

The OhioNetwork: Supporting Trails Across Ohio

A coalition of regional trail advocates throughout the Buckeye State, the OhioNetwork's mission is to establish policies and sustainable funding mechanisms that facilitate planning, construction and maintenance of recreational trail & active transportation networks to transform Ohio and drive job creation, enhance quality of life and foster thriving communities by connecting Ohioans.

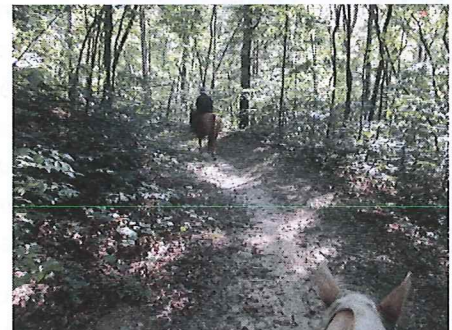
Ohio is well-positioned to be a national leader in developing recreational trail/active transportation networks. Municipalities, trail advocates and Ohioans are energized to make this a reality but can only succeed with increased state support. The **OhioNetwork**, a multi-regional coalition advocating to create a statewide trails network to connect Ohioans, has engaged hundreds of stakeholders representing commerce, public health, local governments, trail managers and other community groups, confirming that our state's districts are motivated to collaborate to *connect people, places and opportunities*.



Municipalities statewide need financial support to complete and maintain their equestrian, hiking, mountain biking, water and multi-use trail systems, and they are working hard to secure federal, private and local funding to move forward their trail development initiatives. Federal infrastructure policy is moving toward heightened requirements for state and local funding to access federal dollars. In response, **state legislators should increase dedicated funding for trails**, which will lead to incredible benefits for Ohio and Ohioans across rural, suburban & urban areas.

Why Trail Networks?

In 2000 and 2008, voters in all 88 counties approved the **Clean Ohio Trails Fund**, demonstrating the shared value Ohioans place on development efforts that work to strengthen the economic, physical and environmental health of our state. Since the program's inception, more than 200 projects have developed over 500 miles of trails, generating thousands of jobs through increased visitor spending and business activity. These trails are helping to better connect places throughout the Buckeye State, increasing accessibility to historical sites, natural areas and urban centers.



A 2013 Trust for Public Land study conducted in Ohio and four of its neighboring states demonstrated that trail networks provide an economic boost to local communities by finding:

- Trail users annually contribute \$17 billion to the regional economy and support 191,000 jobs.
- This economic activity generates \$2.2 billion in state and federal tax revenues every year.
- Ohioans love trails for their recreational and active transportation benefits.



State legislators are critical to delivering these benefits and need to be involved in their implementation. A clear action step is to support a new State Trail Plan, properly funded and developed through an inter-agency effort, that highlights the importance of completing regional trail systems to link population centers with outdoor recreation areas; if executed, the plan would help preserve natural corridors, support commuter access, and ultimately increase economic and quality of life benefits for all Ohio communities.