

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark leggings, and a bright yellow backpack, sitting on a rocky outcrop. She is looking out over a vast mountain range. The mountains are covered in dense forests, with patches of yellow and orange larch trees indicating autumn. A deep blue lake is visible in the valley below. The sky is clear and blue.

Trails for everyone, **forever**

We are on a mission to connect everyone to the outdoors and build a community that gives back to trails and public lands.

Washington Trails Association is focused on a single, long-term vision: **Trails for everyone, forever.**

**This vision guides every aspect of what we do.** And for over 60 years, a passionate community of members, partners, staff and volunteers have powered our work. Together, we have raised our voices through advocacy, lowering barriers and inspiring people to get outside and give back — from local greenspaces to the deep backcountry.

WTA is also a trusted resource for connecting communities to the outdoors and helping people plan trips with confidence. Our website and hiking guide provide free, high-quality information that empowers hikers of all skill levels, while our trail crews are a vital part of keeping outdoor spaces maintained and accessible for everyone.

## **Our work is rooted in core beliefs about the power of nature and the importance of communities in driving change.**

### **We believe that time in nature is good for the heart, mind and body.**

Every day we see the benefits of spending time outdoors, including improved mental and physical health and clear economic boosts for local communities.

### **We believe everyone should have opportunities to get outside.**

Time in nature can be beneficial for everyone. However, systemic barriers continue to prevent many communities from enjoying the outdoors. WTA is dedicated to lowering these barriers and fostering diverse and welcoming outdoor experiences for all.

### **We believe people will defend the places they love.**

Washington's landscapes have been stewarded by Native Peoples for countless generations, and the traditions rooted in these lands continue to thrive today. As more people enjoy time in nature, we have an opportunity to help deepen their appreciation for — and care of — our outdoor spaces. WTA is dedicated to empowering people to protect these treasured places.

### **We believe that, together, we can ensure trails and public lands stand the test of time.**

As the largest trails-based nonprofit in Washington state — and one of the leading trails nonprofits in the country — WTA is committed to defending, maintaining and connecting communities to trails, now and for generations to come.

**Join us and be a part of something bigger.**

## ► The power of WTA



# The future of Washington's trails depends on what we all do next.

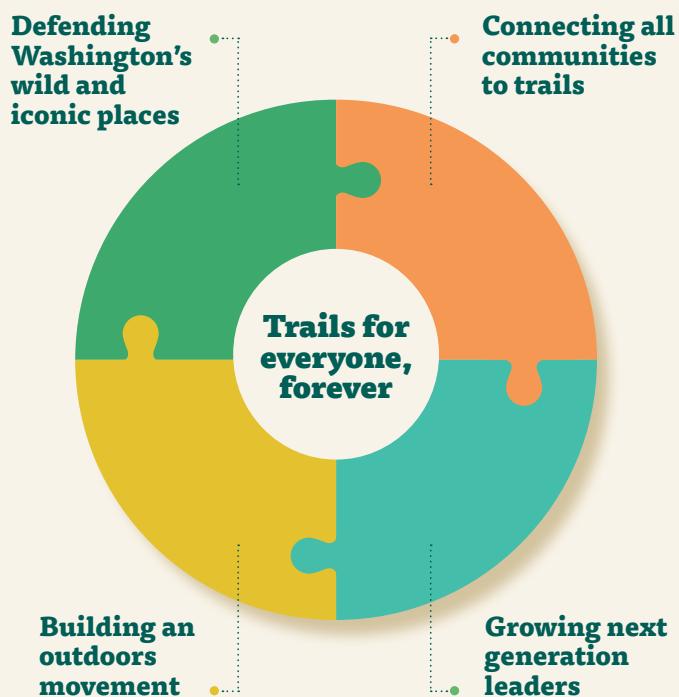
Photo by Paul Brennan

**Federal and state funding cuts, catastrophic wildfires and storms, and the ever-growing number of visitors to public lands have made WTA's work more important than ever.**

We've learned that we can face these challenges more effectively by bringing people together. Thousands of volunteers work on trails with us each season. The people who power our Trail Action Network consistently advocate for public lands, defending them from the dire consequences of those threats. And our donors keep our work moving forward.

This strategic roadmap reflects the biggest challenges trails face during this pivotal time, and the solutions we've developed to address those threats.

The following focus areas are powerful individually, but together they provide an even stronger foundation for Washington's trails in the years to come. With the support of our community, partners, members and everyone who loves and depends on public lands, this plan will help us ensure future generations can experience the beauty, economic benefits, well-being and connection our outdoor spaces provide.



66

I trust WTA to take a position on issues I care about regarding protection and access for public lands, and to advocate for equity.

WTA Trail Action Network member

## We will defend Washington's wild and iconic places

Now is the time to stand up and act for our public lands and trails.

**We are at a critical moment.** The government agencies tasked with caring for our public lands are losing the funding and staff needed to manage and sustain our beautiful landscapes, with dire implications for future generations. At the same time, the challenges of climate change and the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation mean more resources are required to keep our public lands safe, accessible and sustainable.

