The quotations can also be found on the South Carolina Trails Program website at www.SCTrails.net
During the several years of collection, selection, and preparation involved with this book, I have been helped immensely by many trails enthusiasts who have suggested publications and given direction to my search.

The staff of the South Carolina State Library has been especially helpful with inter-library loan searches to track down obscure trail publications.

In order to insure the accuracy of the quotations I relied heavily on the assistance of Bob Swanson and Eileen Hart to proofread and offer corrections.

To all who have supported this effort, I give thanks.

—Jim Schmid
Many publications and conference presentations use quotations to add interest and emphasize the importance of trails and greenways. For over ten years I have been collecting trail and greenway publications (over 2,500 so far) for my resource library. I refer to many of the publications on a daily basis. A few years ago I started collecting quotations from these many sources for future use. By sharing what I’ve collected, I hope that others might find just the right quotation for their publication or presentation.

Here are over 1,000 trail-related quotes that have been used before, but just get better with use. They are arranged loosely according to subject matter. I hope you find one for your next trail or greenway publication or presentation, or you just might enjoy reading them on their own.

Any copyrighted material on these pages is used under “fair use” for the purpose of study and review. A thorough effort was made to clear any necessary reprint permissions. Any required acknowledgement omitted is unintentional. If notified, I will be pleased to rectify any omission in future editions.

Since these quotations were gathered from many different sources, not all the citations are complete. If you know of the source for a quote that does not have one identified, or you have a quote that I should include, please let me know and I’ll fix it in the next edition.

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By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote.
In fact, it is as difficult to appropriate the thoughts of others as it is to invent.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–1882

I hate quotations! Tell me what you know.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–1882

I am reminded of the professor who, in his declining hours, was asked by his devoted pupils for his final counsel. He replied, “Verify your quotations.”
—WINSTON CHURCHILL, British statesman, 1874–1965
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Too often, the advocates of trails and linear parks along rights-of-way come up against officials who recognize only one kind of park—the squared-off kind that comes in chunks; and one kind of recreation—the supervised kind known as ‘organized sweating.’ Such officials refuse to acknowledge that there has been a change in US recreation trends, reflected in the phenomenal growth of hiking, biking, and horseback riding....

—Constance Stallings,
Let’s Use Our Rights-of-Way, Reader’s Digest, 1970

People don’t change under governments. Governments change. People remain the same.
—Will Rogers, cowboy humorist, 1879–1935

The greenway concept has spread across the state [North Carolina] to almost every major municipality.... I think that one of the things that’s impressive is that the energy is coming from the citizens rather than the government units.
—Chuck Flink, President of Greenways Inc.,
as quoted in Corridors of Green, Wildlife in North Carolina, 1988

Preserving Our Natural Resources for the Public, Instead of from the Public.
—motto of the BlueRibon Coalition, 1987

We believe that the place to start … is in our communities. Americans living together and joining in associations across the country—this is where the tremendous strength and vision of our people will be tapped. We recommend a prairie fire of local action to sweep the nation, encouraging investment in outdoor recreation opportunities and rededication to the protection of our great natural heritage.

—President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors,
Americans and the Outdoors, 1987
My own doctrine of organization is that any body of people coming together for a purpose (whatever it may be) should consist of persons wholly wedded to said purpose and should consist of nobody else. If the purpose be Cannibalism (preference for Ham a la Capitalism) then nobody but a Cannibal should be admitted. There should be plenty of discussion and disagreement as to how and the means but none whatever as to ends.

—BENTON MACKAYE in a letter to Bob Marshall discussing membership for newly formed Wilderness Society, December 12, 1935

People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened. Showing up is 80% of life.

—WOODY ALLEN, American film actor, director, & writer, 1935–

When, through automation, a man’s job has become unchallenging, boring and just a way to obtain purchasing power, if he is to keep that yeastlike feeling of being a prime mover in the world, he must do something of value with his spare time.

—RAY LOWES, founder of Canada’s Bruce Trail, in a June 1964 speech to the Appalachian Trail Conference in Vermont

Society as we know it is almost a conspiracy against human health. One of the main forces working to counteract that is the trailsman.

—STEWART UDALL, former Secretary of the Interior from 1961–69 and former Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Board Member, 1998

The fight for free space—for wilderness and for public space—must be accompanied by a fight for free time to spend wandering in that space. Otherwise the individual imagination will be bulldozed over for the chain-store outlets of consumer appetite, true-crime titillations, and celebrity crises.

Be a half-assed crusader, a part-time fanatic. Don’t worry to much about the fate of the world. Saving the world is only a hobby. Get out there and enjoy the world, your girlfriend, your boyfriend, husbands wives; climb mountains, run rivers, get drunk, do whatever you want to do while you can, before it’s too late.


....key factor in the development and planning of most trails is local, grassroots efforts: that is, the citizens who drive the local, state, and federal government to act. Everything from establishing the vision and need for greenways to defining specific trail corridors, to participating in the zoning process, to forming citizen coalitions, to developing guidelines for trail use and access should be within the abilities of each citizen. With broad-based support, the vision of a national system of trails can be realized.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, Trails for All Americans report, 1990

A first-rate trails system can only be created by people.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

If there’s one essential ingredient to creating trails and trail systems, it’s people. All the land and financing in the world won’t blaze a trail if there aren’t people championing the project.


The land belongs to them that love it (and will fight for it?).

DICTUM: NO AUTOMOBILES IN NATIONAL PARKS.

Let’s make them parks and not parking lots. FOR HUMAN BEINGS ONLY.

God bless America. Let’s save some of It!

—EDWARD ABBEY, journal entry April 8, 1957, Arches, Utah
Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocre minds. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN, American scientist, 1879–1955

People who have committed to a service/advocacy role will tell you that some of the sublimest pleasure they have ever experienced comes in the context of that work. You get way more than you give.

—CHARLES GARFIELD, Peak Performers, 1986

Every important change in our society, for the good, at least, has taken place because of popular pressure—pressure from below, from the great mass of people.

—EDWARD ABBEY, One Life at a Time, Please, 1988

Americans are seeking trail opportunities as never before. No longer are trails only for the ‘rugged individualists’ pursuing a solitary trek through breathtaking wilderness … users include young people and senior citizens, families, individuals and organized groups, people with disabilities and the physically fit.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, Trails for All Americans report, 1990

Being an effective trail advocate begins with deciding just exactly what it is you want to achieve. Before you can get out and champion your project, you need a vision, a plan and maps that show preferred routes and other features.


The future is not someplace we are going to, but a place we are creating. The paths to it are not found, they are made.

—JANE GARVEY, Deputy Administrator, Federal Highway Administration from 1993–97
Do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am. A reluctant enthusiast and part-time crusader. A half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the West. It is even more important to enjoy it while you can, while it’s still there. So get out there, hunt, fish, mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, encounter the Griz, climb a mountain, bag the peaks, run the rivers, breathe deep of that yet sweet and elusive air. Sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness of the lovely, mysterious, and awesome space. Enjoy yourselves. Keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to the body, the body active and alive. And I promise you this one sweet victory over our enemies, over those desk-bound people with their hearts in safe deposit boxes and their eyes hypnotized by their desk calculators. I promise you this: you will outlive the bastards.

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

A desk is a dangerous place from which to watch the world.

—JOHN LE CARRÉ, English writer, 1931–

Unless someone truly has the power to say no, they never truly have the power to say yes.

—DAN MILLMAN, Way of the Peaceful Warrior, 1985

We either have wild places or we don’t. We admit the spiritual-emotional validity of wild, beautiful places or we don’t. We have a philosophy of simplicity of experience in these wild places or we don’t. We admit an almost religious devotion to the clean exposition of the wild, natural earth or we don’t.

—ANSEL ADAMS, American photographer, 1902–84

It is at the local, community level where successful trail networks begin.

—BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY, Community Trails Handbook, 1997
Backpacking

Even in these mercifully emancipated decades, many people still seem quite seriously alarmed at the prospect of sleeping away from officially consecrated campsites, with no more equipment than they can carry on their backs. When pressed, they babble about snakes or bears or even, by God, bandits. But the real barrier, I’m sure, is the unknown.


My meals were easily made, for they were all alike and simple, only a cupful of tea and bread.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

We do not go to the green woods and crystal waters to rough it, we go to smooth it. We get it rough enough at home, in towns and cities.

—NESSMUK (G.W. Sears), *Woodcraft*, 1963

Two questions we have been asked repeatedly all through the South: ‘You-all get paid for doing this, don’t you?’ and, ‘Are you working for the government?’ That we should be carrying heavy packs, sticking to the mountain trails, and camping out as we go, doing no hunting along the way, merely for fun, is of course completely incomprehensible! All through this region, nearly every man or boy encountered is carrying a gun; most of them say they would not think of venturing into the mountains without one.

—GEORGE OUTERBRIDGE, Maine to Georgia—All the Way, *Hiking the Appalachian Trail*, edited by James Hare, 1975

He who would travel happily must travel light.

Then came the gadgeteer, otherwise known as the sporting-goods dealer. He has draped the American outdoorsman with an infinity of contraptions, all offered as aids to self-reliance, hardihood, woodcraft, or marksmanship, but too often functioning as substitutes for them. Gadgets fill the pockets, they dangle from neck and belt. The overflow fills the auto-trunk and also the trailer. Each item of outdoor equipment grows lighter and often better, but the aggregate poundage becomes tonnage.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

It is one of the blessings of wilderness life that it shows us how few things we need in order to be perfectly happy.

—HORACE KEPHART, *Camping and Woodcraft*, 1917

I feel so independent now. I can get anywhere I want to. I have the few essentials I need, and the few other things I need or want I can derive from the land.

—DAVID COOPER, on starting his 200-mile solo trek through the Brooks Range, *Brooks Range Passage*, 1982

Backpacking is the art of knowing what not to take.

—SHERIDAN ANDERSON, *Baron Von Mabel’s Backpacking*, 1980

The man with the knapsack is never lost. No matter whither he may stray, his food and shelter are right with him, and home is wherever he may choose to stop.

—HORACE KEPHART, *Camping and Woodcraft*, 1917

I made these Sierra trips, carrying only a sackful of bread with a little tea and sugar, and was thus independent and free....

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
Think what a great world revolution will take place when … [there are] millions of guys all over the world with rucksacks on their backs tramping around the back country....

—JACK KEROUAC, *The Dharma Bums*, 1958

Although the vast majority of walkers never even think of using a walking staff, I unhesitatingly include it among the foundations of the house that travels on my back.


The man who goes afoot, prepared to camp anywhere and in any weather, is the most independent fellow on earth.

—HORACE KEPHART, *Camping and Woodcraft*, 1917

Under most conditions, the best roof for your bedroom is the sky. This commonsense arrangement saves weight, time, energy, and money.


The fascinating quality of all sorts of wilderness and backcountry travel lies in the reduction of life to its essentials: food, shelter, beauty; the confrontation with forces and circumstances which are at once comprehensible, mysterious, and so powerful that they will not be denied.


To equip a pedestrian with shelter, bedding, utensils, food, and other necessities, in a pack so light and small that he can carry it without overstrain, is really a fine art.

—HORACE KEPHART, *Camping and Woodcraft*, 1917
The rule of thumb for the old backpacking was that the weight of your pack should equal the weight of yourself and the kitchen range combined. Just a casual glance at the full pack sitting on the floor could give you a double hernia and fuse four vertebrae. After carrying the pack all day, you had to remember to tie one leg to a tree before you dropped it. Otherwise you would float off into space. The pack eliminated the need for any special kind of ground-gripping shoes, because your feet would sink a foot and a half into hard-packed earth, two inches into solid rock.


More backpacking trips are ruined by sore feet than by all other causes combined. Pounded by the ground below and the weight of you and your pack above, your feet receive harsher treatment than any other part of your body.

Benefits

The tendency nowadays to wander in wilderness is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.

—JOHN MUIR, Our National Parks, 1901

 Trails encourage us to socialize and have meaningful human contact, because they get us out of our steel-encapsulated driving machines.

—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1998

The trail has taught me much. I know now the varied voices of the coyote—the wizard of the mesa. I know the solemn call of herons and the mocking cry of the loon. I remember a hundred lovely lakes, and recall the fragrant breath of pine and fir and cedar and poplar trees. The trail has strung upon it, as upon a thread of silk, opalescent dawns and saffron sunsets. It has given me blessed release from care and worry and the troubled thinking of our modern day. It has been a return to the primitive and the peaceful. Whenever the pressure of our complex city life thins my blood and benumbs my brain, I seek relief in the trail; and when I hear a coyote wailing to the yellow dawn, my cares fall from me—I am happy.

—HAMLIN GARLAND, Hitting the Trail, McClure’s, February 1899

People are different on a path. On a town sidewalk strangers may make eye contact, but that’s all. On a path like this [Stowe, VT] they smile, say hello, and pet one another’s dogs. I think every community in American should have a greenway.

—ANNE LUSK, Vermont greenway advocate, 1990

However useful may be the National Parks and Forests of the West for those affording the Pullman fare to reach them, what is needed by the bulk of the American population is something nearer home.

—BENTON MACKAYE, Progress Toward the Appalachian Trail, Appalachia, 1922
Whenever we make changes in our surroundings, we can too easily shortchange ourselves, by cutting ourselves off from some of the sights and sounds, the shapes or textures, or other information from a place that have helped mold our understanding and are now necessary for us to thrive. Overdevelopment and urban sprawl can damage our own lives as much as they damage our cities and countryside.

—TONY HISS, *The Experience of Place*, 1990

Our suicidal poets (Plath, Berryman, Lowell, Jarrell, et al.) spent too much of their lives inside rooms and classrooms when they should have been trudging up mountains, slogging through swamps, rowing down rivers. The indoor life is the next best thing to premature burial.

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

Recreation in the open is of the finest grade. The moral benefits are all positive. The individual with any soul cannot live long in the presence of towering mountains or sweeping plains without getting a little of the high moral standard of Nature infused into his being ... with eyes opened, the great story of the Earth's forming, the history of a tree, the life of a flower or the activities of some small animal will all unfold themselves to the recreationist....

—ARTHUR CARHART, USDA Forest Service's first landscape architect (1919), 1892–1978

I have a basic belief that outdoor recreation in a natural environment is good for people and is good for society at large. Anything that will bring more people to outdoor recreation, I therefore consider a ‘friend.’ Problems that derive from this philosophy are what keep me and others like me in business as recreation managers.

—RICHARD SPRAY, USDA Forest Service employee, 1986

The influence of fine scenery, the presence of mountains, appeases our irritations and elevates our friendships.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, *Culture, The Conduct of Life*, 1860
What a joy it is to feel the soft, springy earth under my feet once more, to follow grassy roads that lead to ferny brooks where I can bathe my fingers in a cataract of rippling notes, or to clamber over a stone wall into green fields that tumble and roll and climb in riotous gladness!

—HELEN KELLER, deaf & blind American lecturer, 1880–1968

I learned early that the richness of life is found in adventure. Adventure calls on all the faculties of mind and spirit. It develops self-reliance and independence. Life then teems with excitement. But man is not ready for adventure unless he is rid of fear. For fear confines him and limits his scope. He stays tethered by strings of doubt and indecision and has only a small and narrow world to explore.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Of Men and Mountains, 1950

People need immediate places to refresh, reinvent themselves. Our surroundings built and natural alike, have an immediate and a continuing effect on the way we feel and act, and on our health and intelligence. These places have an impact on our sense of self, our sense of safety, the kind of work we get done, the ways we interact with other people, even our ability to function as citizens in a democracy. In short, the places where we spend our time affect the people we are and can become.

—TONY HISS, The Experience of Place, 1990

Greenways and trails offer a new way of looking at how a community’s cultural, historic, recreational and conservation needs fit into an overall picture that also includes economic growth. With their emphasis on connections, greenways and trails allow community leaders to consider how existing parks and open spaces can become part of a network of green that supports wildlife, pleases people, and attracts tourists and clean industry.

In a world dominated by hijackings, hostages, banana republic wars, atom bombs, and superpower posturings, we all yearn for something that makes sense to us as individuals. That something, for an increasing number of Americans, can be a hands-on involvement in a program that plants trees, builds trails, restores streams and streambanks, and creates a sense of ‘natural place’ in their communities.


Continually… I think back on the pleasures that I’ve had on the trail and the teachings that it has imparted to me, and how those pleasures and those teachings have given me happiness and a greater understanding of how to bring fullness and richness into my life.


Trails have multiple values and their benefits reach far beyond recreation. Trails can enrich the quality of life for individuals, make communities more livable, and protect, nurture, and showcase America’s grandeur by traversing areas of natural beauty, distinctive geography, historic significance, and ecological diversity. Trails are important for the nation’s health, economy, resource protection and education.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, *Trails for All Americans* report, 1990

The thrill of tramping alone and unafraid through a wilderness of lakes, creeks, alpine meadows, and glaciers is not known to many. A civilization can be built around the machine but it is doubtful that a meaningful life can be produced by it…. When man worships at the feet of avalanche lilies or discovers the delicacies of the pasque flower or finds the faint perfume of the phlox on rocky ridges, he will come to know that the real glories are God’s creations. When he feels the wind blowing through him on a high peak or sleeps under a closely matted white bark pine in an exposed basin, he is apt to find his relationship to the universe.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Supreme Court Justice and avid hiker, 1898–1980
Retaining a feeling of significance is becoming ever more difficult in our society of giant enterprises, directed by bureaucracy in which man becomes a smaller cog in a bigger machine. In too many cases they live and die without having confronted the fundamental realities of human existence. Their fragmented and piecemeal lives do not teach them the wholeness, unity and purpose that they need in order to be satisfied and secure. Outdoor recreation experiences can help mold into people the wholeness concept and the balance that is essential to a satisfying life. The outdoors embodies something that cannot be found anywhere else. It is not merely the scenery, or the mountain breeze, or the open spaces that delight us. The outdoors embody history, primitive experiences, and elements capable of lifting the spirit.

—Clayne Jensen, Outdoor Recreation in America, 1985

In summary, this study indicates that concerns about decreased property values, increased crime, and a lower quality of life due to the construction of multi-use trails are unfounded. In fact, the opposite is true. The study indicates that multi-use trails are an amenity that help sell homes, increase property values and improve the quality of life. Multi-use trails are tremendously popular and should continue to be built to meet the ever-growing demand for bicycle facilities in Seattle.


Always in big woods, when you leave familiar ground and step off alone to a new place, there will be, along with feelings of curiosity and excitement, a little nagging of dread. It is the ancient fear of the unknown, and it is your bond with the wilderness you are going into. What you are doing is exploring. You are understanding the first experience, not of the place, but of yourself in that place. It is the experience of our essential loneliness, for nobody can discover the world for anybody else. It is only after we have discovered it for ourselves that it becomes common ground, and a common bond, and we cease to be alone.

—Wendell Berry, The Unknown Wilderness: Kentucky’s Red River Gorge, 1971
When man ventures into the wilderness, climbs the ridges, and sleeps in the forest, he comes in close communion with his Creator. When man pits himself against the mountain, he taps inner springs of his strength. He comes to know himself.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, _Of Men and Mountains_, 1950

Why Trails?

▲ Trails promote health and fitness by providing an enjoyable and safe place for bicycling, walking, and jogging, removed from the hazards of motor vehicles.

▲ Trails contribute to economic vitality, increased property values and increases in regional tourism.

▲ Trails help protect resources and preserve open space by defining zones free of human habitation and development.

▲ Trails educate young and old Americans alike about the value and importance of the natural environment.

▲ Trails offer an alternative to motorized vehicles, connecting homes with schools, offices, and shopping areas and contribute to a healthier environment, with cleaner air and less traffic congestion.

▲ 155 million people walk for pleasure, 93 million bicycle, 41 million hike, trails provide access to 43 million for nature study, photography, small game hunting or primitive camping, 10 million ride horses on trails, 5 million backpack, and 11 million ski on trails.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, _Trails for All Americans_ report, 1990
Bicycling

It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up them and coast down them.

—ERNEST HEMINGWAY, American writer, 1899–1961

The more I think about our US domestic transportation problem from this vantage point [China] the more I see an increased role for the bicycle in American life. I am convinced after riding bikes an enormous amount here in China, that it is a sensible, economical, clean form of transportation and makes enormous good sense.

—GEORGE BUSH, US Liaison Office, Beijing, China, 1975

Nothing compares with the simple pleasure of a bike ride.


Let us bequeath our children more than the gadgets that surround us. If bicycling can be restored to the daily life of all Americans, it can be a vital step toward rebuilding health and vigor in all of us.

—DR. PAUL DUDLEY WHITE, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

The world lies right beyond the handlebars of any bicycle.


I thought of that [the theory of relativity] while riding my bike.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN, American scientist, 1879–1955
Bicycle facility planning is commonly thought of as the effort undertaken to develop a separate bikeway system composed completely of bicycle paths and lanes all interconnected and spaced closely enough to satisfy all the travel needs of bicyclists. In fact, such systems can be unnecessarily expensive and do not provide for the vast majority of bicycle travel. Existing highways, often with relatively inexpensive improvements, must serve as the base system to provide for the travel needs of bicyclists. Bicycle paths and lanes can augment this existing system in scenic corridors or places where access is limited. Thus, bicycle transportation planning is more than planning for bikeways and is an effort that should consider many alternatives to provide for safe and efficient bicycle travel.


Get a bicycle. You will certainly not regret it. If you live.

—MARK TWAIN (Samuel Clemens), American writer and humorist, 1835–1910

The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart.


When man invented the bicycle he reached the peak of his attainments. Here was a machine of precision and balance for the convenience of man. And (unlike subsequent inventions for man’s convenience) the more he used it, the fitter his body became. Here, for once, was a product of man’s brain that was entirely beneficial to those who used it, and of no harm or irritation to others. Progress should have stopped when man invented the bicycle.

—Elizabeth West, *Hovel in the Hills*, 1977

Cycle trails will abound in Utopia.

—H.G. Wells, English novelist, 1866–1946
We’ve been trying to sell cyclists of all ages and abilities on very detailed and demanding education and training programs designed to make them more like motorists. Bicyclists have shown they don’t want this. What cyclists repeatedly tell us they do want is more safe places to ride, and it is time we listened to that message.

—BILL WILKINSON, Executive Director, Bicycle Federation of America, 1991

Without question, bicycling is an efficient, economical and environmentally sound form of transportation and recreation. Bicycling is a great activity for families, recreational riders and commuters. Hillary, Chelsea and I have bicycles....

—PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, in Bicycling magazine, 1992

When I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race.

—H.G. WELLS, English novelist, 1866–1946

Since the bicycle makes little demand on material or energy resources, contributes little to pollution, makes a positive contribution to health and causes little death or injury, it can be regarded as the most benevolent of machines.

—S. S. WILSON, Bicycle Technology, Scientific American, March 1973

The bicycle is a vehicle of revolution. It can destroy the tyranny of the automobile as effectively as the printing press brought down despotus of flesh and blood. The revolution will be spontaneous, the sum total of individual revolts like my own. It may have already begun.


25
When the people lead, the leaders will follow.
—OLD AXIOM

We have met the enemy and he is us.
—POGO, 1972, comic strip character by Walt Kelly, 1913–73

There’s some end at last for the man who follows a path: mere rambling is interminable.
—SENECA, Roman statesman, 4 BC–65 AD

The path up and down is one and the same.
—HERACLITUS, Greek philosopher, 535–475 BC

I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
—PSALMS 121:1

Skills vary with the man. We must tread a straight path and strive by that which is born in us.
—PINDAR, Odes, 5th c. BC

Good company in a journey makes the way seem the shorter.
—IZAAK WALTON, English biographer, 1593–1683
All that glitters is not gold. All who wander are not lost.
—William Shakespeare, English dramatist & poet, 1564–1616

Mother of Marvels, mysterious and tender Nature, why do we not live more in thee.
—Henri Frédéric Amiel, Swiss writer, 1821–1881

Where there is no vision, the people perish.
—Proverbs 29:18

He who needs only coarse food, water and drink, and as pillow his folded arms will find happiness without further search.
—Confucius, Chinese philosopher, 551–479 BC

And the Lord said unto Satan, ‘When comest thou?’ Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, ‘From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.’
—Job 1:7

Who never climbed high never fell low.
—Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, 1732

The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger.
—William Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis, 1593

What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.
—Aristotle, Greek philosopher, 384–322 BC
There is more to life than increasing its speed.
—MOHANDAS K. GANDHI, Indian nationalist leader, 1869–1948

To climb steep hills requires slow pace at first.
—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, English dramatist & poet, 1564–1616

It’s easier to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top.
—ARNOLD BENNET, English writer, 1867–1931

Find a path or make one.
—SENECA, Roman statesman, 4 BC–65 AD

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
—PSALMS 119:105

Because it is there [famous explanation for wanting to climb Mount Everest].
—GEORGE MALLORY, English mountaineer, 1886–1924

I follow nature as the surest guide, and resign myself with implicit obedience to her sacred ordinances.
—CICERO, Roman orator, 106–43 BC

The dogs may bark … but the caravan moves on!
—OLD ADAGE
It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.
—SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI, Italian friar, 1181–1226

If you would attain to what you are not yet, you must always be displeased by what you are. For where you are pleased with yourself there you have remained. Keep adding, keep walking, keep advancing.
—SAINT AUGUSTINE, Christian bishop and theologian, 354–430

Prayer of the Woods

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter nights, the friendly shade screening you from the summer sun, and my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst as you journey on.

I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you lie, and the timber that builds your boat.

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the wood of your cradle, the shell of your coffin.

I am the bread of kindness and the floor of beauty. Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer: harm me not.

—First used in the PORTUGUESE FOREST RESERVES more than 1,000 years ago. Now used on nature trails throughout the world.

He who is everywhere is nowhere.
—SENeca, Roman statesman, 4 BC–65 AD
Conflict Resolution

A simple equation exists between freedom and numbers: the more people, the less freedom.

—ROYAL ROBBINS, *Basic Rockcraft*, 1971

Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN, American scientist, 1879–1955

For many years, outdoor recreation proved to be a popular way of expressing such cultural values as thrift, hard work, and self-reliance. Today, we also see outdoor recreation reflecting the more contemporary values of conspicuous consumption, immediate gratification, peer-group acceptance, and the easy life. This suggests that outdoor recreation is, if not a battle ground, at least a focal point for cultural clashes.

—WILBUR LAPAGE, Cultural Fogweed and Outdoor Recreation Research, in *Recreation Symposium Proceedings*, 1971

Trails urge people to slow down, not to speed up.

—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1996

Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Rasselas*, 1759

Trail conflicts can and do occur among different user groups, among different users within the same user group, and as a result of factors not related to users’ trail activities at all. In fact, no actual contact among trail users need occur for conflict to be felt.

—ROGER MOORE, *Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice*, 1994
Splintering the outdoor user groups is playing into the hands of those interests that would exploit or destroy the resource we’re all preoccupied with saving. The Davids of the world have a tough job already. If we continue to sling rocks at each other, the Goliaths will walk or ride all over us. Let’s build trails, not walls between each other.

—JOHN VIEHMAN, Mountain Bikes: Let’s Build Trails, Not Walls, Backpacker, August 1990

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.

—ABRAHAM MASLOW, American psychologist, 1908–1970

The only way you can expect someone to understand your point of view is to provide them with the substance from which your outlook was developed. Essentially then, the task is education and not argumentation.

—HERB COHEN, You Can Negotiate Anything, 1980

There are many kinds of trail users: hikers, horseback riders, bicyclists, motorcyclists, ski tourers, snowshoers, snowmobilers, all-terrain-vehicle riders, joggers, and more recently, mountain bicyclists.

Because different types of trail users often utilize the same trails, there is a potential for conflict. Satisfaction is often affected by the type of users encountered and how they behave. Encountering large groups is particularly disruptive of others’ solitude. All four of the major types of trail users (hikers, horseback riders, bicycle riders, and motorcycle riders) usually enjoy meeting hikers, but hikers prefer not to meet any other types.

