



Courtney Lyons-Garcia:
The National Trails System

Courtney Lyons-Garcia

Courtney Lyons-Garcia is the Executive Director of the Partnership for the National Trails System. She has over 25 years of experience in public lands and trail development, including leadership roles at Big Bend Conservancy, Mission Heritage Partners, and Public Lands Foundation.



The Partnership for the National Trails

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) is a 501(c)(3) that connects member not-for-profit trail organizations and Federal agency partners to further the protection, completion, and stewardship of the 30 national scenic and historic trails within the National Trails System.

The PNTS advocates on behalf of the National Trails System as a whole for land preservation and stewardship resources.

Other major roles of the PNTS include the collection and dissemination of National Trails news and the development of outreach initiatives and youth programming.

Today, the Partnership has over 30 National Scenic & Historic Trail members and a growing network of affiliate members and works in close collaboration with the several Federal agency partners who have jurisdiction over the trails.



Our Approach

Collaborate with Trail Organizations

We work closely with local trail clubs and nonprofit organizations that help build, maintain, and promote trails.

Work with Federal Agencies

We partner with federal agencies like the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management who manage many of the trails.

Support the National Trails System

We provide funding, technical assistance, training, and advocacy to strengthen the National Trails System.

Promote Volunteerism

We promote volunteer trail stewardship and engage volunteers in building, maintaining, and monitoring trails.

Educate the Public

We spread awareness about the value of trails and the National Trails System through media, events, and educational resources.

Advocate for Trails

We advocate for trails at the national, state, and local levels to gain support for trails.

National Trails System

(Some Examples of our National Scenic and Historic Trails)



Appalachian Trail

The 2,180 mile Appalachian Trail stretching from Georgia to Maine winds through the scenic Appalachian Mountains.



Pacific Crest Scenic Trail

The 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail traversing the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range offers desert, mountain and forest scenery.



The El Camino Real de los Tejas

The El Camino Real de los Tejas stretches 2,500 miles from colonial Mexico City through Texas and ends in Natchitoches, Louisiana. It's one of 21 National Historic Trails in the National Trails System.



National Trails benefit local economies, enrich local communities, and protect environments.



Building Local Economies

Trails connect landscapes support local economies and increase access to nature

- run through and connect major cities to natural spaces
- attract visitors and tourists to rural area

Growing job and workforce development Opportunities

Trails connect 230+ major urban areas and Trail Towns or Gateway Communities

- 80%+ businesses saw increase after getting involved with a trail town program

Increasing Opportunities for Outdoor Activities

230 Million people in the U.S. live within an hour drive of a National Trail

Connect 70 National Wildlife Refuges, 80 National Parks and 120+ Wilderness Areas

Capture and interpret some of the nation's most profound history and the stories of the people connected to trail lands

Volunteerism and community building

Programs, activities & events

Land protection

60,600 miles of trails - all 50 States

2/3 protected and accessible to the Public

Enormous opportunity for side and connector trails and 'viewshed' protection

Some trails have little or no land protected outside of parks and forests

Management plans and protections plans not completed for all trails

Management structure gives trail organizations the ability to acquire lands for trails

Becoming a National Trail Partner



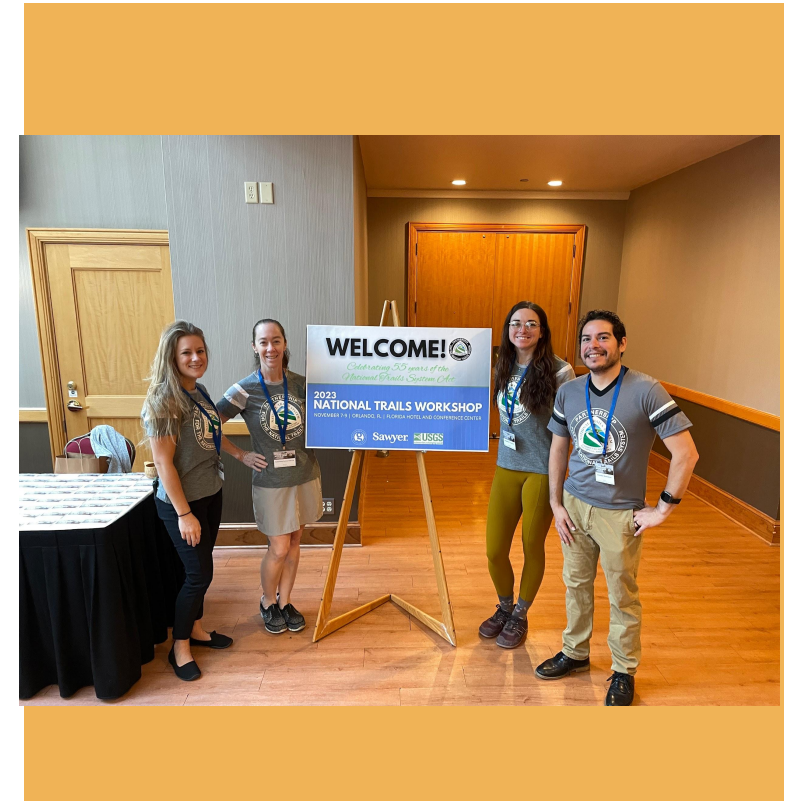
Funding

Access to resources like the agency foundations, matching funds like Centennial Challenge or LRF, IRA funding



DO45, Agreements and more

You will have formalized agreements that extend for years and governing documents



Community

The 32 National Historic and Scenic Trails are a remarkable community - collaboration, efficiencies, learning, advocacy

Local and Gateway Communities

- Local Matters
- Long trails can't exist without healthy local communities
- Local zoning
- There is money locally: bonds, state recreation trail funds, local community foundation grants
- Local advocacy for signage, safe camping areas, amenities for thru hikers, ordinances that impact hikers, lighting
- Great opportunities for visitor spending at the local level - thru hikers love to spend their dollars at local restaurants and shops
- Opportunity to build local systems like Continental Divide and Florida Trail