**WTA has the technical expertise and engaged community to care for trails in our state's most beautiful places.**

### We will:

- **Stand firm against attempts to sell off or reduce protections** for public lands and advocate for increased funding for public land managers
- **Work statewide with professional and volunteer trail crews** to make sure the public places we love are accessible and sustainably managed
- **Help sustainably manage trails and public lands** through collaborative trail system planning and technical trail support to federal and state land managers

Photos by Andrew Rossi, Chloe Median

WTA's Trail Action Network is a statewide community, over 60,000 members strong ... and growing! With the support and action of this passionate network, WTA weighs in on issues and policy that impact hikers — from defending public lands from sell-off attempts to advocating for trail funding and wilderness protection. Learn more at [wta.org/takeaction](http://wta.org/takeaction)





## We will connect all communities to trails

WTA is the go-to organization to help people get outside and give back to trails and public lands.

**The importance of trails and public lands is clearer than ever.** As more people seek the mental and physical benefits of time in nature, demand for outdoor experiences continues to increase, putting pressure on our vital landscapes. People are recognizing how responsible recreation supports economies, health and quality of life, underscoring how important it is to protect outdoor spaces. To meet this moment, WTA works to expand access to reliable information on how to recreate responsibly and create opportunities for individuals to come together to ensure safe, welcoming and well-maintained trails and public lands.

### We will:

- **Expand our trail work** in urban locations, county parks and other close-in areas
- **Maximize WTA's free online tools**, including our hiking guide and Trailblazer app, to continue offering reliable trail information
- **Engage local communities and leaders** in trail work, our trailhead ambassador program and other volunteer opportunities

“

I admire WTA's efforts to make the outdoors more inclusive through programs that remove barriers, like gear libraries and shared identity work parties. WTA's tireless work on trail maintenance ensures the trails I love will be around for my daughter to enjoy for years to come.

Former WTA board member

Photos by Anne Pham, Stacie Farrow



With the help of volunteers and supported by member and partner funding, WTA's trail maintenance crews work more than 160,000 hours a year. That labor is worth about \$5 million annually. Our trail maintenance program is the largest of its kind in the nation. Learn more about WTA's trail work at [wta.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://wta.org/get-involved/volunteer)



## We will inspire the next generation of outdoor leaders

Empowering young people to build skills and careers in the outdoors will build a more sustainable future for trails and public lands.

Photos by MJ Mahan, Tiffany Chou

Having positive experiences in nature at a young age can be transformative and spark a lifelong love and commitment to the outdoors. However, many young people face significant barriers to getting outside, from lack of access to gear, to limited opportunities to safely practice their outdoor recreation skills. By building pathways to better engage youth and young leaders in the outdoors, WTA inspires and empowers the next wave of leaders for the outdoor movement.

### We will:

- **Expand our Outdoor Leadership Training model**, including our gear lending libraries, to other parts of Washington state
- **Build pathways for emerging leaders** to develop their leadership and professional skills
- **Evolve WTA's youth trail maintenance program** to better engage young people and foster their excitement for trail stewardship

“

Before this program, I felt unsure whether there was a place for me in the outdoor industry — this program has changed that feeling for me. I am much more excited to pursue a career in the outdoors.

Emerging Leaders Program participant



66

We are creating opportunities for everyone who loves trails and the outdoors to come together to be a powerful voice for Washington's beautiful landscapes. We are the strongest force for public lands when we speak together.

Jaime Loucky, CEO, Washington Trails Association

## We will build an outdoors movement

We are growing a broad and diverse movement that turns voices and passion into protected trails and public lands. Join us.

Photos by Abby Valiant, Isaac Mazengia

Over the next 5 years, **WTA will lead a strong coalition of members and partners to ensure that maintaining public lands and trails is prioritized** in state and federal planning. We will bring together a wide array of people, communities and organizations to make sustainable access to trails and outdoor spaces a "must-have" in Washington state.

### We will:

- **Inspire individual and collective action** within our community
- **Double WTA membership** and increase engagement to build community, connection and sustainability around trails and public lands
- **Bring together partners**, including land managers, Tribal governments, outdoor organizations, community groups and businesses, to support Washington's public lands for future generations



**90% of people in Washington recreate on public lands.**  
Outdoor recreation contributes \$26.5 billion to Washington state's economy, reduces healthcare costs by \$390 million per year and supports over 200,000 jobs in our state.

Source: Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan, 2023

“

WTA is opening the door to the outdoors for kids who would otherwise not have the expertise or financial capacity to explore the outdoors, especially in winter.

---

**Outdoor Leadership Training program participant**

“

WTA does so much for hikers; they are a force multiplier for people who love the outdoors.

---

**WTA member**

“

WTA's focus on safety, fun, work and a shared love for trails creates a community in which I've had fulfilling friendships and countless memorable experiences.

---

**WTA volunteer**

“

There is no other group we can trust in the same way.

---

**Northwest land manager**



**Join the movement**

**Washington Trails Association**

705 2nd Ave, Suite 300 Seattle, WA 98104

(206) 625-1367 • [wta.org](http://wta.org)



---

Did you know that 50% of WTA's funding comes from our members?  
Join us and become a member today! [wta.org/member-benefits](http://wta.org/member-benefits)