Furthermore, horseback riders and bicyclists are not particularly fond of motorcycle riders. Similarly, cross-country skiers prefer not to meet snowmobilers. This would argue for the separation of trails users, particularly motorized users, whenever possible.

—EDWIN KRUMPE and ROBERT LUCAS, Literature review paper, President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986
Compromise, n. Such an adjustment of conflicting interests as gives each adversary the satisfaction of thinking he has got what he ought not to have, and is deprived of nothing except what was justly his due.

—Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary*, 1881–1911

Twelve principles for minimizing conflicts on multiple-use trails:

1. Recognize Conflict as Goal Interference – Do not treat conflict as an inherent incompatibility among different trail activities, but rather as goal interference attributed to another’s behavior.

2. Provide Adequate Trail Opportunities – Offer adequate trail mileage and provide opportunities for a variety of trail experiences. This will help reduce congestion and allow users to choose the conditions that are best suited to the experiences they desire.

3. Minimize Number of Contacts in Problem Areas – Each contact among trail users has the potential to result in conflict. So, as a general rule, reduce the number of user contacts whenever possible. This is especially true in congested areas and at trailheads.

4. Involve Users as Early as Possible – Identify the present and likely future users of each trail and involve them in the process of avoiding and resolving conflicts as early as possible, preferably before conflicts occur.

5. Understand User Needs – Determine the motivations, desired experiences, norms, setting preferences, and other needs of the present and likely future users of each trail. This ‘customer’ information is critical for anticipating and managing conflicts.

6. Identify the Actual Sources of Conflict – Help users to identify the specific tangible causes of any conflicts they are experiencing. In other words, get beyond emotions and stereotypes as quickly as possible, and get to the roots of any problems that exist.
7. Work with Affected Users – Work with all parties involved to reach mutually agreeable solutions to these specific issues. Users who are not involved as part of the solution are more likely to be part of the problem now and in the future.

8. Promote Trail Etiquette – Minimize the possibility that any particular trail contact will result in conflict by actively and aggressively promoting responsible trail behavior.

9. Encourage Positive Interaction Among Different Users – Trail users are usually not as different from one another as they believe. Providing positive interactions both on and off the trail will help break down barriers and stereotypes, and build understanding, good will, and cooperation.

10. Favor ‘Light-Handed Management’ – Use the most ‘light-handed approaches’ that will achieve objectives. This is essential in order to provide the freedom of choice and natural environments that are so important to trail-based recreation. Intrusive design and coercive management are not compatible with high-quality experiences.

11. Plan and Act Locally – Whenever possible, address issues regarding multiple-use trails at the local level. This allows greater sensitivity to local needs and provides better flexibility for addressing difficult issues on a case-by-case basis.

12. Monitor Progress – Monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the decisions made and programs implemented.

—Roger Moore, Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice, 1994
Connections

We believe that people are genuinely excited about building a nationwide system of interconnected trails and greenways.
—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1997

By linking open spaces we can achieve a whole that is better than the sum of the parts.
—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

Trails consolidate and connect communities, rather than encourage them to expand and fragment.
—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1997

Sooner or later, wittingly or unwittingly, we must pay for every intrusion on the natural environment.
—BARRY COMMONER, Science and Survival, 1966

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a manor of they friends or of thine own were; any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.
—JOHN DONNE, Devotions XVII, 1624

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.
—JOHN MUIR, My First Summer in the Sierra, 1911
Everything is connected to everything else.
—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948

Greenways are ... about connections: connections between people and the land, between public parks, natural areas, historic sites, and other open spaces, between conservation and economic development, and between environmental protection and our quality of life.
—CHUCK FLINK and ROBERT SEARNS, Greenways, 1993

Imagine walking out your front door, getting on a bicycle, a horse ... or simply donning your backpack and within minutes of your home, setting off along a continuous network of recreation corridors that could lead across the country.
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

A connected system of parks and parkways is manifestly far more complete and useful than a series of isolated parks. Report to the Portland [OR] Park Board, 1903.
—FREDERICK LAW OLMS TED, American landscape architect, 1822–1903

Greenways can draw people together in their communities to provide open spaces for all close to their own homes. They have the potential to be this country’s most important land-based effort for conservation and recreation in the next several decades.

They can draw private and local entities into lead roles in provision of recreation opportunities. They can capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit of Americans and give pride of accomplishment and responsibility to millions of people in every community. They can protect vital water, fish, wildlife, and recreation resources as integral parts of the growth of cities and communities.

And, if greenways truly capture the imagination and boldness of the American spirit, they could eventually form the corridors that connect open spaces, parks, forests, and deserts—and Americans—from sea to shining sea.
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986
due to some quirks of history that won’t be repeated, we do have one last chance to
save urban land—linear open space—in rather large chunks and weave them into a
connected system of trails and greenways … it is an opportunity we can’t afford to miss.
—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2000

To follow a trail is to establish a link with the history of man. It is at once the most
primitive and the most civilized of activities. A trail may well have been followed first
by animals seeking food and water; Indians following the game wore it a little wider.
Explorers followed the same paths, to be followed in turn by soldiers and settlers and
men who poured concrete over footpaths. The concrete now goes just about every
place we need to go. But we now have the leisure to travel just for the sake of
traveling, and there is no better way to do it than by trail.
—LENNON HOOPER, National Park Trails, 1973

We can tie this country together with threads of green that everywhere grant us
access to the natural world.
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS,
Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

There are all sorts of opportunities to link separated [open] spaces together, and while
plenty of money is needed to do it, ingenuity can accomplish a great deal. Our
metropolitan areas are crisscrossed with connective strips. Many are no longer used,… but they are there if we only look.
—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

They should form a framework of parks and forests connected by a series of paths
and trails for general outdoor living.
—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975
Conservation

Our values are etched in the landscape. That is our enduring legacy.

—INTERIOR SECRETARY BRUCE BABBITT, 2000

I would not have … every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time.

—GIFFORD PINCHOT, first Chief of the US Forest Service, (1905), 1865–1946

The good news is that Americans will, in increasing numbers, begin to value and protect the vast American landscape. The bad news is that they may love it to death.

—CHARLES LITTLE, The American Land, 1979

[We stand] today poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight. This, in brief, is the quiet conservation crisis.

—STEWART UDALL, The Quiet Crisis and the Next Generation, 1963

There is a limit to the number of lands of shoreline on the lakes; there is a limit to the number of lakes in existence; there is a limit to the mountainous areas of the world, and … there are portions of natural scenic beauty which are God-made, and … which of a right should be the property of all people.

—ARTHUR CARHART, USDA Forest Service’s first landscape architect, in a memorandum to Aldo Leopold, 1919
God keeps on making children but he has quit making land.
—CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY,
*From Rails to Trails*, 1975

What we’re really after is conservation of things we value, and thus I have been trying the term ‘conservation easement.’ Another term may well prove better, but ‘conservation easement’ has a certain unifying value: It does not rest the case on one single benefit—as does ‘scenic easement,’ but on the whole constellation of benefits—drainage, air pollution, soil conservation, historic significance, control of sprawl, and the like.

The long fight to save wild beauty represents democracy at its best. It requires citizens to practice the hardest of virtues—self-restraint.
—EDWIN WAY TEALE, *Circle of Seasons*, 1953

The key to intelligent tinkering is to keep all the parts.
—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948

Friend at home! I charge you to spare, preserve and cherish some portion of your primitive forests; for when these are cut away, I apprehend they will not easily be replaced.
—HORACE GREELEY, Editor of the *New York Tribune*, 1811–1872

A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it.
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62
Today, we must realize that nature is revealed in the simplest meadow, wood lot, marsh, stream, or tidepool, as well as in the remote grandeur of our parks and wilderness areas.

—Ansel Adams, American photographer, 1902–84

Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?

—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

Roosevelt’s brand of conservation set the course that others would follow for decades. Its focus was responsibility and restraint in managing natural resources, and its opponent within the camp was preservationism (led by John Muir), which favored protecting the earth from the hand of man. The tension between management and preservation is present to this day in both natural resource agencies and the environmental movement itself.

—Peter Borelli, Crossroads, 1988

Let us leave a splendid legacy for our children … let us turn to them and say, this you inherit: guard it well, for it is far more precious than money … and once destroyed, nature’s beauty cannot be repurchased at any price.

—Ansel Adams, American photographer, 1902–84

My kind of loyalty was loyalty to one’s country, not to its institutions or its officeholders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to.

—Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), American writer and humorist, 1835–1910
When a tree falls there is no shade.
—LAO-TZU, Chinese philosopher, 604–531 BC

In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.
—BABA DIOUM, Senegalese conservationists, 1937–

A land ethic for tomorrow should be as honest as Thoreau’s *Walden*, and as comprehensive as the sensitive science of ecology. It should stress the oneness of our resources and the live-and-help-live logic of the great chain of life. If, in haste to ‘progress,’ the economics of ecology are disregarded by citizens and policy makers alike, the result will be an ugly America.
—STEWART UDALL, US Secretary of the Interior (1961–69); 1920–

I have explored on this rocky bit of shore the great concept that nothing stands alone and everything, no matter how small, is part of a greater whole.
—SIGURD F. OLSON, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.
—ALDO LEOPOLD, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

Protect the land that I have photographed, so that it may be experienced by your children’s children.
—ANSEL ADAMS, American photographer, 1902–84
Understanding WHY things are done is at least as important as HOW. If you know why something is happening, you'll figure out a way to build a structure to match a need. Soak up the core concepts. Experiment and keep track of the results. Be curious. Add new techniques and tactics to your bag of tricks. Get dirty and HAVE FUN!


The engineer needs to be an artist in laying out and designing new trails. His task is to subtly blend his own accomplishments with the naturalness of the surroundings and avoid any indication of contrivance.

—Stan Murray, Appalachian Trail Conference chairman, encouragement to AT maintainers, 1971

Planning and building trails takes lots of time, money and labor—always scarce commodities.


The ultimate compliment paid to a trail crew is to say, ‘It doesn’t look like you had to do much work to get through here.’ Avoid the Bulldozer Bob look. Make your trail ‘just happen.’


A trail and its markings do not constitute any intrusion upon naturalness of the forest wilderness. Trails should be marked and maintained in a manner to eliminate the necessity of labor and uncertainty in finding one’s route. They should be an open course, a joy for travel. In that manner, without concern for route finding, the traveler will derive full benefit from his surroundings. This is what we have sought to accomplish in our constant and unending emphasis on the indicated standards of Appalachian Trail marking and maintenance.

—Myron Avery, final report to the Appalachian Trail Conference, 1952
Let’s get one thing straight: Trails weren’t put there by the Supreme Being of your choice. They were cut by human beings just like you and me.


It is much more important to understand how the forces of water and gravity combine to move dirt than it is to actually dig dirt, install waterbars, or build puncheon.


Of trail making there are three stages: There is dreaming the trail, there is prospecting the trail, there is making the trail. Of the first one can say nothing—dreams are fragile, intangible. prospecting the trail—there lies perhaps the greatest of the joys of trail work. Making trails is the more plodding work; yet it has reliefs and pleasures of its own.

—Nathaniel Goodrich, paper delivered to New England Trail Council, 1917

I am happy, however, just to go into the forest and put a new handrail on a bridge or putter over a few rods of trail, for, above everything, I am a trail man.

—Charles Blood, helped construct the White Mountain trail system in New Hampshire, 1930

Remember that the two most common injuries in rock work are pinched (or smashed) fingers and tweaked (or blown out) backs. Both sets of injuries are a direct result of using muscles first and brains last. High-quality rock work is almost always a methodical, even tedious task. Safe work is ALWAYS faster than taking time out for a trip to the infirmary.


As a rule, try to hurt the earth as little as possible.

In trail making, as in all other activities, progress and improvement are inevitable; time marches on.


We have overbuilt many roadways in America. We can afford to do that. We cannot afford to overbuild our trails. For in making them ‘better,’ we make the experience worse.


The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.

—CONFUCIUS, Chinese philosopher, 551–479 BC

A lot of learning takes place when you slosh over a wet trail in a downpour and watch what the water is doing and how your drains and structures are holding up.


The focus should be on maintaining basic passage, rather than creating a manicured trail corridor. A more natural look is desired. Smaller blow-downs that can be easily stepped over might be left. Because we are striving for a natural environment, resource protection is the key. The overall goal should be to keep the wilderness experience as natural as possible through trail work that is simple and that blends in.


Trail design should seek to accomplish three objectives. These are satisfaction of user needs, protection of the resource, and cost effectiveness.

Trail location and construction is relatively a simple job. Money, proper workmanship, common sense, abundant energy, and simple tools and equipment are the only requisites to good work. The employment of location and supervising engineers and specially organized survey parties, and the use of precise methods involving technical practices such as accurate leveling, transit work, detailed field notes, and profile maps of location, have no place in the trail program.


Trail building starts by getting on your hands and knees. Look at your soil material. Find out what it is composed of and what it does in the rain. Find out where the water comes from before it gets to your trail and where it goes when it leaves. Your prime consideration is slowing and directing the water runoff from your trail surface.

—Mark Edwards, Trails Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in *Signs, Trails, and Wayside Exhibits* by Suzanne Trapp, 1994

High quality trail design is primarily a balance between beauty and function. Natural features and scenery exist ideally in creative juxtaposition with the continuity, efficiency, and durability of a proposed route.


Any other feature of construction may be improved from month to month or from year to year, but if the grade is not properly established the trail must in time be abandoned. Thus not only may time and money be wasted, but the trail while in use will be unsatisfactory.


No factor in trail construction is more important than proper drainage, and many sections of good trail are damaged and destroyed by erosion which could have been prevented.

—Civilian Conservation Corps, *Construction of Trails Handbook*, 1937
The laying of a trail … becomes not only a pleasure in itself, but an inducement to plan a better way of life, to construct worth-while things, or to weave a better product in the loom of our being.


We forget that trail construction is more common sense than engineering. Thorough knowledge of the country, love for that kind of work, instinct of a dog to know which way to get home, and last but not least, disregard for the time of day, are the principal requisites. A man with a tripod, transit, and level has no business on trails. Personally I would consider him a nuisance. We put too much stress on technical knowledge in simple matters where only good common sense should prevail. In my experience, wild animals solved many problems for me. Good experienced engineers will see the point and agree with me. We are handicapped so much by inexperienced technical knowledge that it takes sometimes ten men to decide whether a certain shrub or tree should be taken out where a dozen could be taken out without injury to the landscape or nature. In conclusion, I want to thank you all in the Park Service. I regret to leave you, but law must take its course and I am leaving after 42 years of service to the nation.

[letter to National Park Service Director]

—Gabriel Sovulewski, Supervisor of Yosemite National Park from 1906–14
Definitions

...a trail is a linear corridor, on land or water, with protected status and public access for recreation or transportation. Trails can be used to preserve open space, provide a natural respite in urban areas, limit soil erosion in rural areas, and buffer wetlands and wildlife habitat along waterways. Trails may be surfaced with soil, asphalt, sand and clay, clam shells, rock, gravel or wood chips. Trails may follow a river, a ridge line, a mountain game trail, an abandoned logging road, a state highway. They may link historic landmarks within a city. Trails may be maintained by a federal, state, or local agency, a local trails coalition, or a utility company.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, *Trails for All Americans* report, 1990

Backcountry trails, sometimes called ‘single-track’ or primitive trails, are generally unsurfaced natural routes that range from narrow treadways to carefully planned and elaborately constructed (but natural-looking) thoroughfares. Attention to slopes and effective drainage is essential for the long-term stability of this type of trail.


Trails are routes on land or water, used for recreational purposes such as walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, equestrian activities, mountain biking, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, and vehicular travel by motorcycle, four-wheel drive or all-terrain off-road vehicles.


Recreation trails are for people. They allow us to go back to our roots. Trails help humans make sense of a world increasingly dominated by automobiles and pavement. They allow us to come more closely in touch with our natural surroundings, to soothe our psyches, to challenge our bodies, and to practice ancient skills.

Multiple-use recreation trails or ‘multi-use trails’ are generic terms for what many people call trails or greenways. These trails are built to high standards, are usually 10-feet wide, asphalt or concrete paved, and designed for many types of use. Bicycling, walking, running, in-line skating, and other nonmotorized uses are typical on multi-use trails, and they are frequently very heavily used.


A trail offers its users awareness of surroundings. Trails preserve vistas. Trails preserve ecosystems which allow natural sounds to drown out urban sounds. Trails invite touch and discovery. Trails protect and preserve fragrance. The trail experiences offer users feelings of bigness and connection with the earth. Trails unfold mystery, offer surprise, preserve the detail. In fact, well designed trails offer the hikers, bicyclists, skaters or other adventurers new sensations each time they are used.


A trail is a narrow highway over which a pack animal can travel with safety during the usual period when the need for a highway exists.

—USDA FOREST SERVICE, *Trail Construction on the National Forests*, 1915

Rail-trails are trails constructed on abandoned railroad corridors converted to recreational use or ‘railbanked’ for possible future rail use. They can be very short to hundreds of miles long. Typically surfaced in crushed stone or paved, their moderate grades make rail-trails popular with bicyclists, walkers, and others.


Leisure is the time available to an individual when the disciplines of work, sleep, and other basic needs have been met.

—COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION RESEARCH ADVISORY GROUP, 1970
In its simplest and most effective form, a nature trail is a narrow path leading through sections of park or woodland chosen for the richness and variety of the natural history materials flanking it and one made alluring by a succession of well-written non-technical labels which name the specimens and give important information regarding them. In other words, a nature trail is a roofless museum the width of a foot-path, a mile or so long.


Water trails: Many people consider any corridor of open water used for recreational travel or string of lakes connected by portage to be a water trail. Camping accessibility by water along the route makes multi-day travel possible. Canoeing, kayaking, and, in some areas, personal-watercraft use are all popular ways to enjoy water trails.


Greenway: 1. A linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, scenic road, or other route. 2. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage. 3. An open-space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas. 4. Locally, certain strips or linear parks designated as parkway or greenbelt.

—CHARLES LITTLE, *Greenways for America*, 1990

A practical working definition for greenways is: a landscape linkage designed to connect open spaces to form protected corridors that follow natural and man-made terrain features and embrace ecological, cultural, and recreational amenities where applicable.

—KEITH HAY, *Greenways and Biodiversity*, *Landscape Linkages and Biodiversity*, 1991
A greenway is a corridor of protected open space that is managed for conservation and/or recreation. The common characteristic of greenways is that they all go somewhere. Greenways follow natural land or water features, like ridges or rivers, or human landscape features like abandoned railroad corridors or canals. They link natural reserves, parks, cultural and historic sites with each other and, in some cases, with populated areas. Greenways not only protect environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife, but also can provide people with access to outdoor recreation and enjoyment close to home.

—Florida Greenways Commission, Creating a Statewide Greenway System for People … for Wildlife … for Florida, 1994

A ‘recreational greenway’ is a linear open space that contains a trail(s). Although a greenway trail can take any form, the term generally refers to a high-standard paved trail that accommodates multiple uses.

—Roger Moore and Thomas Ross, Trails and Recreational Greenways: Corridors of Benefits, Parks & Recreation, January 1998

....if you take a syllable from each of these terms—green from greenbelt and way from parkway, the general idea of greenway emerges: a natural, green way based on protected linear corridors which will improve environmental quality and provide for outdoor recreation.

—Charles Little, Greenways for America, 1990

Greenways are linear corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and/or recreational purposes. They often follow rivers, stream valleys, ridges, railroad corridors, utility rights-of-way, canals, scenic roads or other linear features.

—Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Recreation Planning Manual, 1993
A greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wide corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural, and scenic features. Greenways can be land- or water-based, running along stream corridors, shorelines or wetlands. Some follow old railways, canals, ridge tops, or other features. They can incorporate both public and private property. Some greenways are primarily recreational corridors, while others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage. Greenways differ in their location and function, but overall, a greenway network will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance the natural beauty and the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.


Greenways have been described as linear parks within towns and cities. These parks are usually found along flood-prone rivers and streams, often the only undeveloped land left within cities. When trails are constructed through these parcels, however, they become popular recreation areas for walking, jogging or even bicycling. They also provide linkage between neighborhoods and public areas such as schools or shopping centers, and even help maintain wildlife habitat and unique natural areas.

—Jane Rohling, Corridors of Green, Wildlife in North Carolina, 1988

Recreation is usually defined as some sort of diversion, exercise, or activity that refreshes, relaxes, and pleases the participant. Recreation may take place anywhere, in almost any environment, for the experience is primarily a personal phenomenon, but one that may be shared with family or friends. The recreation experience can usually be enhanced by and may depend on the setting in which it takes place. For many, much of the pleasure of outdoor recreation is the respite it provides from urban densities and pressures and the opportunity to renew our ties with nature.

—USDA Forest Service, National Forest Landscape Management, Recreation, Volume 2, Chapter 2, 1987
Recreation consists of any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time, other than those to which people are normally ‘highly committed.’

—COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION RESEARCH ADVISORY GROUP, 1970

Partnership: a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, for the achievement of a specified goal.

—AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, 1998

Sustainability: the ability of the travel surface to support current and anticipated appropriate uses with minimal impact to the adjoining natural systems and cultural resources. Sustainable trails have negligible soil loss or movement and allow the naturally occurring plant systems to inhabit the area, while allowing for the occasional pruning and removal of plants necessary to build and maintain the trail. If well built, a sustainable trail minimizes seasonal muddiness and erosion. It should not normally affect natural fauna adversely nor require re-routing and major maintenance over long periods of time.

—USDI NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Natural Resources Management Guideline, 1997

When you work in a bureaucracy, trying to make program changes sometimes seems like trying to slow dance with a cow: it’s not much fun, it annoys the cow and you step in a lot of manure.

—BETH TIMSON, From Waterbars to Polygons: The Evolution of a State Trails Program, Trends, 33(2), 1996
Equestrian

The country has gone sane and got back to horses.

Man was created to complete the horse.
—Edward Abbey, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

No one ever came to grief—except honorable grief—through riding horses. No hour of life is lost that is spent in the saddle. Young men have often been ruined through owning horses, or through backing horses, but never through riding them; unless of course they break their necks, which, taken at a gallop, is a very good death to die.
—Winston Churchill, British statesman, 1874–1965

Sit loosely in the saddle of life.
—Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish author and poet, 1850–94

I had rather ride on an ass that carries me than a horse that throws me.
—George Herbert, Jacula Predentum, 1651

It is not best to swap horses while crossing the river.
—Abraham Lincoln, reply to the National Union League, June 9, 1864

You can see what man made from the seat of an automobile, but the best way to see what God made is from the back of a horse.
—Charles Russell, Western artist, 1864–1926
A canter is the cure for every evil.
—Benjamin Disraeli, The Young Duke, 1831

People on horses look better than they are. People in cars look worse then they are.
—Marya Mannes, More in Anger; 1958

A man that don’t love a horse, there is something the matter with him.
—Will Rogers, cowboy humorist, 1879–1935, New York Times, August 17, 1924

A good horse should be seldom spurred.
—Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, 1732

There is more to lose than land. A way of life and an understanding of who we are is also at stake. Horsemanship is important to our country’s history and lore. It teaches us responsibility and stewardship and how to care for another life form. When we protect this, it enriches our communities.
—John Turner, President and CEO, Conservation Fund, 1997

There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.
—Winston Churchill, British statesman, 1874–1965

There will never be a time when the old horse is not superior to any auto ever made.
—Will Rogers, cowboy humorist, 1879–1935, syndicated column, September 11, 1932
If you ride a horse, sit close and tight. If you ride a man, sit easy and light.
—Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard’s Almanack, 1732-57

He who would venture nothing must not get on a horse.
—Spanish proverb

If an ass goes traveling, he’ll not come home a horse.
—Thomas Fuller, British scholar, 1608–61

I want to leave the world a better place for horses and people.

Fortunate indeed is the rider of a good trail horse; for nothing he possesses will provide a more liberal and constant opportunity to explore and become thoroughly familiar with the open range lands, forests, mountains and wilderness areas of America.

There is no secret so close as that between a rider and his horse.
—Robert Smith Surtees, Mr. Sponge’s Sporting Tour, 1853

Horses are our silent partners. When we learn their language. This partnership grows strong.
Take care of your body with steadfast fidelity. The soul must see through these eyes alone, and if they are dim, the whole world is clouded.

—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, German philosopher and writer, 1749–1832

There’s something wrong with a society that drives a car to work out in a gym.

—BILL NYE, The Science Guy, 1999

Physical fitness is vital for the optimal function of the brain, for retardation of the onset of serious arteriosclerosis which is beginning to appear in early adult life, and for longevity, and a useful and healthy life for our older citizens.

—DR. PAUL DUDLEY WHITE, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

Without health there is no happiness. An attention to health, then, should take the place of every other object.

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, Third US President (1801–09), 1743–1826

It is not God, but people themselves who shorten their lives by not keeping physically fit.

—CARL LINNAEUS, Swedish botanist and explorer, 1707–78

We are under-exercised as a nation. We look instead of play. We ride instead of walk. Our existence deprives us of the minimum of physical activity essential for healthy living.

—JOHN F. KENNEDY, address to National Football Foundation, New York City, December 5, 1961
Hiking a ridge, a meadow, a river bottom, is as healthy a form of exercise as one can get.

—William O. Douglas, Supreme Court Justice and avid hiker, 1898–1980

Most people are pantywaists. Exercise is good for you.

—Emma ‘Grandma’ Gatewood, at age 67 first woman to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail (1955), 1887–1973

Increased access to open space and scenic resources, and increased participation in outdoor recreation activities have been linked to better physical fitness leading to decreased public health care costs; reduced social service and police/justice costs; as well as reduced self-destructive and anti-social behavior.

—USDI National Park Service, Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors, 1995

Not less than two hours a day should be devoted to exercise.

—Thomas Jefferson, Third US President (1801–09), 1743–1826

After dinner sit a while; after supper walk a mile.

—Thomas Fuller, British scholar, 1608–61
Greenway-making is as much a matter of scrounging as it is of making genteel applications to government and foundation funding sources. The fact is, scroungers make by far the best greenway leaders simply because, by rooting around, they somehow find the grants, the in-kind services, donated materials, and significantly, the gifts of land. There is no way to provide tips for the art of scrounging; scroungers are born, not made.

—CHARLES LITTLE, *Greenways for America*, 1990

Fiscally we are budgeted for the 1950's while our problems are those of the 1970's.


The best way to save land is to buy it outright....

—WILLIAM WHYTE, *The Last Landscape*, 1968

Can anybody remember when the times were not hard and money was not scarce?

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82
Greenways

Anatomically, greenways are long and skinny yet they can get fat when they go through a park. Emotionally, they return to a town the ‘front porch’ socializing rudely taken away by the car. Morally, they can stand as hometown environmental monuments for future generations. Greenways deserve to be anthropomorphized, for they’re the country’s healthiest brainchild since the conception of national parks.

—Anne Lusk, Vermont greenway advocate, 1990

Greenways are terribly important in the urban environment because they provide an edge, which means you have more people connected to the greenway itself, to the system of connections. Also, they’re practical. In many areas, we can’t get more ‘big fat guys’—parks in the traditional sense. But by restoring rivers and other corridors, we can save the skinny ones.

—William Spitzer, former Acting Assistant Director, National Recreation Programs, National Park Service, 1998

The ‘linkage of urban and rural spaces’: this is what makes the greenway idea so fresh and compelling.

—Charles Little, Greenways for America, 1990

The dream is to spiderweb this entire nation with so many green threads, principally along streams and ridges, that every citizen would be only minutes away from one.

