



2025 Annual Report



HTA Mission Statement

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

2025 Strategic Goals



After revising our Strategic Plan three times in response to shifting federal land management policies and uncertainty, we entered 2025 grounded in three guiding pillars: **Resiliency, Adaptability, and Flexibility**. With funding, capacity, public land protection, and recreational access all in question, these values positioned us to navigate an increasingly unpredictable landscape.



2025 Field Season Statistics

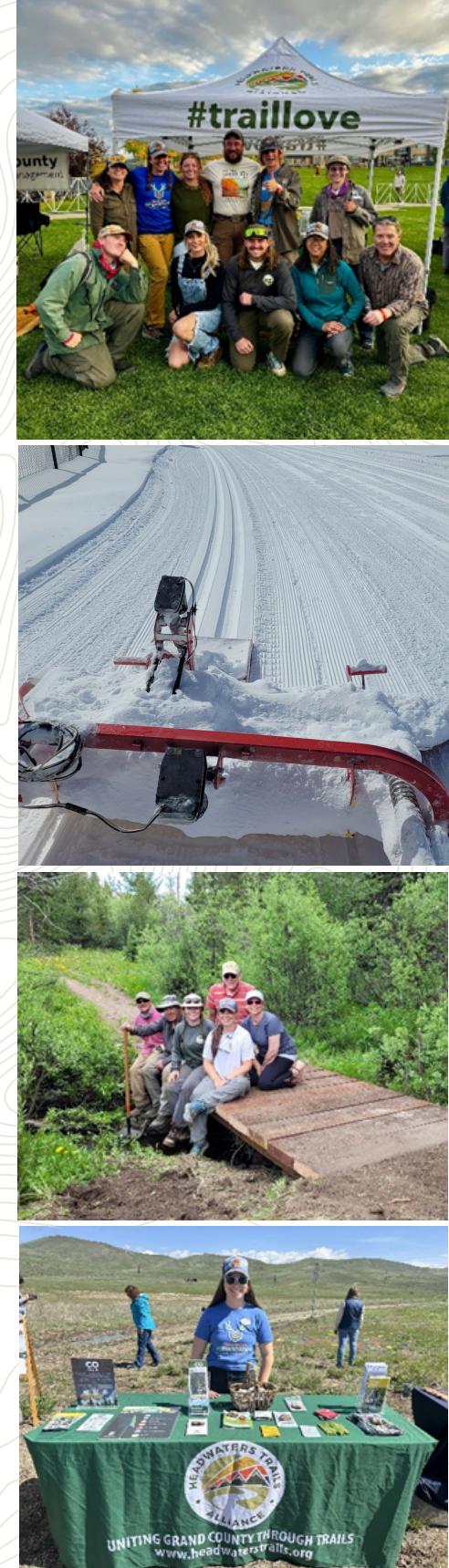
Trails maintained & assessed: 963 miles
Trail Crew Hours: 3,152
New trail construction: 1.2 miles
Winter Trail Grooming: 700 hours
Individual trail volunteers: 616
Volunteer hours on trails: 1,673
Trails decommissioned: 2,405 feet
Trail restoration: 10,234 feet
Drains cleared & constructed: 2,600
Bridges repaired or construction: 6
Turnpikes constructed: 5
Trash removed: 1,213 pounds
Trees cleared: 4,739
New Trail Adoptions: 10 trails
National Public Lands Day projects: 10

Stewardship Ambassadors

Education and outreach: 1,419 hours
Public education contacts: 28,067
Youth engagement: 11 events; 844 contacts
Trainings and special events: 28

New in 2025

Fire Restoration Field Crew
Wilderness Ranger
CDNST Gateway Community Designation -
Winter Park and Fraser



