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Nationwide Trail Etiquette Campaign Kicks Off with Call for Inclusivity and Mutual Respect

Trails are Common Ground is the work of the largest group of trail users, brands, advocacy groups, and media outlets ever assembled.

Carbondale, Colo. (August 19, 2021) – Any hiker, mountain biker, or trail runner will tell you there are more people on the trails than ever before. According to a study commissioned by the Outdoor Industry Association, 8.1 million more Americans hiked in 2020 versus 2019. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, automated counters at trail systems around the country recorded four times as many users compared to the same timeframe in 2019. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy reported a 79% spike in usage nationwide between March and July of 2020.

Recognizing that the community of trail users continues to grow at an exponential rate, an unprecedented consortium of advocacy groups, brands, media outlets, and ambassadors have come together to create a public awareness campaign. Launching today, the “Trails are Common Ground” campaign elevates the importance of respectful, inclusive, safe, and enjoyable experiences on trails.

Trails are being used more than ever before by an increasingly large number of people, many of whom recently discovered a love for the outdoors. It’s a complex ecosystem with lots of moving parts: people and animals, moving in different directions, in lots of different ways, for lots of different reasons. Trails are Common Ground aims to build a communal perspective on the mutual use of, and respect for, trails and for one another.

“This campaign is designed to remind experienced users to exemplify trail etiquette and inclusivity and introduce new users to our personal and collective responsibility outdoors,” said David Wiens, Executive Director of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) and member of the coalition behind Trails are Common Ground. Echoing Wiens’ sentiment, Luis Villa, Executive Director of Latino Outdoors said, “Trails are Common Ground is about positivity, mutual respect, and coming together as one community of diverse trail users, and that is something that Latino Outdoors will always get behind.”

The campaign includes a [website](#), [social media](#), and creative assets that can be shared and personalized by brands, non-profits, content creators, and all passionate trail users who want to rise together to share the message of Trails are Common Ground.

Advocacy groups and industry leaders began collaborating in February 2021 to discuss the need for this campaign. The coalition shaped the campaign to reinforce the many local, regional and user-specific trail respect programs in existence by promoting kindness and awareness while elevating the work of these programs. More than 15 meetings have taken place with input from more than 20 organizations, as well as outdoor industry brands, land managers, representatives with BIPOC

communities, and adaptive trail users. Coalition members represent all manner of activities that take place in the dirt, including hiking, trail running, equestrian, mountain biking, and motorized singletrack.

The coalition partnering on Trails are Common Ground includes American Motorcyclist Association, American Trail Running Association, American Trails, Back Country Horsemen of America, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Equine Land Conservation Resource, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Latino Outdoors, NavajoYES, PeopleforBikes, Teton Adaptive Sports, Tread Lightly!, US Trail Running Conference, Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Washington Trails Association, among many more partners.

“We’re excited to be part of and help shape the Trails are Common Ground movement,” said Nick Bennette, Executive Director of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association. “As we’ve seen trail usage explode these past few years, and come to terms with our need to be a more inclusive community, this coalition and the resulting campaign offer a powerful approach to ensure we can provide incredible experiences for anyone interested in getting out on the trail.”

For more information about Trails are Common Ground, please direct media inquiries to Bobby Lea at bobby.lea@backbone.media.