



Sunflower Foundation

*Paving the Way: From
Blazing Trails to
Building Community*



Trail Blazer Learning Series

Supports communities that are exploring the creation of their first public trail. Through a structured virtual learning series and early planning funds, it strengthens local leadership, fosters community engagement, and lays the groundwork for a sustainable, well-designed trail.



Purpose of Today's Session

- Build connections by getting to know fellow participants and communities
- Meet your hosts and understand their roles in supporting your journey
- Gain an overview of the full learning series
- Explore what investing in trails can mean for your community and how to build support
- Engage in peer-to-peer discussion through breakout sessions

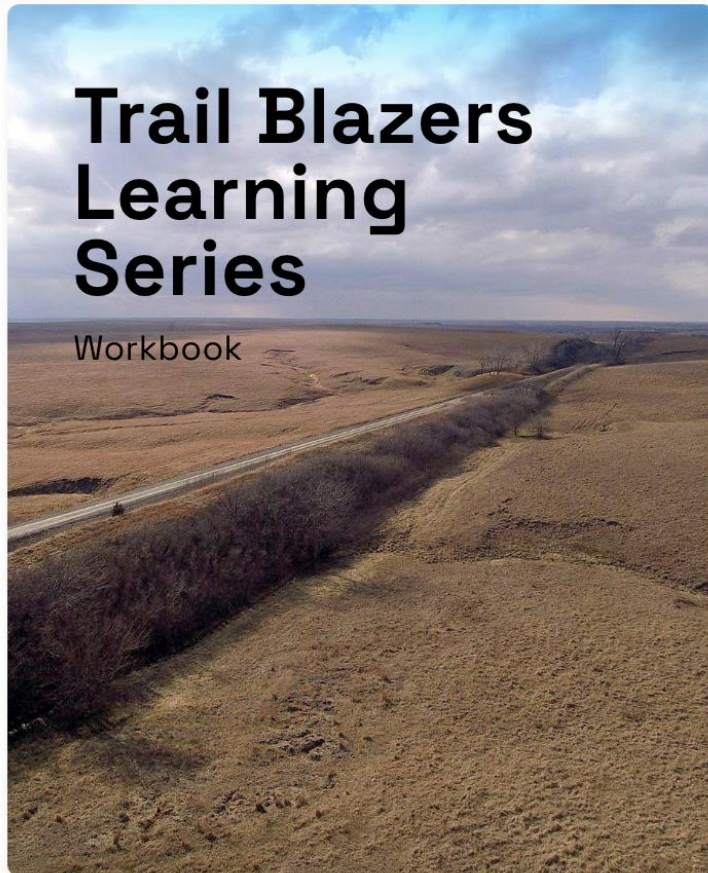


Housekeeping

- All sessions will be recorded
- Paving the Way Learning Library - see link in your email
- Please turn your camera on, but mute your audio
- Questions? Use the raise your hand feature or unmute yourself so we can see you want to talk. Use the chat if you have a question on a different topic.



Workbooks



- Online workbook to help you track ideas, insights and new information. Also, do your homework!
- You can download the whole thing into a PDF at the end to save or print.
- I'll email you a link this week so you can get started
- Kelli and I will have access to your workbooks so we can provide comments and suggestions.



Kansas Trail Inc. (KTI)



- KTI's goal: Help KS communities develop, maintain, promote and maximize public trail access. Find Trails, Build Trails, Support Trails, Promote Trails!
- KTI is not a funding source for trails, but is the statewide trail wraparound support and TA provider

KTI Mission Statement:

Empower Kansas communities to collaboratively promote and maximize economic development, health and wellness, civic engagement, and cultural appreciation through sustainable stewardship of statewide trails and routes.

FIND TRAILS

Discover the best trails across Kansas with accurate maps and expert recommendations.

BUILD TRAILS

Get the resources and guidance you need to plan, design, and construct sustainable trails.

SUPPORT TRAILS

Help protect and maintain Kansas trails by joining our community of trail advocates.

PROMOTE TRAILS

Showcase and share the trails you love to inspire more people to explore the outdoors.

