



WORLD TRAILS NETWORK

Annual Report 2025

Strengthening trails and trail communities





Vision

Trail organizations and people around the world are inspired by the World Trails Network to learn, share, protect, promote and enhance sustainable trails for all.

Mission

To facilitate international cooperation and collaboration between trail organisations and individuals sharing expertise, knowledge and skills to promote sustainable trails.

Values

Care: Look after the trails, the people who use them and those who work to support them

Collaborate: Work together to advance the goals and strategic priorities of the World Trails Network

Motivate: Support and encourage all those who want to enjoy the trails with accurate information and advice

Advocate: Advocate for these international treasures, our trails

Transparent: Work in an honest, fair, ethical and transparent manner

Sustainable: Work with a light footprint to protect our environment now and for future generations

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement

At the World Trail Network, we believe that every person—regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, income, age, ability, sexual orientation or expression, or other status—deserves access to free, accessible, welcoming, and safe places where they can be active and enjoy nature. We believe trails have the power to transform communities and create joyful, vibrant, healing public spaces that are equitable and inclusive.

The World Trail Network (WTN) is devoted to creating and fostering an inclusive environment that is open to diverse thoughts, ideas, and communications, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against any member and the community. The WTN is committed to providing equal opportunities and a safe environment, in all aspects of our organization, for every person who chooses to participate in its work. Additionally, WTN strives to represent the communities and countries that it serves, within the organization and in the field.

We are committed to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. WTN actively promotes the inclusion of a diverse set of members of its boards and committees at all levels, which will lead to more representative decisions, policies and activities across WTN. We recognize and honor diverse cultures and traditions and proactively seek individuals for all aspects of our work from varied backgrounds for the greater enrichment of the organization. We are committed to being a diverse and inclusive organization and recognize that diversity contributes to a more effective and successful organizational culture and mission. WTN strives for these same principles for all WTN activities, including in our programs, publications and our various committees, Hubs and International Board.

2025 Reach of the World Trails Network



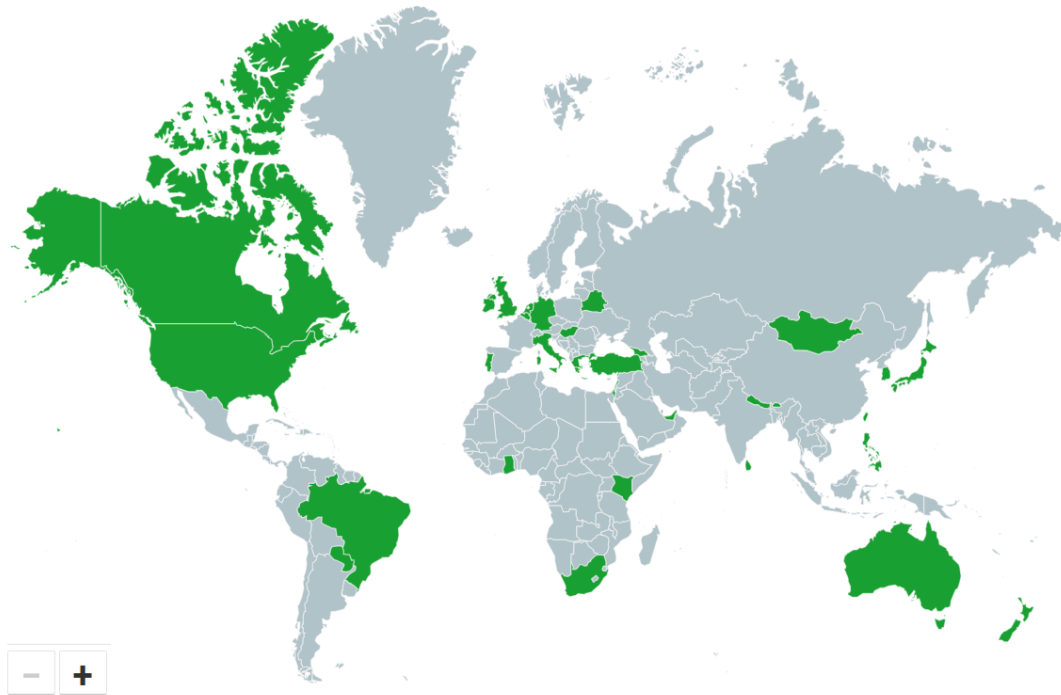
176 Members - slight decrease in membership



