

How to Get a Trail Project Rolling and Built

What are the key steps to build momentum, stimulate public interest and motivate people to get involved?

Learn what your neighbors care about. What's the need? What's out there already for trails and open spaces? Ask students, seniors and in between. Bring maps. Photos.

Seek advice and info from those who've been there before.

Attend conferences. Take field trips. Ask for help from everyone.

Build a vision—identify your niche.

Your mission statement may take considerable time to develop.

Need logo—name ("Shining Sea" vs "the trail").

Include team members in decision making.

Take time to set goals and priorities.

Get something done—event---some clearing---on the ground piece of trail

How do we make connections across gaps and around obstacles in the proposed corridor?

Be prepared—have maps and land ownership info. Know what you are asking for. Go in twos.

Be patient. Negotiations may take years...or happen suddenly.

Speak with a positive expectation. Be respectful and humble—fully appreciative of what you are asking.

Consider all alternatives—may need the street or road as a temporary short or long-term connection.

What can be accomplished through printed newsletters, websites and email blasts?

Reader may give 10 to 30 seconds, so photos and headlines are important. Others read from head to toe.

Good quality, simple publication increases trust, confidence in your org.

Keeps your group in view and mind.

Establishes that you are working—producing results.

Helps you review your work and organize.

Encourages or thanks volunteers.

Informs members of what you are doing—sometimes key volunteers don't know what others are doing.

Builds connections within the group and outside.

Catches someone's eye to attend events—or to try an activity or piece of trail or open space for the first time

Sparks new volunteers.

Place to thank (7 times)

Website similar—different tastes. Can reach a broader audience. Key words for search important. Keeping site fresh and current. Ease of maneuvering and place to sign up needed.

E-mail good if not overused—best if you are sending to individuals, but big group mailings can be time savers to get the word out—then follow-up with individual or small group. Quick notice to teams and committees.

How do we get started in fundraising, then progress from nickel & dime to major fundraising, including cash and in-kind?

Take time—asking is honoring.

Give generously yourself first.

Make a match to government, foundation or individual challenge.

Need clear case statement.

Build relationships. Sit face to face.

For capital campaigns need to ID some philanthropic candidates first and develop a fund base before you open the campaign to all.

Auction, cookbook, trail event—all can become signature events and draw in new people. Can be very time consuming.

How do we apply for, then get and manage federal funding?

For grants—read carefully.

Make contact with grantor

Follow the vision of the grantor.

Highlight the fit—but don't squash a square peg in round hole.

Edit well.

Don't bundle too many pieces together. Realistic time table and budget.

Try, try again.

Be flexible and ready to look at all funding approaches.

Our full hand-of-five model—

- individual members
- businesses
- state and federal government agencies
- municipal
- foundations

How do we balance our roles with state agencies and other players, ranging from supportive partners, to ambassadors, to political organizers, to fierce advocates?

Be clear about your vision, goal, niche. Be willing to work hard. Be respectful. *Build connections—partnerships.* Listen. Be brave.