

National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act 5-Year Anniversary

Overview

The [National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act](#), which passed in late 2016 with bipartisan support, contains four main requirements:

Trail Maintenance Priority Areas:

Select 15 areas for increased trail maintenance accomplishments.

Trail Volunteer and Partner Strategy Development:

Develop a strategy that aims to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in trail maintenance.

Outfitter and Guide Trail Stewardship Credit Pilot Program:

Participating outfitters and guides perform trail maintenance in lieu of paying the permittee’s annual land use fee.

Report Findings:

Report back to Congress on implementation of the strategy and accomplishments.



Flathead National Forest: Forest Service employees and Montana Conservation Corps field crews rigging a root ball for removal along the Big River trail on Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger District.

Trail Maintenance Priority Areas

In 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture selected 15 Trail Maintenance Priority Areas for increased trail maintenance work. All 15 Priority Areas are actively implementing their Priority Area Plans and working to improve maintenance. In FY21, 9,400 trail miles were maintained, 63% of those miles were maintained by partners and volunteers. Here are a few highlights from FY21:

On the Flathead National Forest (NF) in Montana, Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger District, 43% more maintenance was accomplished in 2021 within the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex and Adjacent Lands Priority Area thanks to additional funding from Great American Outdoors Act. A total of 334 miles were maintained with the aid of Back Country Horsemen Flathead Chapter, Montana Conservation Corps, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Wild Montana, and more.

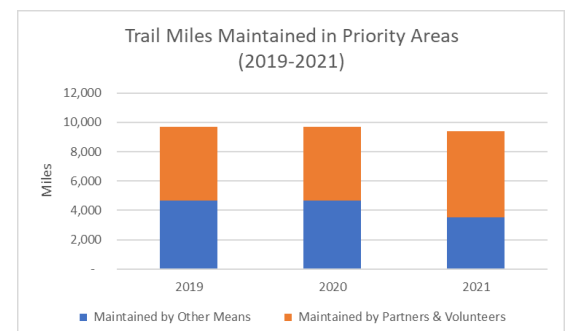
The Chugach NF in Alaska hired a Student Conservation Association intern and a

Mobilize Green Resource Assistant to work with the trail crew on Iditarod National Historic Trail maintenance projects and improve the public website in 2021.

The Salmon-Challis NF in Idaho maintained about 930 miles on the Central Idaho Complex Priority Area which is 72 miles more than the previous year. This is despite trail staff being called away to assist with fires in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021.



Coconino National Forest: Members of Friends of the Forest alongside other local volunteers help reroute a section of trail to improve drainage, reduce erosion, and decrease future maintenance costs.



Trail Miles Maintained within Priority Areas 2017-2021: On average, partners and volunteers accomplished 46% of trail mile maintenance in priority areas.



Angeles National Forest: All trail maintenance done on the Angeles NF from 2019-2021 was provided entirely by the help of volunteers.

Check This Out!

The Idaho Trails Association have been one of our key partners in maintaining the Central Idaho Complex Priority Area. Check out their [All-Girls Youth Crew Project](#) and [2021 Trail Season Overview](#) videos (~3 min each) highlighting exciting work done in 2021.



Chugach National Forest: American Hiking Society volunteer vacation completing work on the Gull Rock Trail in 2021.

Trails Stewardship Act

Partners & Volunteers

Highlights

Forest Service partners and volunteers have been at the forefront helping agency staff maintain trails to be open and accessible to all users (see Appendix A for a summary of partner and volunteer contributions). Here are a few highlights of great work done in FY21 thanks to the support of our partners and volunteers!

On the Chugach NF in Alaska, the Glacier Ranger District held a volunteer event with Alaska Trails on Turnagain Pass. Nearly 20 volunteers helped during the 4-hour event. On the same forest, the American Hiking Society also held a volunteer vacation on the Gull Rock Trail.

