

Alabama's Physical Activity Potential

Alabama Obesity Task Force

November 16, 2011

Birmingham, Alabama

Alabama Trails Commission



Alabama Trails Commission

- Founded by the Alabama legislature and signed into law by the governor in 2011
- The Commission is a way to bring together all the trail stakeholders and to coordinate their efforts as a way to leverage Alabama's natural resources
- Increased tourism and community development are the expected outcomes

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Mission Statement

- "The Alabama Trails Commission will guide and promote the development of trails by connecting citizens and communities with their historical and natural resources for the betterment of Alabama."

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Three related trail groups

- The Alabama Trails Commission comprises 12 members, each an appointee by an Alabama industry or government agency
- A twelve-member advisory board has been created to work in partnership with the Commission
- The Alabama Trails Foundation has been created to fund the work of the Alabama Trails Commission



Distinctions

- Alabama Trails Commission is a one-stop shop for coordinated trail development that will create the most impact with the least redundancy
- Alabama Trail Advisory Board brings guidance through the state's largest organizational and agency stakeholders



Why should Alabama develop trails?

What are the benefits?

- Leverages existing resources into sustainable industries
- Improves quality of life and health
- Economic development/impact—jobs, small business, expanding tax base
- Business diversification—sustainable, low-investment
- Positive image for Alabama

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How can trails benefit communities and individuals?

- Improved environment for outfitters, food, lodging, camping and other service sectors
- Tourist opportunities
- “Employee magnets” for employers
- Turns desire to be outdoors into health benefit
- Provides achievable goals for community volunteers and organization

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What are some of the current users/interest groups in Alabama?

- Canoe and kayakers
- Equestrian riders
- Mountain bikers
- Road cyclists
- ATV riders
- Hikers and walkers
- Trail runners
- Birders

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Impact of Trails on Local Economies

- Increased property values, thus increasing local tax revenue
- Provide business opportunities, locations and resources for commercial activities
- Major tourist attractions which generate expenditures on lodging, food and recreation-related services



Trails and Healthcare Benefits

- In Lincoln, Nebraska, per capita annual cost of using trails was \$209. Per capita annual direct medical benefit of trail use was \$564. The cost-benefit ratio was 2.94. **This means that every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit.**
A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails, Wang, G., et al., (2004)
- According to the *Trail Benefits Study: The Ludlam Trail Case Study* in 2011, “The development of Ludlam Trail will **save the community between \$1.68 million and \$2.25 million annually in direct medical costs** related to lack of physical exercise while leading to approximately 4,931 to 6,579 area residents becoming new exercisers.”



Active Outdoor Recreation Economy

- Contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy
- Supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the U.S.
- Generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue
- Provides sustainable growth in rural communities
- Generates \$289 billion annually in retail sales and services across the U.S.
- Touches over 8 percent of America's personal consumption expenditures – more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy

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Outdoor Recreation Participation

- Nearly 50% of Americans ages 6 and older (137.9 million) participated in outdoor recreation in 2010
- In the East South Central region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi), there is 46% participation



How can the Alabama
Department of Public Health
and the
Alabama Trails Commission
work together?

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A group of people are kayaking on a river. In the foreground, a dog is sitting on a yellow kayak. The background shows a large white structure, possibly a bridge or dam, and a building on the shore.

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