33 Countries



2,988 newsletter subscribers



Co-Chair's Message

As we reflect on 2025, the World Trails Network stands stronger, more connected, and more energized than ever. This past year has been defined by collaboration, renewed purpose, and meaningful progress toward our mission of supporting, celebrating, and strengthening trails and trail communities around the globe.

One of our most significant achievements has been the remarkable progress in planning the 2026 World Trails Conference, which will take place in Perth, Australia, in October 2026. Thanks to the dedication of our planning committees, hosts, and partners, the conference framework is now well established. The international community has responded with enthusiasm: our pre-sale launch surpassed expectations, with over 70 registrations secured during the early international release. This strong early interest speaks to the growing global relevance of trails, and the growing trust in WTN as a convener of diverse voices and trail leaders.

This year also marked a major step forward in strengthening our organizational capacity. With vital leadership and clarity from our Treasurer, Kara Wooldrik, we made significant progress in building a deeper, more transparent understanding of our financial landscape. This work has improved our forecasting, strengthened our financial governance.

As we close 2025, our focus now turns toward the year ahead. The World Trails Conference this October will be a defining moment for our network—a chance for practitioners, planners, advocates, researchers, and trail enthusiasts to come together to shape the next era of global trail stewardship. We look forward to fostering rich dialogue, showcasing innovation, and celebrating the enduring power of trails to connect people to nature, culture, and one another.

Thank you to our members, volunteers, partners, ambassadors, and the global trail community for your unwavering dedication. Together, we continue to build a world where trails are valued, protected, and accessible for all.

Onward,

Jackie Randle and Julian Gray
Co-Chairs, World Trails Network

World Trails Network Board

International Board Members 2025-2026

- Jackie Randle (Canada) – Co-Chair
- Julian Gray (UK) – Co-Chair
- Maya Karkour (Lebanon)
- Pedro Cunha e Menezes (Brazil)
- Oscar Kambona Ouma (Kenya)
- Ali Pretty (UK)
- Elsi Rizvanolli (Singapore)
- Mathieu Roy (Canada)
- Omar Sakr (Lebanon) - Secretary - Mediterranean Trails Representative
- Fivos Tsaravopoulos (Greece)
- Hartmut Wimmer (Germany) - European Trails Representative
- Julie Judkins (US)
- Kara Wooldrik (US) - Treasurer
- Kath Broderick (Australia)

14 Board members

12 Countries are represented on the Board.

Ex-Officio Board Representatives

Advisory Council Co-Chairs - Stephen Couchman and Delia Clark

Chapter Representatives - Nat Scrimshaw (Pan American Trails) and Jacky Tao (Asia Trails Network)

Board Committee Reports

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of the Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Chairs of the Board Committees. Acting on behalf of the Board between meetings, the Committee works to advance the ongoing business and strategic priorities of the WTN.

Over the past year, the Executive Committee focused primarily on assessing the organization's capacity for growth and sustainability. A key outcome of this work was the identification of the need for an Executive Director to support and accelerate WTN's continued development. Additional details regarding this new role and the planned next steps will be shared at the Annual General Meeting.

Governance Committee

During the year, the Governance Committee dedicated its efforts to a comprehensive refresh of the WTN Strategic Plan. This work was undertaken collaboratively, with meaningful input from the Advisory Council and Task Team Chairs, ensuring alignment with the organization's mission, values, and future priorities.

Highlights from the updated Strategic Plan will be presented at the Annual General Meeting in June and made available on the WTN website following its approval by the WTN Board.

