

Forest Service National Trail Program

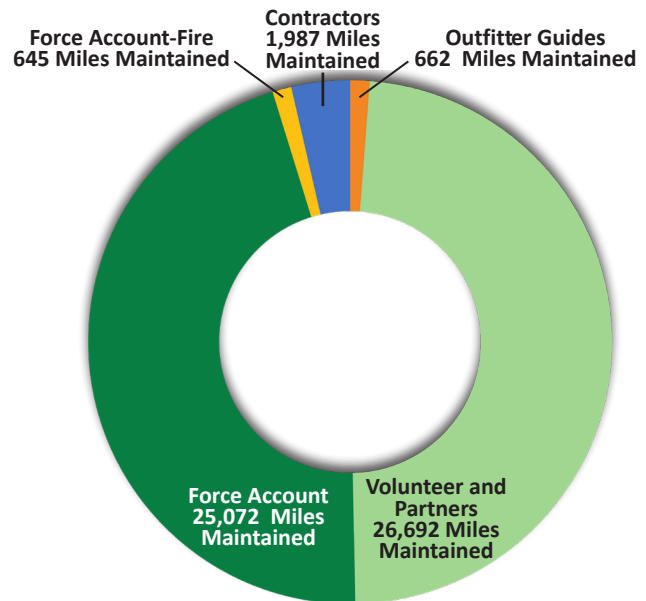
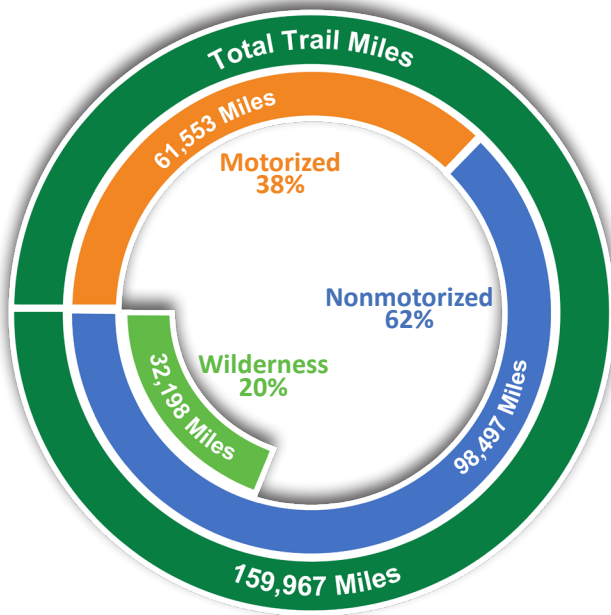
FY21 Accomplishments

This document summarizes FY21 USFS Trail Program accomplishments to promote transparency and accountability and highlight the trail work being completed by the agency each year. The WO Trail program supports **USDA STRATEGIC GOAL 6**: Ensure productive and sustainable use of our National Forest System lands, and the corresponding Forest Service priorities of: *Wildland Fire Management, Improving Forest Conditions, Contributing to Rural Prosperity, and Workplace Environment.*

Vision for National Forest System Trails

National Forest System trails (NFSTs) are well-designed, well-maintained, and support recreation use today and tomorrow. Agency staff, partners, and volunteers work collaboratively across boundaries, are highly skilled, and have the resources they need to steward all National Forest System trails, as well as the ability to address emerging issues. All members of the public feel welcome and safe on National Forest System trails.