—Noel Grove, Land & People, 1994

It is easy to fall into the assumption that everything we do harms the environment. Our relationship with nature is complex and it is unfair to over-emphasize our harmful impacts. Indeed, greenways represent our desire to foster a healthy and responsible attitude toward nature.

Greenways are ‘the paths to the future’ as they link people to the outdoors. They meet an ever growing need, a need to leave the hectic city (if only for a moment) and to experience earth beneath your feet and fresh air in your lungs—to feel life and to feel alive.

—VICTORIA LOGUE, Backpacking in the ‘90s, 1995

We need to bring open space to the people, instead of expecting them to journey to find it. That’s where greenways are contributing.

—GILBERT GROSVENOR, Vice Chairman, President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987

If the greenway movement can help us get back a bit of honest natural beauty and our heritage of historic place, we shall owe it much.

—CHARLES LITTLE, Greenways for America, 1990

Greenways allow us to treat land and water as a system, as interlocking pieces in a puzzle, not as isolated entities.

—ED MCMAHON, Director, American Greenways Program, 1999

Protecting environmental corridors through establishing and managing greenways represents one method (to be used in conjunction with other approaches) to safeguard vital ecological processes.


To leave for our children what our grandparents enjoyed as children … trees, streams, and that quiet place from which to draw strength.

—CAPITAL AREA GREENWAY COMMISSION REPORT, Raleigh, NC, 1974
Linkage is the central theme and goal of the greenway concept—to reconnect and preserve natural land and water habitats, thus reversing the biologically destructive effects of landscape fragmentation that inevitably result from urbanization.

—KEITH HAY, Greenways and Biodiversity, *Landscape Linkages and Biodiversity*, 1991

A highway takes your car to the country, a greenway your mind.

—CHARLES LITTLE, *Greenways for America*, 1990

Greenway corridors have three standard features: they are linear pieces of land, they are under some form of long-term protection and they connect one area to another.


The building of greenway systems takes time, money, patience, technical knowledge, and partnerships. Without dedicated people, the greenway corridors that protect the habitat linkages so essential for biodiversity would not happen.

—KEITH HAY, Greenways and Biodiversity, *Landscape Linkages and Biodiversity*, 1991

....[the greenway story] is the story of a remarkable citizen-led movement to get us out of our cars and into the landscape—on paths and trails through corridors of green that can link city to country and people to nature....

—CHARLES LITTLE, *Greenways for America*, 1990

Greenways provide more bang for the recreational buck by taking advantage of otherwise unbuildable landscapes like floodplains and ridgelines, and by linking lands already in public ownership.

—ED McMahan, Director, American Greenways Program, 1998
Greenways are a bold idea with the magic to stir people to action. Greenways themselves are not new. We want to encourage their spread across the American landscape, by focusing on their values to communities. A nationwide network could ultimately grow from local action in thousands of communities across America.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986

No other single conservation opportunity offers so many advantages. No single environmental solution serves so many purposes. Publicly or privately owned, following rivers or ridges, greenways can link the nation in a network of green.

—PATRICK NOONAN, President, The Conservation Fund, 1993

A greenway is the great equalizer. Everyone, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick, can use it in order to have the opportunity to enjoy the out-of-doors. A greenway just says, here I am.

—ANNE LUSK, Stowe, Vermont, Builds a Greenway, Small Town, Nov/Dec 1989

By preserving land in its natural state you allow the natural system as God designed it to function. If you think of greenways as a means to provide a place for biological communities in their natural state to be maintained, and if at the same time you provide human access to the greenway corridor, you have given people a means to look at our world in a different way.

—CHUCK FLINK, President, Greenways Inc., 1988

....linear open space has significantly more perimeter or edge than traditional consolidated parks. This edge may be used to buffer competing land uses, and soften the urban image.

—BILL FLOURNOY, Capital City Greenway: A Report to the City Council on the Benefits, Potential, and Methodology of Establishing a Greenway System in Raleigh (NC) report, 1972
....let us build many more golf course developments, but for the most part without the golf courses themselves—substituting community greens for putting greens and greenways for fairways.


The greenway design should ensure accessibility to all whether disabled by a physical handicap or by the weight of carrying parcels from market to home.

—CHUCK FLINK, President, Greenways Inc., 1991

Communities [should] establish Greenways, corridors of private and public recreation lands and waters, to provide people access to open spaces close to where they live, and to link together the rural and urban spaces in the American landscape.

—PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, *Americans and the Outdoors*, 1987

To make a greenway … is to make a community. And that, above all else, is what the movement is all about.

—CHARLES LITTLE, *Greenways for America*, 1990

We have a vision for delivering outdoor recreation opportunities close to home for all Americans: a network of Greenways, created by local action, linking private and public recreation areas in linear corridors of land and water. Greenways can bring access to the natural world to every American, and can eventually, if we act now with speed and with foresight, link our communities and our recreation areas together across the nation.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, *Americans and the Outdoors*, 1987
Greenways are many things to many people. And that’s one of their virtues.

—CHRIS BROWN, Chief, National Park Service, River, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, 1994

Greenways provide a wide range of benefits for people, wildlife and the economy, and a system of greenways and larger greenscapes offers many, long-term ecological benefits.

Greenways:

- preserve biodiversity
- provide wildlife corridors
- protect water quality
- direct growth
- maintain character/sense of place
- serve as outdoor classrooms
- provide outdoor recreation
- contribute to high quality of life
- enhance surrounding property values
- stimulate tourism and related business ventures
- offer alternative transportation
- reduce public expenditures to correct environmental problems (flooding, water/air treatment, etc.)

—TERESA MOORE, Greenscapes and Greenways—Maryland’s Green Infrastructure, Trends, 33(2), 1996
Greenways are popular now for some very good and lasting reasons. They remind us that our urban environment is not just a fume-choked freeway or boulevard of billboards.

We may go out of our way to despise the city rather than see it as our own habitat, however unnatural. Here we work, consume, sleep—but we also grow, play, and learn. Few of us live near the rainforests or Arctic wilderness that attract so much environmental attention. We experience our lives as urban people—by the year 2000, over 80% of Americans will live in cities or suburban areas. And yet there is wildness, if not Wilderness by bureaucratic designation, in our urban areas.

As conservationists, greenways, as places where the natural world lives in the midst of cities, deserve more of our attention. Most of us have an image of a greenway as a river plus a trail. Those are the typical ingredients in greenway systems—some as large and complex as the Hudson River, others as small as the nameless creek through a townhouse project. Other greenway corridors include road and utility rights-of-way, abandoned rail lines, drainageways and canals.

All these combine the natural with the industrial, provide recreation and wildlife habitat, and link utilities and living streams. In short, greenways are linear parks that borrow the power in our minds of the River, the Forest, and the Journey.

The importance of greenways lies in this diversity. While greenways provide some very tangible benefits to the urban world, they also make appealing environmental projects....

Hiking

Take nothing for granted. Not one blessed, cool mountain day or one hellish, desert day or one sweaty, stinky, hiking companion. It is all a gift.
—CINDY ROSS, Journey on the Crest, 1987

....unless we begin to protect existing hiking trails and provide new ones to cope with projected demands, the hiker faces a grim future—more and more hikers with fewer and fewer places to hike.
—ROBERT LUCAS and ROBERT RINEHART, The Neglected Hiker, Backpacker, 1976

I would, as always, be going alone. I know well the arguments that solo hiking in a remote wilderness is foolhardy, dangerous, even irresponsible, but I know even more the great rewards that await the lone wanderer, rewards that can only be glimpsed by those who walk in groups.
—CHRIS TOWNSEND, Walking the Yukon: A Solo Trek Through the Land of Beyond, 1993

Dear Lord, if you pick ‘em up, I’ll put ‘em down.
—Hiker’s Prayer

So, good luck to you fellow-hiker, wherever you go! May you never run out of tobacco or songs; may the trees be great and old and the girls young and comely. May the sun shine upon your cheek and the shade lie upon the back of your neck. May you find wood and strawberries and sassafras. But he who flingeth away the bottle and hindereth not the picnic paper, he that carveth the beech bole and she that expects others to carry her coat, camera and pack, may their socks be lumpy, and farm dogs bite their calves!

65
The more that’s done for hikers in the forests and woods and mountains, in that far
do they fail to get the most out of it…. We must retain the challenging character of
the wilderness.

—WALTER O’KANE, guidebook writer, 1935

To explore the interesting places in the vicinity, to become acquainted to some extent
at least, with the natural history of the localities, and also to improve the pedestrian
powers of the members.

—Objectives of ALPINE CLUB OF WILLIAMSTOWN, MA,
America’s first organized hiking club, 1863

Almost 48 million Americans over age 15 went hiking in 1994. Hiking’s popularity
has increased considerably, up 93% since 1984. Over the same periods, the number
of backpackers increased by 73%—from 9 to 15 million and interest in primitive area
only camping increased 58%—from 17 to 28 million.

—SPORTING GOODS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION and USDA FOREST SERVICE,
Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation, 1997

To the untrained eye, selfish or ego climbing and selfless climbing may appear
identical…. Both kinds of climber place one foot in front of the other. Both breathe
in and out at the same rate. Both stop when tired. Both go forward when rested. But
what a difference! The ego climber is like an instrument that’s out of adjustment. He
puts his foot down an instant too soon or late. He’s likely to miss a beautiful passage
of sunlight through the trees. He goes on when the sloppiness of his step says he’s
tired. He rests at odd times. He looks up the trail trying to see what’s ahead even
when he knows what’s ahead because he just looked a second before. He goes too fast
or too slow for the conditions and when he talks his talk is forever about something
else. He’s here but he’s not here. He rejects the here, is unhappy with it, wants to be
further up the trail but when he gets there will be just as unhappy because then it will
be ‘there.’ What he’s looking for, what he wants is all around him. But he doesn’t
want that because it is all around him. Every step is an effort, both physically and
spiritually because he imagines his goal to be external and distant.

—ROBERT PIRSIG, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values, 1974
Humor

One man alone can be pretty dumb sometimes, but for real bona fide stupidity there ain’t nothing can beat teamwork.

—MARK TWAIN, *The Tragedy of Puddin’head Wilson*, 1893

All other things being equal, choose a john with a view.


DO NOT TREAD, MOSEY, HOP, TRAMPLE, STEP, PLOD, TIP-TOE, TROT, TRAIPSE, MEANDER, CREEP, PRANCE, AMBLE, JOG, TRUDGE, MARCH, STOMP, TODDLE, JUMP, STUMBLE, TROD, SPRINT, OR WALK ON THE PLANTS

—sign at MOUNT RAINER NATIONAL PARK, 1994

If people persist in trespassing upon the grizzlies’ territory, we must accept the fact that the grizzlies, from time to time will harvest a few trespassers.

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

A pedestrian ought to be legally allowed to toss at least one hand grenade at a motorist every day.

—BRENDAN FRANCIS, Irish writer, 1923–64

A near tragedy—the first week out on the expedition someone lost the bottle opener, and for the rest of the trip we had to subsist on food and water.

—W.C. FIELDS, American comedian, 1880–1946

My advice for grizzlies is to try to maintain sphincter control.

—KERRY SNOW, volunteer trail manager with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1990
The tourists drift in and out of here like turds floating through the sewer.
—EDWARD ABBEY, writing about Arches National Monument in 1956

Everything in life is somewhere else, and you get there in a car.
—E.B. WHITE, Fro-Joy, One Man’s Meat, 1944

Life is like a dogsled team…. If you’re not the lead dog, the scenery never changes.
—LEWIS GRIZZARD, American humorist, 1946–94

Buy land; they are not making it anymore.
—MARK TWAIN (Samuel Clemens), American writer and humorist, 1835–1910

Put the park rangers to work. Lazy scheming loafers, they’ve wasted too many years selling tickets at toll booths and sitting behind desks filling out charts and tables in the vain effort to appease the mania for statistics which torments the Washington office. Put them to work. They’re supposed to be rangers—make the bums range; kick them out of those overheated airconditioned offices, yank them out of those overstuffed patrol cars, and drive them out on the trails where they should be, leading the dudes over hill and dale, safely into and back out of the wilderness. It won’t hurt them to work off a little office fat; it’ll do them good, help take their minds off each other’s wives, and give them a chance to get out of reach of the boss—a blessing for all concerned.
—EDWARD ABBEY, Desert Solitaire, 1971

Never journey without something to eat in your pocket. If only to throw to dogs when attacked by them.
—E.S. BATES, American writer, 1879–1939
After all, what is a pedestrian? He is a man who has two cars—one being driven by his wife, the other by one of his children.

There are three kinds of lies—lies, damned lies and statistics.
—MARK TWAIN (Samuel Clemens), American writer and humorist, 1835–1910

She travels grubbiest who travels light.
—ERMA BOMBECK, Humor columnist, 1927–

HOWDY FOLKS. WELCOME. THIS IS YOUR NATIONAL PARK, ESTABLISHED FOR THE PLEASURE OF YOU AND ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. PARK YOUR CAR, JEEP, TRUCK, TANK, MOTORBIKE, SNOWMOBILE, JETBOAT, AIRBOAT, SUBMARINE, AIRPLANE, JETPLANE, HELICOPTER, HOVERCRAFT, WINGED MOTORCYCLE, ROCKETSHP, OR ANY OTHER CONCEIVABLE TYPE OF MOTORIZED VEHICLE IN THE WORLD’S BIGGEST PARKINGLOT BEHIND THE COMFORT STATION IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR REAR. GET OUT OF YOUR MOTORIZED VEHICLE, GET ON YOUR HORSE, MULE, BICYCLE OR FEET, AND COME ON IN.

ENJOY YOURSELVES. THIS HERE PARK IS FOR people.
—EDWARD ABBEY, Desert Solitaire, 1971
The creation of the ATC (Appalachian Trail Conference) was one of two pivotal events in the history of the trail; the other was the signing of the National Trails System Act in 1968. The first provided a parent organization for clubs whose members work at maintaining the trail; the second provided federal protection for it. Achieving this protected status is the result of the enthusiasm and concern of a host of hikers during half a century. Perhaps it is unrivaled by any other single feat in the development of American outdoor recreation.


Though new as an ‘endless footpath through the wilderness,’ the [Appalachian] Trail itself seems age-old, so naturally does it fit into its surroundings. Just a path, now through old clearings sweet scented with grasses in the sun, through dim forests, then up through scrub and out over bare mountain ledges, it seems it’s been since the beginning; it seems it will be till the end.

—JEAN STEPHENSON, Impressions of the Maine Wilderness, *Appalachian Trailway News*, 1941

By dramatizing the long trail as the key to the Appalachian Empire, as he loved to call it, [Benton] MacKaye incited hundreds of others to participate in the laying out of the route, achieving by purely voluntary cooperation and love what the empire of the Incas had done in the Andes by compulsory organization.

—LEWIS MUMFORD, American social philosopher and urban planner, 1895–1990

The Appalachian Trail is conceived as the backbone of a super reservation and primeval recreation ground covering the length (and width) of the Appalachian Range itself, its ultimate purpose being to extend acquaintance with the scenery and serve as a guide to the understanding of nature.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975
We also come out here to learn about ourselves. The biggest prize in long-distance hiking is the gift of time. Time to look. Time to think. Time to feel. All those hours you spend with your thoughts. You don’t solve all of your problems, but you come to understand and accept yourself.

—CINDY ROSS, Journey on the Crest, 1987

Our ultimate aim is more than just a trail—it is a whole system of them, a cobweb planned to cover the mountains of the eastern country. It is not ‘to turn the people loose in there’ and give vent to the vandal, but just the other way—to turn them loose to kill the vandal. Here is where the planning comes, for a playground and a living ground—well equipped, well cared for, and well used.

—BENTON MACKAYE, Progress Toward the Appalachian Trail, Appalachia, 1922

The ideal mountain trail is one which has no end. The ideal trail journey is one which never turns back, but leads forever onward to discover what lies around the next bend and beyond the next crest. Such a trail is the Appalachian [Trail], and such is the kind of journey that, better than on any other trail in existence, may be made upon it.

—ELMER ADAMS, Walking in the Clouds, 1939

We emerge then, with some of the philosophy of the ‘long trail.’ Basically the formula is simple. You start with a geological feature, such as a mountain range, that is not too highly developed yet close enough to the people that will use it. You clear a trail along it for recreational use, and mark the route with some standard marking. You build simple overnight shelters close to a supply of good, natural drinking water, and protect the land nearby so that you can keep the kind of trail you want. You tell the people about it and give them a guidebook to help them plan a safe and comfortable journey. The area encompassing a long trail may be too long and narrow to be managed efficiently by one single organization or agency, and a cooperative program of many groups may be needed.

—STAN MURRAY, The Appalachian Trail, National Parks Magazine, December 1966
Pledge for Nature Lovers: To maintain and defend for the benefit and enjoyment of nature lovers the Pacific Crest Trailway as a primitive wilderness pathway in an environment of solitude, free from the sights and sounds of a mechanically disturbed nature.

—CLINTON CLARKE, *The Pacific Crest Trailway*, 1945

....for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains. It is a means of sojourning among these lands, such that visitors may experience them by their own unaided efforts.

In practice, the [Appalachian] Trail is usually a simple footpath, purposeful in direction and concept, favoring the heights of land, and located for minimum reliance on construction for protecting the resource. The body of the Trail is provided by the lands it traverses, and its soul is the living stewardship of the volunteers and workers of the Appalachian Trail community.


Myron [Avery] left two trails from Maine to Georgia. One was of hurt feelings and bruised egos. The other was the A.T. [Appalachian Trail]. The first will disappear, the second will last.

—BILL MERSCH, speaking of Myron Avery, chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference from 1931 to 1952

How can a book describe the psychological factors a person must prepare for … the despair, the alienation, the anxiety and especially the pain, both physical and mental, which slices to the very heart of the hiker’s volition, which are the real things that must be planned for? No words can transmit those factors, which are more a part of planning than the elementary rituals of food, money, and equipment, and how to get them.

It was a clear day, with a brisk breeze blowing. North and south, sharp peaks etched the horizon. I felt as if atop the world, with a sort of planetary feeling. I seemed to perceive peaks far southward, hidden by old Earth’s curvature. Would a footpath some day reach them from where I was then perched? Little did I dream....

—BENTON MACKAYE, (founder of the Appalachian Trail), relating his climb to the summit of Stratton Mountain, VT, summer of 1900, in a letter to the general meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conference, 1964

At trail’s end no fertile valleys, no gold mines, no thriving ports are reached. The Pacific Crest Trail, like the other National Scenic Trails, is not a corridor to an economic end but rather is a process for individual change and growth. Although the trail’s end is a desirable goal, it is not a necessary one, for the traveler is enriched in a nonmaterial sense with every step he takes along the way.

—JEFFREY SCHAFFER and DR. BEV & FRED HARTLINE, The Pacific Crest Trail, Volume 2, 1979

The Appalachian Trail as originally conceived is not merely a footpath through the wilderness but a footpath of the wilderness.

—BENTON MACKAYE, address to the members of the Seventh Appalachian Trail Conference, held at Skyland, VA, June 22, 1935

We celebrate not the trail, but the wild places it passes through.


I want to see what’s on the other side of the hill—then what’s beyond that.

—EMMA ‘GRANDMA’ GATEWOOD, at age 67 first woman to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail (1955), 1887–1973
The purpose of this organization shall be first to promote, construct, and maintain a connected trail, with related trails, to be called The Appalachian Trail, and to preserve and restore the natural environment of the Trail and its adjacent lands; and to provide an educational opportunity to enjoy the Appalachian Trail, related trails and adjacent lands. This Trail shall run, as far as practicable, over the summits of the mountains and through the wild lands of the Atlantic Seaboard and adjoining states from Maine to Georgia, so as to render accessible for hiking, backpacking, and other forms of primitive travel and living, the said mountains and wild lands, and shall be a means for conserving and developing, within this region, the primeval environment as a natural resource.

—APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION, 1925

....ultimate purpose is to conserve, use, and enjoy the mountain hinterland which penetrates the populous portion of America from north to south. The Trail (or system of trails) is a means for making the land accessible. The Appalachian Trail is to this Appalachian region what the Pacific Railway was to the Far West—a means of ‘opening up’ the country. But a very different kind of ‘opening up.’ Instead of a railway we want a ‘trailway’...

But unlike the railway the trailway must preserve (and develop) a certain environment. Otherwise its whole point is lost. The railway ‘opens up’ a country as a site for civilization; the trailway should ‘open up’ a country as an escape from civilization.... The path of the trailway should be as ‘pathless’ as possible; it should be the minimum consistent with practical accessibility.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founding meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conference, March 2–3, 1925

The [Appalachian] Trail is an entity of public and private hope—public because its establishment and perpetuation represent a curious maturity of civilization and private because the average hiker still has certain portions of the Trail he’s never seen and wants to hike as soon as he can.

The Appalachian Trail is a wilderness strip; it could be very wide—several miles wide—if possible. It is not a trailway. Actually, the trail itself could be a strip no wider than space for a fat man to get through. And that’s the trouble: ‘Trailway’ is a very unfortunate word; it gives the impression of a Greyhound bus and a great cement, six-lane highway, which is just the opposite of what the trail is supposed to be. The idea is a foot trail, and if there is a wheel on it at all, there is no point in the Appalachian Trail. People should get that through their heads....

—BENTON MACKAYE, *ALA Journal* interview where he bluntly repudiated the Trailway concept as adopted by the Appalachian Trail Conference, 1971

And what is the [Appalachian] Trail? … It always was a place for people. People who care for land and tend a simple footpath as if it were their garden.


The Long Cruise was finished. Already it seemed like a vivid dream, through sunshine, shadow, and rain—Already I knew that many times I would want to be back again—On the cloud-high hills where the whole world lies below and far away—By the wind-worn cairn where admiring eyes first welcome newborn day—To walk once more where the white clouds sail, far from the city clutter—And drink a toast to the Long High Trail in clear, cold mountain water. Beside me as I stood there, happy yet sad, was another weatherbeaten sign, on a post held up by a heap of gathered stones.

—EARL SHAFFER, atop Katahdin, upon completing first uninterrupted solo-hike of the entire length of the Appalachian Trail, 1948

To maintain and defend for the benefit and enjoyment of nature lovers the Pacific Crest Trailway as a primitive wilderness pathway in an environment of solitude, free from the sights and sounds of a mechanically disturbed nature.

—CLINTON CLARKE, mission of the Pacific Crest Trail, 1932

To walk; to see and to see what you see.

—BENTON MACKAYE, on the ultimate purpose for hiking on the Appalachian Trail, 1971
What is suggested, therefore, is a ‘long trail’ over the full length of the Appalachian skyline, from the highest peak in the north to the highest peak in the south—from Mt. Washington to Mt. Mitchell.

—BENTON MACKAYE, An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning, The Journal of the American Institute of Architects, 1921

[Benton] MacKaye felt it proper that government agencies administer the land but essential that volunteers, through the clubs, maintain and protect the [Appalachian] Trail.

—DAVID MUECH, Uncommon Places, 1991

High and dry above the stupendous detail of our job we should hold the reason for it all. This is not to cut a path and then say—‘Ain’t it beautiful’ Our job is to open a realm. This is something more than a geographical location—it is an environment.

—BENTON MACKAYE, on the vision of the Appalachian Trail, 1925

One man told me I could run [the Appalachian Trail] right through his house if I wanted to; his explanation was that he had met his wife on the Trail.

—MURRAY STEVENS, negotiating for Appalachian Trail to cross private property, 1927

In few regions of the world—certainly nowhere else in the United States—are found such a varied and priceless collection of the sculptured masterpieces of nature as adorn, strung like pearls, the mountain ranges of Washington, Oregon and California. The Pacific Crest Trailway is the cord that binds this necklace.

—CLINTON CLARKE, founder of the Pacific Crest Trail, 1945

Those of us, who have physically worked on the [Appalachian] Trail, know that the Trail, as such, will never be completed.

—MYRON AVERY, Appalachian Trail Conference meeting in Gatlinburg, TN, 1937
Remote for detachment, narrow for chosen company, winding for leisure, lonely for contemplation, it [the Appalachian Trail] beckons [or leads] not merely north and south but upward to the body, mind and soul of man.

—MYRON AVERY, final report to Appalachian Trail Conference, 1952, also attributed to Harold Allen, one of the early AT volunteers

The Appalachian Trail derives much of its strength and appeal from its uninterrupted and practically endless character. This is an attribute which must be preserved. I view the existence of this pathway and the opportunity to travel it, day after day without interruption, as a distinct aspect of our American life.

—MYRON AVERY, final report to Appalachian Trail Conference, 1952

It is the love of country, the love of primal nature and of human nature, the lure of crestline and comradeship, which we like to think of as being indigenous to our own homeland. In short, the object of the Appalachian Trail is to develop the Indigenous America.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975

Each [national scenic trail] should stand out in its own right as a recreation resource ... be built to harmonize with the natural areas they cross ... and afford the visitor closeup instruction in nature and her ways. The entire length of each, together with sufficient land area on both sides to safeguard adequately and preserve its character, should be protected in some form of public control. Federal and state agencies should modify timber harvesting, livestock grazing, and special permit practices to protect trail quality ... and the natural and scenic qualities and historic features along and near national scenic trails must be protected.

—USDI BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION, Trails for America: Report on the Nationwide Trails Study, 1966
I read about this [Appalachian] trail three years ago in a magazine, and the article told about the beautiful trail, how well marked it was, that it was cleared out, and that there were shelters at the end of a good day’s hike. I thought it would be a nice lark. It wasn’t. There were terrible blow-downs, burnt-over areas that were never remarked, gravel and sand washouts, weeds and brush to your neck, and most of the shelters were blown down, burned down, or so filthy I chose to sleep out of doors. This is no trail. This is a nightmare. For some fool reason, they always lead you right up over the biggest rock to the top of the biggest mountain they can find. I’ve seen every fire station between here and Georgia. Why, an Indian would die laughing his head off if he saw [that] trail. I would never have started this trip if I had known how tough it was, but I couldn’t, and I wouldn’t quit.

—OCTOBER 10, 1955 SPORTS ILLUSTRATED ARTICLE about Emma ‘Grandma’ Gatewood, at age 67 first woman to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail

opportunities for observation, contemplation, enjoyment and exploration of the natural world; a sense of remoteness and detachment from civilization; opportunities to experience solitude, freedom, personal accomplishment, self-reliance, and self-discovery; a sense of being on the height of the land; opportunities to experience the cultural, historical, and pastoral elements of the surrounding countryside; a feeling of being part of the natural environment; and opportunities for travel on foot, including opportunities for long-distance hiking.

—APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONFERENCE, defining the Appalachian Trail experience, 1997

The old pioneer opened through the forest a path for the spread of civilization. Now comes the great task of holding this life in check—for it is just as bad to have too much urbanization as too little. It is just as vital today to open up our overcrowded areas as it was a century ago to open up the overwooded areas. Hence the Appalachian Trail.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975
**Maintenance**

The desired standards of trail upkeep are those which are necessary to maintain the standard of construction established herein. Well-balance work, not polish, is wanted. To underdo maintenance is bad. To overdo it is worse, because a dollar unspent remains available to correct mistakes, while more dollars spent than necessary are simply wasted.


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A trail is as serviceable as its poorest link.


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Ten years ago ... the job of the Trail Crew was to make passage through the mountains easier for the people who hiked. Now the main concern of the Trail Crew is to lessen the impact on the environment that great numbers of people make.

—APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB trail crew leader, 1971

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We have to get away from looking at [trail] maintenance as a ‘duty’ and as ‘work,’ and start selling it as a fun sport separate from hiking with its own types of equipment, styles, methods, approaches, rewards, etc. Why is the maintainer looking up to the hiker? Why is the greater dream to walk 2000 miles and not to maintain the perfect 5-mile section?