WTC Steering Committee

The WTC Steering Committee met regularly throughout 2025 to oversee the development and launch of the Call for Proposals for the upcoming World Trails Conference in Perth, Australia. The response exceeded expectations, with more than 120 proposals submitted from across the global community.

Committee members undertook a thorough review and scoring process to curate a diverse, engaging, and high-quality conference program. The Steering Committee looks forward to welcoming participants to Perth and hopes you will join them at the upcoming conference.

Financial Report

2025 Revenues	USD
Membership Dues	\$6,970.11
Conference License Fee	\$30,195.93
Interest	\$43.37
Total	\$37,209.41

2025 Expenses	USD
Bank Fees	\$128.97
Web Hosting	\$725.05
Zoom	\$204.25
Website Assistance	\$91.98
Insurance	\$799.20
Database	\$1,045.05
Contractors - Communications	\$5,494.50
Mailchimp	\$733.58
Miscellaneous	\$1,244.86
Total	\$10,467.44

Difference	\$26,741.97
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Advisory Council

Co-Chairs Delia Clark (USA) and Stephen Couchman (Canada)

Task teams are the main connecting point for World Trails Network members. It is through these small working groups that individuals and organizations from around the globe, work together on areas of interest, share information and learn. Involvement in task teams is the best way to make the most of your membership with the WTN.

Task Team priorities are set every two years at the WTN conference. The groups generally meet once per month via Zoom, though conversations and collaborations are often ongoing. Every month, the Chairs of each task team gather to review, share and problem-solve. They act as an Advisory Council, providing input to the WTN board and helping to steer the overall organization. Much of the work of the WTN takes place here.

The meetings of the Advisory Council include an opportunity each month for one Task Team to collaborate with the full group as thought partners on a particular issue or opportunity. One time per year the full network and guests come together between conferences in a World Trails Network Rendezvous where each Task Team shares the highlights of their work.

If you are not already a member of a Task Team, please contact info@worldtrailsnetwork.org. We will connect you with the team/s which align with your skills and interests. Task Teams for 2024-26 were confirmed following the 2024 conference.

Task Teams 2024-2026

Arts & Culture

Co-Chairs: Ali Pretty (UK) and Lora Aziz (UK)

Our task team explores the role artists play in:

- Strengthening the identity and voices of communities through walking
- Gathering and sharing stories of the beliefs, heritage, landscape and aspirations of local people and their places
- Facilitating cultural exchange between hosts and visitors
- Generating conversation and debate on shared global issues whilst walking
- Celebrating diverse ecologies and humanity's stewarding of them by making work in response to the natural landscape.
- We are exploring a contemporary practice of Pilgrimage, defined as a journey undertaken by individuals seeking personal growth, reflection, or a deeper connection to their values, culture, or history.

Accomplishments in 2025:

Sacred Steps, a 6-month series in partnership with Walk, Listen, Create, exploring a contemporary practice of Pilgrimage, defined as a journey undertaken by individuals seeking personal growth, reflection, or a deeper connection to their values, culture, or history.

PATH – Protecting Anatolia's Trail & Heritage --- Art in motion for the Lycian Way's future, a week-long creative, educational, and cultural initiative bringing together artists from UK and Turkey. The project wove together art, ancient history, local legends, community storytelling, and environmental advocacy to engage local people and raise awareness of the threats facing the Lycian Way's landscape and cultural heritage.

Cities & Towns

Co-Chairs: Brendan Blotnick (Canada) and David Loutzenheiser (USA)

The Cities & Towns Task Team is focused on positioning trails as essential infrastructure within the communities where people live. Trails are more than recreational assets—they support active transportation, improve public health, strengthen ecosystems, and help create more connected and equitable communities. The team’s mandate is to identify models for closing gaps in urban and regional trail networks, improving connectivity through safe active transportation routes and coordinated planning among municipal, regional, and national partners, while recognizing the importance of community-led initiatives.