2025 Highlights



In 2025, HTA delivered a highly impactful season of stewardship, trail maintenance, restoration of wildfire-impacted landscapes, maintenance of wilderness trails, and deepened community engagement across Grand County with nearly 20 staff - the largest in our history. With the support of over 600 individual volunteers, HTA staff and volunteers contributed over 7,600 total people hours, covering 963 miles of trail and ensuring safe, sustainable, year-round access to the region's most loved outdoor spaces. HTA completed extensive trail maintenance and infrastructure improvements. Crews removed almost 5,000 downed trees, cleared and/or constructed 2,600 drainage features, restored more than 10,200 feet of trail surface, and decommissioned ½ mile of unsustainable social trails. Major bridge, boardwalk, and turnpike projects - many completed in partnership with public land agencies - repaired wildfire damage, improved user safety, and increased trail resilience, particularly in wilderness areas. HTA also completed 6,400 feet of new trail construction and multiple reroutes to protect sensitive habitats.



Community stewardship and education remained central to HTA's mission. The Adopt-a-Trail Program expanded to 109 adopted trails countywide, while the Stewardship Ambassador Program logged more than 1,400 hours and reached the public over 28,000 times through trailhead contacts and events. HTA hosted 28 stewardship trainings and special events, expanded our youth education programs, and engaged almost 850 students, fostering the next generation of trail stewards.

HTA's extensive collaboration amplified our impact throughout the year as we worked with 36 partner organizations and celebrated a major milestone as Winter Park and Fraser became official Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Gateway Communities. Signature events like the 31st Annual Grand County National Public Lands Day mobilized more than 400 volunteers over 10 projects and generated over \$53,000 in volunteer value, while community fundraisers like the Tour de Pour Bike Pub Crawl strengthened local support. Together, these efforts reflect a year defined by partnership, stewardship, resiliency, adaptability, and lasting investment in Grand County's trails and public lands.



Grand County's Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails Fund

Since 2018, HTA has applied for and has been awarded 65 different grants from the Open Lands, Rivers and Trails Fund through a 0.3% countywide sales tax. With the recent change in eligibility to include operations, HTA submitted and was awarded 5 grant applications for 2025 that spanned operations to specific projects to support trail work across all jurisdictions within Grand County. These grants totaled \$226,968 - approximately 25% of HTA's annual budget. Projects included operations, fire recovery projects, winter trail grooming, trail maintenance, and volunteer projects. For fall 2025 applications, HTA was able to successfully consolidate the trail and volunteer projects application to help streamline the grant administration process moving into 2026.

Outreach and Education/Stewardship Ambassador Program

HTA's Stewardship Ambassador Program is a successful outdoor recreation and tourism management strategy that promotes community engagement, stewardship education, and new partnerships. Over the last year, Ambassador trainings expanded - allowing staff to broaden public education across high-use recreation areas including Berthoud Pass, Meadow Creek Reservoir (*left photo - cabin hosting at Junco Cabin*), East Shore Trailhead, and campgrounds throughout the Grand Lake and Winter Park areas. Outreach efforts diversified to include campfire safety and wildfire prevention, with ambassadors



conducting unattended campfire patrols and proactive visitor education. Overall public engagements increased by approximately 4%, while youth education efforts grew significantly through new partnerships with the Grand County Library District (*see right photo*) and Fraser Valley Elementary School, reaching more than 100 additional students. These collaborative stewardship efforts culminated in Winter Park and Fraser joining Grand Lake in being officially designated as Gateway Communities to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in September 2025, underscoring the region's commitment to responsible recreation and long-term public lands stewardship.