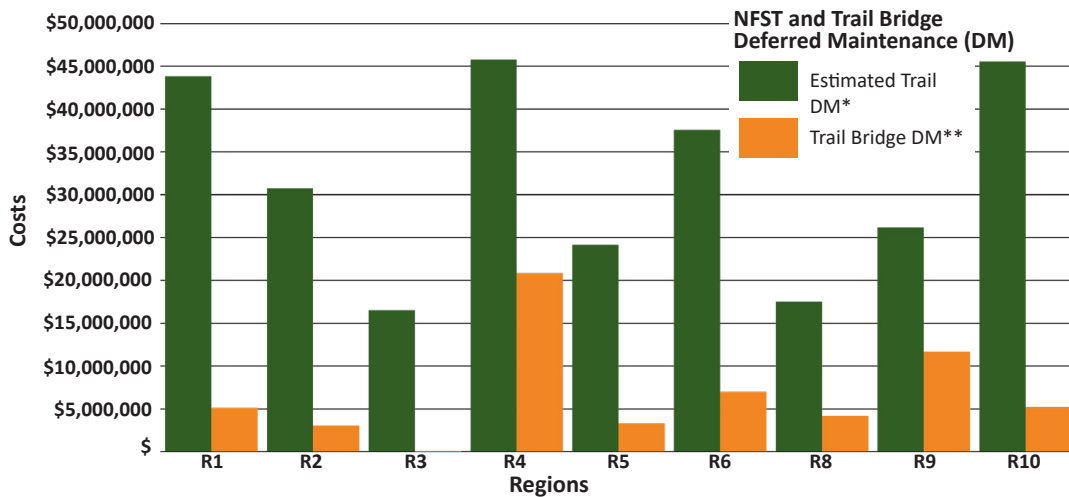
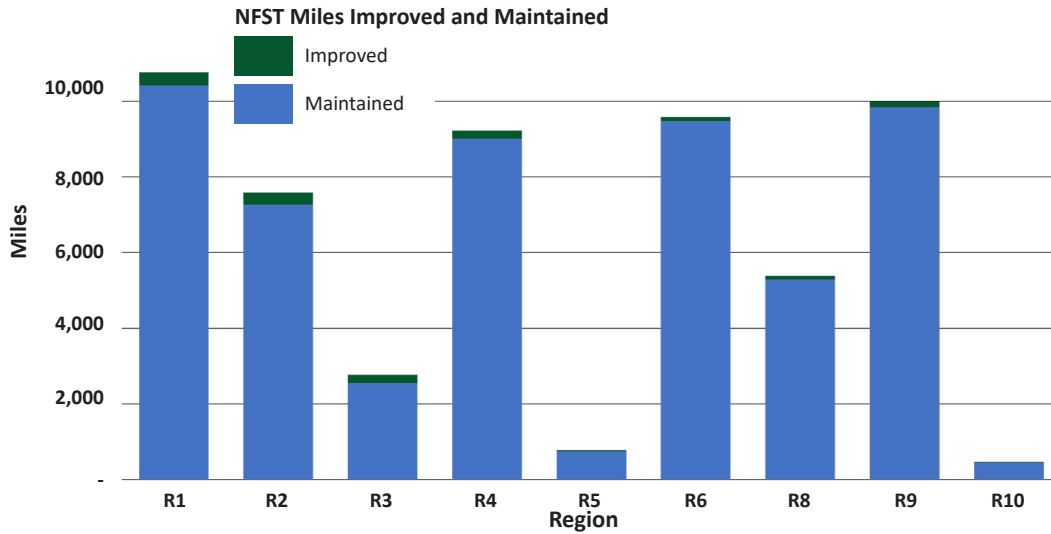
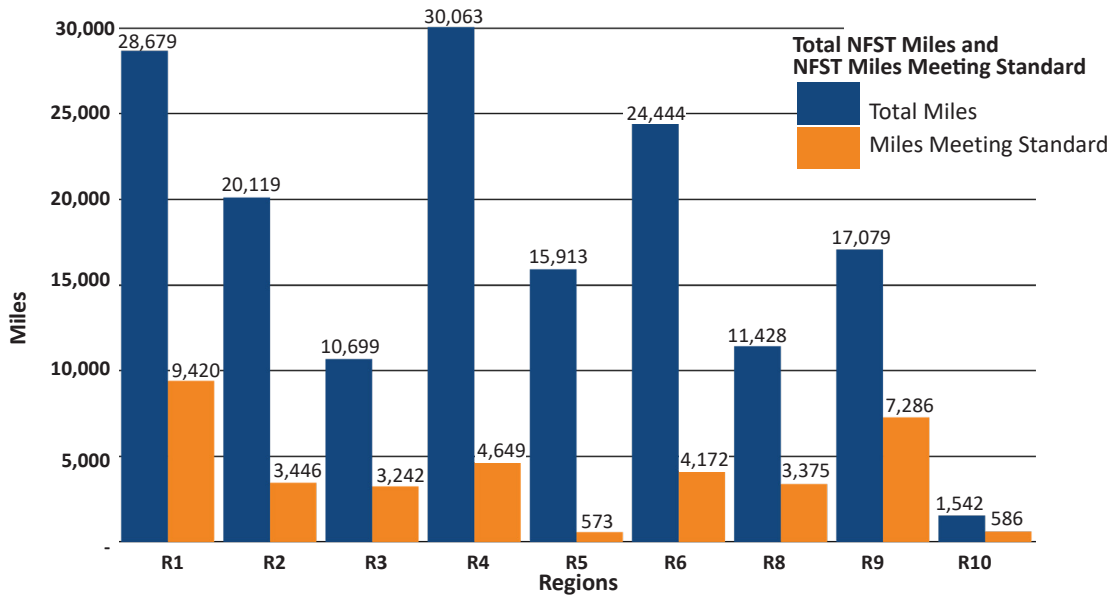
Mission of the WO Trail Program: Caring for land and serving people by professionalizing the trail program and improving processes to better support the collective trail workforce of agency staff, partners, and volunteers in order to provide a sustainable trail system that maximizes public benefits.



