

# Utah Trails Promotion

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## Planning your event



*Alliance for Cardiovascular Health in Utah*  
*[www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org)*

# Introduction

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Did you know that half of everyone in your community is overweight or obese? Did you know that more than half also don't get enough physical activity to support good health?

Increased activity can help strengthen hearts, lower cholesterol, and maintain a healthy weight. Activities like biking and walking can be done by the majority of the people in your community, and need to be encouraged whenever, and wherever possible.

One way to promote walking and biking is to build communities that are conducive to these activities. Such communities are called Active Community Environments, or ACEs. Research shows us that people are more active in communities that are designed with sidewalks, multi-use trails, and open spaces that provide safe and attractive places to walk and ride bikes. Hopefully, your community is one of the many in Utah that is working to make your community a place that encourages healthy living.

Promoting activities that include the trails and walkways in your area can remind the people in your community where their parks, trails and pathways are, and give them the desire to use them more often. This will also encourage your builders and developers to include more Active Community Environments in their plans for future development.

Your local health departments and parks and recreation program planners are working hard to plan, organize and implement activities that remind community members where their urban trails are, and that walking can be done comfortably and safely in their own neighborhoods. Having community members working with them in planning these activities goes a long way toward making them a success.

We know that the health and wellness of your community are of utmost importance to you, and feel that like you we can work together to help our citizens to begin and to maintain these healthy behaviors.

For more information on National Trails Day:

[www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)  
[www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org)  
email: [janelambert@utah.gov](mailto:janelambert@utah.gov)

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# Select a location for your event or project

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The following are suggestions for locations for your event or project:

- Existing Legacy Gold Medal Miles
- Multi-use trails within the community
- Trails on or around school grounds or parks
- Safe Routes to School
- New or re-furbished trails
- Historic trails
- Neighborhood sidewalks and parks

In planning a trail event, please consider the following guidelines:

## Accessibility

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Trail should be at least 4 feet wide
- Proper drainage
- Relatively flat
- Paved or comfortable surface for walking and hiking
- Convenient and safe access to roads
- Few street or driveway crossing conflicts
- Continuous separation from traffic
- Benches or places to rest

## Sustainability and Maintenance

- Scenic qualities that offer an aesthetic experience and attracts walkers and bikers
- Hold an initial kick-off event introducing the trail and an additional event every year for the next two years
- Schools, worksites, organizations and community sponsors need to develop policies to ensure promotion and continued use
- Proper maintenance with regular sweeping and repairs as needed for the next five years must be arranged for in advance.

## Safety

- Adequate lighting
- Visibility from nearby buildings and streets
- Free from any structural problems
- Well designed street crossings, with measures such as bike and pedestrian activated signals, median refuges, and warning signs for both motor vehicles and path users.

## Trail Marking and Way Finding

- An official start sign should be placed at the trailhead
- Additional signs, or distance indicators are encouraged.
- Clear destination and directional signing throughout
- A precise map or diagram along with a short written description should be available at the trail head and in sites throughout town

## Choose an event or project

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In addition to getting people outside to enjoy trails, an event can raise awareness of trails and inform the public of the need to protect and maintain trail corridors. It's the perfect springboard for local trail initiatives and a chance to recognize the groups, public agencies, and individual leaders who are making a difference. Your event can be used as a tool to build alliances and to plan for the future.

Here are some suggestions for events or projects that could be effective in creating, promoting, and maintaining the trails in your area:

- Poster contest
- Schools: competition (miles walked)
- "Stroller Derby", Family Fun Day
- Kick-off of a week of Trails Day activities
- Challenge from local media
- Businesses challenge: competition
- Clean up or prepare a new trail
- Scavenger hunt, geo-caching
- Green Ribbon Week
- Walk to School Day activities
- Equestrian trail rides
- Historic trail dedication
- Dedicate a new trail
- Provide and promote new walkable areas in towns

## Build your partnerships

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The more people and organizations involved in your event, the more success you will have. By including more people and agencies, you are sharing the work and costs. Now is the time to broaden your trail "family". The following list illustrates potential groups that would be beneficial to your event:

- Parks and Recreation Department
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local businesses
- SBOE - LBOE (Elks clubs)
- County, City and State Government
- Youth Groups
- Forest Service
- Cultural/ethnic Groups
- Trail Groups, Walking Clubs
- Environmental Groups, ie. Sierra Club
- Local and State Health Department
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Law Enforcement
- PTA
- Aging Services/ AARP
- College/University Campuses
- Local Media
- Church Groups
- BLM (Bureau of Land Management)
- Fitness Clubs
- Travel and Tourism Offices
- Local Hospitals
- Legislators
- Arthritis Foundation
- American Heart Association
- American Cancer Society

