



# 2023 Annual Report



## HTA Mission Statement

Headwaters Trails Alliance (HTA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to trails in scenic Grand County, Colorado. Our primary goal is to provide high quality trails linking towns and recreational areas within Grand County, with secondary trail systems connecting historical, cultural, and recreational sites near our communities. HTA's mission is to preserve, enhance, and promote sustainable high quality multi-use trail opportunities for residents and visitors.



## 2023 Strategic Goals

Strategic direction for 2023 focused on organizational improvements moving towards sustainability; Goals included:

- Strive for organizational excellence and sustainability; strengthen financial position through funding diversification.
- Foster public and private partnerships to support and enhance HTA through strengthening and initiating partnerships.
- Improve HTA's efforts towards diversity, equity and inclusion; ensure that HTA's policies and efforts are in alignment with current trends.
- Continued implementation of the Grand County Strategic Trails Plan (2019), focusing on mid- to long-term goals.



## Field Season Summary 2023



New Trail Construction: 5.79 miles  
 Reroute Trail Construction: 3.30 miles  
 Trails Maintained and/or Assessed: 561 miles  
 Trails Decommissioned: 0.78 miles  
 Drains Cleared: 3,236



Bridge Construction: 11  
 Bridge Replacements and/or Repairs: 4  
 Turnpike Construction: 300 feet



Buck & Rail Fence Construction: 900 feet  
 Staff Hours Winter Trail Grooming: 650



Trail Volunteer Hours: 1,256  
 Stewardship Ambassador & Wilderness Group  
 Volunteer Hours: 1,375  
 Public Education Contacts: 15,980



Trees Cleared: 6,868  
 Trailhead Improvement Locations: 15  
 New Kiosks Installed and/or Repaired: 8



Continental Divide National Scenic Trail projects: 4  
 Youth Education/Service-Learning Projects: 12  
 Youth Corps Project Weeks: 6





## 2023 Highlights

Headwaters Trails Alliance experienced both its greatest capacity and impact in 2023 with a record number of trail improvements, projects, structures built, miles of new trail constructed and/or rerouted, wilderness trail projects, new partnerships developed, educational outreach, county-wide sustainability planning efforts initiated, growth of the Stewardship Ambassador program, installation of new signage and kiosks, winter trail grooming expansion (location and frequency), extension of the local sales tax for open lands, rivers, and trails, and outdoor recreation leadership of local, regional, and state committees. HTA had the greatest number of employees in its history at 17 with four year-round. HTA staff attended the International Trails Summit and hosted the statewide Colorado Trails Symposium. Grand County's National Public Lands Day celebrated its 29th year with 11 projects and over 200 volunteers.

### Colorado Trails Symposium

HTA hosted the 6th Annual Colorado Trails Symposium (CTS) in Winter Park in September 2023 - bringing over 100 trail professionals from across the state to experience educational sessions and site visits prepared by HTA staff. Presentations focused on the winter trail grooming operations, collaborative partner organizations, HTA-USFS' Trail Smart Sizing Project, volunteer engagement and management, local history, and offered field sessions throughout the Fraser Valley.



## Grand County's Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails Fund (1A)

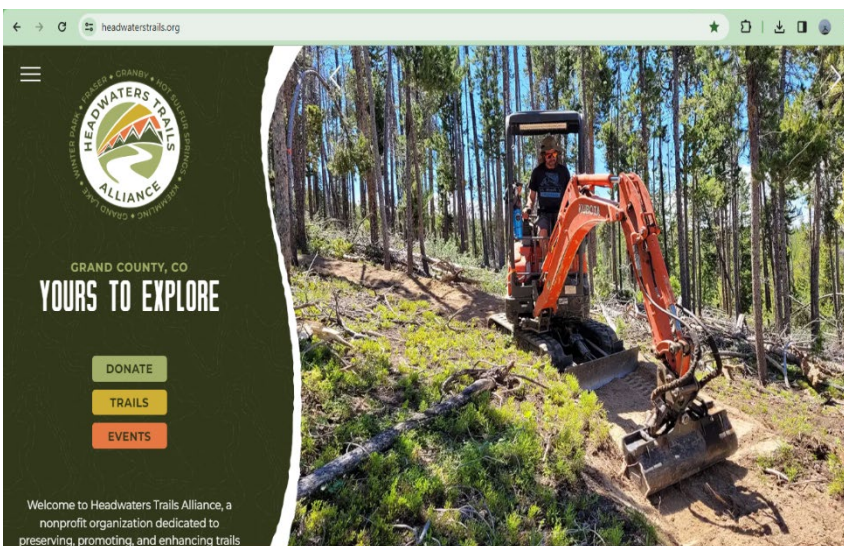


HTA, working in partnership with the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust, Trust for Public Land, and local and regional organizations, helped pass a modified and extended county-wide 0.3% sales tax to now include operational expenses, multi-use trails, and new trail construction as eligible expenses. The pass rate of this measure was 72%, compared to the initial pass rate of 60% in 2015, reflecting the positive impacts of the fund. OLRT funds are grant dollars, however, these funds can be used for HTA's future operations since staffing and planning are now eligible expenses.

