to the Summit
- Potential guest speakers in the future
  - Youth mountain biking group in Utah
  - Local examples
  - Bring in good ideas (e.g., Trail Lab West)
- Follow up to this year's summit
  - Participant list with affiliations and email addresses to summit participants
  - Follow up survey for working group/topic signups

### **Overall collaboration moving forward**

- Develop collaborative structure to align partners
  - Working Groups
    - Topics from the summit
    - Offer way to sign up after the summit

- Summit organizers can help working groups form, linking across group/people is a good role for the coordinating committee
- Coordinating Committee
- Outreach ideas
  - American Trails: webinar could be about this, 2021 conference
  - Get marketing tool to local orgs to state legislators
- Summit website
  - Contacts/partners
  - Resources
  - Could use social media
- Outdoor recreation state office or equivalent
  - Leverage to form this kind of office, or a single person, or a collaborative structure
- Naming/framing
  - Current relevant state level committees:
    - AZ Outdoor Recreation Coordination Commission
    - ASCOT
    - OHV Advisory Group
    - State Parks Board
  - Outdoor recreation for the overall effort vs trails only
  - For the summit, people like trails focus

## 6. State Lands

### What could we do together?

- Sit down - together - listen / share / problem solve
- Find funding - look at and tout the data that shows economic value - money talks
- Ask: "What can we do / what do you need - to change your mind? THEN - get whatever was asked for!!!

### Initial Steps

- DATA: to support the argument / position that a trail or system of trails is needed
- Positive economic impact of having trail(s)
- Identify cultural, visual, and geographic resources that need to be accessible
- Go to the voters - make it a grassroots effort
- Money talks - show value of tax dollars generated, tourism, a healthy population, etc.
- tT support the idea that since its bare land doing nothing and bringing in no revenue, a trail or trail system would generate revenue

### Who needs to be engaged?

- Land managers
- Local government agencies
- For the 2 listed above would, hopefully, be an entity that State Lands would agree to, or believe be capable of, maintaining the trail(s)
- Educational institutions
- The GOVERNOR / legislators at the state level - the group was adamant that the governor was essential to this process.

## 7. Fundraising

### What Can We Do On This Topic

- Work with local Chamber of Commerce (Sedona experience as example)
- Convince communities that trails benefit local businesses and economies

- Create a “Play to Play” – eBikes, Bikes similar to OHV decal
  - Supports Maintenance / Educational Signage
  - AZCOT – Approval / AZSPT admin of bike decal
- Small Groups collaborate to target donors – APS, SRP, Large Corporations
- Work with United Way / AZ Community Foundation
- Create a 501(3)C
- Education / Awareness outreach – costs to maintain
- Greater Donation Opportunities? Check out at Basha’s – “\$1 for community trails”
- Collaborate on grant funding opportunities
- Successes on fundraising through knowledge sharing
- Find right donor

### **Initial Steps**

- Work with advocacy groups
- Create a fundraising hub
- Hold events
- Share Knowledge – tap into the experienced

### **Who Needs to be engaged?**

- Local community
- Government entities
- Multi use users
- Private business
- Health agencies
- Youth through retired
- Local chambers

## **8. Diversity and inclusion**

### **What could we do together?**

- No tokenism
- Equity vs. equality
- Expanding definition of what it means to be “outdoorsy”
- Branch out of our comfort zones to support one another
- Being okay with being uncomfortable

### **Initial Steps**

- Restorative justice
- Acknowledging our privileges
- Inclusive language
- Exposure
- Hiking clubs with youth – affinity/single identity groups
- Ancestral land acknowledgement
- Diverse levels of experiences/comfort
- Representation without appropriation
- Identify safety concerns
- Identify barriers
- Communicate with all groups – outreach

### **Who needs to be engaged?**

- Ensure all stakeholders have a voice (not just the loud ones)
- Affinity groups

- Diverse partnerships
- All age groups
- Leadership reflects target audience

## 9. Trails and the environment

### What could we do together?

- Collaborate on better signage – educational, interpretive, etiquette
- Develop consistent messaging across jurisdictional boundaries (like LNT or based on LNT – check in with AZ Office of Tourism and see what they’re doing – is there a way to build on this or boost it?)
  - Tied to branding
- Enhance community stewardship
  - Volunteerism
  - Tie it to citizen science (app – like iNaturalist, or other local/regional based apps)
- Think more broadly about partners – health departments, fire departments, economic development orgs (another group mentioned chambers of commerce – that would apply here)
- Encourage restoration / rehab as part of trail planning and building
- Build sustainable / exciting trails to reduce social trails
- Signage – respect property (both private and public) – tied back to the first two bullets