# Promote your event

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Promotion is an extremely important facet of your planning. A well thought out promotion plan can determine the influence your event has on your community and trails. It is important to work with your local media to publicize your event. Start early to promote your event or project. Involve as many groups and agencies as possible. The following are some suggestions for promotions:

- TV news story
- Flyers home with kids
- Flyers in paychecks or power bills
- Community marquee
- Banner on Main Street
- Find a state or local champion or spokesperson to appear at event
- Local newspaper story
- Sports guides
- Gold Medal School teams
- Use national sponsors when designated
- Radio advertising
- Local AARP
- Provide information to websites for calendaring
- Doctors' offices (flyers and pamphlets)
- Offer prizes for registration
- Plan some friendly competition
- Bus boards
- Senior Centers

## Working with the Media

Because publicity is so important, your partnership or committee should have a person or group in charge of creating and circulating information about your event. Find a coordinator as soon as possible, or try to find people who have experience with the media, art/graphics/layout, public relations, etc. The committee should contact reporters, schedule interviews, and prepare materials in a timely manner.

Reporters, columnists, and editors at local papers, magazines, and radio and television stations should cover environment, science, health, or transportation issues should all be considered. If the media outlet is small, and they don't have a reporter specifically assigned to any of these topics, ask for a general assignment "reporter" or talk to the "assignment editor" in the city newsroom.

## Press Release

When a press release is sent to media, it is in competition with hundreds of other ideas, programs, and events. Most reporters will read no further than the second or third paragraph before making a decision to pursue the story or not. Remember to:

- Include Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How in the first paragraph.
- Be brief. Keep sentence and paragraphs short.
- Include a centered headline near the top of the first page.
- Double and triple check for accuracy, spelling, and punctuation.
- Call your contact after submitting your release to see if he/she intends to cover the event. Follow-ups are critical.

# Pre-event schedule for organizers (example)

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## Four months before event

1. Order pins, ribbons, etc.
2. Hold initial organizing meeting
3. Secure commitments from participating organizations
4. Select the date, time, duration of the event, and secure a site

## Three months before event

1. Design the overall event plan and budget
2. Register your event at [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org), if it is a National Trails Day event
3. Begin fundraising for the event
4. Acquire necessary permits and insurance
5. Establish a media plan and press list
6. Involve local radio station as sponsors

## Two months before event

1. Write first press release announcing event
2. Invite VIPs
3. Send out promotion mailing to potential participants
4. Contact press for interviews, feature stories and show appearances
5. Prepare logistics instructions for all exhibitors so that they know everything they need to know about setting up for your event

## One month before event

1. Distribute posters and flyers
2. Follow-up on press efforts
3. Follow-up on all invitations
4. Send out public service announcements and announcements to community calendars
5. Reserve risers for stage and sound equipment if needed

## Three weeks before event

1. Schedule volunteer crews
2. Confirm all guest speakers
3. Arrange for banners, background music, and other attractions at site

## Two weeks before event

1. Keep up the press work

## One week before event

1. Confirm volunteers, committees, vendors, exhibitors
2. Double check publicity progress and re-leaflet poster as necessary
3. Notify police, local rescue squad, and other organizations who have a need to know

# Day of event schedule for organizers (example)

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## **1 ½ hours before start of event:**

All volunteers should arrive. Assignments should be given out at this time:

1. Set up of start and finish lines with balloons and pennant rope
2. Registration tables
3. Directional signs
4. Distribute barricades or someway to mark the course; check course for any hazards
5. Set up informational posters along the course
6. Set up water coolers, cups and garbage cans
7. Set up sound system
8. If you are using local police to stop traffic confirm that they are coming

## **One hour before start of event:**

1. Put out registration materials, pens, clipboards, stickers
2. Remind volunteers to be as friendly and helpful as possible
3. Make sure volunteers are all familiar with how to fill out the registration forms
4. Ask them if volunteers have any questions

## **Ten minutes before start:**

Warm up. Ask whoever is going to do the warm up to get participants ready by bending, stretching, or doing light aerobics, etc. for 5-10 minutes.

## **Five minutes before start:**

1. Event Coordinator should welcome everyone and gives a brief speech describing the intent of the program. Inform walkers about specifics of the course, this is not a race, to walk at your own pace, etc.
2. Event coordinator then turns the time over to the Walk Marshal or lead-off walker to say a few words and to start the walk.

## **Walk Begins:**

(Latecomers may show up for the next hour and volunteers will need to be available to register and get them going.)

1. Assign two volunteers to follow the last participants so you know when everyone is done
2. All volunteers prepare for finish line activities
3. As walkers finish the course, volunteers will congratulate participants and hand out pins, incentives, etc.

