

Current Activities and Priorities

The Senate has unanimously designated 2018 **Ohio's Year of the Trails**, underscoring the importance of trail networks such as the Ohio to Erie Trail, the Buckeye Trail, the Great Miami Watershed National Water Trail, Ohio State Parks 500+ miles of bridle trails & 200+ miles of mountain biking trails, and the 'nation's largest paved trail network' in the Miami Valley. The **Ohio Trails Partnership**, unifying all non-motorized trail users, highlights that trail systems boost local economies, retain/attract businesses, improve Ohio's regional competitiveness, connect communities and reduce health care costs by promoting active lifestyles. Due to limited funding, however, local governments require financial support to develop these critical trail projects before their benefits can be realized. Several municipalities, counties and other jurisdictions have completed or are developing trail/active transportation plans that will take decades to execute because existing funding sources are annually oversubscribed by at least three times the amounts available.



The **Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus**, a bipartisan group of state legislators committed to creating a statewide trails network to connect Ohioans, emphasizes the need to focus on improving existing trails and ensuring smart planning for future trails. Neighboring states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Indiana are currently engaged in significant trail development projects, recognizing that trails translate to better quality of life for their residents and attract & retain businesses and talented individuals. Ohio has solid trail infrastructure and must continue to be a leader among Midwestern states to remain competitive.



Beyond prioritizing connectivity and building trail networks, policies that facilitate trail development and provide for planning, maintenance and safety are critical. **Establishing and enhancing reliable funding mechanisms as well as increasing state agency capacity to administer programs should be prioritized. Encouraging coordination among ODNR, ODOT, ODH and ODSA (TourismOhio) will ensure that the benefits of trail networks are fully realized.** Currently, these agencies are collaborating to celebrate Ohio's Year of the Trails by:

- Developing a comprehensive online trail map and new state trail plan.
- Establishing state and national bicycle routes.
- Implementing active transportation initiatives.
- Connecting residents and visitors to recreational opportunities.

Learn how you can get involved with the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus & the Ohio Trails Partnership and support the OhioNetwork initiative to positively transform communities across the Buckeye State!

Help support trails in Ohio by:

- Joining & actively engaging in Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus (Nate.Shipman@ohiosenate.gov for more info)
- Continuing the full biennial appropriation for the Clean Ohio Trails Fund
- Supporting increased funding for trail planning, development and maintenance
- Recognizing that trails & active transportation are critical to better health & economic development policy
- Ensuring that ODH, ODNR, ODSA (TourismOhio) and ODOT have the resources needed to do their parts in making Ohio a national model for trails experiences, economic vitality and quality of life

Learn more at www.railstotrails.org/policy/building-active-transportation-systems/active-transportation-policy-hub/