On the Sawtooth NF in Idaho, the Idaho Mountain Dirt Bike Riders Coalition logged out motorized trails. The Wood River Trails Coalition held various volunteer events and started the Trail Boss initiative, which aims

to provide specialized training sessions in trail building techniques and volunteer opportunities.

On the Flathead NF in Montana, the Back Country Horsemen Flathead Chapter used cured logs to construct 6 box steps and 120 feet of retaining wall at an important trailhead. These partnerships continue to provide the Flathead NF with trail maintenance and improvement support each year.

The Pisgah NF in North Carolina recently launched the Old Fort Trails Project to build 42 miles of new trails alongside community partners like the G5 Trail Collective, People on the Move for Old Fort, Camp Grier, Kitsbow Cycling Apparel and many more! The G5 Trail Collective was recently awarded funds to construct 6 miles of multi-use trails; construction is planned to start in late 2022.



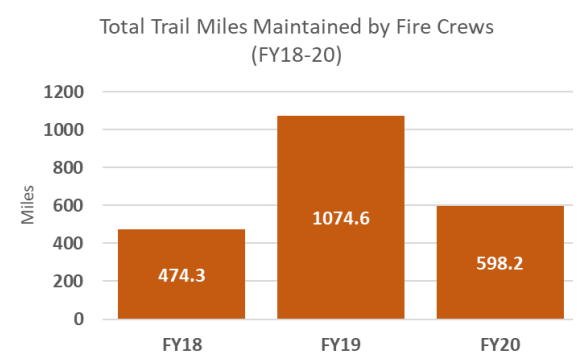
Sawtooth National Forest: Funds from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) helped hire a 12-person skilled Student Conservation Association crew and a mule packer to support their work. The mule packer was invaluable in transporting material and tools to the crew while they completed 11 miles of heavy maintenance trail work. (Photo credit: Max Benz)

Fire Supported Trail Work Study

Next Steps

The Trail Stewardship Act directs the Forest Service to first study, then determine if trail maintenance activities could be advanced using fire crews without jeopardizing firefighting capabilities, public safety, or resource protection. Nationally, fire crews have maintained a total of 2,147 miles of trails between FY2018-2020.

The agency is conducting a study in FY22 to evaluate the ability of fire crews to contribute to trail maintenance without compromising their firefighting mission. Surveys are planned for winter 2022 with results and recommendations to be completed by early summer 2022.



Total Trail Miles Maintained by Fire Crews (FY18-20): Trail maintenance by fire crews dropped in half during the pandemic but was still higher than the first year in FY 2018.



Chugach National Forest: Trail structure replacement on the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Trails Stewardship Partner Funding Program

2017-2021

Item	Total
USFS Funding	\$1.5 M
Partner Cash/in-kind Contributions	\$9.7 M
Value of Volunteer Hours	\$8.2 M
Total Volunteer Hours	303,870
# Miles Maintained	7,363
# Projects Funded	174

[Trails Stewardship Partner Funding Program](#): Administered by numerous partners, this program aims to increase volunteerism by leveraging federal dollars to complete trail projects across the country. Partners have leveraged the total USFS investment of \$1.5M by 600%.

Outfitter & Guides

Trail Stewardship Credit Pilot Program

The Trail Stewardship Credit Pilot Program allows permitted outfitters and guides to offset all or part of their land use fee through the exchange of agreed-upon work associated with trails, trailheads, or developed sites maintenance work.

In February 2019, former Chief Vicki Christiansen announced the selection of 20 pilot forests across the country. The program launched in the summer of 2020, although participation was limited due to disruptions from the ongoing pandemic.

Highlights: In FY21, 696 trail miles were maintained by outfitters and guides through the pilot program.