Examples such as Guelph demonstrate how successful trail systems rely on a mix of city-led capital projects, development-focused planning initiatives, and community-led, city-supported projects. The team also sees an important role for organizations like the World Trails Network in convening partners, sharing expertise, supporting funding access, and promoting best practices. Ultimately, the work aims to define the criteria for a connected [“Trail City or Town” that links people, communities, and destinations.](#)

Conservation

Chair: Galeo Saintz (South Africa)

The Trails & Conservation Task Team continued to champion trails globally, not only for their role in conservation, but specifically in their capacity for supporting landscape and habitat connectivity via corridors. The team continued to work on its White Paper and a paper focused on trails and connectivity. Various members of the Task Team attended numerous conferences relating to conservation where they represented WTN. These included the Convention on Migratory Species, the UNESCO World Biosphere Congress and the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi. Our motion put forward to the IUCN Congress was accepted as a resolution, resulting in the formation of a dedicated Task Force within IUCN focused on trails and conservation, this will help shape an important space for trails to become more visible within the global conservation community for their benefits and value to conservation over the coming years. This is a key achievement and opens an exciting new chapter for trails within the global conservation community. At the 2026 Convention on Migratory Species meeting in Brazil further milestones were achieved. The Task Team continues to grow and looks forward to further collaboration with key stakeholders in the conservation sector.

Education and Inclusive Engagement

Co-Chairs: Takla Khoueiry (Lebanon), Julie Judkins (USA), Delia Clark (USA)

The World Trails Network Education & Inclusive Engagement Task Team continued to strengthen global connections, elevate emerging leaders, and advance inclusive approaches to trail stewardship throughout 2025. Building on the momentum of previous years, the Task Team focused its efforts on three interconnected priorities:

World Trails Ambassadors Program: The Ambassadors program exists to 1) Support communities through trail leadership and action, 2) Raise awareness of the importance of trails globally, and 3) Increase leadership capacity and global connectivity among emerging trail stewards. Throughout the year, the Task Team refined application materials and onboarding processes for the program, developed a sponsorship framework for chapters and trail organizations, expanded

recruitment strategies and communication tools, and created a clearer timeline to support ambassador selection, onboarding, visa coordination, and conference preparation.

Indigenous Ways: Indigenous Ways is a movement within the Task Team that centers Indigenous knowledge, leadership, and cultural authority in global trails work. Conversations focus on the importance of engaging Indigenous communities not as partners, but as essential leaders and knowledge holders in shaping the future of trails. Three forums or circles were held virtually with Indigenous speakers from Fiji, the Philippines, and Canada. Discussions highlighted the shared understanding that Indigenous knowledge systems hold critical wisdom for contemporary environmental stewardship and community resilience.

Public Forums & Global Learning: The Task Team supported three educational forums and peer learning opportunities designed to amplify promising practices from around the world, including Youth Conservation Corps, Accessibility and inclusive trail design, Trail-based education, and Youth and Inclusive trail development. Members also discussed how World Trails Day could become a stronger organizing framework for engagement across Task Teams and chapters.

Trails and Knowledge Task Team

Co-chairs: Shay Rabineau (Binghamton University, USA) & Martina Sedlakova (Wageningen University & Research, NL)

What is Trailology? Trailology is an effort to place trails at the center of scholarly inquiry, and to create spaces where research on trails can be shared and disseminated. Because trails are everywhere, they are incidental to many academic conversations, but only rarely are examined as phenomena unto themselves. When they are, they tend to be examined through narrow disciplinary lenses.

Trailology views trails as an interdisciplinary field of study, creating conversations between hikers and trail developers on the one hand, and scholars from the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the arts on the other. By approaching trails as fundamental interfaces between living things and the world, trailology views trails themselves as offering vantage points and new scholarly methods for answering the most pressing questions of our time.