KTC - Trail In A Box



- Mike Goodwin, Kansas Trails Council
- If you've used the Trail In A Box, please chime in!



National Expert – Harbinger Consultancy

- Harbinger – rooted in a deep passion for the people and places they call home
- National Trail Town expert Michele Archie will lead the Trail Blazer and Trail Town/Trail Steward Learning Series



Community Team Introductions

1) One person from each team:

- Your community
- Team members
- One thing you hope to do or gain over the coming year.
- Where would you say your group is in its trail journey?

In the chat: Everyone feel free to weigh in!

In this order, please

- | |
|-----------------------------------|
| ● Mark Arts |
| ● City of Wamego |
| ● Prairie Museum of Art & History |
| ● Mission Trails Fund |
| ● Lakemary Center |
| ● Quindaro Ruins Project |

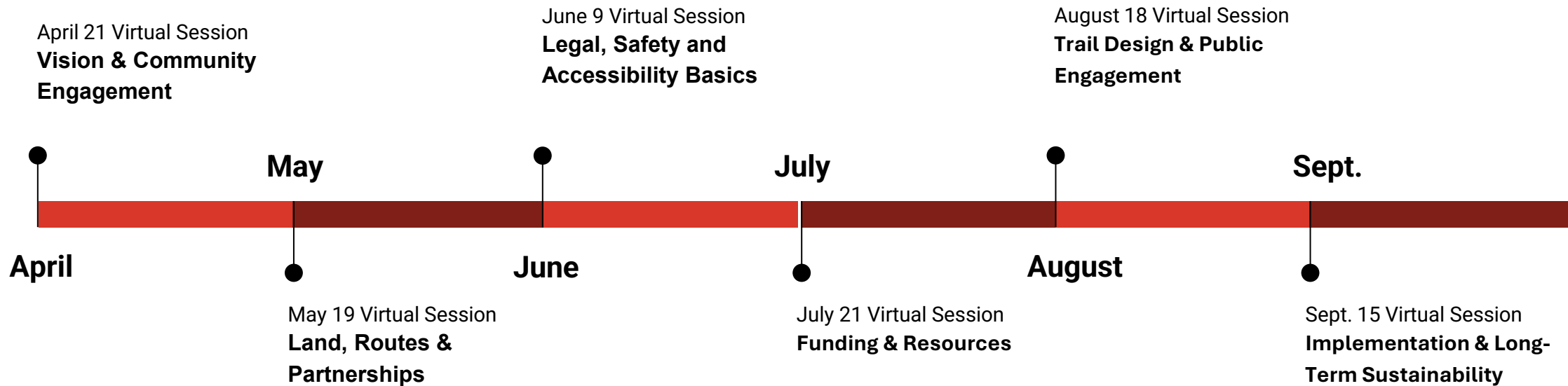


The year ahead

To be scheduled...

Kansas Trail Exchange Day (in-person)

Monthly office hours; generally, 2nd Tuesdays



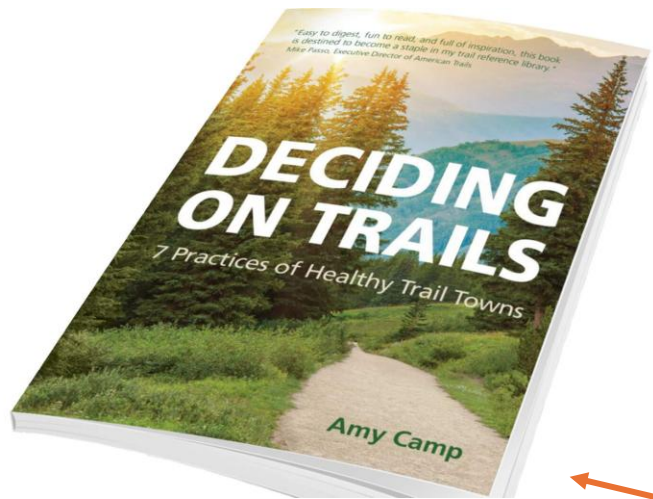
A few other details

- Trail Towns/Trail Stewards learning sessions - 1st Tuesdays: June, August, October, December
- Team leaders, watch your mail for a copy of *Deciding on Trails* by Amy Camp.
- Trail Talk Tuesdays webinars — if you want a jumpstart, dive in!
- We'll have guest speakers for some of our sessions so you can learn directly from people who've done this.



