

# The Trust for Public Land Launches Colorado Community Trails Program

An innovative initiative propelled by private funding

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The Trust for Public Land announced today the creation of the Colorado Community Trails Program, a new statewide initiative designed to accelerate the planning, design, construction and stewardship of trails that connect communities.

This new program builds on Governor John Hickenlooper's Colorado the Beautiful Initiative, which seeks to emphasize the important role trails and access to the outdoors play in the state's economy and quality of life.

"The Colorado Community Trails Program is building on our vision of expanding access to the outdoors," said Governor John Hickenlooper. "It embodies the Colorado spirit of collaboration that is central to everything we do."

Ben and Lucy Ana Walton have generously committed \$2 million to the Colorado Community Trails Program to serve as a catalyst for leveraging funds and galvanizing partners from state, local, and federal governments, other non-profit organizations and the private sector. The program will work with Ken Gart, Colorado's Bike Czar, to raise additional private capital to leverage local, state and federal resources to expand the program's reach.

The Trust for Public Land is working collaboratively with trail advocates and other private and public partners throughout the state to move transformational trail projects from concept to acquisition, design, construction and stewardship.

With thousands of people per month moving to Colorado, there is an urgent need to secure trail corridors to connect communities to one another and to the great outdoors. Improving access to trails can bring a wide range of benefits to communities, including strengthening local economies, improving public health, reducing carbon emissions and connecting people to the state's remarkable public lands. Trails improve a community's quality of life by providing safe, healthy places for recreation and commuting, increasing access to nature, and creating opportunities for social connection. People recognize these benefits, with studies consistently showing that both rural and urban residents place great value in their nearby trail systems.

“No matter where they are located, our state's trails are an open invitation to Colorado visitors and residents alike to explore and get physically active,” said Jim Petterson, The Trust for Public Land's Southwest and Colorado Director. “By connecting communities with trails, we enhance equitable access for all to quality outdoor experiences. We look forward to working with Governor Hickenlooper, local communities and partners across the state to bring the benefits of great trails systems to more Coloradans.”

Jake Houston will lead the new program as Colorado Community Trails Program Director. Jake previously held the position of Local Government Program Manager for Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). In this role, he was instrumental in the design and execution of GOCO's CONNECT Initiative while serving on multiple statewide trails committees and working groups, as well as Governor Hickenlooper's Trails Council.

The Colorado Community Trails Program will draw upon The Trust for Public Land's longstanding Colorado partnerships, connecting passionate individuals, local groups, state and federal agencies, private landowners, and dedicated funders in striving to make Colorado the most trail connected state in the country.

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## **About The Trust for Public Land**

*The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Millions of people live near a Trust for Public Land park, garden, trail, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).*

## **About The Colorado the Beautiful Initiative**

*Through the initiative, the state will set high-level values for trail development and develop a public map of recreational trails – all to encourage Coloradans to participate in healthy outdoor activities. The vision of Colorado the Beautiful is that within a generation, every Coloradan will live within 10 minutes of a park, trail, or vibrant green space. To learn more, visit [www.cdnr.us/#/cothebeautiful](http://www.cdnr.us/#/cothebeautiful).*