—JOHN SCHOEN, member of the New York–New Jersey Trail Conference, 1981
The first priority for trail work is to correct truly unsafe situations. This could mean repairing impassable washouts along a cliff, or removing blowdown from a steep section of a packstock trail.

The second priority is to correct things causing significant trail damage—erosion, sedimentation, and off-site trampling, for instance.

The third priority is to restore the trail to the planned design standard. This means that the ease of finding and traveling the trail matches the design specifications for the recreational setting and target user. Actions range from simply adding ‘reassurance markers’ to full-blown reconstruction of eroded tread or failed structures.

Whatever the priority, doing maintenance when the need is first noticed will help prevent more severe and costly damage later.


....the rangers know how to locate trails wisely on a gradual traverse upslope instead of going straight up and down; they know how to put in water bars at regular intervals to shunt the water flow off the trails onto the forest floor where it can be slowly absorbed. To a great extent we already have the technical know-how, though admittedly we have yet to devise aesthetically pleasing techniques to preserve the naturalistic settings along the trails. What we frankly don’t have is the necessary staff of trail rangers to handle the upkeep problems created by the hordes of recreationists now exploring the mountain slopes.

—E.H. KETLEDGE and R.E. LEONARD,
The Impact of Man on the Adirondack High Country,
*The Conservationist*, 25(2), 1970
We are always getting ready to live, but never living.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I do not believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and if they cannot find them, make them.
—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, Irish dramatist, 1856–1950

To pursue is to explore, and the first step is to seek the mountain top.
—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975

Make voyages. Attempt them. That’s all there is.
—TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, American playwright, 1911–1983, Camino Real, 1953

The best antidote to fear is confidence—confidence that what you are working for is truly important. And it is!
—PETER HARNICK, Converting Rails to Trails, 1989

I’ve never been interested in just doing with less. I’m interested in doing more with less. We don’t have to become vegetarians and ride bicycles to save the Earth.
—AMORY LOVINS, Smithsonian, April 1990

Life is eating us up. We all shall be fables presently. Keep cool: it will be all one a hundred years hence.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, Self Reliance, Essays: First Series, 1841
A straight path never leads anywhere except to the objective.
—ANDRE GIDE, *Journals*, 1922

Never before have we had so little time to do so much. New ideas can be good and bad, just the same as old ones. One thing is sure. We have to do something. We have to do the best we know how at the moment. If it doesn’t turn out right, we can modify it as we go along.
—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, Thirty-second US President (1933–45), 1882–1945

Life always gets harder toward the summit—the cold increases, responsibility increases.
—FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE, German philosopher, poet, and critic, 1844–1900

Perseverance is a great element of success. If you knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you’re sure to awaken someone.
—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, American poet, 1807–82

All things are possible until they are proved impossible—and even the impossible may only be so, as of now.

For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice.
—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921

What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for others?
—GEORGE ELIOT, (pen name of Mary Ann Evans), English novelist, 1819–80
I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community ... and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live.

—**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**, Irish dramatist, 1856–1950

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men who experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.

—**HELEN KELLER**, deaf & blind American lecturer, 1880–1968

It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinions; it is easy in solitude to live after your own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

—**RALPH WALDO EMERSON**, American essayist, 1803–82

What we get from this adventure [climbing Mount Everest] is just sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life. We do not live to eat and make money. We eat and make money to be able to enjoy life. That is what life means and what life is for.

—**GEORGE MALLORY**, English mountaineer, 1886–1924

The wise man bridges the gap by laying out the path by means of which he can get from where he is to where he wants to go.

—**J.P. MORGAN**, American financier, 1837–1913

I am glad I did it, partly because it was well worth it, and chiefly because I shall never have to do it again.

—**MARK TWAIN** (Samuel Clemens), American writer and humorist, 1835–1910
There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better or worse as is his portion; that though the universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.


Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Apply yourself. Get all the education you can, but then, by God, do something. Don’t just stand there, make it happen.

—LEE IACOLCA, American automobile executive, 1924–

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.


A man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, can never regain its original dimension.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, American physician, poet, and humorist, 1809–94

Great things happen when men and mountains meet; these are not done by jostling in the street.

—WILLIAM BLAKE, English poet, 1757–1827
Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what needs to be done and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

—GEORGE S. PATTON, US Army General, 1885–1945

The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Go as far as the eye can see, and when you get there, look farther.

—DAG HAMMARSKHJOLD, Secretary General of the United Nations, (1953–61), 1905–61

People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.

—DALE CARNEGIE, American lecturer, 1888–1955

Be very careful what you set your heart upon, for you will surely have it.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Before everything else, getting ready is the secret to success.

—HENRY FORD, American industrialist, 1863–1947

Never, never, never, never give up.

—WINSTON CHURCHILL, British statesman, 1874–1965
Speak what you think today in words as hard as cannonballs, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Self-Reliance, Essays: First Series, 1841

The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it, if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

—Theodore Roosevelt, Twenty-sixth US President (1901–09), 1858–1919

Some see things as they are and ask why. Others dream things that never were and ask why not.

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish dramatist, 1856–1950

Somehow I can’t believe that there are any heights that can’t be scaled by a man who knows the secrets of making dreams come true. This special secret, it seems to me, can be summarized in four Cs. They are curiosity, confidence, courage, and constancy, and the greatest of all is confidence, when you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionably.

—Walt Disney, motion picture producer, 1901–66

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, 1803–82

What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

—Mark 11:24

If God be for us, who can be against us?

—Romans 8:31
To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Seize the day, put no trust in the morrow.
—HORACE, Latin lyric poet, 65–8 BC

THIS IS WHAT YOU SHALL DO: Be loyal to what you love, be true to the earth, fight your enemies with passion and laughter.
—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is a process; working together is success.
—HENRY FORD, American industrialist, 1863–1947

Sow an action and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.
—WILLIAM JAMES, American psychologist and philosopher, 1842–1920
People usually fail when they are on the verge of success so give as much care to the end, as the beginning.

—LAO-TZU, Chinese philosopher, 604–531 BC

In the long run, we only hit what we aim at.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

—CALVIN COOLIDGE, Thirtieth US President (1923–29), 1872–1933

The invariable mark of a dream is to see it come true every day.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.

—MATTHEW 7:7

Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Do what you can with what you have, where you are.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT, Twenty-sixth US President (1901–09), 1858–1919
As life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time, at the peril of being not to have lived.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, American physician, poet, and humorist, 1809–94

There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.
—Victor Hugo, French poet, novelist, and dramatist, 1802–85

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, things aren’t going to get better, they’re not!
—Theodor Seuss Geisel, (better known as Dr. Seuss), 1904–91

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena. Whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood. Who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place will never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.
—Theodore Roosevelt, Twenty-sixth US President (1901–09), 1858–1919

The winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am. Losers, on the other hand, concentrate their waking thoughts on what they should have or would have done, or what they can’t do.
—Denis Waitley, motivational speaker and author, 1933–

Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.
—Thomas Edison, American inventor, 1847–1931
There are only two options regarding commitment. You’re either IN or you’re OUT. There’s no such thing as life in-between.

—Pat Riley, NBA basketball coach, 1945–

Nobody climbs mountains for scientific reasons. Science is used to raise money for the expeditions, but you really climb for the hell of it.

—Edmund Hillary, first to summit Everest (1953), 1919–

Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing.

—Zig Ziglar, motivational speaker and author, 1926–

The secret of success is to be ready when your opportunity comes.

—Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister, (1874–80), 1804–81

Exceed expectations. We are not driven to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

—Charles Gore, English bishop and theologian, 1853–1932

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German philosopher and writer, 1749–1832
It’s not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.
—EDMUND HILLARY, first to summit Everest (1953), 1919–

We can do anything we want if we stick to it long enough.
—HELEN KELLER, deaf & blind American lecturer, 1880–1968

Failure is impossible.
—SUSAN B. ANTHONY, American crusader for women’s suffrage, 1820–1906

Enthusiasm was understood by the ancient Greeks to mean ‘God within us.’ And so it is that when we open ourselves to enthusiasm we receive something from above that makes us capable of achievements otherwise beyond our powers. Enthusiasm is the burning spirit within that says, ‘I can!’ It is the indomitable ‘Yes!’ without which nothing worthwhile is ever accomplished.
—ROYAL ROBBINS, American climber and retailer, 1935–

Mountains cannot be surmounted except by winding paths.
—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, German philosopher and writer, 1749–1832

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans: aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram, once recorded, will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watch-word be order and your beacon beauty.
—DANIEL BURNHAM, American architect and city planner, 1846–1912
Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, Circles, Essays, First Series, 1841

Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men.
—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, German philosopher and writer, 1749–1832

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live a life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.
—MARGARET MEAD, American anthropologist, 1901–78

This life is yours. Take the power to choose what you want to do and do it well. Take the power to love what you want in life and love it honestly. Take the power to walk in the forest and be part of nature. Take the power to control your own life. No one else can do it for you. Take the power to make your life happy.
—SUSAN POLIS SCHUTZ, American writer, 1944–

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.
—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, German philosopher and writer, 1749–1832
The mountains can be reached in all seasons. They offer a fighting challenge to heart, soul and mind, both in summer and winter. If throughout time the youth of the nation accept the challenge the mountains offer, they will keep alive in our people the spirit of adventure. That spirit is a measure of the vitality of both nations and men. A people who climb the ridges and sleep under the stars in high mountain meadows, who enter the forest and scale the peaks, who explore glaciers and walk ridges buried deep in snow—these people will give the country some of the indomitable spirit of the mountains.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Supreme Court Justice and avid hiker, 1898–1980

The world is full of willing people, some willing to work, the others willing to let them.

—ROBERT FROST, American Poet, 1874–1963

We are not here merely to make a living. We are here to enrich the world, and we impoverish ourselves if we forget this errand.

—WOODROW WILSON, Twenty-eight US President (1913–21), 1856–1924
Mountain Biking

I’ve seen mountain bike rides transform people—not just their bodies, but their way of thinking. Their spirit.

—CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM, mountain biking pioneer, 1949–

It’s a feeling you get on certain trails, when you’re reacting like you and your machine are just one thing. It’s the feel of physical exertion and speed and technique all wrapped into one.

—NED OVEREND, winner of first-ever mountain bike world championships (1990), 1955–

No model of bike has ever taken the US market the way these [mountain] bikes have.

—BILL WILKINSON, Executive Director, Bicycle Federation of America, 1987

There were many steps in the evolution of the mountain bike. There was no single inventor.

—JOE BREEZE, builder of the first frame specifically designed for mountain biking (1977), 1953–

IMBA Rules of the Trail:
1. Ride on open trails only
2. Leave no trace
3. Control your bicycle
4. Always yield trail
5. Never spook animals
6. Plan ahead

—INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLE ASSOCIATION, 1989
Perhaps the key message that can be learned from the evolution of cycling trail access is the importance of personal responsibility. Following trail rules, respecting fellow trail users, and leaving no trace are the simple methods that will help assure the sport’s future.

—Tim Blumenthal, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycle Association, 1995

You’re moving through a wonderful natural environment and working on balance, timing, depth perception, judgment.... It forms kind of a ballet.

—Charlie Cunningham, mountain biking pioneer, 1949–

We were just having fun. I always liked that line. It’s true—that’s all we were doing in the late ‘70s. People think there was some marketing genius behind the development of mountain bikes, but we were just having fun.

—Joe Breeze, builder of the first frame specifically designed for mountain biking (1977), 1953–

Mountain biking helps people become environmentalists. A mountain bike is a vehicle to appreciate the backcountry.

—Ned Overend, winner of first-ever mountain bike world championships (1990), 1955–

Anyone who says that mountain bikers are always occupied with speed and precision doesn’t have a clue.

—Tim Blumenthal, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycle Association, 1995
National Forests

Outdoor recreation ranks today as one of the major resources or utilities of the National Forests, not because of anything the government has done to facilitate or increase this form of use, but because of the demonstrated belief of several millions of people that Forests offer a broad and varied field of recreational opportunity.

—USDA Forest Service, Report of the Forester, 1922

Trails will be maintained, reconstructed, and constructed in the interests of: (a) Fire control; (b) administration; (c) grazing; (d) recreation. The objects of trail construction are (a) to provide safe and unobstructed passage of loaded animals and foot travelers at a walking gait and in single file; (b) durability designed to meet expected use and liability of damage from natural causes.

—USDA Forest Service, Forest Trail Handbook, 1935

A ranger must be able to take care of himself and his horses under very trying conditions; build trails and cabins; ride all day and all night; pack, shoot and fight fire without losing his head.... All this requires a very vigorous constitution.... Invalids need not apply!

—USDA Forest Service, help-wanted flyer, 1905

So great is the value of national forest areas for recreation, and so certain is this value to increase with the growth of the country and the shrinkage of the wilderness, that even if the forest resources of wood and water were not to be required by the civilization of the future, many of the forests ought certainly to be preserved, in the interest of national health and well-being, for recreation use alone.

—Treadwell Cleveland, National Forests as Recreation Grounds, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 35(2), March 1910
The national forests are designed by Congress for ‘multiple’ use. That is the professed policy. I had long suspected that ‘multiple’ use was semantics for making cattlemen, sheepmen, lumbermen, miners the main beneficiaries. After they gutted and ruined the forests, then the rest of us could use them—to find campsites among stumps, to look for fish in waters heavy with silt from erosion, to search for game on ridges pounded to dust by sheep.


....recreation is a major value of the forests ... the woods and mountains should be enjoyed by their owners, the citizens of the United States....

—John Sieker, *Trees, Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1949

There are many great interests on the national forests which sometimes conflict a little. They must all be made to fit into one another so that the machine runs smoothly as a whole. It is often necessary for one man to give way a little here, another a little there. But by giving way a little at present, they both profit by it a great deal in the end.

National forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them run.

—Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the US Forest Service, (1905), 1865–1946
The most basic thing that can be done is to encourage the simple pleasures of walking and cycling. It is something of a tribute to Americans that they do as much cycling and walking as they do, for very little has been done to encourage these activities, and a good bit, if inadvertently, to discourage them. We are spending billions for our new highways, but few of them being constructed or planned make any provision for safe walking and cycling. And many of the suburban developments surrounding our cities do not even have sidewalks, much less cycle paths.

Europe, which has even greater population, has much to teach us about building recreation into the environment. Holland is constructing a national network of bicycle trails. In Scotland, the right of the public to walk over the privately owned moors goes back centuries. In Scandinavia, buses going from the city to the countryside have pegs on their sides on which people can hang their bicycles. Car ownership is rising all over Europe, but in the planning of their roads and the posting of them, Europeans make a special effort to provide for those who walk or cycle.

Why not here? Along the broad rights-of-way of our highways—particularly those in suburban areas—simple trails could be laid out for walkers and cyclists. Existing rights-of-way for high tension lines, now so often left to weeds and rubble, could at very little cost be made into a ‘connector’ network of attractive walkways.

—OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES REVIEW COMMISSION final report, 1960

We have the choice of whether we want our communities as they grow to become a jumble of unsightly development and noisy concrete deserts, or whether we will preserve fresh, green pockets and corridors of living open space that cleanse our air and waters and refresh our populations. We have the responsibility and the capacity to choose, for ourselves, our neighbors, and for future generations.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

The creation of a true national system of trails begins with all Americans in their own backyards—in neighborhoods and communities, in churches, schools and social organizations, in cities and towns, in every county and state.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, Trails for All Americans report, 1990
Trail opportunities should exist within 15 minutes of most American’s homes.
—AMERICAN TRAILS, Trails for All Americans report, 1990

[The Commission recommended that] all Americans be able to go out their front doors and within fifteen minutes be on trails that wind through their cities, town or villages and brings them back without retracing steps. They could travel across America on trails that connect one community to another and stretch from coast to coast, and from border to border.
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

More than anything else, we found in Americans a love of the land, and a shared conviction that it is our legacy for the future. We found that recreation is important to people in their daily lives, and that most of them cannot imagine a world in which they did not have access to the outdoors. We found that Americans are willing to work, and to pay, to see that quality outdoor opportunities continue to be available to them, and to their children’s children.
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

The Great Outdoors is still great. But we found that we are facing a deterioration of the natural resource base, and of the recreation infrastructure. Accelerating development of our remaining open spaces, wetlands, shorelines, historic sites, and countrysides, and deferred maintenance and care of our existing resources, are robbing future generations of the heritage which is their birthright. We are selling the backyard to buy groceries....
—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

Walking for pleasure will increase from 566 million occasions of participation in 1960, to 1,569 million by the year 2000, a 277 percent increase. Hiking will jump 358 percent, from 34 million to 125 million.
—USDI BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION, Trails for America: Report on the Nationwide Trails Study, 1966
According to 13 national surveys conducted between 1959 and 1978, trail-related activities consistently rank among the ten most popular outdoor recreation activities. Historically, trails in the United States are not the result of conscious recreation planning decisions. Consequently, many trail routes pass over private property or along public rights-of-way and are subject to disruption and environmental degradation as development threats grow. This susceptibility is of particular concern as public interest in trails continues to grow at a rapid rate.

—Lawrence Klar and Jean Kavanagh, Literature review for the President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors report, 1986

The time for trails is now, if we all act now, we can begin to see results. We can realize the vision of a system of trails, connecting people and communities. This can be the era of the recreational interstate system—with a trail within 15 minutes of most of our homes.

—American Trails, Trails for All Americans report, 1990

The changing population characteristics of the United States point to a multiplying demand for outdoor recreation opportunities of all kinds. An expected two-fold increase in the number of people by the year 2000 will mean at least a three-fold increase in the demand for recreation according to the O.R.R.R.C. (Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission). Trails, with all other forms of outdoor recreation, will be in short supply unless adequate facilities systematically are provided.


Trails represent a major opportunity to satisfy the demand for outdoor recreation. By their nature, they afford a low-concentration, dispersed type of recreation that is much sought after today. Trails are the means to some of the most beneficial kinds of exercise—walking, hiking, horseback riding, and cycling. Trails enable people to reach prime areas for hunting, fishing, and camping; they lead to areas prized by students of nature and history; they are used by artists and photographers; they help to satisfy the craving many people have for solitude and the beauty of untrammeled lands and water.

Trails near metropolitan centers where a disproportionate share of the increasing population will be located are especially inadequate.

—USDI BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION, 
*Trails for America: Report on the Nationwide Trails Study*, 1966

....a national system is one that is made up of trails in a city or town, those that pass through the countryside, those on private lands and on public lands in state and national parks and forests. Creating a system means learning where trails are and developing connections that link them together into networks and where desirable and necessary, building new trails that also connect. Just as the nation’s roads, whether interstate highways, state roads, county roads or village streets, are seen as a system, developed and managed by various entities and levels of government, so should trails be viewed. A system will result only when individual trails or a community or park or forest trail system are looked at and planned for in the context of a larger system.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, *Trails for All Americans* report, 1990

Walking, hiking, and bicycling are simple pleasures within the economic reach of virtually all citizens. Horseback riding, even though increasingly expensive for urban dwellers, is available to a large portion of Americans. Opportunities to enjoy these basic activities have become increasingly limited for the American people as the society has urbanized and as economic development has preempted areas which had earlier been devoted to outdoor recreation areas. Today, with more leisure time and with rising amounts of disposable income available for recreation users, more and more Americans are seeking relaxation and physical and spiritual renewal in the enjoyment of the traditional simple pleasures.

—USDI BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION, 
*Trails for America: Report on the Nationwide Trails Study*, 1966
NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT (preamble)

AN ACT To establish a national trails system, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the ‘National Trails System Act.’

STATEMENT OF POLICY
SEC. 2. (a) In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation, trails should be established (i) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within scenic areas and along historic travel routes of the Nation, which are often more remotely located.
(b) The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system.
(c) The Congress recognizes the valuable contributions that volunteers and private, nonprofit trail groups have made to the development and maintenance of the Nation’s trails. In recognition of these contributions, it is further the purpose of this Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails.

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
SEC. 3. (a) The national system of trails shall be composed of the following:
(1) National recreation trails, established as provided in section 4 of this Act, which will provide a variety of outdoor recreation uses in or reasonably accessible to urban areas.
(2) National scenic trails, established as provided in section 5 of this Act, which will
be extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass. National scenic trails may be located so as to represent desert, marsh, grassland, mountain, canyon, river, forest, and other areas, as well as landforms which exhibit significant characteristics of the physiographic regions of the Nation.

c) National historic trails, established as provided in section 5 of this Act, which will be extended trails which follow as closely as possible and practicable the original trails or routes of travel of national historical significance. Designation of such trails or routes shall be continuous, but the established or developed trail, and the acquisition thereof, need not be continuous on site. National historic trails shall have as their purpose the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment. Only those selected land and water based components of a historic trail which are on federally owned lands and which meet the national historic trail criteria established in this Act are included as Federal protection components of a national historic trail. The appropriate Secretary may certify other lands as protected segments of an historic trail upon application from State or local governmental agencies or private interests involved if such segments meet the national historic trail criteria established in this Act and such criteria supplementary thereto as the appropriate Secretary may prescribe, and are administered by such agencies or interests without expense to the United States.

(4) Connecting or side trails, established as provided in section 6 of this Act, which will provide additional points of public access to national recreation, national scenic or national historic trails or which will provide connections between such trails. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with appropriate governmental agencies and public and private organizations, shall establish a uniform marker for the national trails system.

—from the National Trails System Act, as amended, Nov. 17, 1993

The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining … a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails.

—Section 2(b) of the National Trails System Act, 1968
....in selecting the rights-of-way full consideration shall be given to minimizing the [trail’s] adverse effects upon the adjacent landowner or user and his operation. Development and management of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for the specific area in order to ensure continued maximum benefits from the land.

—Section 7(2) of the NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT, 1968

If a State, political subdivision, or qualified private organization is prepared to assume full responsibility for management of such [railroad] rights-of-way and for any legal liability arising out of such transfer or use, and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against such rights-of-way, then the Commission shall impose such terms and conditions as a requirement of any transfer or conveyance for interim use in a manner consistent with this Act, and shall not permit abandonment or discontinuance inconsistent or disruptive of such use.

—Section 8(d) of the NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1247(d) – referred to as railbanking, Amendments of 1983
I conceive that the land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living and countless numbers are still unborn.

—Iroquois Chief

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. All things are connected.

—Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish Tribe in the Washington Territory, 1790–1866

We will be known by the tracks we leave behind.

—Dakota Proverb

Great Mother Earth, upon you the people will walk; may they follow the Sacred Path with light, not with the darkness of ignorance.... And may they know they are related to all that moves upon the universe.

—Black Elk, Oglala Sioux Holyman, 1863–1950

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth.... So if we sell you our land, love it as we’ve loved it. Care for it as we’ve cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children, and love it ... as God loves us all.

—Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish Tribe in the Washington Territory, 1790–1866
On the trail marked with pollen, may I walk.
With grasshoppers about my feet, may I walk.
With dew about my feet, may I walk.
With beauty, may I walk.

—Navajo Indian Saying

Give me the strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is!
—Black Elk, Oglala Sioux Holyman, 1863–1950

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befall the sons of the earth....

—Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish Tribe in the Washington Territory, 1790–1866

We didn’t inherit the earth from our parents, we are borrowing it from our children.

—Native American Proverb

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

—Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish Tribe in the Washington Territory, 1790–1866

Never criticize a man until you’ve walked a mile in his moccasins.

—Native American Proverb
Going to the woods is going home, for I suppose we came from the woods originally.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Commonly we stride through the out-of-doors too swiftly to see more than the most obvious and prominent things. For observing nature, the best pace is a snail's pace.
—EDWIN WAY TEALE, July 14, *Circle of the Seasons*, 1953

Hedge or qualify as we will, man is part of nature.
—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921

To the dull mind nature is leaden. To the illumined mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

We need the tonic of wildness—to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground…. We can never have enough of Nature.
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, *Walden*, 1854

It were happy if we studied nature more in natural things, and acted according to nature, whose rules are few, plain, and most reasonable.
—WILLIAM PENN, *Some Fruits of Solitude*, 1693

The clear realities of nature, seen with the inner eye of the spirit, reveal the ultimate echo of God.
—ANSEL ADAMS, American photographer, 1902–84
It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, and gives birth to imagination.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Journal, August 21, 1851

And how should a man who has lived in towns and schools know anything about the wonders of the woods?

—JAMES FENNIMORE COOPER, American author, 1789–1851

Solitude is a silent storm that breaks down all our dead branches. Yet it sends out living roots deeper into the living heart of the living earth. Man struggles to find life outside himself, unaware that the life he is seeking is within him. Nature reaches out to us with welcome arms, and bids us enjoy her beauty; but we dread her silence, and rush into the crowded cities, there to huddle like sheep fleeing from a ferocious wolf.

—Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet, 1923

Whatever befalls in accordance with nature should be accounted good.

—CICERO, De Senectute, 44 BC

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Education is only second to nature.

—HORACE BUSHNELL, creator of America’s first public park, 1802–76

Talk of mysteries! Think of our life in nature—daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it—rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! the sold earth! the actual world! the common sense! Contact! Contact! Who are we? where are we?

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62
Every woodland or forest in addition to yielding lumber, fuel, and posts, should provide those who frequent it with a liberal education about nature. This crop of wisdom never fails but unfortunately it is not always harvested.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948

Adopt the pace of nature: Her secret is patience.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

—KAHLIL GIBRAN, The Prophet, 1923

Let us teach about nature where nature is.

—FRANK LUTZ, Nature Trails An Experiment in Out-door Education, 1926

In short, all good things are wild and free.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Now away we go toward the topmost mountains. Many still, small voices, as well as the noon thunder, are calling, ‘Come higher, come higher.’ Farewell, blessed dell, woods, gardens, streams, birds, squirrels, lizards, and a thousand others. Farewell, farewell.

—JOHN MUIR, My First Summer in the Sierras, 1911

It is not so much what we see in nature but how we interpret what we see.

—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921
Our crude civilization engenders a multitude of wants, and law-givers are ever at their wit’s end devising. The hall and the theater and the church have been invented, and compulsory education. Why not add compulsory recreation? Our forefathers forged chains of duty and habit, which bind us notwithstanding our boasted freedom, and we ourselves in desperation add link to link, groaning and making medicinal laws for relief. Yet few think of pure rest or of the healing power of Nature.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

The goal of life is living in agreement with nature.

—ZENO OF ELEA, Greek philosopher, 490–430 BC

After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, and so on—have found that none of these satisfy, or permanently wear—what remains? Nature remains.

—WALT WHITMAN, American poet, 1819–92

Nature is always hinting at us. It hints over and over again. And suddenly we take the hint.

—ROBERT FROST, American poet, 1874–1963

Man and other civilized animals are the only creatures that ever become dirty.

—JOHN MUIR, A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf, 1868

To those devoid of imagination, a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, A Sand County Almanac, 1949
I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT, English writer, 1778–1830

Without love of the land, conservation lacks meaning or purpose, for only in a deep and inherent feeling for the land can there be dedication in preserving it.

—SIGURD F. OLSON, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

Up we climb with glad exhilaration.

—JOHN MUir, *The Yosemite*, 1912

If I were to name the three most precious resources of life, I should say books, friends and nature: and the greatest of these, at least the most constant and always at hand, is nature. Nature we always have with us, inexhaustible storehouse of that which moves the heart, appeals to the mind, and fires the imagination—health to the body, stimulus to the intellect, and joy to the soul.

—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.

—JOHN MUir, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Walking brings out the true character of a man. The devil never yet asked his victims to take a walk with him. You will not be long in finding your companion out. All disguises will fall away from him.