### Initial Steps

- Share knowledge and success stories
  - Success story of the Verde Front
- Messaging Committee – bring together a group to ID what messages need to be communicated and how
  - State version of LNT? (2<sup>nd</sup> group included AZ Office of Tourism woman, she said there is or will be a State LNT Coordinator – is there an opportunity for them to be a leader on this?)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> group also tied this to a need for research/better access to research and better knowledge of best practices
- Replicate ‘Trek About’ program statewide – this is a program with a local county health department (I didn’t catch which one) – combines recreation and health with stewardship/conservation ethics (?? This is my interpretation – may not have that completely right)
- Develop educational program/campaign or state curriculum for kids focused on environmental stewardship and recreation (get ‘em young) (tie to 4<sup>th</sup> grade Every Kid Outdoors program?)
- College students as volunteer educators/ambassadors – teach, build relationships (loose guidelines needed – tied to next bullet)
  - Perhaps some kind of urban or volunteer ranger program; could do ‘patrols’ where students interact with trail users (this is my interpretation)
- Identify the critical issues (locally / regionally) – what are the needs? what needs to be addressed?
  - Collaborative planning with local jurisdictions

### Who Needs to Be Involved?

- USFS, FWS, State and Federal land managers, schools, county commissioners, health depts., NGOs, local tribes . . . everyone.
- Ask Wendy – how to organize statewide?
- If there is some kind of state office or organization – they could be a leader, or a convener/coordinator to bring people together to work on this

### Additional Input

- Add ‘voluntourism’ to volunteerism
  - Develop ways for local/regional visitors to participate in trail building/maintenance
- Consider the environmental cost of too many trails (such as habitat fragmentation)

- Needs to be tied to better planning – where trails should and should not go, user numbers (my interpretation)
- Also tied to need for well-built, sustainable trails that discourage social trailing (also my interpretation)
- Improve availability of and access to research / best practices / knowledge; identify gaps in knowledge
  - Do we have easy to understand guidelines/info?
  - Bring in university partners (NAU?) (could also tie this to the ideas around messaging or building curriculum/educational programming)
  - Corporate partners – funding for research
- Storytelling (tied to fundraising)
- Fundraising (tell a good story, raise funds)

## 10. Shared statewide environmental/NEPA review

### Ideas

- Use retired NEPA/env. Professionals to learn more
- Team NEEDS to be acceptable to federal agencies
- Pilot project- find a willing partner to allow pilot project on their land. Use pilot project to build story, promote idea and document lessons learned.
- Team members need to understand trails
- State Parks have several groups who provide these types of services on contract
- Need to coordinate with ADOT, Federal agencies (BLM, NPS, USFS, USFWS), AZSPT
- End goal- one approval that will be recognized by agencies at all levels
- Goal is to alleviate pressure on agencies

### Initial Steps

1. Identify Pilot project- find a willing agency to test idea
2. Create criteria
  - a. Agency is willing partner
  - b. Agency can't provide NEPA resources for that project
  - c. Natural resource benefit
3. Partners- Community- ID team members using committee that is developing idea
4. Needs a champion- steering committee to advocate and stay engaged with stakeholders
5. Articulate the high-level vision, create marketing

### Additions

- Get buy in from federal agency partners to be willing to accept external NEPA review
- Compile and have available resources to access for trail managers
- AZSPT has a list of authorized NEPA resources in the archeology fields, interest in AZSPT to develop list for biological resources as well.
- This team must be willing to help and work with agency partners
- Step by step criteria, agreed to by agency partners and approved by federal agencies before pilot project begin

## Next Steps

- Compile notes into summary report of the Summit (SDR)
- Follow up with participants - participant list, notes, opportunity to sign up for topic groups, etc. (Wendy)
- Steering Committee follow up on other next steps identified during the Summit (Steering Committee)

## Participants

105 representatives of trail groups, organizations, and agencies from across the state and beyond - [link](#)  
Thank you as well to the Summit Steering Committee, additional helpers at the event, and our sponsors.

### Steering Committee:

Wendy Lotze - Arizona Trail Association  
Kent Taylor - Pinal County Open Space & Trails  
Evan Pilling - Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists  
Rich Smith - Tonto Recreation Alliance  
Mark Loeth - American Conservation Experience  
Brady Vandragt - USFS Coconino National Forest  
Adam Milnor - NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
Tahnee Robertson - Southwest Decision Resources (SDR)  
Terri Nelson - Yavapai County  
*Thank you also to additional small group facilitators:*  
Andi Rogers – Southwest Decision Resources  
Betsy Byrne – NPS RTCA (Utah)  
Carrie Eberly – Southwest Decision Resources  
Ricardo Escobar – Latino Outdoors



### Sponsors:

Arizona Trail Association, Flagline Trails, Pinal County Open Space, REI Coop, RideNow Powersports, and Southwest Trails Solutions

### Youth scholarship winners:

Julie Polovitch – Arizona Trail Association  
Eaton Mazur – University of Arizona School of Natural Resources and the Environment  
Ricardo Escobar – Latino Outdoors  
Nataleah and Leah Munoz – OS3Movement