Activities in 2025:

Over the course of 2025, the Trails and Knowledge task team and the broader Trailology Collective have been active across a range of fronts, including:

- Hosting monthly task team meetings with invited guest presentations on trailology topics
- Expanding the Trailology Collective network of researchers across disciplines and institutions
- Organising in-person talks and gatherings at member home institutions
- Updating and expanding the Natasha Luzhkova Digital Library
- Strategic planning for trailology as an emerging field of study
- Developing new spaces and structures to facilitate collaborative research projects
- Engaging with graduate students and researchers, including collaborations with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Massachusetts, USA)
- Preparing a proposal for a dedicated Trailology Research Center at Binghamton University (New York, USA)
- Developing an outdoor trail laboratory in partnership with the Binghamton University Environmental Studies Program and field research partners

- Collaborating with Wageningen University & Research on an Academic Consultancy Training graduate course: Trailology: Building a New Academic Discipline Through Experimentation and Innovation
- Planning and organisation of an international trailology symposium to be held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, in June 2026

These activities reflect the task team's commitment to growing trailology as a recognised and rigorous interdisciplinary field, and to building the networks and infrastructure needed to sustain it. We welcome collaboration from any scholar or practitioner with an interest in trails and invite all to join us in shaping the future of trailology.

Media

Chair: Zak Klein (USA)

The media task team aims to gather, curate and showcase media related to trails. We strive to strengthen trail community connections, advocate alongside trail organizations, and support trail media creators. Our scope remains open to digital, printed, photo, audio and video. In addition, cartography and physical elements unique to trail cultures (signage, trail markings, patches, pins, trail passports, etc.) are zones worth exploring with teamwork. [Trails Film](#), also known as the World Trails Film Festival, is an ongoing product of the task team, and the primary focus of its current chair.

**Co-chair seats are open and ready for new faces and project visions.*

In 2025, Trails Film hosted 11 screenings with a collective audience size of over 1,200 people. We held a successful 4th call for new films, resulting in over 100 film entries from over 30 countries. Our 9-week series of screening committee "watch parties" ran through late winter, so our 2025 work culminated by [welcoming 47 new films](#) into the Trails Film archive. While our website recorded over 10,000 page views by 3,800 people on our film pages, our in-person events also reached:

- Over 500 Trail Professionals - While primarily from the United States and Canada, we estimate this audience also includes citizens from over 25 other countries.
- Over 800 General public - Broadly speaking, some events attract youth, but most attendees range from 30-years-old to our highest-represented group, over 50-years old.

Sustainability & Governance

Chair: Cesar Aspiazu (Bolivia/Brazil)

During the 2024–2025 period, the Sustainability & Governance Task Team of the World Trails Network consolidated its work around advancing governance approaches and sustainability frameworks for trail systems, with particular emphasis on long-distance trails, protected areas, and community-based development.

Key developments during this reporting period included:

- Advancement of an international dialogue on governance and sustainability challenges facing trail systems across diverse socio-ecological contexts;
- Strengthening collaboration among professionals and organizations working on trail governance, protected areas, ecotourism, public use, and conservation policy through the participation of representatives from academia, NGOs, trail networks, and international specialist groups;
- Promotion of comparative discussions and knowledge exchange on topics such as multi-level governance, co-management arrangements, stakeholder participation, and institutional frameworks for trail systems;

- Integration of trail-related discussions with broader biodiversity conservation agendas, including ecological connectivity, Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and landscape-scale conservation strategies;
- Support for applied research and field-based initiatives examining the role of trails in conservation, sustainable tourism, territorial development, and community resilience across Latin America;
- Expansion of interdisciplinary collaboration through engagement with specialists linked to organizations and initiatives such as IUCN WCPA TAPAS, universities, community-based tourism initiatives, and regional trail networks;
- Contribution to visibility and international exchange on emerging practices related to governance innovation, sustainability assessment, visitor use management, and community stewardship in trail systems.

The Task Team also strengthened connections between research, policy, and implementation by incorporating experiences from biodiversity hotspots and protected landscapes in the Americas, helping position trail systems as strategic tools for conservation, ecological connectivity, public use, and inclusive local development.