—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921
I have a low opinion of books; they are but piles of stone set up to show travelers where other minds have been, or at least signal smokes to call attention…. No amount of wordmaking will ever make a single soul to know these mountains. As well to seek to warm the naked and frostbitten by lectures on caloric and pictures of flame. One day’s exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books. See how willingly Nature poses herself upon photographer’s plates. No earthy chemicals are so sensitive as those of the human soul. All that is required is exposure, and purity of material.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever in life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods we return to reason and faith.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

Come to the woods, for here is rest. There is no repose like that of the green deep woods.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he takes into these precincts.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, Nature, 1836

The outdoor trail is one of many useful devices through which the teacher-naturalist is able to bring the world of nature closer to children, school groups and adults.

—CARL W. BUCHHEISTER, President, National Audubon Society, 1965
But let children walk with Nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life, and that the grave has no victory, for it never fights. All is in divine harmony.

—JOHN MUIR, *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*, 1868

All the great naturalists have been habitual walkers, for no laboratory, no book, car, train or plane takes the place of honest footwork for this calling, be it amateur’s or professional’s.


You cannot walk fast very long on a footpath.

—RICHARD JEFFERIES, English naturalist and novelist, 1848–87

The outdoor trail is one of many useful devices through which the teacher-naturalist is able to bring the world of nature closer to children, school groups and adults.

—CARL W. BUCHHEISTER, President, National Audubon Society, 1965

….that only true development in American recreational resources is the development of the perceptive faculty in Americans: that recreational development is a job, not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948

It must be a poor life that achieves freedom from fear.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948
The mountains are fountains of men as well as of rivers, of glaciers, of fertile soil. The great poets, philosophers, prophets, able men whose thoughts and deeds have moved the world, have come down from the mountains—mountain dwellers who have grown strong there with the forest trees in Nature’s workshops.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Emerson says that things refuse to be mismanaged long. An exception would seem to be found in the case of our forests, which have been mismanaged rather long, and now come desperately near being like smashed eggs and spilt milk.

—JOHN MUIR, *Our National Parks*, 1901

The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

If every citizen could take one walk through this [Sierra] reserve, there would be no more trouble about its care; for only in darkness does vandalism flourish.

—JOHN MUIR, *Our National Parks*, 1901

Camp out among the grass and gentians of glacier meadows, in craggy garden nooks full of Nature’s darlings. Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

—JOHN MUIR, *Our National Parks*, 1901

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin....

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, English dramatist & poet, 1564–1616, *Troilus and Cressida*
Society speaks and all men listen, mountains speak and wise men listen.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Wildness is a necessity.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Do something for wildness and make the mountains glad.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Wherever we go in the mountains we find more than we seek.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Keep close to Nature’s heart, yourself; and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the Mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914, talking about the proposal to dam Hetch Hetchy

The mountains call and I must go.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
The battle we have fought, and are still fighting ... is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

In wildness is the preservation of the world [motto of the Wilderness Society].

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Walking, Atlantic Monthly, June 1862

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and to see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness out of it and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience....

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Walden, 1854

A taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62
The evergreen woods had a decidedly sweet and bracing fragrance; the air was a sort of diet-drink, and we walked on buoyantly in Indian file, stretching our legs.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Time and space—time to be alone, space to move about—these may well become the greatest scarcities of tomorrow.

—EDWIN WAY TEALE, Autumn Across America, 1950

To get past the superficial, two-dimensional, merely aesthetic experience you must, eventually, leave the mechanical conveyances behind....

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

To learn something new, take the path you took yesterday.

—JOHN BURROUGHS, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921

The attention of a traveler should be particularly turned, in the first place, to the various works of Nature.

—WILLIAM BARTRAM, American naturalist, 1739–1823
Purpose of this order was to establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.

—Executive Order 11644: Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands, 1972

Perhaps the most important thing I have learned is the fact that nothing government agencies can do will go further toward managing trailbike use than developing adequate mileage of high-quality trails. After many years of firsthand experience, it is my belief that no amount of restriction or enforcement can begin to provide the environmental protection achieved through provision of adequate facilities and rider education. When quality trails are built riders use them. When riders use developed trails, environmental impact can be designed for, monitored, and controlled. The key is quality, adequate mileage and competent design.


As the number of off-road vehicles has increased, so has their use on public lands…. Increasingly Federal recreational lands have become the focus of conflict between the newer motorized recreationist and the traditional hiker, camper, and horseback rider…. The time has come for a unified Federal policy toward use of off-road vehicles on Federal lands....

—President Richard Nixon, message to Congress, 1972

One punk slob on a dirt bike makes more noise takes up more space inflicts more damage than a hundred horsemen or a thousand walkers.

—Edward Abbey, journal entry of September 24, 1984
We recognize that off-road recreational vehicle use is one of many legitimate uses of federally-owned lands.

—ROGERS C.B. MORTON, Secretary of Interior, 1971

A significant portion of the American public, in an effort to occupy leisure time with fulfilling activities, has rediscovered the attractions of areas away from permanent human habitation. They are using the products of modern technology to reach into the landscape for a more remote recreational experience with a greater degree of comfort and convenience. The internal combustion engine provides a power source for adventure. The off-road vehicle has come of age.


The successful [OHV] trail must: 1. satisfy the trailbike enthusiast; 2. provide protection for the environment; and 3. be developed and managed in a cost-effective manner. A trail that does not meet all of the above criteria is a failure. Fortunately, all three criteria can be successfully met by any land manager with a sense of fairness and a willingness to put forth the necessary effort.


...trailbike and ATV enthusiasts require considerable mileage for a quality outing. It is wise to plan multiple trail systems, each with adequate mileage to provide several full days of riding without having to retrace part of the previous day’s route. The lack of adequate trail mileage for OHV recreation is one of the most serious problems facing public lands managers.

I hope there is some way we could outlaw all off-road vehicles, including snowmobiles, motorcycles, etc., which are doing more damage to our forests and deserts than anything man has ever created. I don’t think the Forest Service should encourage the use of these vehicles by even suggesting areas they can travel in…. I have often felt that these vehicles have been Japan’s way of getting even with us.

—BARRY GOLDWATER, Senator from Arizona, 1973

The state of the art in motorized trail planning should be in constant flux. Constantly test new ideas. Implement the best ones. Planners should first acquire an understanding of the recreation and its participants, then develop an analytic approach to developing and managing trails and facilities.


One man’s noise may be another man’s music.

—MALCOM BALDWIN and DAN STODDARD, The Off-Road Vehicle and Environmental Quality, 1973

In the land use planning process, the question should not be, should we close an area to ORV use? But—can ORV use, in some form, be permitted on the area? One of the primary questions … is generally—How much resource impact can we live with in providing for a recreation activity such as ORVs.

—USDA FOREST SERVICE, 1974

Whenever man with a machine comes in contact either with man without a machine or with nature, the man with the machine is rarely more than inconvenienced, while the man without a machine or nature can suffer anything from inconvenience to extinction.

—RICHARD BUTLER, How to Control 1,000,000 Snowmobiles?

Canadian Geographical Journal, 1974
It is convenient to think of a trailbike trail system as having three basic components. These are:

- An adequate land base.
- Developed areas to start and finish the ride, picnic, and camp, i.e., trailheads and campgrounds.
- An interconnected network of trail loops of varying lengths and degree of difficulty.


Despite years and years of research, we really know very little about the behavior and needs of snowmobilers and off-road recreation (ORV) users.

Although urban open space is usually thought of as providing recreation, it serves many other purposes as well. Open space can provide beauty, privacy, and variety; moderate temperature; and create a sense of spaciousness and scale. It can protect a water supply; provide a noise and safety buffer zone around an airport; or substitute for development on unsuitable soils, in flood plains, or in earthquake zones.

—COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, *Environmental Quality*, 1973

What makes life in our cities at once still tolerable, exciting, and stimulating is the existence of an alternative option, whether exercised or not, whether even appreciated or not, of a radically different mode of being out there, in the forests, on the lakes and rivers, in the deserts, up in the mountains … we cannot have freedom without leagues of open space....

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

What I have learned convinces me that there is one overriding consideration for any open space program. It is, simply, that open space must be sought as a positive benefit. Open space is not the absence of something harmful; it is a public benefit in its own right, now, and should be primarily justified on this basis.


....efforts to develop open space should concentrate not on sheer physical size but on usable space. The linear dimension of the right-of-way trail makes it eminently usable and adds a dimension for hiking and biking that can seldom be realized within the normal park concept....

—CITIZENS’ ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, 1975

The moral activity of all is creation of space for life to move around.

Linear open space can connect traditional parks and other activity centers such as schools and shopping centers. They can also accommodate popular recreational activities such as jogging, walking, bicycling, and canoeing which may be incompatible with traditional urban parks. When associated with streams, which are also linear systems, the open space allows flooding to occur without damage to buildings, or disruption of the local economy or individual lives. Environmentally, linear open space acts as a vegetated buffer along streams to protect water quality and fragile natural ecosystems such as wetlands. Further, the urban environment is enhanced through air quality, temperature, and noise moderation resulting from the conservation of vegetation. Finally, these areas function as wildlife corridors, allowing a greater diversity of animals to travel through and survive within urban areas.


The towns of to-day can only increase in density at the expense of the open spaces which are the lungs of a city. We must increase the open spaces and diminish the distances to be covered. Therefore, the center of the city must be constructed vertically.

—LE CORBUSIER, *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning*, 1929

It may not be crowding *per se* that degrades us, but a lack of relief from crowding—a lack of open space, a lack of green, of nature going its own way.

—CHARLES LITTLE and JOHN MITCHELL, *Space for Survival*, 1971

Concern for the environment and access to parks and open space is not frivolous or peripheral, rather, it is central to the welfare of people body, mind, and spirit.

—LAURANCE ROCKEFELLER, American capitalist & philanthropist, 1910–

If a label is required, say that I am one who loves unfenced country.

—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89
We want a ground to which people may easily go after their day’s work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the streets, where they shall, in effect, find the city put far away from them.... Practically, what we most want is a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward, with sufficient play of surface and a sufficient number of trees about it to supply a variety of light and shade.... We want depth of wood enough about it not only for comfort in hot weather, but to completely shut out the city from our landscapes.

—FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, Public Parks and Enlargement of Towns, 1870

A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below—such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Walking, Atlantic Monthly, June 1862

As leisure-rich Americans turn increasingly from the teeter-totter and turnpike to trail, and as large, natural open spaces become more and more difficult to acquire, comprehensive inventories of useable rights-of-way must be made available to state, county and local governments; and government must seize these opportunities before they are lost forever. It is no longer enough to remember that trails nurtured the growth of this nation. What is clearly needed now is a national effort to nurture the growth of trails.


Our options are expiring. As far as open space is concerned, it doesn’t make a great deal of difference when the projected new population reaches target or whether it is going to be housed in green-belted mega-structures or linear cities or what. The land that is still to be saved will have to be saved within the next few years. We have no luxury of choice. We must make our commitments now and look to this landscape as the last one. For us it will be.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968
Per acre linear strips are probably the most efficient form of open space, and there are plenty of practical examples on the ground to bear this out. When they are laid along the routes people travel or walk, or poke into the places where they live, the spaces provide the maximum visual impact and the maximum physical access. They provide us a way of securing the most highly usable spaces in urban areas where land is hard to come by, and, in time, a way of linking these spaces together.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

The only possible way we can save much open space is to use every tool we can get our hands on and use them together. There has to be a unifying plan, and we must be as hard-boiled as the speculator in framing it. We must identify what cannot be saved, what can and should be saved, and tackle the job as though there will be no reprieve.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

For most of the people most of the time, the edge of the open space is the open space.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

The distribution of open space must respond to natural process…. The problem lies not in absolute area but in distribution. We seek a concept that can provide an interfusion of open space and population.

—IAN MCHARG, Design with Nature, 1969

....as the painter George Catlin had anticipated the national park idea by suggesting a wild prairie reservation, so Thoreau anticipated the more modest urban-open-space idea by suggesting that every community should have its patch of woods where people could refresh themselves. His notion of nature as having healing powers has now the force of revealed truth.

—WALLACE STEGNER, Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs, 1992
Outdoor Ethics

We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

Take only photographs; leave only footprints.

—Sierra Club dictum

When I reached the trailhead and started walking through the harmonious association of huge ponderosa pines, incense cedars, and white firs with its apparently endless diversity of wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, songbirds, and insects, I experienced a novel sense of rightness. Growing up in the suburbs had been an experience of fragmentation as roads and buildings dissected the landscape. The thought that this harmony would continue for dozens of miles without interruption was like relief from a headache so habitual I hadn’t known I had it.


Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons. It is to grow in the open air and, to eat and sleep with the earth.

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855

A land ethic changes the role of homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.

—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

A good walker leaves no tracks.

—Lao-Tzu, Chinese philosopher, 604–531 BC
Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad. And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee. For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp...

—Deuteronomy 23:12–14

We can’t be light in wilderness and heavy in every other aspect of our lives. Going light has got to be applied right across the board or it ends up just another sentimental gesture.

—Albert Sajo, The Backpacker; 1972

It is legitimate to hope that there may be left … the special kind of human mark, the special record of human passage, that distinguishes man from all other species. It is rare enough among men, impossible to any other form of life. It is simply the deliberate and chosen refusal to make any marks at all.

—Wallace Stegner, This Is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country and Its Magic Rivers, 1955

Let no one say and say it to your shame that all was beauty here until you came.

—Author Unknown

We have forgotten how to be good guests, how to walk lightly on the earth as its other creatures do.

—Barbara Ward, Only One Earth, 1972

No Sierra landscape that I have seen holds anything truly dead or dull, or any trace of what in manufactories is called rubbish or waste; everything is perfectly clean and pure and full of divine lessons.

—John Muir, American naturalist, 1838–1914
Well. I do not know why our visitors had such good manners on our Trails in 1925 and we can scarcely hope that it will ever be entirely thus but—still—who knows? Perhaps if you ‘jolly’ the public instead of ordering it about, if you explain instead of dictate, if you ask people to help and to be one with you in protecting nature, they may do it. It is worth trying at any rate, especially as the other way clearly does not work in this land of the free.

—FRANK LUTZ, Nature Trails: An Experiment in Out-door Education, 1926

Rules are for fools.

—PAUL PETZOLDT, Founder, National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), 1908–99, preached outdoor education based on developing understanding and good judgement instead of rules

Seven Principles of Leave no Trace
1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate to other visitors

—LEAVE NO TRACE, INC., 1999

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

Recreationists need to be educated and then constantly reminded of their responsibility to the outdoors.

—JACK LORENZ, Director, Izaak Walton League of America, 1997
An outdoor ethic means personal involvement in the outdoors as an essential part of life. It means a sense of appreciation for, and obligation toward the air, land, water and living things of the earth. It includes statesmanship: courtesy for others using the outdoors; and stewardship: our obligation to ensure future generations’ enjoyment of our natural heritage.

—President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986

Why do Americans, who love the outdoors so much, do so much to jeopardize its future? Are we oblivious to the insults we scatter in the form of trash along our country roads—or worse yet along trails to our scenic natural sites? How did we ever come to expect others to clean up after us at our campsites? Because we exhibit so little respect for the outdoors, we run the risk of converting our federal, state, and local recreation programs into law enforcement efforts. Enough! We can do better. We need to educate all Americans to their rights to enjoy the outdoors—and their responsibilities to use the outdoors well.

—Derrick Crandall, Director, American Recreation Coalition, 1986

For the past 100 years—especially during the past 25—we have emphasized the role of government in conservation and have given little attention to the individual. We have not developed a land ethic in the minds and hearts of citizens in a manner and scale that complements public programs.

—Larry Tombaugh, Michigan State University, President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986

TREAD Lightly! Pledge:
T ravel and recreate with minimum impact
R espect the environment and the rights of others
E ducate yourself, plan and prepare before you go
A llow for future use of the outdoors, leave it better than you found it
D iscover the rewards of responsible recreation

—Tread Lightly! Inc., 1998

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The movement of a canoe is like a reed in the wind. Silence is part of it, and the sounds of lapping water, bird songs, and wind in the trees. It is part of the medium through which it floats, the sky, the water, the shores.... There is magic in the feel of a paddle and the movement of a canoe, a magic compounded of distance, adventure, solitude, and peace. The way of a canoe is the way of the wilderness, and of a freedom almost forgotten. It is an antidote to insecurity, the open door to waterways of ages past and a way of life with profound and abiding satisfactions. When a man is part of his canoe, he is part of all that canoes have ever known.

—SIGURD F. OLSON, *The Singing Wilderness*, 1956

Boats are for work; canoes are for pleasure. Boats are artificial; canoes are natural.

—JOHN BOYLE O’REILLY (1844–90), Canoeing on the Connecticut, *Ethics of Boxing and Manly Sport*, 1890

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass, and the Deuce knows what we may do—but we’re back once more on the old trail; our own trail, the out trail; we’re down, hull down, on the long trail—the trail that is always new.

—RUDYARD KIPLING, English author, 1865–1936

As one goes through life, one learns that if you don’t paddle your own canoe, you don’t move.

—KATHERINE HEPBURN, American actress, 1894–1979

The canoe is the American boat of the past and of the future. It suits the American mind: it is light, swift, safe, graceful, easily moved; and the occupant looks in the direction he is going, instead of behind, as in the stupid old tubs that have held the world up to this time.

—JOHN BOYLE O’REILLY (1844–90), Canoeing on the Connecticut, *Ethics of Boxing and Manly Sport*, 1890
Partnerships

Successful greenways grow out of the grassroots. They depend on local enthusiasm, local money, local leaders, local priorities, local agreements and local governments. They depend on highly motivated volunteers including individuals, groups and businesses. They are dependent, in short, on a strong sense of community responsibility and on the willingness of each community to link its destiny to that of its neighbors.

—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1996

Role of the Federal Government: 1) To develop additional trails on Federal lands, especially in or near urban areas. 2) To work with states and local agencies in their planning of trail programs. 3) To encourage local leadership, both public and private. 4) To help local agencies obtain financial assistance to acquire the necessary land.

—USDI BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION, Trails for America: Report on the Nationwide Trails Study, 1966

The federal [trails] role must evolve along these lines:
1. Working with private groups to bring together clubs, groups, and individuals into compact, influence-wielding confederations;
2. Serving as a clearing house for the latest in trail-planning information, with more ambitious contributions of their trail expertise to citizen groups;
3. Financial assistance for establishing trails, including acquisition and development costs.

—G. DOUGLAS HOFE, American Trails—Rediscovered, Parks & Recreation, March, 1971

Our success depends on the collaborative efforts of volunteers, agencies, and communities working to close the gaps.

—BARBARA RICE, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, 1993
Successful partnerships are ‘win-win’ situations that require give-and-take from all involved…. Partnerships are often fairly easy to establish, but require on-going support and involvement to sustain…. Because forming partnerships can be frustrating, especially in the early stages, successes need to be planned early on as a reward for the time and effort invested.


It seems logical that the people who want trails, will use trails, and who live near trails … should have the opportunity to take part in the planning and management of these trails. This idea is central to the Ridge Trail Council’s philosophy—involvement of the community, building support and stewardship, and establishing a strong and continuing caretaking ethic.


All trails work is a partnership. Without vibrant nonprofit organizations, supportive state programs, and the assistance and recognition of local communities, it is almost impossible to bring these trails forward as real places to visit and experience.

Philosophy

The health of the eye demands a horizon.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

All paths lead nowhere, so it is important to choose a path that has heart.
—CARLOS CASTANEDA, The Teachings of Don Juan, 1969

Mountain should be climbed with as little effort as possible and without desire. The reality of your own nature should determine the speed. If you become restless, speed up. If you become winded, slow down. You climb the mountain in an equilibrium between restlessness and exhaustion. Then, when you’re no longer thinking ahead, each footstep isn’t just a means to an end but a unique event in itself. This leaf has jagged edges. This rock looks loose. From this place the snow is less visible, even though closer. These are things you should notice anyway. To live only for some future goal is shallow. It’s the sides of the mountain which sustain life, not the top. Here’s where things grow.
—ROBERT PIRSIG, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values, 1974

If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.
—WALLACE STEGNER, American environmental writer, 1909–93

A civilization which destroys what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins and betraying the principle of civilization itself.
—EDWARD ABBEY, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

I care to live, only to entice people to look at nature’s liveliness.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
....followers of trails and of seasons, breakers of camp in the little dawn wind, seekers of watercourses over the wrinkled rind of the world, o seekers, o finders of reasons to be up and be gone....


We are born wanderers, followers of obscure trails, or blazers of new ones. The mind, too, is a natural wanderer, ever seeking, and occasionally discovering, new ideas, fresh insights.

—ROYAL ROBBINS, American climber and retailer, 1935–

The tops of mountains are among the unfinished parts of the globe, whither it is a slight insult to the gods to climb and pry into their secrets, and try their effects on our humanity. Only daring and insolent men, perchance, go there. Simple races, as savages, do not climb mountains—their tops are sacred and mysterious tracts never visited by them [on his climb of Katahdin, Maine].

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

To have his path made clear for him is the aspiration of every human being in our beclouded and tempestuous existence.

—JOSEPH CONRAD, The Mirror of the Sea, 1906

Books are but steeping stones to show you where other minds have been.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914

Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82
Planning

A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.
—GEORGE S. PATTON, US Army General, 1885–1945

Trails and parks are as necessary to communities as roads, sewer systems and utility grids.
—PETER HARNICK, Converting Rails to Trails, 1989

We need information, we need sources of information, we need a bibliography of printed [trails] material that is out today.
—PHIL LAVELY, Fourth National Trails Symposium, 1977

The user doesn’t need trails. The land does.
—JIM ANGELL, Western Trailbuilder, 1992

Parks do to the landscape what museums do to painting and sculpture. They embalm it. They tend to elevate us on weekends and holidays rather than enriching our everyday life.
—PETER BLAKE, God’s Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America’s Landscape, 1964

Too often the number of participants has been our only criteria for evaluation. We count numbers—and after a while only numbers count.
—CLAYNE JENSEN, Outdoor Recreation in America, 1985
The three ingredients: plans, action, and money are essential to the success of any trails program.

—G. DOUGLAS HOFÉ, American trails—Rediscovered, Parks & Recreation, March, 1971

Some environmentalists and planners are suggesting a note of caution on the development of trails. Perhaps we need fewer but better planned trails. And trail layout and construction, it is now generally agreed, is not something for the general amateur but serious business. A trail once constructed is difficult to obliterate. Trail planning and layout, therefore, is something for the professional.

—JOSEPH J. SHOMAN, Director, Nature Center Planning Division, National Audubon Society, 1971

But how were these trails made?... According to one writer, ‘The deer were first; then the elk followed the deer; the buffalo followed the elk; the Indian followed the buffalo; trappers then; then army officers came along and discovered a pass.’

—MATHILDE EDITH HOLTZ and KATHARINE ISABEL BEMIS, Glacier National Park: Its Trails and Treasures, 1917

Plans get you into things but you got to work your way out.

Come into the mountains, dear friend
Leave society and take no one with you
But your true self
Get close to nature
Your everyday games will be insignificant
Notice the clouds spontaneously forming patterns
And try to do that with your life.

—Susan Polis Schutz, American writer and poet, 1944–

I've decided to make up my mind
about nothing, to assume the water mask,
to finish my life disguised as a creek,
an eddy, joining at night the full,
sweet flow, to absorb the sky,
to swallow the heat and cold, the moon
and stars, to swallow myself
in ceaseless flow.


And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher.

—William Wordsworth, *The Tables Turned*, 1798

When you feel how depressingly
slowly you climb
it's well to remember
Things Take Time

Voyage upon life’s sea
To yourself be true,
And whatever your lot may be,
Paddle your own canoe.

—Sarah Knowles Bolton,
Paddle Your Own Canoe, in Harper’s Magazine, May, 1854

The flowers bloom, the songbirds sing,
and though it be sun or rain,
I walk the mountaintops with spring
from Georgia north to Maine.

—Earl Shaffer, first solo-hike uninterrupted of the entire
    length of the Appalachian Trail, 1948

Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature’s teachings,...

—William Cullen Bryant, from Thanatopsis, 1821

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I’ll never see a tree at all.

—Ogden Nash, Song of the Open Road,
    Verses from 1929 On, 1959

Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, The Vagabond, 1895
Now Talking God
With your feet I walk
I walk with your limbs
I carry forth your body
For me your mind thinks
Your voice speaks for me
Beauty is before me
And beauty if behind me
Above and below me hovers the beautiful
I am surrounded by it
I am immersed in it
In my youth I am aware of it
And in old age I shall walk quietly
The beautiful trail.
—Diné Prayer, in *Earth Prayers*, edited by
Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991

Afoot and light hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth, I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune.
Henceforth, I whimper no more, postpone no more, I need nothing. I’m done
with indoor complaints, libraries, and querulous criticisms.
Strong and content I travel the open road.
The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.
(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill’d with them, and will fill them in return.)
You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.
—Walt Whitman, Song of the Open Road, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855
I come from haunts of coot and heron:
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.
By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.
Till last by Philip’s farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.
I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying hays,
I babble on the pebbles.
With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.
I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.
I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,
And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,
And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.
I steal by lawns and grassy lots:
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.
I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows;
I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my creases;
And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

—ALFRED LORD TENNYSON,
The Brook, Maud and Other Poems, 1855

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain,
Poems are made my fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

—JOYCE KILMER, Trees,
in Trees and Other Poems, 1914
Embark upon this hallowed trail
Prepare the fabric of your life
While some will make it, most will fail
But all will know both joy and strife
Joy of friendship and challenge met
Strife in hardships to endure
And guaranteed you will think yet
Through much of what you’re hiking for
Consider this from one who’s done
Before you move on down this path
For every three days in the sun
You’ll taste a day of nature’s wrath
When pain rears up its ugly head
You have to walk your way right through
Adventures always lie ahead
Each day is altogether new
But no amount of words can tell
Or ever manage to convince
How once you’ve hiked the whole A.T. [Appalachian Trail]
You live your life with confidence.
  —DON HIRSOHN, The Poetry Man, To Future Classes, 1986

It’s little I care what path I take,
And where it leads it’s little I care;…
I wish I could walk for a day and a night,
And find me at dawn in a desolate place
With never the rut of a road in sight,
Nor the roof of a house, nor the eyes of a face.
  —EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY, Departure, Collected Poems, 1923

I like a road that wanders; the King’s Highway is fair,
And lovely are the sheltered lanes that take you here and there;
But best of all I love a trail that leads to God knows where.
  —CHARLES HANSON TOWNE, American writer & educator, 1877–1949
Traveler, your footsteps are the path, and nothing else; traveler, there is no path, a path is made by walking. Walking makes the path, and on looking back we see a trail that never can be walked again. Traveler, there is no path, Only a wake in the sea.

—Antonio Machado, _Proverbios y Cantares_, 1964

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.


Trails are not dust and pebbles on a hill, Nor even grass and wild buds by a lake; Trails are adventure and a hand to still The restless pulse of life when men would break Their minds with weight of thinking. Trails are peace, The call to dreams, the challenge to ascent; Trails are the brisk unfolding of release From bitterness and from discouragement. Trails are the random writing on the wall That tells how every man, grown tired at heart Of things correct and ordered, comes to scrawl His happy hour down—then goes to start Life over with new eagerness and zest. Who builds a trail finds labor that is rest!

—Helena Frazee-Bower, American poet, 1896–2000, _Trails_
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

—ROBERT FROST, The Road Not Taken,
in Mountain Interval, 1916

It took that pause to make him realize
The mountain he was climbing had the slant
As of a book held up before his eyes
(And was a text albeit done in plant).

—ROBERT FROST, Time Out, 1942

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to
walk free and own no superior?

—WALT WHITMAN, from Laws for Creations, 1860
There’s a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingales are singing
And a white moon beams;
There’s a long, long night of waiting
Until my dreams all come true,
Till the day when I’ll be going down that
Long, long trail with you

—STODDARD KING and ZO ELLIOT,
_The Long, Long Trail_, 1913

Weep, all ye little rains
Wail, winds, wail,
All along, along, along
The Colorado Trail.