36,792 trail miles (or 23%) meet standard

Trail miles “meeting standard” are reported as meeting the [National Quality Standards](#) for trails.

State of the NFSTs by Region for FY21



*Estimated from statistically significant random sample & regular inspections.

**Trail bridge inspections are not current in some areas.

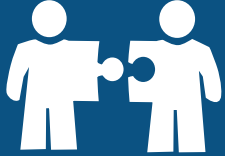
National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (P.L. 114-245) Highlights



Outfitter and Guide Trail Stewardship Credit Pilot Program: 696 miles of trail maintained in FY21.



Trail Maintenance Priority Areas: 9,400 miles of trail maintained and 226 miles of trail improved in FY21. Trail miles maintained down 2% and trail miles improved up 30% from FY20.



Fire study and National Volunteer and Partnership Strategy: A working group is carrying out a congressionally mandated study to identify coordination opportunities between fire and trail programs.



Volunteer/Partner total trail maintenance support: 1,308,443 hours; 26,692 miles (or 48% of all trail maintenance completed).

Trail Challenge Accomplishment Highlights

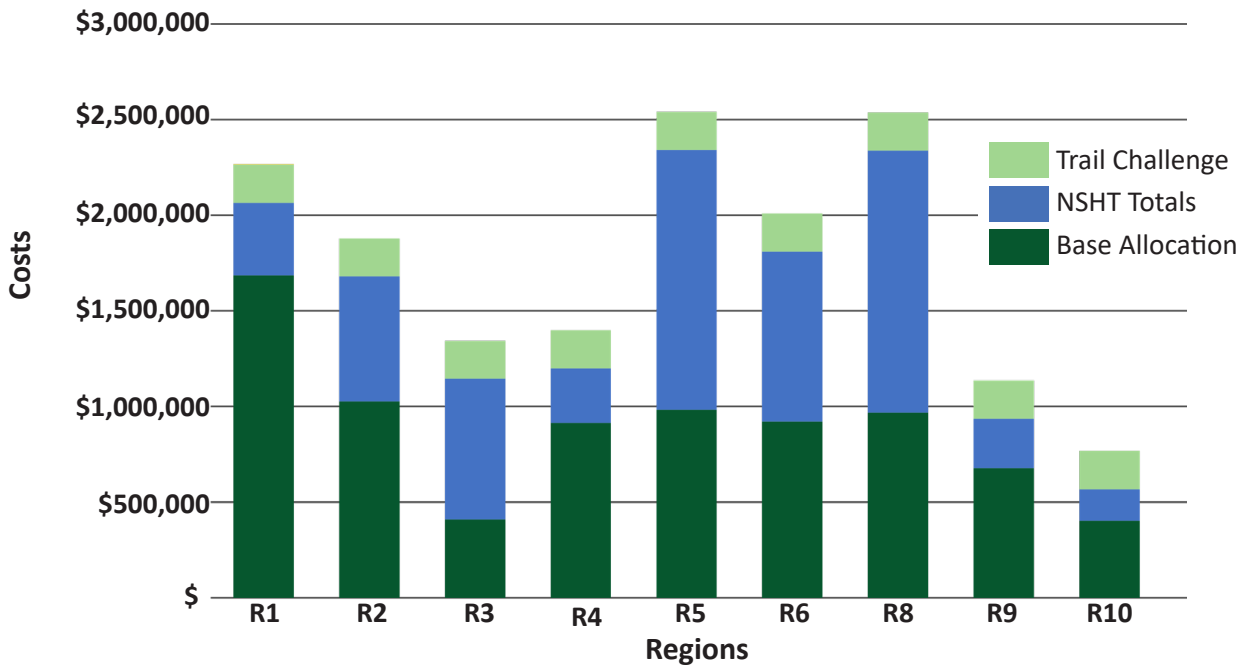
- **Online dashboard** to summarize national, regional, and forest accomplishments.
- **Implementation technical guidebook** for field staff.
- **National and regional level meetings** with agency staff and partners to raise awareness.
- **Chief's leadership corner message** inviting agency staff and partners to participate.
- **\$1.8M of carryover funding** distributed to regions for 10 YTC implementation.
- **Secured 3,500 hours of Enterprise time** to develop supporting products in FY22.

Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) Implementation Summary

The Forest Service secured ~\$69 million in GAOA funding to address projects that include a trail or major or complex trail bridge component, with an estimated deferred maintenance (DM) reduction of ~1 billion once these projects are completed.

Region	# of Projects with a Trail Component	# of Projects with a Trail Bridge Component
R1	22	4
R2	23	23
R3	11	0
R4	24	4
R5	34	2
R6	9	5
R8	8	4
R9	7	6
R10	17	0
Total	155	48

FY21 Regional CMTL Budget Allocations



National Level Trail Partners

- American Hiking Society
- American Trails
- National Forest Foundation
- National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
- Partnership for the National Trails System
- Next 100 Coalition
- International Mountain Biking Association
- Federal Highways Administration
- Back Country Horsemen of America
- Leave No Trace
- American Motorcyclist Association
- Blue Ribbon Coalition
- National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
- American Council of Snowmobile Associations
- US Snowmobile Association
- TreadLightly!



FY21 Accomplishments

Integrated accomplishments of the National Trail Teams: National Trail Board (NTB), National Scenic and Historic Trails (NSHT) Administrator’s group, and Trails Advisory Group (TAG), including the saw and travel management programs. Fiscal year accomplishments are organized by the seven 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge elements that guide the work of the national trail program.

10-Year Trail Challenge Element	FY 21 Accomplishment
A. Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated development of trail core competencies in partnership with American Trails, Professional Trailbuilders Association, and other partners and agencies. Initiated an effort to build support for training and certification of volunteer major trail bridge inspectors.
B. Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with Human Resources to resolve temporary employee hiring issues. Funded a multi-year study of trail partnership success factors with Virginia Tech and National Park Service.
C. Trail Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed minimum criteria for assessing trail sustainability. Secured 3,500 hours of Enterprise time for FY22 Trail Challenge implementation. Funded 48 partner-led trail projects through the Trails Stewardship Grant Program that leveraged 6:1 on initial \$550,000 USFS investment. Initiated a study about best practices for engaging fire crews in trail maintenance activities.
D. Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted a successful proposal for modernization and full re-design of Infra Trails, Trail Bridges and Access and Travel Management Applications beginning FY22. Piloted the use of Survey 123 to collect trail condition survey (TRACS) data. Piloted an online data dashboard to track Trail Challenge accomplishments.
E. Agency Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed GAOA tips and tools documents to assist field staff with project proposals. Developed a composite deferred maintenance task in Infra to facilitate data entry for GAOA project proposals. Developed 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge technical guidebook. Conducted a survey of field level trails staff to understand perceptions and experiences; held listening sessions. Established a new national level, 5-year MOU with Back Country Horsemen of America Developed a TRACS quick reference guide.
F. Working with Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired a Trail Program Resource Assistant to add to the WO Trail Team’s capacity. Worked with American Trails to develop two professional video productions inviting young people to work on trails. Funded three national level agreements to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in trail program delivery.
G. NSHTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began identifying amendments to Forest Service Manual 2350 to provide better direction for NSHT management. Developed and promoted the National Trails System 101 training for line officers and forest staff. Re-established the interagency National Recreation Trail round table with the BLM and NPS. Improved website information about national recreation trails. Participated in annual Hike the Hill events (virtually).

National Crosscut and Chainsaw Program Key Accomplishments

- Initiated amendment of National Saw Policy (FSM 2358) to add clarity, remove conflicts and better align with new training curricula.
- Established new Oversight Committee to better integrate all Deputy Areas affected by Saw Program.
- Developed new sawyer training curriculum to better train agency employees, partners and volunteers.
- Developed Sawyer Qualification Tracking Database.
- Extended timelines for expired sawyer certifications due to COVID disruptions.
- Established Memorandum of Agreement with NPS which provides for reciprocity of sawyer qualifications for groups working on Nationally recognized trails crossing Agency jurisdictional boundaries.



Seasonal Trails/Wilderness crew members felling a tree as a part of the crosscut saw course, Brown Duck Creek, Ashley National Forest. USDA Forest Service photo by Nathaniel Nealley.

National Travel Management Program Key Accomplishments

- Developed and shared the Over-snow Vehicle Use Map guide for data preparation.
- Continued to revise and update EM 7100-15 Sign and Poster Guidebook (Chapter 5 Trail Signs).
- Responded to public comment and conducted content analysis for comments received about E-bike directives.
- Supported a contractor led e-bike programmatic environmental analysis in Region 8.

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Website: [National Forest System Trails](https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails)
(<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails>)

USDA Forest Service photo