Forest Fuels Mitigation & Fire Recovery in the Burn Scars

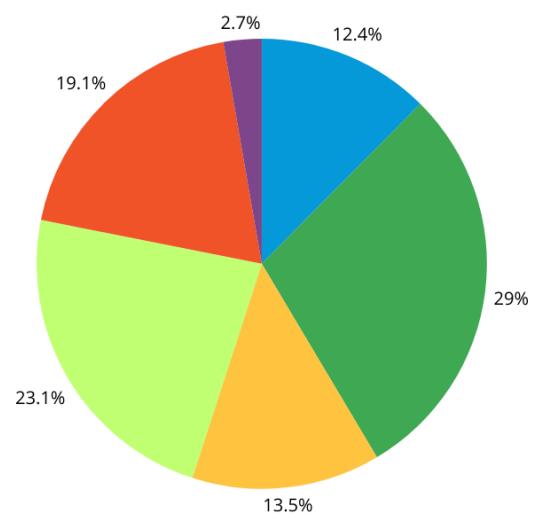
HTA further enhanced our work with the USFS through a modification of our Challenge Cost Share Agreement to start assessing, planning, and implementing countywide forest fuels reduction work and fire recovery projects in the areas impacted by the East Troublesome and Williams Fork wildfires of 2020. This fire recovery effort is in partnership with the USFS and National Forest Foundation and aims to restore impacted landscapes and recreational infrastructure devastated by fire. In 2025, HTA hired and trained a fire recovery crew which consisted of a crew of 3 with support from HTA's Trail Maintenance Crew. The Fire Recovery Crew worked from July – early October and completed structure and tread repair, signage installation, and buck and rail fence delineation on over 20 trails in these areas.



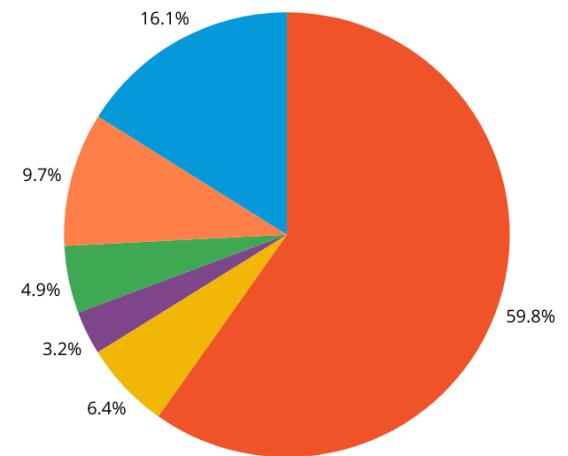
Statement of Financial Position

HTA's primary goal in 2025 was to create a more sustainable income model to cover our general operations. HTA initiated discussions with local government partners regarding sustainable, designated annual funding, but there is still work to be done to improve HTA's current funding structure. Project funding continues to be easier to secure thanks to support from Winter Park's and Fraser's Transit & Trails Tax, Grand County's Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails Tax, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife's State Trails grant program.

General Trail Work on existing summer and winter trails by our field crew and volunteers amounted to almost 60% of HTA's budget 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.



2025 Revenues
\$929,191.33



2025 Expenses
\$904,037.88

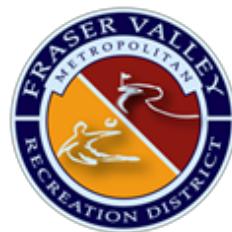
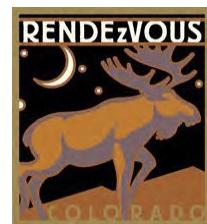
Looking forward to 2026, HTA's 30th anniversary, we anticipate taking our trail crew expertise to a new level and starting to work on mechanized trail building projects with mini excavators and trail dozers. Our Field Projects Manager and Field Crew Supervisor will both be receiving training from professional trail builders and we are bringing a mechanized trail builder on as a contract employee, especially to work in the fire recovery areas. HTA is also undertaking an organizational structure shift to include a few more contracted employees to assist with grant writing, accounting, and advanced field skills. Lastly, we are eager to initiate a more structured and formulaic approach to our annual operational funding through new agreements with our local government and federal land manager partners.

Funding Partners

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



Grand County
Colorado



CONTACTS

Meara McQuain
Executive Director
meara@headwaterstrails.org
970.726.1013

Maire Sullivan
Development & Projects
maire@headwaterstrails.org
970.726.1013

Sean Burke
Field Projects Manager
sean@headwaterstrails.org
970.726.1013

Erica Bean
Stewardship Coordinator
erica@headwaterstrails.org
970.726.1013