—CARL SANDBURG, _The Colorado Trail,
The American Songbag_, 1927

Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I’ll protect it now.

—GEORGE PERKINS MORRIS,
_Woodman, Spare That Tree_, 1830

Whoso walks in solitude,
And inhabiteth the wood,
Choosing light, wave, rock, and bird
Before the money-loving herd,
Into that forester shall pass,
From these companions, power and grace.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, _Wood-notes_, 1847
When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

—WENDELL BERRY, The Peace of Wild Things,
in *Openings*, 1968

Ye who know the Lone Trail fain would follow it,
Through it lead to glory or the darkness of the pit.
Ye who take the Lone Trail, bid your love good-bye;
The Lone Trail, the Lone Trail follow till you die.
The trails of the world be countless,
and most of the trails be tried;
You tread on the heels of the many,
till you come where the ways divide;
And one lies safe in the sunlight,
and the other is dreary and wan,
Yet you look aslant at the Lone Trail,
and the Lone Trail lures you on.
And somehow you’re sick of the highway,
with its noise and its easy needs,
And sometimes it leads to the desert,
and the tongue swells out of the mouth,
And you stagger blind to the mirage,
to die in the mocking drought.
And sometimes it leads to the mountain,
to the light of the lone camp-fire,
And you gnaw your belt in the anguish of hunger-goaded desire.
And sometimes it leads to the Southland,
to the swamp where the orchid glows,
And you rave to your grave with the fever,
and they rob the corpse for its clothes.
And sometimes it leads to the Northland,
and the scurvy softens your bones,
and your flesh dints in like putty,
and you spit out your teeth like stones.
And sometimes it leads to a coral reef
in the wash of a weedy sea,
And you sit and stare at the empty glare
where the gulls wait greedily.
And sometimes it leads to an Arctic trail,
and the snows where your torn feet freeze,
And you whittle away the useless clay,
and crawl on your hands and knees.
Often it leads to the dead-pit; always it leads to pain;
By the bones of your brothers ye know it,
but oh, to follow you’re fain.
By your bones they will follow behind you,
till the ways of the world are made plain.
Bid good-by to sweetheart, bid good-by to friend;
The Lone Trail, the Lone Trail follow to the end.
Tarry not, and fear not, chosen of the true;
Lover of the Lone Trail, the Lone Trail waits for you.

—Robert Service,
The Lone Trail, 1907
I am one of you no longer; by the trails my feet have broken,  
The dizzy peaks I’ve scaled, the camp-fire’s glow;  
By the lonely seas I’ve sailed in—  
yea, the final word is spoken,  
I am signed and sealed to nature. Be it so.

—ROBERT SERVICE,  
from The Rhyme of the Remittance Man, 1921

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
There is a society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:  
I love not man the less, but Nature more,  
Form these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
What I can ne’er express, yet can not all conceal.

—GEORGE GORDON (LORD) BYRON, also know as Lord Byron,  
Apostrophe to the Ocean, in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, 1817

We had learned the Appalachian Trail parallels life. It has  
peaks and valleys,  
joys and sorrows,  
exhilarating times and ordinary times,  
sunshine and rain,  
laughter and tears,  
healing and pain,  
and, as in life,  
the trail has a beginning and an end.  
Likewise, the end is a new beginning.

—MADELAINE CORNELIUS,  
Katahdin with Love: An Inspirational Journey, 1991
If you'll go with me to the mountains
And sleep on the leaf carpeted floors
And enjoy the bigness of nature
And the beauty of all out-of-doors,
You will find your troubles all fading
And feel the Creator was not man
That made lovely mountains and forests
Which only a Supreme Power can.
When we trust in the Power above
And with the realm of nature hold fast,
We will have a jewel of great price
To brighten our lives till the last.
For the love of nature is healing,
If we will only give it a try
And our reward will be forthcoming,
If we go deeper than what meets the eye.

—EMMA ‘GRANDMA’ GATEWOOD,
at age 67 first woman to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail (1955), 1887–1973,
The Reward of Nature
When you come to where
the trail ends
and stones begin
to be placed one upon the other
crowding into a wall
that splits the land,
and stumps break
the elegant curve of birch
angling to the emptiness,
when a light mist
turns to cold
drenching rain
and you crawl
into your own
sense of outside:
do you walk into the cleared field
expecting no worse than a gentle admonishing
that your muddy tracks have disturbed
the rows of seed waiting to join
the inevitable harvest,
do you draw back and fold
those earlier steps into a neat deck
of snapshots certain to please
the vicarious roamer
emptying your blood on the path
even as you struggle to alert him
of your intimate presence,
or do you draw open your hood
to the icy rain,
laugh at believing in anything
other than the cold
wet soft murmur of rills
threading the shadowy edge of forest,
and turn again to the darkening trail
as a child to the wind of night.

—Justin Askins, When You Come to Where the Trail Ends, in Mountain Passages: An Appalachia Anthology, edited by Robert Manning, 1982
I think politicians sometimes badly underestimate the true feelings that Americans have for the land.

—MORRIS UDALL, Senator from Utah, 1987

I am one of those people who deeply resents not having been born in the 19th century, when there were still open places to explore.

—BRUCE BABBITT, former Governor of Arizona, quoted in Los Angeles Times, March 3, 1987

We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft.

—ADLAI STEVENSON, American political leader, 1900–65

Trails are relatively inexpensive. A splendid national network of all kinds of trails can be established at less cost than a few hundred miles of super highway.

—GAYLORD NELSON, Senator from Wisconsin, 1969

Like the railroads that brought us together in the 19th century, these trails will bring us together in the 20th and 21st centuries.

—FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON at launch of the National Millennium Trails Program, 1999

Many of the green places and open spaces that need protecting most today are in our own neighborhoods. In too many places, the beauty of local vistas has been degraded by decades of ill-planned and ill-coordinated development.

—VICE PRESIDENT ALBERT GORE, January 12, 1999
I think a current understanding about urban behavior tells us that it’s important that people get out and be able to get away from the concrete jungles and the dense environment where they live for their own mental well-being. If they don’t do this, the costs in human loss and human sickness will be far greater than what we would be expending for these kinds of releases and open spaces.

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail, but without it, nothing can succeed.
—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, Sixteenth US President (1861–65), 1809–65

We must think nationally about the [trails] system and act locally to link trails and make the system happen.
—BRUCE F. VENTO, Senator from Minnesota, 1998

I’ve been through legislation creating a dozen national parks, and there’s always the same pattern. When you first propose a park, and you visit the area and present the case to the local people, they threaten to hang you. You go back in five years and they think it’s the greatest thing that ever happened.
—MORRIS UDALL, Too Funny to Be President, 1988

Far and away the best prize life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.
—THEODORE ROOSEVELT, Twenty-sixth US President (1901–09), 1858–1919

The fact that we live in a world that moves crisis by crisis does not make a growing interest in outdoor activities frivolous, or ample provision for them unworthy of the nation’s concern.
Admittedly, we must move ahead with the development of our land resources. Likewise, our technology must be refined. But in the long run life will succeed only in a life-giving environment, and we can no longer afford unnecessary sacrifices of living space and natural landscape to ‘progress.’

—Stewart Udall, Secretary of Interior (1961–69), 1920–

There is delight in the hardy life of the open. There are no words that can tell of the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy and its charm. The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value.

—Theodore Roosevelt, Twenty-sixth US President (1901–09), 1858–1919

Hiking trails provide the entire American family with perhaps the most economical, most varied form of outdoor recreation. So this new law (The National Trails System Act of 1968) gives us a much needed opportunity to preserve and more widely enjoy many significant parts of our country’s natural heritage....

The goal is to provide all of us, no matter where we live, with easy access to a wide variety of trails suited to our tastes and needs—whether we are grandparents on a Sunday stroll, kids on bikes or horseback, or veteran hikers.

—Gaylord Nelson, Senator from Wisconsin, 1969

Each generation has its own rendezvous with the land, for despite our fee titles and claims of ownership, we are all brief tenants on this planet. By choice, or by default, we will carve out a land legacy for our heirs. We can misuse the land and diminish the usefulness of resources, or we can create a world in which physical affluence and affluence of the spirit go hand in hand.

—Stewart Udall, The Quiet Crisis and the Next Generation, 1963

....I heartily commend all those who have worked so hard to make this dream a reality. Eventually your work will lead to a trail system spanning from coast to coast that will not only provide wonderful recreational opportunities for countless American’s but also help to preserve our nation’s precious natural resources....

—President George Bush, National Trails Day, June 3, 1992

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Few of us can hope to leave a work of art, or a poem, to posterity; but together—if we act before it is too late—we can set aside a few more great parks, and round out our system of refuges for wildlife. Or, working at other levels, we can reserve a marsh or meadow, or an avenue of open space as a green legacy for other generations. By a series of such acts of conservation we can do much to save what Thomas Jefferson called the ‘face and character’ of our country. If we do this, surely those who follow, whether or not our names survive, will remember and praise our vision and our works.

—STEWART UDALL, Secretary of Interior (1961–69), 1920–
Do not follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail.
—ASHANTI PROVERB

It is better to lose the saddle than the horse.
—ITALIAN PROVERB

If you take big paces you leave big spaces.
—BURMESE PROVERB

Walking makes for a long life.
—HINDU PROVERB

It is a long lane that has no turning.
—ENGLISH PROVERB

Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness.
—OLD PROVERB

The man who moved a mountain was the one who began carrying away small stones.
—CHINESE PROVERB
Those who are absent are always wrong.
—ENGLISH PROVERB

When you reach the top, keep climbing.
—ZEN PROVERB

On a long journey even a straw weighs heavy.
—SPANISH PROVERB

It is better to travel alone than with a bad companion.
—SENEGALESE PROVERB

Better to turn back than to lose your way.
—RUSSIAN PROVERB

Po buckra an dog walk one pat [The poor man and the dog walk the same path].
—GULLAH PROVERB (dialect heard in the lowcountry of South Carolina)

Act quickly, think slowly.
—GREEK PROVERB

It is better to wear out one’s shoes than one’s sheets.
—GENOESE PROVERB
Who begins too much accomplishes little.
—GERMAN PROVERB

When you drink the water, remember the spring.
—CHINESE PROVERB

A wise man changes his mind, a fool never will.
—SPANISH PROVERB

The day on which one starts out is not the time to start one’s preparations.
—NIGERIAN PROVERB

Every path has its puddle.
—ENGLISH PROVERB

Set a stout heart to a steep hillside.
—SCOTTISH PROVERB

Walk till the blood appears on the cheek, but not the sweat on the brow.
—SPANISH PROVERB

It is solved by walking.
—LATIN PROVERB
Standing is still going.
—SWAHILI PROVERB

Do not look to the ground for your next step; greatness lies with those who look to the horizon.
—NORWEGIAN PROVERB

Work is good, provided you do not forget to live.
—BANTU PROVERB

—CHINESE PROVERB

We have not inherited the world from our forefathers—we have borrowed it from our children.
—KASHMIRI PROVERB

What is the use of running when we are not on the right road?
—GERMAN PROVERB
This is one of those ideas that you sit down and ask yourself. ‘Why didn’t we think of this before?’ Here we have a resource [abandoned railroad rights-of-way] that is not being used, thousands of miles of scenic real estate suitable for hiking, biking, and all of the rest for no cost…. We can give them what amounts to a huge injection of excellence in the system of national trails.

—Morris Udall, Senator from Utah, 1988

Converting an abandoned rail corridor into a trail is not always an easy task, but it is one whose rewards to your community and region will continue far into the future.

—Peter Harnick, Converting Rails to Trails, 1989

Once people have access to a rail-trail, it tends to get used, whether for recreation, commuting, or providing a safe route to their friend’s house. A rail-trail can attract people who otherwise may not have much contact with the natural world.

—Sally Trepanowski, Rails to Trails, American Hiker, 1992

Rail-trails are a perfect means of telling community stories…. Their long and colorful history make perfect greenways. They combine that history with a respect for the environment, and recreation, and allow us to live life on a human scale maintaining contact with each other and with nature.

—David Burwell, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1998

Cycling is recycling, and abandonments are not abandonments. The conversion program must be considered a transportation program to preserve railroad right-of-ways for the future reactivation of rail service. Today we will have our trails, but tomorrow we will once again have our rails.

—Glenn Tiedt, From Rails to Trails and Back Again: A Look at the Conversion Program, Parks & Recreation, 1980
When we first heard about the plans for the Cedar Valley Nature Trail from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids [Iowa], we were less than enthusiastic. We attended the meetings and tried to get laws passed and lawsuits initiated to stop what we felt was a real menace to our well-being. We headed up a group of farmers and took the issue to court. We fought it for a year and finally decided that it wasn’t worth it and that we should negotiate.

In retrospect, it’s funny, ‘cause the trail is the greatest thing going.’ None of the fears have come to pass. There are perhaps 15,000 people using the trail every year. Many of them access the trail through our farm. We have formed many friendships with the trail users, and hear from them throughout the year and at Christmas.

—RICK SPENCE, Farmer, Farmland News, February, 1993

Towns which have rail-trails are better places to live, work, recreate and raise a family; towns without these greenways are poorer for the lack of them.

—PETER HARNICK, Converting Rails to Trails, 1989

We have an opportunity to preserve a dwindling national resource [abandoned rail lines] of close-to-home open space. Let’s not let it slip away.

—GILBERT GROSVENOR, President, National Geographic Society, 1988

Human history and natural history are visible from trails. The old railroad routes through a town can show a lot about how the town developed, what it was like long ago. When you go through a town by bicycle on an old railroad route, the place looks very different than from the customary perspective of the car and the highway.

—PETER HARNICK, Co-founder, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1987
It’s truly ironic that this country spends millions of dollars each year building new trail systems while an already-established system of trail corridors along some of our most scenic vistas is melting away before our very eyes [testimony before President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors].

—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1987

Thinking back, it is a wonder there have been any rail-trail conversions at all, considering the kinds of problems the pioneer projects had to face. Even without the killers [issues], almost any rail-trail project is a huge challenge, given the large number of jurisdictions and adjoining land users any railroad right-of-way encounters in just a few miles, never mind the typical twenty- to thirty-mile length (or more) of some of the major projects.

—CHARLES LITTLE, Greenways for America, 1990

It is a rare [railroad] right-of-way which does not have an incredibly complicated legal and political history behind it, and unsnarling questions of title and jurisdiction is difficult under the best of circumstances. It takes a hard core of screwballs to see this kind of project through.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

At an average of twelve acres per mile, and with widths up to 400 feet, abandoned lines represent a million-acre resource available for many public uses, particularly trails: conservation trails for wildlife protection, nature interpretation, and open space; recreation trails for hiking, biking, walking, skiing, and horseback riding; trails for cultural interpretation and historic preservation; and access trails to rivers and to public lands for camping, hunting, and fishing.

—DAVID BURWELL, President. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1988
We are human beings. We are able to walk upright on two feet. We need a footpath. Right now there is a chance for Chicago and its suburbs to have a footpath, a long one.

The right-of-way of the Aurora electric road lies waiting. If we have courage and foresight, such as made possible the Long Trail in Vermont and the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia, and the network of public footpaths in Britain, then we can create from this strip a proud resource.

Look ahead some years into the future. Imagine yourself going for a walk on an autumn day. Choose some part of the famed Illinois footpath. Where the highway crosses it, you enter over a stile. The path lies ahead, curving around a hawthorn tree, then proceeding under the shade of a forest of sugar maple trees, dipping into a hollow with ferns, then skirting a thicket of wild plum, to straighten out for a long stretch of prairie, tall grass prairie, with big blue stem and blazing star and silphium and goldenrod.

You must go over a stile again, to cross a highway to another stile. This section is different. The grass is cut and garden flowers bloom in great beds. This part, you may learn, is maintained by the Chicago Horticultural Society. Beyond the garden you enter a forest again, maintained by the Morton Arboretum. At its edge begins a long stretch of water with mud banks, maintained for water birds and waders, by the Chicago Ornithological Society. You notice an abundance of red-fruited shrubs. The birds have the Audubon Societies to thank for those. You rest on one of the stout benches provided by the Prairie Club, beside a thicket of wild crab apple trees planted by the Garden Club of Illinois.

Then you walk through prairie again. Four Boy Scouts pass. They are hiking the entire length of the trail. This fulfills a requirement for some merit badge. A troop of Scouts is planting acorns in a grove of cottonwood trees. Most of the time you find yourself in prairie or woodland of native Illinois plants. These stretches of trail need little or no upkeep. You come to one stretch, a long stretch, where nothing at all has been done. But university students are identifying and listing plants. The University of Chicago ecology department is in charge of this strip. They are watching to see what time and nature will do.
You catch occasional glimpses of bicycles flying past, along one side. The bicycles entered through a special stile admitting them to the bicycle strip. They cannot enter the path where you walk, but they can ride far and fast without being endangered by cars, and without endangering those who walk.

That is all in the future, the possible future. Right now the right-of-way lies waiting, and many hands are itching for it. Many bulldozers are drooling.

—May Theilgaard Watts, letter to the editor, Chicago Tribune, October 2, 1963.
This letter led to the creation of the 50-mile Illinois Prairie Path and is generally credited with getting the rails-to-trails movement started.

No single individual should be able to unravel the tapestry of railroad corridors in our nation which took generations to weave together, at the expense of the great sweat and toil of American workers.

—Stewart Udall, Former Secretary of the Interior from 1961–69 and former Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Board Member, 1998

Of the many hurdles that rails-to-trails advocates confront, the basic one is fear—fear by landowners of outsiders, fear by park managers of unexpected costs or liability, fear by politicians of trying something new. Virtually all these fears have proven groundless....

—Peter Harnick, Converting Rails to Trails, 1989
Rivers

A river is more than an amenity—it is a treasure that offers a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, American physician, poet, and humorist, 1809–94

There is something more than association at the bottom of the excitement which the roar of a cataract produces. It is allied to the circulation in our veins. We have a waterfall which corresponds even to Niagara somewhere within us.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

The life of every river sings its own song, but in most the song is long since marred by the discords of misuse.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948

As long as there are young men with the light of adventure in their eyes or a touch of wildness in their souls, rapids will be run.

—SIGURD F. OLSON, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

River time flows inside me. It becomes who I am: River of spirit … river of hope, river of fears … river of tears, river of passion … river of purpose, river of solitude … river of song, river of truth … river of love, river of dreams, river of life.

—TOM BLAGDEN, The Rivers of South Carolina, 1999

Rivers have what man most respects and longs for in his own life and thought—a capacity for renewal and replenishment, continual energy, creativity, cleansing.

—JOHN KAUFFMANN, Flow East: A Look at Our North Atlantic Rivers, 1973
You cannot step twice in the same river.

—HERACLITUS, Greek philosopher, 535–475 BC

Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world’s great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters.

—NORMAN MACLEAN, A River Runs Through It, 1976

Swift or smooth, broad as the Hudson or narrow enough to scrape your gunwales, every river is a world of its own, unique in pattern and personality. Each mile on a river will take you further from home than a hundred miles on a road.

—BOB MARSHALL, Co-founder, Wilderness Society, 1901–39

Rivers are places that renew our spirit, connect us with our past, and link us directly with the flow and rhythm of the natural world.

—TED TURNER, in The Rivers of South Carolina, 1999

The mist was all gone from the river now and the rapids sparkled and sang. They were still young as the land was young. We were there to enjoy it, and the great machines seemed far away.

—SIGURD F. OLSON, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.

—LOREN EISELEY, The Immense Journey, 1946
It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big, still river, laying on our backs, looking up at stars, and we didn’t even feel like talking aloud.

—Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 1884

The activist is not the man who says the river is dirty. The activist is the man who cleans up the river.

—Ross Perot, American businessman & philanthropist, 1930–

Finally, I took a walk alone to the levee. I wanted to sit on the muddy bank and dig the Mississippi River; instead of that I had to look at it with my nose against a wire fence. When you start separating the people from their rivers, what have you got? Bureaucracy!

—Jack Kerouac, On the Road, 1955

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

—Ecclesiastes 1:7

A river is more than an amenity—it is a treasure.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, American physician, poet, and humorist, 1809–94

There is no music like a little river’s…. It takes the mind out-of-doors … and … it quiets a man down like saying his prayers.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish author and poet, 1850–94
The real way to know a river is not to glance at it here or there in the course of a hasty journey, nor to become acquainted with it after it has been partly civilized and spoiled by too close contact with the works of man. You must go to its native haunts; you must see it in youth and freedom; you must accommodate yourself to its pace, and give yourself to its influence, and follow its meanderings withersoever they may lead you.

—Henry Van Dyke, American poet, 1852–1933

The good life on any river may … depend on the perception of its music, and the preservation of some music to perceive.

—Aldo Leopold, American conservationist, 1887–1948

The rivers are our brothers.

—Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish Tribe in the Washington Territory, 1790–1866
Safety

....it is safer to wander in God’s woods than to travel on black highways or to stay at home.

—JOHN MUIR, *Our National Parks*, 1901

Crime and the fear of crime do not flourish in an environment of high energy and healthy interaction among law abiding community members—the trail may be one of the safest places in the city.

—CHIEF OF POLICE in South Burlington, Vermont, 1997

Fears vanish as soon as one is fairly free in the wilderness.

—JOHN MUIR, *Our National Parks*, 1901

A venturesome minority will always be eager to set off on their own, and no obstacles should be placed in their path; let them take risks, for Godsake, let them get lost, sunburnt, stranded, drowned, eaten by bears, buried alive under avalanches—that is the right and privilege of any free American. But the rest, the majority, most of them new to the out-of-doors, will need and welcome assistance, instruction, and guidance. Many will not know how to saddle a horse, read a topographical map, follow a trail over slickrock, memorize landmarks, build a fire in rain, treat snakebite, rappel down a cliff, glissade down a glacier, read a compass, find water under sand, load a burro, splint a broken bone, bury a body, patch a rubber boat, portage a waterfall, survive a blizzard, avoid lightning, cook a porcupine, comfort a girl during a thunderstorm, predict the weather, dodge falling rock, climb out of a box canyon, or pour piss out of a boot.

—EDWARD ABBEY, *Desert Solitaire*, 1971
No American wilderness that I know of is so dangerous as a city home ‘with all the modern improvements.’

—JOHN MUIR, Our National Parks, 1901

The people’s safety is the highest law.

—ROMAN MAXIM

One should go to the woods for safety, if for nothing else.

—JOHN MUIR, Our National Parks, 1901

....most trails are safer for bicycle and pedestrian use than the major alternatives such as public highways and roads. This point can be put another way: the risks of liability for bicycle and pedestrian use of trails are less than those associated with similar use of streets and highways. The reason is the user is less likely to be hit by a car or to run afoul of the detritus thrown from cars or other vehicles when the user is on a trail were such vehicles are prohibited. Indeed, the relative safety of trails is one of the major reasons that they are so popular with pedestrians and cyclists.

Songs

And I’m back on the trail again,
missed you like some long lost friend,
Sometimes I think I’m just a part of the wind,
When I’m back on the trail again.
—*Walkin’ Jim Stolz*, long-distance hiker and
song writer, *Back On The Trail Again*,
Walkin’ Jim Music, BMI, 1984

Out on the Crest Trail, there’s a wind a-blowin’,
Mojave wind, blowin’ way my cares,
It’s pushing me northward, that’s where I’m a-goin’,
I’m bound for the border and I’ll soon be there.
—*Walkin’ Jim Stolz*, long-distance hiker and
song writer, *On the Crest Trail*,
Walkin’ Jim Music, BMI, 1996

When the sun’s behind the mountain and the frost is in the air,
We’re up and off and hiking on our way;
We don’t know where we’re going and we don’t supremely care,
But we’ll be there when the evening ends the day.
Up the rocky slopes we clamber and then down the other side,
Through forests and across the rocky streams,
Through a land of bright enchantment where the vision opens wide,
And we find the wide horizon of our dreams.
—*Sierra Club Song*, in *Joseph Hazard*,
Pacific Crest Trails, 1946
This land is your land, this land is my land,
From [the] California to the [Staten] New York Island,
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
[God blessed America for me.]

As I went walking that ribbon highway
And saw above me that endless skyway,
And saw below me the golden valley, I said:
[God blessed America for me.]

I roamed and rambled and followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts,
And all around me, a voice was sounding:
[God blessed America for me.]

Was a high wall there that tried to stop me
A sign was painted said: Private Property,
But on the back side it didn’t say nothing—
[God blessed America for me.]

When the sun came shining, then I was strolling
In wheat fields waving and dust clouds rolling;
The voice was chanting as the fog was lifting:
[God blessed America for me.]

One bright sunny morning in the shadow of the steeple
By the Relief Office I saw my people—
As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if
[God blessed America for me.]

—WOODY GUTHRIE, American folk singer, 1912–67,
_This Land Was Made For You And Me_, 1940
I’ve been chasing rainbows since I was a kid
Seekin’ out the paths where no others did.
The life of the trail I took to my heart,
Wanderin’ wild, and livin’ the part.
I found my way down that endless track,
It fit me well, this life of the pack,
Out where the world is one, untamed and on the run,
Stretching out into the setting sun.

I walk the long trails, I came of age on the long trails,
I found my place in those wide open spaces
Out there a-walkin’ on the long trails.
—Walkin’ Jim Stolz,
long-distance hiker and song writer,
The Long Trails, Walkin’ Jim Music, BMI, 1997

Happy trails to you, until we meet again.
Happy trails to you, keep smilin’ until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we’re together?
Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.
Happy trails to you till we meet again.

Some trails are happy ones.
Others are blue.
It’s the way you ride the trail that counts.
Here’s a happy one for you.
—Dale Evans-Rogers, Happy Trails, 1951
Down at Springer Mountain I learned a thing or two,
Just a greenhorn city boy, starting out brand new,
I’d been feeling disconnected, kind of lost along the way,
But the first step that I took, found me coming home that day.

Chorus:
The Appalachian Trail was where it all began,
That’s where this boy first learned, to call himself a man,
It was the wind that taught me how to spread my wings,
It was the path, that led me on to other things.

It’s funny how just spirit will see you through hard times,
The blisters pain and freezin’ rain, and frozen boots were mine,
I look back now and think of how I could have thrown it in,
But the one who stands before you now, just never would have been.

(Repeat Chorus)
I still spend my days out walkin’ with the wind,
Now there’s silver in my beard, my hair is getting’ thin,
They say life is a circle and we’ll all come ’round again,
If that’s so, I’m looking for my Appalachian friends.

(Final Chorus)

—Walkin’ Jim Stoltz,
long-distance hiker and song writer,
The Appalachian Trail, Walkin’ Jim Music, BMI, 1974

The crystal morning is broken with the cooing of a dove
As you head on up the trail to the highlands up above
Where the colors of the rainbow, are the flowers at your feet,
And your heart sings a song with every beat.

—Walkin’ Jim Stoltz,
long-distance hiker and song writer,
All Along The Great Divide, Walkin’ Jim Music, BMI, 1984
I love to go a-wandering
along the mountain track,
and, as I go, I love to sing,
my knapsack on my back.

Chorus:
Valderi, valdera
Valderi, valdera ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,
Valderi, valdera,
My knapsack on my back,

I love to wander by the stream…
that dances in the sun,
so joyously it calls to me,
Come! Join my happy song!
(Repeat Chorus)
I wave my hat to all I see,
and they wave back to me,
and blackbirds all so loud and sweet
from every greenwood tree.
(Repeat Chorus)
O may I go a-wandering
until the day I die.
O may I always laugh and sing
beneath God’s clear blue sky.