Trail Design & Stewardship

Co-Chairs: Yu-Fai Leung (USA) and Jacky Tao (Taiwan)

We believe that having timely and quality information about trail conditions can facilitate effective and sustainable management of our trails, and such information can be acquired through public engagement. We also believe that the craftsmanship of our historical trails continue to shed light on contemporary trail stewardship and design. Thus, our task team launched two international projects in 2025, namely the citizen-based trail monitoring programs survey, and the traditional trail craftsmanship video project.

For the survey project, we collected 22 responses from 10 countries, with 8 of which providing more detailed information. Data analysis is underway to develop several outputs to share with the respondents, WTN members, and the trail community at large. These include a panel discussion at the 2026 World Trails Conference, featured talks at three task team meetings in 2026, and a manuscript aimed for peer-reviewed journal publication. As for the video project, we reached out to teams in Türkiye, Greece and Taiwan, and would curate these films at the 2026 World Trails Conference.

Tourism

Chair: Kate Harbour (USA) and and Jane McCulloch (Canada)

The Tourism Task Team spent 2025 refining and advancing four key priority projects that support trail-based tourism development, collaboration, and long-term sustainability across the network:

Team Gatherings: The Team Gatherings are designed to provide learning and networking opportunities for trail organizations, tourism operators, and community partners. These sessions focus on sharing practical knowledge, innovative ideas, and successful case studies from across the sector. In 2025, the Task Team hosted a gathering focused on how trail organizations can capitalize on tourism-related revenue generation opportunities. Momentum continued into 2026, with two gatherings already hosted early in the year and two additional sessions currently scheduled.

Regenerative Trail Tourism: This initiative focuses on advancing a regenerative approach to trail tourism, one that not only minimizes impacts, but actively improves the environmental, cultural, social, and economic well-being of communities and landscapes connected to trails. The work includes identifying best practices, developing guiding principles, and exploring how trail organizations can create tourism experiences that support stewardship, reconciliation, community resilience, and long-term sustainability. A workshop focused on Regenerative Trail Tourism will be held at the World Trail Conference in 2026.

White Paper on Destination Trail Criteria: The Task Team is developing a white paper that will define the characteristics and criteria of a “destination trail” through a global lens. The document will examine the infrastructure, governance, visitor experience, partnerships, economic impacts, and stewardship practices required for trails to attract visitors and support sustainable tourism development. The paper is intended to serve as a resource for trail organizations, funders, and government partners.

“Best Practices” Mission: The “Best Practices” Mission is intended to provide Task Team members with opportunities to learn directly from leading trail and tourism destinations. Through site visits, stakeholder meetings, and case study exploration, the mission will examine successful governance models, tourism strategies, funding approaches, infrastructure development, and community engagement practices that can help inform and strengthen trail tourism initiatives at home. We have had an initial discussion with a long-distance cycling trail and plan on hosting the mission in May 2027, with the majority of the planning and promotion taking place in 2026.

Technology

Chair: Vera Cvetkovic (Canada)

Team Purpose:

Provide a platform within the WTN to discuss emerging technologies, create and publish valuable material for trail organizations and enthusiasts.

Areas of Focus:

1. Digitization of trail resources
2. Role of technology & apps in trail research, planning, and navigation
3. Social, commercial, and cultural impact of tech on trail information
4. User-Generated Content vs. organizational control of trail data
5. Influence of new media on trails and adventure tourism
6. Open-source initiatives and standards to enhance data accessibility

The Technology Task team faced some major changes in 2025. The new team lead established monthly meetings and onboarded new active team members.. Focus on recruiting and expanding tech team globally, connect with and work with other task teams and trail organizations, and get into a rhythm of creating and publishing content via web blog and newsletter. Exploring options for webinar or podcast. 2026 had a strong start with finalizing details for the upcoming fall conference. We are working on workshop details and parallel with that exploring other interesting technology trail projects around the globe