## Outreach and Education/Stewardship Ambassador Program



HTA had a full-time (seasonal) Stewardship Ambassador Coordinator who worked closely with the US Forest Service to train five paid Stewardship Ambassadors who provided public lands information to visitors in Winter Park, Fraser, Granby, and at busy trailheads throughout the summer and fall. Additional outreach promoting responsible recreation occurred through HTA's "Tap Talk" series, its quarterly book club, and at over a dozen community events ranging from parades and events to farmers markets. Topics and events focused on balancing recreational interests with conservation values, including wilderness areas, wolf reintroduction, and western water issues. Ambassadors and volunteers reached over 16,000 people.



## New HTA Website

Through grant funding, HTA developed and launched a new website in 2023 aimed at improving information delivery to the community and visitors to Grand County. New website features include photos and biographies of Board Members, Volunteer Forms for Ambassadors and Trail Assessment Reports, and links to our social media for updated grooming and trail conditions information.

# Statement of Financial Position

HTA's primary goal in 2023 was to create a more sustainable business income model to cover our general operations. HTA initiated discussions with local funders to simplify funding requests, but there is still work to be done to improve current funding structures. Overall project funding continues to be abundant thanks to support from the Transit & Trails Tax in the Towns of Winter Park & Fraser, Grand County's Open Lands Rivers and Trails Sales Tax, Colorado Parks and Wildlife's State Trails grant program, and a Great Outdoors Colorado Community Resiliency grant. However,

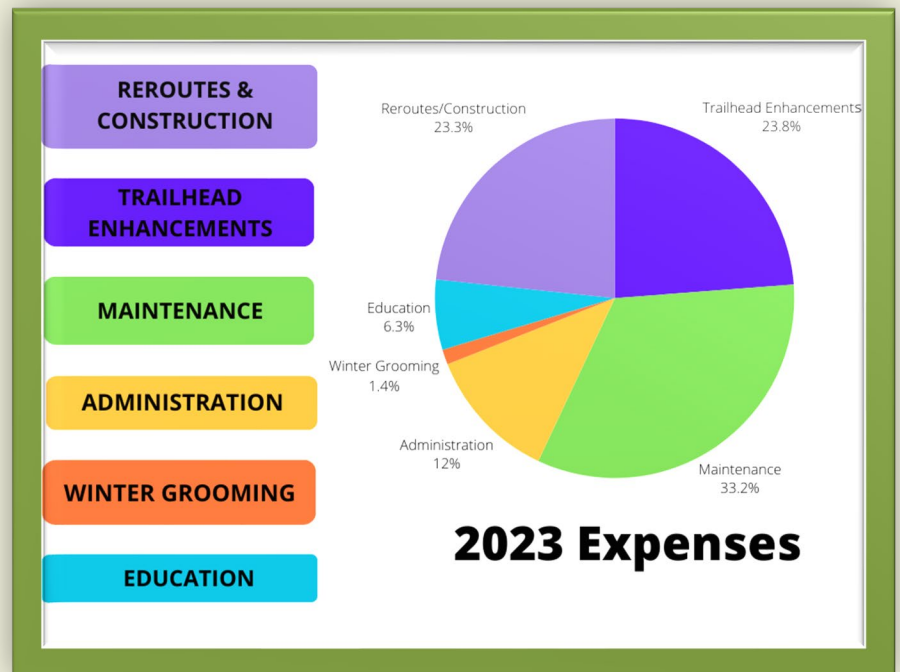
we are challenged securing the operational funds necessary to sustain our basic operations and staffing. Fortunately, our cash donors have provided us with the contributions necessary to round out our operational needs for day-to-day operations. HTA's payroll grew with the growth of its capacity (through project funding) and with paid Stewardship Ambassadors and an expanded trail crew.

HTA's largest expense categories are:

**Maintenance** of existing summer and winter trails by our field crew and volunteers amounted to over \$350,000 to the benefit of all recreators. The headway we have made over the last several years on deferred maintenance has improved both the user experience and safety of Grand County's trail systems, boosting their status as economic drivers in our communities.

**Trailhead Enhancements** of \$250,000 across Grand County. This investment provided infrastructure at trailheads to lessen recreation impacts by providing trash and restroom facilities, kiosks with maps and information, and bike tool stands.

**New in 2023:** The US Forest Service, through our Challenge Cost Share Agreement, paid for two additional field staff and five Stewardship Ambassadors to increase information delivery throughout Grand County. This partnership provided more boots on the ground and stewardship education than ever before.

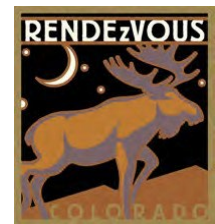


# Funding Partners

HTA is primarily funded through grants and donations from individuals and the following partners:



**Grand County**  
Colorado



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