—Antonia Ridge and
Frederick W. Moller,
The Happy Wanderer, 1810
Transportation

Speed shrinks distance. Roads shrivel parks. Keep out the cars and you will make what is now a two-hour routine drive from Gatlinburg to Cherokee into something more like a two- or three-day expedition on foot, bicycle or horseback. Set a man on foot at the entrance to the park, at any entrance, with no means to proceed except by his own energy and inclination, and he faces a vista as wild and immense as that which confronted Hernando de Soto, William Bartram or Daniel Boone. What was an excursion becomes an adventure.

—EDWARD ABBEY, talking about the overuse of Great Smokies National Park in *Appalachian Wilderness*, 1988

Our national flower is the concrete cloverleaf.

—LEWIS MUMFORD, American social philosopher and urban planner, 1895–1990

The current tendency in the parks is to limit entrances by upping admission prices, requiring reservations, and so forth. These solutions may be necessary, and I would rather put up with them than see a park destroyed. But usually pressures could be better reduced by getting rid of the motor vehicles. A car takes up more space, makes more noise, pollutes more air, requires more facilities, and carries more trash than a person—or a lot of people. Let the visitors walk or put them on bicycles. That is what the parks are all about anyway. Let them stick their noses in flowers, gawk at the cliffs, wonder at the sunset, and get blisters on their feet. But for God’s sake, let them leave their gasoline engines somewhere else—we need parks, not parking lots.


Let’s work together to get America moving on both legs and on two wheels, and have a good time while we do it!

—FEDERICO PENA, Secretary of Transportation, 1994

Road, n. A strip of land over which one may pass from where it is too tiresome to be to where it is too futile to go.

—AMBROSE BIERCE, *The Devil’s Dictionary*, 1881–1911

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Saving old railroad corridors as trails is not only good recreation policy, it is good railroad policy. They [abandoned rail corridors] may be appropriate for rail use in the future. If they are destroyed now, we will never be able to reassemble them again.

—DREW LEWIS, former Secretary of Transportation and a former Chief Executive Officer for Union Pacific Railroad, 1990

This is the vision—to create a changed transportation system that offers not only choices among travel modes for specific trips, but more importantly presents these options so that they are real choices that meet the needs of individuals and society as a whole. Making this vision a reality must begin now.


The automobile has not merely taken over the street, it has dissolved the living tissue of the city. Its appetite for space is absolutely insatiable; moving and parked, it devours urban land, leaving the buildings as mere islands of habitable space in a sea of dangerous and ugly traffic.


Transportation is about more than asphalt, concrete and steel. Ultimately it is about people. It is about providing people with the opportunity for a safer, happier and more fulfilling life.

—RODNEY SLATER, US Secretary of Transportation, 1999

Perhaps our age will be known to the future historian as the age of the bulldozer and the exterminator; and in many parts of the country the building of a highway has about the same result upon vegetation and human structures as the passage of a tornado or the blast of an atom bomb....

—LEWIS MUMFORD, The Highway and the City, 1953
Travel

A journey of a thousand miles starts must begin with a single step.
—LAO-TZU, Chinese philosopher, 604–531 BC

To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor.
—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, El Dorado, Virginibus Puerisque, 1881

Methods of locomotion have improved greatly in recent years, but places to go remain about the same.
—DON HEROLD, American writer, 1905–60

Those who would see wonderful things must often be ready to travel alone.
—HENRY VAN DYKE, American poet, 1852–1933

A traveler. I love his title. A traveler is to be reverenced as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from—toward; it is the history of every one of us.
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

‘Go West,’ said Horace Greeley, but my slogan is ‘Go Anyplace.’
—RICHARD BISSELL, American writer, 1913–82

Thanks to the Interstate Highway System, it is now possible to travel across the country from coast to coast without seeing anything.
—CHARLES KURALT, A Life On the Road, 1990

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When one realizes that his life is worthless he either commits suicide or travels.
—Edward Dahlberg, On Futility, Reasons of the Heart, 1965

The thing to remember when traveling is that the trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast and you miss all you are traveling for.
—Louis L'Amour, Western writer, 1908–88

Mileage craziness is a serious condition that exists in many forms. It can hit unsuspecting travelers while driving cars, motorcycles, riding in planes, crossing the country on bicycles or on foot. The symptoms may lead to obsessively placing more importance on how many miles are traveled than on the real reason for traveling.
—Peter Jenkins, American writer, 1951–

The journey not the arrival matters.

For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel’s sake. The great affair is to move.
—Robert Louis Stevenson, Travels with a Donkey in The Cevennes, 1879
Urban Trails

Nothing could do more to give life back to our blighted urban cores than to reinstate the pedestrian, in malls and pleasances designed to make circulation a delight.

—LEWIS MUMFORD, The Highway and the City, 1953

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Commission marked a notable point…. The simple, close-to-home activities, it discovered, are by and far away the most important to Americans…. The structure of our metropolitan areas has long since been set by nature and man, by the rivers and hills, and the railroads and highways. Many options remain, and the great task of planning is not to come up with another structure but to work within the strengths we have, and to discern this structure as people experience it in their everyday life.

—WILLIAM WHYTE, The Last Landscape, 1968

Few actions can do more to make urban areas safer, healthier, prettier, and more environmentally balanced than setting aside corridors or trails for walking, biking, wildlife watching, and just plain breaking up the monotony of cars and concrete.

—JAMES SNYDER, Publisher of Environment Today, 1990

As we examine ways to get trails built under uncertain circumstances, there is one fact we must face: no urban trail is going to get built without solid political and community support.

—STUART MACDONALD, Building Support for Urban Trails, Parks & Recreation, 22(11), 1987

The new big issues [facing urban trails] are funding, user fees, and private sector involvement, not planning, programs, and social research.

—STUART MACDONALD, Building Support for Urban Trails, Parks & Recreation, 22(11), 1987
Vision

It [a decent spiritual and economic connection to the land] will have to be done by making a bond with some place, and by living there—doing the work the place requires, repairing the damage that others have done to it, preserving its woods, building back its ecological health—undertaking, that is, the necessary difficulty and clumsiness of discovering, at this late date and in the most taxing of circumstances, a form of human life that is not destructive.
—WENDELL BERRY, *The Unknown Wilderness: Kentucky’s Red River Gorge*, 1971

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I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.
—ALBERT EINSTEIN, interviewed by George Viereck, *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 26, 1929

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In the not-too-distant future, Americans will look back on those who created rail-trail parks with the same gratitude that we today feel for those visionary men and women who created our first national parks. But this ‘second wave’ of park creation must take place now, within the next decade or so, if we are not to lose the opportunity of using the abandoned rail corridors which are rapidly disappearing from the landscape.
—PETER HARNICK, *Converting Rails to Trails*, 1989

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A clear stream, a long horizon, a forest wilderness and open sky—these are man’s most ancient possessions. In a modern society, they are his most priceless.
—LYNDON B. JOHNSON, Thirty-sixth US President (1963–68), 1908–73

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Any Trail which is to survive must be in public ownership.
Benedicto: May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds. May your rivers flow without end, meandering through pastoral valleys tinkling with bells, past temples and castles and poets towers into a dark primeval forest where tigers belch and monkeys howl, through miasmal and mysterious swamps and down into a desert of red rock, blue mesas, domes and pinnacles and grottos of endless stone, and down again into a deep vast ancient unknown chasm where bars of sunlight blaze on profiled cliffs, where deer walk across the white sand beaches, where storms come and go as lightning clangs upon the high crags, where something strange and more beautiful and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for you … beyond that next turning of the canyon walls.

—Edward Abbey, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

Technology continues to create more problems than technological thinking can solve, and we are faced with accepting the biblical injunction that, without vision, the people perish.

—Frank Bergon, editor of The Wilderness Reader; 1980

I find in this a note of optimism for our sometimes gloomy world. With pollution and overpopulation spawning a sprawling urban desert, I am encouraged by the knowledge that there are millions in America who care about wilderness and mountains; who go forth for strength to Mother Earth; who defend her domain and seek her secrets. I am proud to have played a role in the birth of the Appalachian Trail. And I am proud of the generations of hikers who have made my dream become a reality.

—Benton MacKaye, foreword, The Appalachian Trail, 1972

America needs her forests and wild spaces quite as much as her cities and her settled places.

—Benton MacKaye, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975
Leisure, of course, will be greatly extended. A much shorter work week will no doubt prevail in 1980, and another ten or fifteen years will have been added to the average life space. Not labor but leisure will be the great problem in the decades ahead. That prospect should be accepted as a God-given opportunity to add dimensions of enjoyment and grace of life.

—DAVID SARNOFF, Chairman of RCA, The Fabulous Future, Fortune, 51(1), January 1955

You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again. So why bother in the first place? Just this: what is above knows what is below, but what is below does not know what is above. In climbing, always take note of difficulties along the way; for as you go up, you can observe them. Coming down, you will no longer see them, but you will know they are there if you have observed them well.

One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer but one has seen. There is an art of conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory of what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.

—RENÉ DAUMAL, French writer, 1908–44, Mount Analogue, 1952

Too many cities in America have become places to survive. We need more places to thrive.

—DAN BURDEN, Florida Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Handbook, 1997

The elegant simplicity and dazzling utility of the ban-all-motors solution to park problems may blind some to its feasibility. It is feasible. It can be done. Eventually it will have to be done. All that is lacking at present is the will on the part of the National Park Service officialdom. Or to phrase it more poetically, the guts. All it takes is a little guts. And this, or these, it is the duty of the park-supporting public to supply.

—EDWARD ABBEY, talking about the overuse of Great Smokies National Park in Appalachian Wilderness, 1988
All of us are dreamers. Dreams are what started everything. Dreams are the most realistic way of looking at life. Dreamers are not shadowy ephemeral-thinking people. The dreamers are the realists. They are the ones who look through all the facades to all the things that we’re doing to our environment and see the end result as it affects humanity. We are asking ourselves a great question … and all of us interested in wilderness preservation are asking it all the time, and that is: What kind of world do we want?

—SIGURD F. OLSON, speech at Ninth Biennial Wilderness Conference, San Francisco, 1965

It is not by whining that one carries out the job of a leader.

—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, French emperor (1804–15), 1769–1821

I dream of a day when one cannot only walk or bike from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but from Hudson Bay to the Caribbean. These routes will vary—some will stick to the back country, some will be on ‘blue’ highways, some through city neighborhoods, some past farms. But all can feature a variety of natural, recreational and cultural experiences which marks our diversity. The American Discovery Trail embraces this diversity, linking hundreds of communities from coast to coast. Would that there will be more American Discovery Trails criss-crossing North America, binding us together as the road system does now, but with an eye for community building, building a sustainable, inhabitable, safe earth for our children to the seventh generation.

—WILLIAM SPITZER, Acting Assistant Director, National Recreation Programs, National Park Service, Trails Connecting Our Communities, Keynote Address at 12th National Trails Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska, October 1994

Keep your eye fixed on the path to the top, but don’t forget to look right in front of you. The last step depends on the first. Don’t think you’re there just because you see the summit. Watch your footing, be sure of the next step, but don’t let that distract you from the highest goal. The first step depends on the last.

—RENÉ DAUMAL, French writer, 1908–44, Mount Analgue, 1952

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Our children and grandchildren deserve the opportunity to realize the fulfillment of the recommendations contained within *Trails for All Americans* [report]: they deserve the opportunity to hike through an old growth forest that has been protected by virtue of its greenway designation; they deserve the opportunity to feel the wind whistle through their hair as they glide across the snow in northern states on their solar powered, modern and quiet snowmobiles. Or as they hike, bike or ride their horse from the Atlantic coast, through the Appalachians, the prairies of the central plains, and across the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra and on to the Golden Gate Bridge. And, they deserve the opportunity to enjoy the quality of life that we have enjoyed as Americans—to walk, run and ride on a national system of trails and greenways that reflects the heritage and pride of our great nation.

—CHUCK FLINK, President, American Trails, 1990

Trails in the 21st century will:

- be located, designed, and managed as accessible and appealing to serve all Americans regardless of age, physical ability, cultural background, economic situation, or geographic location
- develop apace with other infrastructure systems to meet the changing needs of a changing nation
- be within easy and safe reach of every American
- form a complete grid criss-crossing the nation, interconnecting at all levels, forming a new infrastructural network
- be characterized by meaningful connections, whereby all Americans will have access to parks, places of employment, and neighboring communities
- provide diverse experiences while respecting both the natural and man-made environments
- provide numerous benefits, including recreation and transportation opportunities while conserving natural and cultural resources
- be built through creative partnerships, relying heavily on citizen initiation, while combining the resources of nonprofit organizations, public agencies, foundations, and private corporations

—RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY, A vision for trails in the 21st century presented at the 12th National Trails Symposium, in Anchorage, Alaska, October 1994
We have a vision for allowing every American easy access to the natural world: Greenways. Greenways are fingers of green that reach out from and around and through communities all across America, created by local action. They will connect parks and forests and scenic countrysides, public and private, in recreation corridors for hiking, jogging, wildlife movement, horse and bicycle riding.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS,
Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

Our common goal is the creation of a nationwide network of multi-use trails—local, regional, and national systems—that allow walkers, bicyclists, people with disabilities, equestrians, runners, skiers, hikers, and others to enjoy the beauty of the American landscape.

—DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and WILLIAM SPITZER, Chief, Recreation Resources Assistance Division, National Park Service, 1993

- Trail opportunities should exist within 15 minutes of most American’s homes;
- The system should be made up of a combination of federal, state, local and private trails, with entities working together to make an interconnected system;
- Trails must be planned as part of the nation’s infrastructure as are sewers, utilities and highways;
- Planning for trail corridors and networks should be a grassroots effort to ensure there is adequate support for their development, management and long-term protection.

—AMERICAN TRAILS, Trails for All Americans report, 1990

....we’re at a critical stage in the world. We have reached the point where we need to think about what kind of environmental future we’re going to have. I believe we can live in harmony with our environment; we don’t have to go out and pave every square inch. But we need a new ethic for living in our world. That’s why I do what I do.

—CHUCK FLINK, President, Greenways Inc., 1988
We can’t all be great explorers, like Perry and Powell, nor great naturalists, like Thoreau and Humboldt. But anyone who prizes the sights and sounds of nature in action, whether robins at the window or muskrat in the stream, or bog born of ages, such a one is, within his measure, an explorer and naturalist. And his job is cut out for him: to make of his region, as seen from its highest hill, a place for taking expeditions.

—BENTON MACKAYE, Expedition Nine: A Return to a Region, 1969

Recreational trails should provide the people of Illinois with opportunities to enjoy physical and social activities … they should provide opportunities to experience the natural, cultural and scenic amenities of the trail corridor … they should reflect landscapes typical of the state’s different regions … they should be accessible to the state’s citizens … they should provide a pleasurable, non-polluting alternative to automobile travel for short trips … they should be economic assets to communities along the trail … and they should contribute to the quality of life in Illinois.

These trails should be developed through partnerships among state, federal, regional and local units of government, constituent organizations and trail users … they should link communities and their parks and extend from cities into the countryside … they should connect Illinois’ diverse regions and with trails in neighboring states’ … and they should evolve into a network of trails throughout the length and breadth of Illinois, easily accessible to all Illinoisans for their use and enjoyment.

—ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, Illinois State Trails Plan, 1995

Little did I dream more than fifty years ago when I sat down with two men in the New Jersey Highlands and outlined to them my idea of a footpath through the Appalachians, that such plans would be translated into the institution that has now come to pass. I did little more than suggest the notion: I set the match to the fuse and set the chain reaction that has come about.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, statement read to Appalachian Trail Conference meeting in Boone, NC, 1975
I’ll tell you my vision. I’d like for most Americans to be able to reach a trail within walking distance of their home and work place. I would like us all to have available a significant natural corridor where we can stroll, exercise, or socialize with friends. I would like to see the National Trails System be as myriad and diverse as the American people. I would like to see us being committed to preserving enough significant corridors that we could have a trail system that is reflective of various communities of interest—so we are not confused by some as serving a single activity group.

—WILLIAM SPITZER, Chief, Recreation Resource Division, National Park Service, Ninth National Trails Symposium, Unicoi State Park, Georgia, 1988

We can tie this country together with threads of green that everywhere grant us access to the natural world. Rivers and streams are the most obvious corridors, offering trails on the shores and boating at mid-channel. They could link open areas already existing as national and state parks, grasslands, forests, lakes, and reservoirs, the entire network winding through both rural and urban populations. Thousands of miles of abandoned rail lines should become hiking, biking, and bridle paths. Utility rights-of-way could share their open space not only with hikers and cyclists but also with wildlife. Citizens and landowners, both individual and corporate, can look for opportunities to establish and maintain greenways with the help of volunteer labor. Imagine every person in the U.S. being within easy walking distance of a greenway that could lead around the entire nation. It can be done if we act soon.

—PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS, Americans and the Outdoors, 1987

A vision without a task is but a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision with a task is the hope of the world.

—CHURCH INSCRIPTION, Sussex, England, 1730
Volunteers

Here is enormous undeveloped power—the spare time of our population. Suppose just one percent of it were focused upon one particular job, such as increasing the facilities for the outdoor community life. This would be more than a million people, representing over two million weeks a year. It would be equivalent to 40,000 persons steadily on the job.

—BENTON MACKAYE, An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning, 1921

So much work remains to be done in this unfinished and imperfect world that none of us can justify standing on the sidelines. Especially in a society like ours, volunteering is an expression of democracy in its purest form. For the volunteer is a participant, not a looker-on, and participation is the democratic process.

—EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER, in President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986

Enhancing the other person’s ability to live more beautifully and to grow is an exciting challenge for us. The purpose of life is to help others. And if you can’t help them, would you at least not hurt them?

—LEO BUSCAGLIA, Living, Loving, and Learning, 1983

If you tell enough people what you’re doing, you’ll find someone who will want to help.

—MICHELLE STURM, Programs Coordinator, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, 1990
....volunteerism is not a fad but a viable, long term solution to providing many recreation services. The success and importance of volunteer activities today are far exceeded by their potential for the future. Volunteer programs require a great deal of effort to initiate and sustain, and they are not free. However, when approached properly, these programs can have broad long term benefits that far outweigh costs.

—Roger Moore, Appalachian Mountain Club, in President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986

Many will be shocked to find when the day of judgement nears that there’s a special place in heaven set aside for volunteers. Furnished with big recliners, Satin Couches, and footstools, where there’s no committee chairman, no group leaders or car pools. No eager team that needs a coach, no bazaar and no bake sale. There will be nothing to fold or mail. Telephone lists will be outlawed. But a finger snap will bring cool drinks and gourmet dinners and treats fit for a king.

You ask, ‘Who’ll serve these privileged few and work for all they’re worth?’ Why, all those who reaped the benefits and not once volunteered on Earth.

—Volunteers, God Bless Them, printed in ANN LANDERS’ advice column, May 5, 1999
Volunteers working in our wildlands are important today. In the future, they will become even more important. We volunteers will be needed not only to protect existing trails, but to demonstrate leadership in developing recreation opportunities for the people of the entire nation.

—PAUL PRITCHARD, Director of Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, address to the 102nd annual meeting of the Appalachian Mountain Club, 1977

For volunteers to perform well, they need to have a sense of responsibility. Too often government agencies have seen volunteers as inexpensive, unskilled laborers, not as a tremendous resource waiting to be tapped. Under utilized volunteers rarely develop a solid sense of stewardship or participation.

On the Appalachian Trail, where the clubs are clearly in the hot seat of responsibility, there is a remarkable level of commitment and resolve to do well. Public land managers must be willing to have faith in volunteer organizations with good track records. In some cases specific legislation will be necessary to give volunteer groups significant responsibility.

—LAWRENCE VAN METER, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, in President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, Report and Recommendations to the President of the United States, 1986
No city should be too large for a man to walk out of in a morning.
—CYRIL CONNOLLY, The Unquiet Grave, 1945

A city that outdistances man’s walking powers is a trap for man.
—ARNOLD TOYNBEE, English historian and historical philosopher, 1889–1975

When I see the discomforts that able-bodied American men will put up with rather than go a mile or half a mile on foot, the abuses they will tolerate and encourage, crowding the streetcar on a little fall in the temperature or the appearance of an inch or two of snow, packing up to overflowing, dangling to the straps, treading on each other’s toes, breathing each other’s breaths, crushing the women and children, hanging by tooth and nail to a square inch of the platform, imperiling their limbs and killing the horses—I think the commonest tramp in the street has good reason to felicitate himself on his rare privilege of going afoot. Indeed, a race that neglects or despises this primitive gift, that fears the touch of soil, that has no footpaths, no community or ownership in the land which they imply, that warns off the walker as a trespasser, that knows no way but the highway, the carriage way, that forgets the stile, the footbridge, that even ignores the rights of the pedestrian in the public road, providing no escape for him but in the ditch or up the bank, is in a fair way to far more serious degeneracy.

—JOHN BURROUGHS, in his essay, The Exhilaration of the Road, Winter Sunshine, 1875

One can tell the health of a town by the meanness of its dogs. If they snarl and bark, down to the smallest runt, the town is mean and its inhabitants set a poor table for the sojourner. Well fed dogs are content to lie on their porches in the shade and make a ceremonial growl as the stranger passes. That town will have hospitality.
—BARTON BROWN, 2,000–Miler Report to the Appalachian Trail Conference, 1977
to bring the pedestrian back into the picture, one must treat him with the respect and honor we now accord only to the automobile: we should provide him with pleasant walks, insulated from traffic, to take him to his destination, once he enters a business precinct or residential quarter.

—Lewis Mumford, American social philosopher and urban planner, 1895–1990

Europeans are redesigning entire cities to accommodate people on foot, benefiting mind, body, and spirit in the process. It’s high time we took note.


A walkway system can be a showcase of how existing features in a landscape—an abandoned railroad right-of-way, utility corridors, city sidewalks, a canal towpath, a city dock—can be thoughtfully adapted to form a unified and useful outdoor space. It creates a public environment where people want to gather, explore, and learn. That promotes conservation at its most basic level—knowing our World.

—Craig Evans, President, WalkWays Center in Washington, DC, 1989

Great walking cities are those with destinations within a 15- to 20-minute walk of each other … varied architecture. Diverse neighborhoods and a lively street life energized by sidewalk vendors, entertainers, and window-shoppers … filled with open spaces and parks … widened sidewalks, auto-restricted zones, and amenities such as benches, signs, and fountains.

—The Walking Magazine, August 1991
Walking is easiest, you don’t need a lot of apparatus. Just shoe leather and good feet.
—DR. PAUL DUDLEY WHITE, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

I used, when I was younger, to take my holidays walking. I would cover 25 miles a day, and when the evening came I had no need of anything to keep me from boredom, since the delight of sitting amply sufficed.
—BERTRAND RUSSELL, English philosopher, 1872–1970

In our entrancement with the motorcar, we have forgotten how much more efficient and how much more flexible the footwalker is.
—LEWIS MUMFORD, American social philosopher and urban planner, 1895–1990

Never did I think so much, exist so much, be myself so much as in the journeys I have made alone and on foot. Walking has something about it which animates and enlivens my ideas. I can hardly think while I am still; my body must be in motion to move my mind.
—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, French philosopher & writer, 1712–78

In the first place you can’t see anything from a car; you’ve got to get out of the goddamned contraption and walk, better yet crawl, on hands and knees, over the sandstone and through the thornbush and cactus. When traces of blood begin to mark your trail you’ll see something, may be. Probably not.
—EDWARD ABBEY, Desert Solitaire, 1971

I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.
—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
Walking companions, like heroes, are difficult to pluck out of the crowd of acquaintances. Good dispositions, ready wit, friendly conversation serve well enough by the fireside but they prove insufficient in the field. For there you need transcendentalists—nothing less; you need poets, sages, humorists and natural philosophers.


Walk and be happy, walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily and with a purpose.

—Charles Dickens, British novelist, 1812–70

We Americans are a funny people. We say that our favorite outdoor recreation is ‘walking for pleasure’ (or so it is reported in *Outdoor Recreation Trends*). Yet the average housewife will jump into the family car—or one of them—to go around the corner for a bottle of aspirin and a television guide. The businessman who walks four blocks to an appointment is the exception rather than the rule.


Let’s all start walking more and driving less.

—Lewis Grizzard, American humorist, 1946–94

Walking provides free, immediate, healthful, energy-efficient motion. Evidence shows that when neighborhoods and communities are designed at a human scale to support walking trips, there are increases in community interaction and involvement. There are also reduced costs of transporting the elderly, children, the poor, and the physically challenged. A walking community also greatly increases the success of transit. These increases in walking and transit greatly reduce the congestion of roadways, and hence help maintain the mobility of all.

—Florida Department of Transportation, *Florida Pedestrian Safety Plan*, 1992
The civilized man has built a coach, but he has lost the use of his feet.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

People seem to think there is something inherently noble and virtuous in the desire to go for a walk.
—MAX BEERBOHM, Going Out for a Walk, And Even Now, 1920

...in every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks.
—JOHN MUIR, Steep Trails, 1918

You get most out of walking by going along briskly, swinging the arms and breathing deeply. It also helps promote the circulation of blood to the brain. The Greek philosophers promenaded as they philosophized.
—DR. PAUL DUDLEY WHITE, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

The art of walking is obsolete. It is true that a few still cling to that mode of locomotion, are still admired as fossil specimens of an extinct race of pedestrians, but for the majority of civilized humanity, walking is on its last legs.
—SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, January 9, 1869

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or mall?
—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

Walking has the best value as gymnastics of the mind.
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

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But man’s values change as his life changes. The deeper he plunges into the whirlpool of modern living, with its speeding transport, vexing problems, and harassing pressures, the more he prizes the escape of an adventure as old as mankind itself—a solitary walk in the wilds.

—MIKE EDWARDS, Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail, *National Geographic*, June 1971

I can only meditate when I am walking. When I stop, I cease to think; my mind only works with my legs.

—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, French philosopher & writer, 1712–78

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Walking, *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1862

[Walking’s] overwhelming advantage is that it can be done by anyone, anytime, anywhere—and it doesn’t even look like exercise.

—DR. KENNETH H. COOPER, American physician, his *Aerobics* (1968) helped launch the 1970s fitness craze, 1931–

I find that the three truly great times for thinking thoughts are when I am standing in the shower, sitting on the john, or walking. And the greatest of these, by far, is walking.


It is great art to saunter.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62
Whenever possible I avoid the practice myself. If God had meant us to walk, he would have kept us down on all fours, with well-padded paws. He would have constructed our planet on the model of a simple cube, so that that notion of circularity and consequently the wheel might never have arisen. He surely would not have made mountains.

There is something unnatural about walking. Especially walking uphill, which always seems to me not only unnatural but so unnecessary. That iron tug of gravitation should be all the reminder we need that in walking uphill we are violating a basic law of nature. Yet we persist in doing it. No one can explain why. George H. Mallory’s asinine rationale for climbing a mountain—‘because it’s there’—could easily be refuted with a few well-placed hydrogen bombs. But our common sense continues to lag far behind the available technology.

There are some good things to say about walking. Not many, but some. Walking takes longer, for example, than any other known form of locomotion except crawling. Thus it stretches time and prolongs life. Life is already too short to waste on speed. I have a friend who’s always in a hurry; he never gets anywhere. Walking makes the world much bigger and therefore more interesting. You have time to observe the details. The utopian technologists foresee a future for us in which distance is annihilated and anyone can transport himself anywhere, instantly. Big deal, Buckminster. To be everywhere at once is to be nowhere forever, if you ask me. That’s God’s job, not ours.

The longest journey begins with a single step, not with a turn of the ignition key. That’s the best thing about walking, the journey itself. It doesn’t matter whether you get where you’re going or not. You’ll get there anyway. Every good hike brings you eventually back home. Right where you started.

Which reminds me of circles. Which reminds me of wheels. Which reminds me my old truck needs another front-end job. Any good mechanics out there wandering through the smog?

—Edward Abbey, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

I favor parking a few miles from the office and walking to work. You get the benefit of exercise and besides it is easier to get a parking space.