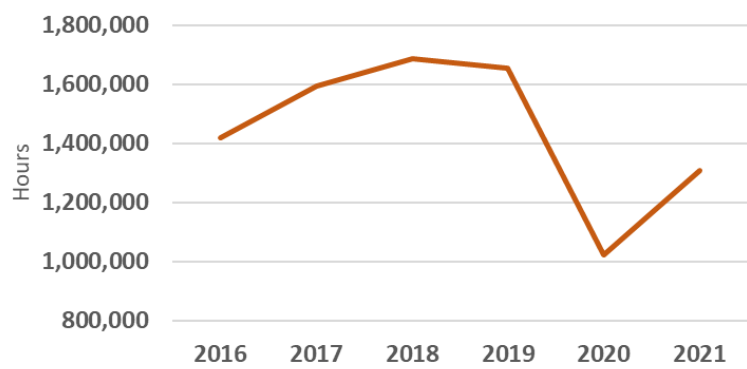
In FY20, 320.8 trail miles were maintained through the pilot program.

FY20, the Shoshone NF in Wyoming awarded a fee offset to Elk Fork Outfitters, LLC for trail work done on the Wapiti Ranger District. Trail work tasks consisted of logging-out, brushing, and tread work.

All pilot units and many other units report outfitters and guides being eager to participate in the future. In FY22, the agency is exploring whether this fee-offset program should be expanded to any unit that chooses to participate.

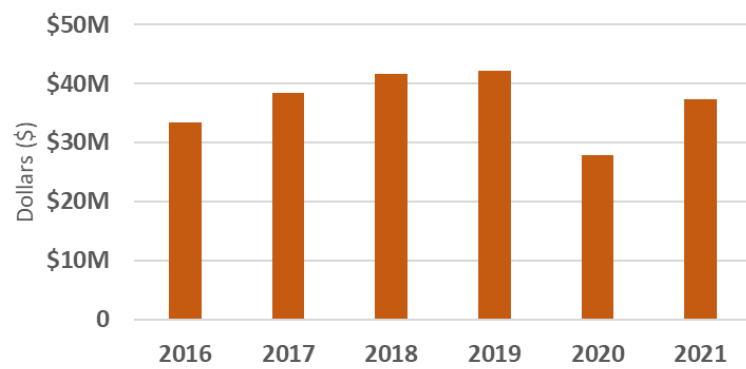
Appendix A: Partner & Volunteer Contributions

Partner & Volunteer Accomplishments:
Hours Contributed (2016-2021)



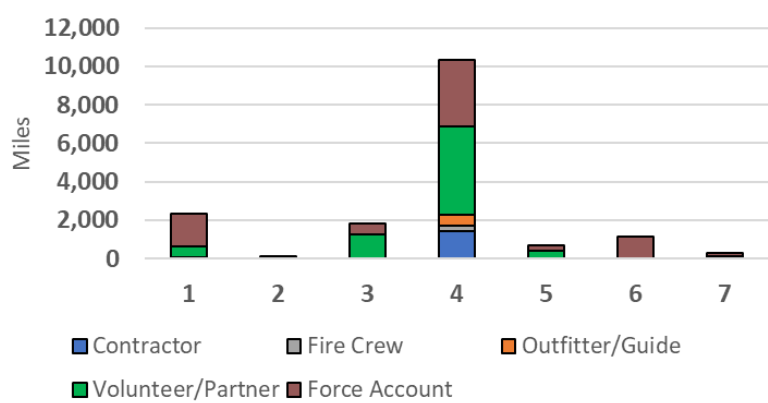
Partner & Volunteer Accomplishments - Hours Contributed (2016-2021): Volunteers and partners were working at a steady increase from 2016 to 2019 but saw a large decline in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. Volunteerism appears to be rebounding in 2021.

Partner & Volunteer Accomplishments:
Appraised Value (2016-2021)



Partner & Volunteer Accomplishments - Appraised Value (2016-2021): Accumulated hours from partners and volunteers are valued at an average of 36 million dollars a year. In FY21, these valuable contributions amounted to nearly double the Forest Service trail program (CMTL) allocation of \$18.3 million.