## **Post Event**

1. When the event is over, all volunteers need to break down and gather whatever they were assigned to put up, take down banners and signs, and clean up entire area.
2. Thank volunteers for all their help and dismiss everyone.



# Sample news release (example)

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## Press Release XX Month Year For Immediate Release

### **State Agencies Team Up to Combat America's Supersized Killer**

*Obesity Expected to Claim Over 500,000 Lives This Year,  
Becoming Nation's No. 1 Cause of Avoidable Deaths*

**Salt Lake City** (June 5, 2004) - According to a recent study released by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity is expected to become the leading cause of avoidable deaths within the next year, surpassing a death toll of 500,000. Walking is one form of exercise known to reduce many of the health risks accompanying obesity, with:

- 50 percent less incidence of Diabetes
- 30 to 40 percent reduction in the risk of heart disease
- 50 percent reduction in the risk of premature death
- 20 percent reduction in the risk of stroke

Today's event also celebrates National Trails Day, and will include commemorating the designation of a Gold Medal Mile (GMM) Trail within the Hogle Zoo. The Gold Medal Mile initiative urges Utah communities to adopt their own GMM Trails. Those agencies responsible for today's activities hope to encourage individuals to utilize the abundance of trail systems available within Utah for exercise.

"America is realizing it can no longer afford to 'supersize it' and forgo exercise," said Jane Lambert, MS, exercise physiology and community health specialist for the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program at the Utah Department of Health. "To avoid premature death linked to obesity, it is paramount our lifestyles include physical exercise and healthy eating. Today's event brings us one step closer to overcoming the obesity epidemic."

Families, adults and children alike are expected to take part in the event. Joan Ware, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program Director at the Utah Department of Health and Utah Department of Transportation Deputy Director Carlos Braceras will address the benefits and importance of exercise. Participants will then enjoy a walk along trails winding between animal exhibits and other zoo attractions.

"The Utah Department of Transportation promotes the safety and wellness of Utah citizens," said Braceras. "We encourage walking and the use of trails within the state as an opportunity to prevent obesity and to reduce vehicle emissions and the risks associated with them."

For more information on walking in Utah, visit [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org).

# Sample events

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## **1. National Healthy Trails Celebration, Kearns Oquirrh Park Family Center**

This event will be held on Monday, June 13th. Families are encouraged to bring dinner to the park and walk the Gold Medal Mile trail within the park. For every one-half mile participants walk they will get a ticket to enter a drawing for prizes at the end of the evening. Pedometers will be given to the first 100 people to participate in the walk, and mileage and food logs will be provided to all participants.

A health tent will be set up with a health awareness surveys, blood pressure testing, body composition evaluation, and a nutritionist on hand to answer questions. Walking facts and tips will be posted along the trail.

As a follow-up, in October there will be a drawing for all those who have followed through and recorded their daily pedometer readings. Gold, Silver and Bronze awards will be given to winners. Information from health awareness surveys and exercise logs will be used in planning future events and programs.

## **2. School Gold Medal Mile Eagle Scout Project, Eastwood Elementary School**

For my eagle project I painted a quarter mile track of footsteps around the perimeter of Eastwood Elementary asphalt play area. My goal in doing this project is that it will be a fun reminder for kids to exercise and stay healthy. Eastwood students walk at least one mile a week as part of their Gold Medal School Criteria.

This project required about five hours from five individuals. We built a contraption with two wheels mounted to a push bar, on the wheels we mounted two cutout sponges (directly opposite each other), in the shape of feet that we used to apply the design onto the asphalt. I requested two gallons of yellow and two gallons of white road crew safety paint, (the yellow and white paint seen on the road marking separate lanes) from the street maintenance section of Salt Lake City Public Works. The last item I required were two medium sized paintbrushes to apply the paint to the sponges.

As one of the scouts pushed the contraption with the sponges on it along a pre-measured quarter mile track, two boys, one on either side, held white or yellow paint to apply to the sponges as they came up, one sponge containing the yellow paint and one with the white paint. In front of the three painters is a sweeper making sure that no debris is in the way to get stuck on a sponge. The fifth person walks behind everybody to make sure that the footprints came out fine and to touch any up if necessary.

Submitted by:  
Connor Kitchens,  
Boy Scout

## **3. Trail Clean-up Project, Sandy, Utah**

Working with REI, a National Trails Day sponsor, Sandy City Parks and Recreation will advertise for volunteers who will work on making improvements to a local trail. Volunteers will be asked to bring shovels and rakes - other equipment will be provided. The National Forest Service will direct volunteers in their work.