—Dr. Paul Dudley White, American cardiologist, 1886–1973
The swiftest traveler is he that goes afoot.
—Henry David Thoreau, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

All walking is discovery. On foot we take the time to see things whole.
—Hal Borland, American journalist and naturalist, 1900–78

A first walk in any new country is one of the things which makes life on this planet worth being grateful for.

It is good to collect things; it is better to take walks.
—Anatole France, French writer, 1844–1924

Today I have grown taller from walking with the trees.
—Karle Wilson Baker, Good Company, 1916

One of the problems of modern times is that we are separated from the world that supports us by the speed with which we traverse it. Walking is the best way to know a place, perhaps the only way.
—Chris Townsend, Walking the Yukon: A Solo Trek Through the Land of Beyond, 1993

Walking is the exercise that needs no gym. It is the prescription without medicine, the weight control without diet, the cosmetic that is sold in no drugstore. It is the tranquilizer without a pill, the therapy without a psychoanalyst, the fountain of youth that is no legend. A walk is the vacation that does not cost a cent.
People don’t think me as queer as they did a while ago. Now I’m stopped on the street by people who tell me proudly they’ve started to walk three miles a day. That’s good. We’re bipeds, you know, and we were given muscles to use!

—DR. PAUL DUDLEY WHITE, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

Walking is simple and second nature for most of us. It’s an everyday kind of activity, not something that’s frequently the rage of fashion or touted for its sex appeal. Yet few physical pursuits in this life are ultimately as rewarding. It’s a wonderfully satisfying way to spend an hour, and afternoon, a day, or longer.


These men I have examined around the world who live in vigorous health to 100 or more years are great walkers. If you want to live a long, long time in sturdy health you can’t go wrong in forming the habit of long vigorous walking every day … until it becomes a habit as important to you as eating and sleeping.

—DR. LEAF, Executive Health, 1977

There is one thought for the field, another for the house. I would have my thoughts, like wild apples, to be food for walkers, and will not warrant them to be palatable if tasted in the house.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Journal, October 27, 1855

And what exactly is nature walking? It’s any and every kind of walking you can do in the natural world. The activity encompasses strolling, striding, sauntering, stepping, treading, tramping, traipsing, traversing, rambling, roving, roaming, racewalking, hiking, meandering, wandering, wending, pacing, peregrinating, perambulating … in natural surroundings.

Unhappy business men, I am convinced, would increase their happiness more by walking six miles every day than by any conceivable change of philosophy.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL, English philosopher, 1872–1970

Talk long walks in stormy weather or through deep snow in the fields and woods, if you would keep your spirits up. Deal with brute nature. Be cold and hungry and weary.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

And the moral of my whole story is that walking is not only a joy in itself, but that it gives an intimacy with the sacred things and the primal things of earth that are not revealed to those who rush by on wheels.

—JOHN FINLEY, Traveling Afoot, essay in The Art of Walking, edited by Edwin Valentine Mitchell, 1934

It’s about as nice a thing as anybody can do—walking, and it’s cheap, too!

—EMMA ‘GRANDMA’ GATEWOOD, at age 67 first woman to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail (1955), 1887–1973

Now shall I walk or shall I ride? ‘Ride,’ Pleasure said; ‘Walk,’ Joy replied.

—WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES, English poet, 1871–1940

Walking is the best way to gain an understanding of a place, to assimilate its rhythms and time scales…. Walking is the best way to know a place, perhaps the only way.

—CHRIS TOWNSEND, Walking the Yukon: A Solo Trek Through the Land of Beyond, 1993
When you have worn out your shoes, the strength of the shoe leather has passed into the fiber of your body. I measure your health by the number of shoes and hats and clothes you have worn out. He is the richest man who pays the largest debt to his shoemaker.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, 1803–82

When you stroll you never hurry back, because if you had anything to do, you wouldn’t be strolling in the first place.

—Virginia Cary Hudson, O Ye Jigs & Juleps!, 1962

I go to my solitary woodland walks as the homesick return to their homes.

—Henry David Thoreau, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

A vigorous five-mile walk will do more good for an unhappy but otherwise healthy adult, than all the medicine and psychology in the world.

—Dr. Paul Dudley White, American cardiologist, 1886–1973

’Tis the best of humanity that comes out to walk.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, 1803–82

Never ride when you can walk.

—Bill Gale, The Wonderful World of Walking, 1988

The walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours … but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day.

—Henry David Thoreau, Walking, Atlantic Monthly, June 1862
...I dressed and went for a walk—determined not to return until I took in what
Nature had to offer.

—RAYMOND CARVER, American writer and poet, 1938–88,
This Morning, Ultramarine, 1986

It is a gentle art; know how to tramp and you know how to live. Manners makyth
man, and tramping makyth manners. Know how to meet your fellow wanderer, how
to be passive to the beauty of Nature and how to be active to its wildness and its rigor.
Tramping brings one to reality.

—STEPHEN GRAHAM, The Gentle Art of Tramping, 1926

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked
almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted
them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any
afternoon. Two or three hours’ walking will carry me to as strange a country as I ever
expect to see.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, Walking, Atlantic Monthly, June 1862

I like to walk about amidst the beautiful things that adorn the world.

—GEORGE SANTAYANA, Spanish born philosopher, writer, 1863–1952

He who walks may see and understand. You can study all America from one hilltop, if
your eyes are open and your mind is willing to reach. But first you must walk to that hill.

—HAL BORLAND, To Own the Streets and Fields, The New York Times Magazine,
October 6, 1946

Walking is man’s best medicine.

—HIPPOCRATES, Greek physician, 460–377 BC
THE PREDICTION: Cities and town will become more livable thanks to the accouterments of walking. We will see a rash of nature paths, arcade malls, and auto-free zones mushrooming in cities large and small throughout the nation.

—RAYMOND DREYFACK, The Complete Book of Walking, 1979

He who walks alone, waits for no-one.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

I have often started off on a walk in the state called mad—mad in the sense of sore-headed, or mad with tedium or confusion; I have set forth dull, null and even thoroughly discouraged. But I never came back in such a frame of mind, and I never met a human being whose humor was not the better for a walk.


I have two doctors, my left leg and my right. When body and mind are out of gear (and those twin parts of me live at such close quarters that the one always catches melancholy from the other) I know that I shall have only to call in my doctors and I shall be well again.


Walking is nearly as natural as breathing. Most of us don’t remember learning how—it’s just something that happens. And when it does—one foot in front of the other, one foot in front of the other—thoughts are free to go skipping over the landscape like thistledown on the wind.

—CATHY JOHNSON, Nature Walks, 1994
Going tramping is at first an act of rebellion; only afterwards do you get free from rebelliousness as Nature sweetens your mind. Town makes men contentious; the country smooths out their souls.


....the brisk exercise imparts elasticity to the muscles, fresh and healthy blood circulates through the brain, the mind works well, the eye is clear, the step is firm, and the day’s exertion always makes the evening’s repose thoroughly enjoyable.

—David Livingstone, Scottish explorer in Africa, 1813–93

If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk.

—Henry David Thoreau, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62

How many different pleasures are brought together by this agreeable way of travelling, without counting strengthened health and brightened humor! I have always observed that those who traveled in good smooth-riding vehicles were dreamy, sad, scolding, or ailing, while pedestrians were happy, easygoing, and content with everything. How the heart laughs when one approaches lodging! How savory a coarse meal appears! With what pleasure one rests at the table! What a good sleep one has in a bad bed! When one wants only to arrive, one can hurry in a post-chaise. But when one wants to travel, one has to go on foot.

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher & writer, 1712–78

Part of the pleasure of any kind of walking for me is the very idea of going somewhere—by foot.

Few men know how to take a walk. The qualifications of a professor are endurance, plain clothes, old shoes, an eye for nature, good humor, vast curiosity, good speech, good silence, and nothing too much.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, from Country Life, the opening lecture of a course given in the Freeman Place Chapel in Boston, MA, in March 1858, first published in Natural History of Intellect and Other Papers, 1904

...there are three prerequisites to going out into the world to walk for pleasure. One must have free time, a place to go, and a body unhindered by illness or social restraints.


If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen.

—Henry David Thoreau, Life without Principle, 1863

There is no orthodoxy in walking. It is a land of many paths and no-paths, where every one goes his own and is right.

—George Macaulay Trevelyan, British historian, 1876–1962

I am not going to advocate ... the abandoning of the improved modes of travel; but I am going to brag as lustily as I can on behalf of the pedestrian, and show how all the shining angels second and accompany the man who goes afoot, while all the dark spirits are ever looking out for a chance to ride.

—John Burroughs, American essayist and naturalist, 1837–1921
I can conceive of only one way of travelling that is more agreeable than going by horse. That is going by foot. The traveler leaves at his own good time; he stops at will; he takes as much or as little exercise as he wants. He observes the whole country; he turns aside to the right or the left; he examines all that appeals to him; he stops to see all the views. Do I notice a river? I walk along it. A thick wood? I go beneath its shade. A grotto? I visit it. A quarry? I examine the minerals. Everywhere I enjoy myself, I stay. The moment I get bored, I go. I depend on neither horse nor coachman. I do not need to choose ready-made paths, comfortable roads; I pass wherever a man can pass. I see all that a man can see; and, depending only on myself, I enjoy all the liberty a man can enjoy.

—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, French philosopher & writer, 1712–78

Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far. The Europeans value themselves on having subdued the horse to the uses of man; but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained, by the use of this animal.

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, Third US President (1801–09), 1743–1826

Take a two-mile walk every morning before breakfast.

—HARRY S. TRUMAN, Thirty-third US President (1945–53), 1884–1972

Virtually all of our township roads, at this date, have been stoned and paved the better to drive on. Few are still fit for walking. When you walk, you walk against traffic, wary, adapting, on the alert, keeping step with a fast-wheeling evolution, for the test of successful pedestrianism is, after all, survival. In the scheme of contemporary reversal such pleasures as walking—the time and the space to walk in—these become the luxuries. And naturally. For where many are riding few will be able to walk. Only those who feel rich can afford it—or those who are, or feel poor....

—WALTER TELLER, Area Code 215, 1962

The sovereign invigorator of the body is exercise, and of all the exercises walking is best.

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, Third US President (1801–09), 1743–1826
Walking has been one of the constellations in the starry sky of human culture, a constellation whose three stars are the body, the imagination, and the wide-open world, and though all three exist independently, it is the lines drawn between them—drawn by the act of walking for cultural purposes—that makes them a constellation. Constellations are not natural phenomena but cultural impositions; the lines drawn between stars are like paths worn by the imagination of those who have gone before. This constellation called walking has a history, the history trod out by all those poets and philosophers and insurrectionaries, by jaywalkers, streetwalkers, pilgrims, tourists, hikers, mountaineers, but whether it has a future depends on whether those connecting paths are traveled still.


So a man who walks, and lives and sees and thinks as he walks, has lengthened his life.


I never knew a man go for an honest day’s walk for whatever distance, great or small … and not have his reward in the repossession of his own soul.

—GEORGE MACAULAY TREVELYAN, British historian, 1876–1962

Let the people walk. Or ride horses, bicycles, mules, wild pigs—anything—but keep the automobiles and the motorcycles and all their motorized relatives out. We have agreed not to drive our automobiles into cathedrals, concert halls, art museums, legislative assemblies, private bedrooms and other sanctums of our culture; we should treat our national parks with the same deference, for they, too, are holy places.

—EDWARD ABBEY, *Desert Solitaire*, 1971

A sedentary life is the real sin against the Holy Spirit. Only those thoughts that come by walking have any value.

—FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1888
In God’s wildness lies the hope of the world—the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness. The galling harness of civilization drops off, and the wounds heal ere we are aware.

—JOHN MUIR, *Alaska Fragment*, 1890

I have discovered in a lifetime of traveling in primitive regions, a lifetime of seeing people living in the wilderness and using it, that there is a hard core of wilderness need in everyone, a core that makes its spiritual values a basic human necessity. There is no hiding it.... Unless we can preserve places where the endless spiritual needs of man can be fulfilled and nourished, we will destroy our culture and ourselves.

—SIGURD F. OLSON, speech at Sierra Club conference, 1965

Wilderness touches the heart, mind and soul of each individual in a way known only to himself.


Discovery is adventure. There is an eagerness, touched at times with tenseness, as man moves ahead into the unknown. Walking the wilderness is indeed like living. The horizon drops away, bringing new sights, sounds, and smells from the earth. When one moves through the forests, his sense of discovery is quickened. Man is back in the environment from which he emerged to build factories, churches, and schools. He is primitive again, matching his wits against the earth and sky. He is free of the restraints of society and free of its safeguards too.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, *Of Men and Mountains*, 1950

....the most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wilderness.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
I realized that Eastern thought had somewhat more compassion for all living things. Man was a form of life that in another reincarnation might possibly be a horsefly or a bird of paradise or a deer. So a man of such a faith, looking at animals, might be looking at old friends or ancestors. In the East the wilderness has no evil connotation; it is thought of as an expression of the unity and harmony of the universe.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Go East, Young Man, 1974

Without enough wilderness America will change, Democracy, with its myriad personalities and increasing sophistication, must be fibred and vitalized by the regular contact with outdoor growths—animals, trees, sun warmth, and free skies—or it will dwindle and pale.

—WALT WHITMAN, American poet, 1819–92

The only way we can save any wilderness in this country is to make it harder to get into, and harder to stay in once you get there.

—MARTIN LITTON, The Grand Canyon, 1972

Wipe out wilderness and the world’s a cage.

—DAVID BROWER, Executive Director, Sierra Club, (1952–69), 1912–2000

Wilderness has little appeal to those who are blind to all except material values. To them it is a resource “poorly used”; the uncut timber, or the grass on inaccessible alpine meadows is going to waste. Well-watered valleys, supporting only salmon or trout, or deer and other wildlife, might better give way to choice dam sites whose development could provide handsome blocks of power for new or expanding farms, industries, and cities.

—BERNARD FRANK, Our National Forests, 1955
The reason we need wilderness is because we are really wild animals. Every man needs a place he can go, to go crazy in peace…. Only then can we return to man’s other life, to the other way, to the order and sanity and beauty of what will somewhere be, unless all visions are false, the human community.

—Edward Abbey, American environmental advocate, 1927–89

We simply must band together, all of us who love the wilderness. We must fight together—wherever and whenever wilderness is attacked.


A man could be a lover and defender of the wilderness without ever in his lifetime leaving the boundaries of asphalt, powerlines and right-angled surfaces. We need wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it. We need a refuge even though we may never need to go there. I may never in my life get to Alaska, for example, but I am grateful that it’s there. We need the possibility of escape as surely as we need hope; without it life of the cities would drive all men into crime or drugs or psychoanalysis.

—Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire, 1968

Never did we plan the morrow, for we had learned that in the wilderness some new and irresistible distraction is sure to turn up each day before breakfast. Like the river, we were free to wander.

—Aldo Leopold, American conservationist, 1887–1948

I hesitate to define just what the qualities of a true wilderness experience are. Like music and art, wilderness can be defined only on its own terms. The less talk, the better.

—Ansel Adams, American photographer, 1902–84
Only by going alone in silence, without baggage, can one truly get into the heart of the wilderness. All other travel is mere dust and hotels and baggage and chatter.

—JOHN MUIR, *Life and Letters of John Muir*, 1924

It is commonplace of all religious thought that the man seeking visions and insight must go apart from his fellows and live for a while in the wilderness. If he is of proper sort, he will return with a message. It may not be a message from the god he set out to seek but even if he has failed in that particular, he will have had a vision or seen a marvel and these are always worth listening to or thinking about.

—LOREN EISELEY, *The Immense Journey*, 1946

If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.

—PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON, upon signing of the Wilderness Act of 1964

To carry out this program it is exigent that all friends of the wilderness ideal should unite. If they do not present the urgency of their viewpoint the other side will certainly capture popular support. Then it will only be a few years until the last escape from society will be barricaded. If that day arrives there will be countless souls born to live in strangulation, countless human beings who will be crushed under the artificial edifice raised by man. There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness.


You know that I have not lagged behind in the work of exploring our grand wilderness, and in calling everybody to come and enjoy the thousand blessings they have to offer.

—JOHN MUIR, American naturalist, 1838–1914
On wilderness preservation: *Don’t* rely on the Park Service; all they can think of is more asphalt paving, more picnic tables, more garbage cans, more shithouses, more electric lights, more Kleenex dispensers. Those bastards are scared to death of congressmen, who in turn are representatives of and often identical with local chambers of commerce.

—Edward Abbey, June 15, 1956 journal entry while working at Arches National Park in Utah

None know how often the hand of God is seen in a wilderness but them that rove it for a man’s life.

—Thomas Cole, Romantic landscape painter, 1801–48

Wilderness can be appreciated only by contrast, and solitude understood only when we have been without it. We cannot separate ourselves from society, comradeship, sharing, and love. Unless we can contribute something from wilderness experience, derive some solace or peace to share with others, then the real purpose is defeated.

—Sigurd F. Olson, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

To sit in solitude, to think in solitude with only the music of the stream and the cedar to break the flow of silence, there lies the value of wilderness.

—John Muir, American naturalist, 1838–1914

The exquisite sight, sound, and smell of wilderness is many times more powerful if it is earned through physical achievement, if it comes at the end of a long and fatiguing trip for which vigorous good health is a necessity. Practically speaking, this means that no one should be able to enter a wilderness by mechanical means.

—Garrett Hardin, *The Ecologist*, February 1974
How great are the advantages of solitude! How sublime is the silence of nature’s ever-active energies! There is something in the very name of wilderness which charms the ear, and soothes the spirit of man. There is religion in it.

—ESTWICK EVANS, American author, 1787–1866

For me, and for thousands with similar inclinations, the most important passion of life is the overpowering desire to escape periodically from the clutches of a mechanistic civilization. To us the enjoyment of solitude, complete independence, and the beauty of undefiled panoramas is absolutely essential to happiness.

—BOB MARSHALL, Co-founder, Wilderness Society, 1901–39

Often the difference between a full life and a cramped existence is measured in terms of our opportunities to test our physical strength against the elements of the wilderness.


In this day of man’s increasingly mechanical approach to the outdoors, when thousands experience nature not for what it is through observation but as a playground, there aren’t many places left where one is guaranteed one won’t be run over by a jeep or snowmobile or mountain bike. Preserving those [Wilderness] areas—at the cost of a disgruntled few—seems worth the price.


Wilderness enough to be the preservation of the world still exists. We can enjoy it today and save it for coming generations. Invite them to a clean, unspoiled world. If we do, they will want to know about us. That is real immortality. But if we don’t leave our descendants a habitable life-affirming world, we’ll deserve to be forgotten, and their willingness to forget would be our eternal death.

—CALVIN RUTSTRUM, *Chips From a Wilderness Log*, 1978
When ever the light of civilization faces upon you with a blighting power ... go to the wilderness.... Dull business routine, the fierce passions of the marketplace, the perils of envious cities became but a memory.... The wilderness will take hold of you. It will give you good red blood; it will turn you from a weakling into a man.... You will soon behold all with a peaceful soul.

—ESTWICK EVANS, American author, 1787–1866

The most glorious value of the wilderness is that in it a person may be completely disassociated from the mechanical and dated age of the twentieth century, and bury himself in the timeless oblivion of nature. Its enjoyment depends on a very delicate psychological adjustment.... You have got to be immersed in a region where you know that mechanization is really absent, and where you are thrown entirely on the glorious necessity of depending on your own powers.

—BOB MARSHALL, The Wilderness on Trial, Outdoor America, March 1938

A road is a dagger placed in the heart of wilderness.

—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Supreme Court Justice, as quoted in Ghost Grizzlies by David Petersen, 1995

To some extent wilderness is a link with our heritage of the frontier—an opportunity for a discovery or renewal of something already within us. You might call it an aloneness, a detachment from normal cares and responsibilities, or a renewed feeling of one’s place in nature.

—USDA FOREST SERVICE, National Forest Wilderness and Primitive Areas, 1973

The richest values of wilderness lie not in the days of Daniel Boone nor even in the present, but rather in the future.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948
True wilderness is where you keep it, and real wilderness experience cannot be a sedentary one; you have to seek it out—not seated, but afoot.

—David Brower, preface, Going Light—With Backpack or Burro, 1962

Solitude is an essential quality of wilderness.


Not only has wilderness been a force in molding our character as a people, but its influence continues, and will, if we are wise enough to preserve it on this continent, be a stabilizing power as well as a spiritual reserve for the future.

—Sigurd F. Olson, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

The sovereign quality of wilderness is the same wherever encountered…. Each manifestation has an unshackled quality—each stirs untapped longings—each gives a fillip to living—each has an unsurpassed lilt which bursts from the deepest wellsprings of life. These are the realities found in the wilderness of the Great Smoky Mountains.

—Harvey Broome, Out Under the Sky of the Great Smokies, 1967

Wilderness is the raw material out of which man has hammered the artifact called civilization.

—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor … the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees the thunder cloud and the rain … some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

—Henry David Thoreau, American writer and naturalist, 1817–62
....if I should be fated to walk no more with Nature, be compelled to leave all I most devoutly love in the wilderness, return to civilization and be twisted into the characterless cable of society, then these sweet, free, cumberless rovings will be as chinks and slits on life’s horizon, through which I may obtain glimpses of the treasures that lie in God’s wilds beyond my reach.

—John Muir, Notes, 1873

Freedom of the wilderness means many this to different people. If you really want to enjoy it, you must recognize your responsibilities as adult humans living in a world with others…. Freedom gives no one license to change a heritage that belongs to the ages.

—Sigurd F. Olson, conservation writer and wilderness advocate, 1899–1982

Wilderness is a resource that can shrink but not grow … the creation of new wilderness in the full sense of the word is impossible.

—Aldo Leopold, American conservationist, 1887–1948

For we need this thing wilderness far more than it needs us. Civilizations (like glaciers) come and go, but the mountain and its forest continue the course of creation’s destiny. And in this we mere humans can take part—by fitting our civilization to the mountain.

—Benton MacKaye, letter to Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, 1933

We must provide enough wilderness areas so that, no matter how dense our population, man—though apartment-born—may attend the great school of the outdoors, and come to know the joy of walking the woods, alone and unafraid. Once he experiences that joy, he will be restless to return over and over again…. If that is to happen, the places where the goldthread, monkey flower, spring beauty, or starflower flourish in sphagnum moss must be made as sacred as any of our shrines [after climbing Katahdin to complete his hike of the Appalachian Trail, 1958].

—William O. Douglas, Supreme Court Justice and avid hiker, 1898–1980
Mechanized recreation already has seized nine-tenths of the woods and mountains; a decent respect for minorities should dedicate the other tenth to wilderness.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

Wilderness is two things—fact and feeling. It is a fund of knowledge and a spring of influence. It is the ultimate source of health—terrestrial and human.

—BENTON MACKAYE, founder of the Appalachian Trail, 1879–1975

There must always be wilderness, a lovely someplace for the young spirits to discover the wonders of nature and the dependence of man on other living things.

—US DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, *In Touch With People*, 1973

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

—WILDERNESS ACT of 1964, Sec. 2c

In an age of crowded, dirty cities, the wilderness has come to symbolize a refuge, the last place where man can breathe clean air, drink freely from streams, and get away from other people.


Pristine wilderness is an acquired taste and is incompatible with the enjoyment of some popular tastes such as dirt bikes, snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles. But surely there is no shortage of space in America for persons whose play must involve internal-combustion engines.

—GEORGE WILL, *Newsweek*, August 16, 1982
Wilderness has noise as when great winds make treetops roar, setting up the cadence of a pounding surf. Wilderness noise is also the murmur of brooks, the chatter of squirrels, the scolding of camp robbers. Wilderness noise is the sequence of birdcalls just before dawn, the ecstatic music of the whippoorwill at dusk, and the deep quiet of a darkened forest. The noise of wilderness is varied; it has no monotony; it is the music of the earth of which man is an integral part whether he knows it or not. The healing effects of wilderness are well known. Cares slough off; the conscious springs that create tension are relaxed; man comes to an understanding of his relation to the earth from which he came and to which he returns.


...a continuous stretch of country preserved in its natural state, open to lawful hunting and fishing, big enough to absorb a two weeks’ pack trip, and kept devoid of roads, artificial trails, cottages, or other works of man.

—Aldo Leopold, *The Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreational Policy*, *Journal of Forestry*, 1921

...I ... shall use the word *wilderness* to denote a region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out. The dominant attributes of such an area are: First, that it requires any one who exists in it to depend exclusively on his own effort for survival; and second, that it preserves as nearly as possible the primitive environment. This means that all roads, power transportation and settlements are barred. But trails and temporary shelters, which were common long before the advent of the white race, are entirely permissible.


From the point of view of wilderness, perhaps it would be best if the people did perish.

—Frank Bergon, editor of *The Wilderness Reader*, 1980
Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in 10 years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as idea.

—WALLACE STEGNER, Coda: Wilderness Letter; December 3, 1960

We can turn wilderness into timberland. We can turn timberland into farmland. We can turn farmland into shopping malls. But we can’t create wilderness.

—MIKE DOMBECK, Chief of the US Forest Service, speech at Wilderness 2000 Conference

In addition, there is a composite value in wilderness recreation that cannot be reproduced anywhere short of an authentically rugged and big tract of undeveloped country. It derives from all the activities and experiences one enjoys or doesn’t enjoy—camping, primitive travel, exhaustion, incomparable solitude, miserable weather—in a setting big enough for their simultaneous happenings with elbowroom.

—JOHN SAYLOR, Senator from Pennsylvania, 1962
The word ‘wilderness’ occurs approximately three hundred times in the Bible, and all its meanings are derogatory.


If I had not been able to periodically renew myself in the mountains … I would be very nearly bughouse. Even when I can’t go into the back country, the thought of the colored deserts of southern Utah, or the reassurance that there are still stretches of prairie … is a positive consolation. The idea alone sustains me. But as wilderness areas are progressively exploited or ‘improved,’ as the jeeps and bulldozers of uranium prospectors scar up the deserts and the roads are cut into the alpine timberlands, and as the remnants of the unspoiled and natural world are progressively eroded, every loss is a little death in me. In us.


...there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area … and (except for emergency uses) no temporary road, no use of motor vehicle, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation.

—Wilderness Act of 1964

Wilderness areas are first of all a series of sanctuaries for the primitive arts of wilderness travel, especially canoeing and packing.

—Aldo Leopold, American conservationist, 1887–1948

When all the dangerous cliffs are fenced off, all the trees that might fall on people are cut down, all of the insects that bite are poisoned … and all of the grizzlies are dead because they are occasionally dangerous, the wilderness will not be made safe. Rather, the safety will have destroyed the wilderness.

—Roger Yorke Edwards, Canadian environmentalist, 1924—
We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.

—WALLACE STEGNER, Coda: Wilderness Letter; December 3, 1960

Throughout the history of this country, it’s been possible to go to a place where no one has camped before, and now that kind of opportunity is running out. We must protect it, even if artificially. The day will come when people will want to visit such a wilderness—saving everything they have to see it, at whatever cost.

—JOHN McPHEE, Coming into the Country, 1976

The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, American essayist, 1803–82

No servant brought them meals; they got their meat out of the river or went without. No traffic cop whistled them off the hidden rock in the next rapids. No friendly roof kept them dry when they mis-guessed whether or not to pitch the tent. No guide showed them which camping spots offered a night-long breeze, and which a night-long misery of mosquitoes; which firewood made clean coals, and which only smoke…. The elemental simplicities of wilderness travel were thrills not only because of their novelty, but because they represented complete freedom to make mistakes. The wilderness gave them their first taste of those rewards and penalties for wise and foolish acts which every woodsman faces daily, but against which civilization has built a thousand buffers.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, American conservationist, 1887–1948
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