Trail Miles Maintained in Priority Areas

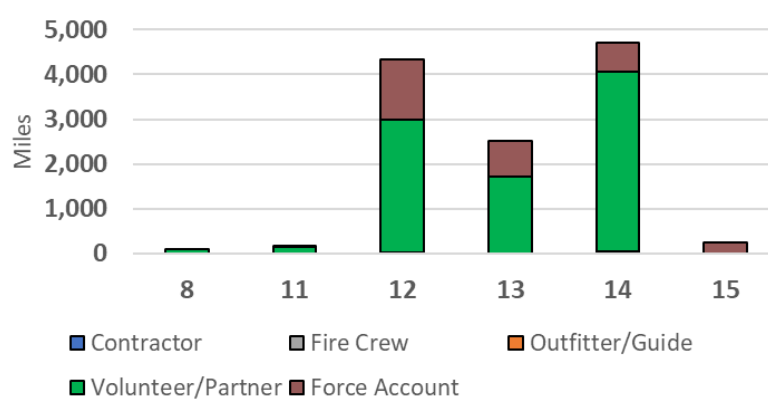


Trail Miles Maintained in FY 21 in Priority Areas: Figure summarizes number of miles maintained by contractors, fire crews, outfitter/guides, volunteer/partners, and force account at priority areas 1-7 labeled in the key.

Figure Key (Priority Areas):

- 1: Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex & Adjacent Lands
- 2: Methow Valley Ranger District
- 3: Hells Canyon National Recreation Area/Eagle Cap Wilderness
- 4: Central Idaho Complex
- 5: Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- 6: Wyoming Forest Gateway Communities
- 7: Northern California Wilderness Areas: Marble Mountains & Trinity Alps

Trail Miles Maintained in Priority Areas

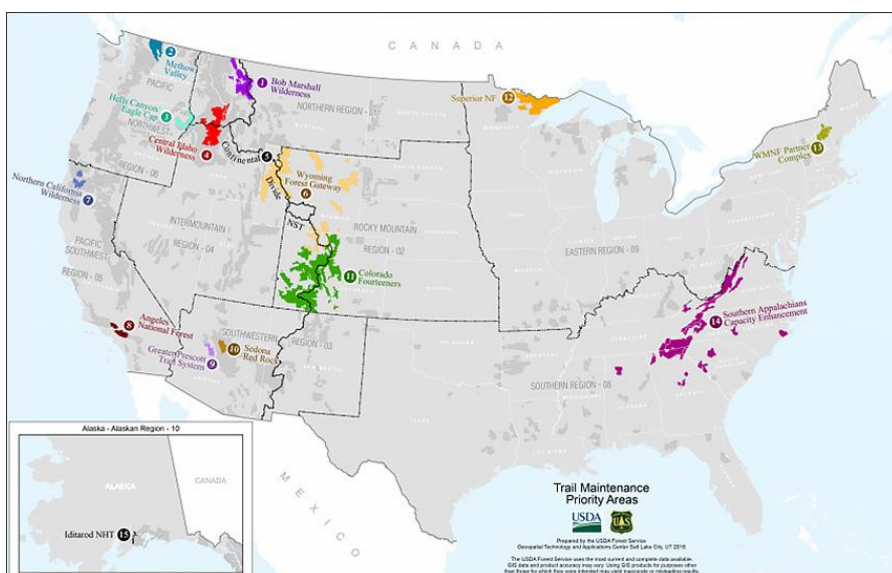


Trail Miles Maintained in FY 21 Priority Areas Continued: Figure summarizes number of miles maintained by contractors, fire crews, outfitter/guides, volunteer/partners, and force account at priority areas 8-15 labeled in the key.

Figure Key (Priority Areas):

- 8: Angeles National Forest
- 9: Greater Prescott Trail System*
- 10: Sedona Red Rock Ranger District Trail System*
- 11: Colorado Fourteeners
- 12: Superior National Forest Trails
- 13: White Mountain National Forest Partner Complex: "200 Years of Community Trail Stewardship"
- 14: Southern Appalachians Capacity Enhancement Model
- 15: Iditarod National Historic Trail "Southern Trek"

*No Information Available



Contact us:

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For More Information:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails/trails-stewardship-act>