Why pay attention to trails?

Investing in trails contributes to more vibrant, delightful, visitor-ready communities. **“Trail Towns” is a model to guide the investment.**



At its simplest:

To be a trail town is to make a decision to pay attention to trails.

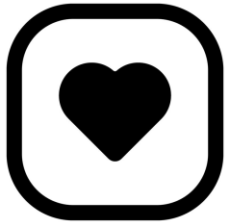
Deciding on Trails, Amy Camp

A book geared toward
cycleforward.org/book



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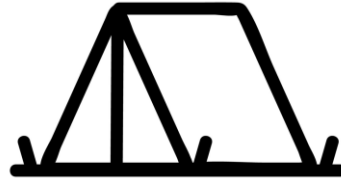
Community & econ benefits



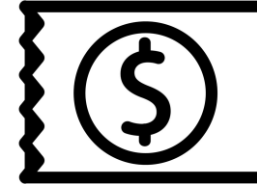
Health



Transportation



Recreation



Economy

Trails are a proven investment for communities across the country.



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Trails offer more than dollars and cents



- Experiences
- Memories
- Sense of place
- Connection & belonging
- Health & wellness
- Routes & access
- Community Vibrancy
- Land conservation

Breakout rooms & discussion

20 minutes: Why is your organization investing in a trail?
What's your vision for it? Who do you hope will use it?
What do you hope will be special about your trail?

Bonus points for:

What opportunities do you see to make this happen?

Come back with:

1. One reason you're investing in trails
2. One benefit you hope your organization or community will gain

Put these in the chat when we come back together, and bring your insights, ideas and questions to share in an open discussion.

Let's talk

One reason you're investing in trails

One benefit you hope your organization or community will gain

Put these in the chat, and let's talk. Aha's, insights, ideas, questions?

Then: What do you want to learn from each other?

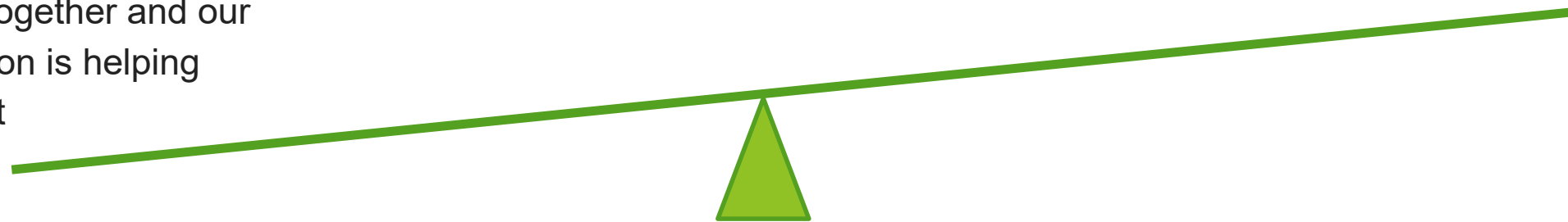


Trail instigators teeter totter

Where are you?

Our community came up with this idea together and our organization is helping implement

Our organization is driving the show and recruiting advocates/champions/allies



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Whose vision — yours, mine, ours?

Where you are on the teeter totter influences *how* you need to engage your community, not *whether*.

- Your vision: Volunteers to build or maintain? help with a fundraiser? participate in your events?
- Community vision: Broad, participatory engagement. Vision sessions? Collaborative events? Community fundraisers? Lobbying legislators?

Questions to ponder

- What do you think you need from your community?
- Are/how are you willing to expand or change your vision?



Trails for whom?

Think about your future trail. Who do you envision using it?

- Families with strollers and toddlers? Folks in wheelchairs?
- People out running or walking their dogs?
- Serious cyclists? Kids biking to school?
- Locals out getting a little exercise?
- Natural experience seekers?
- Blind/low vision users?
- Who's on your list? Who in your community might you be leaving out?

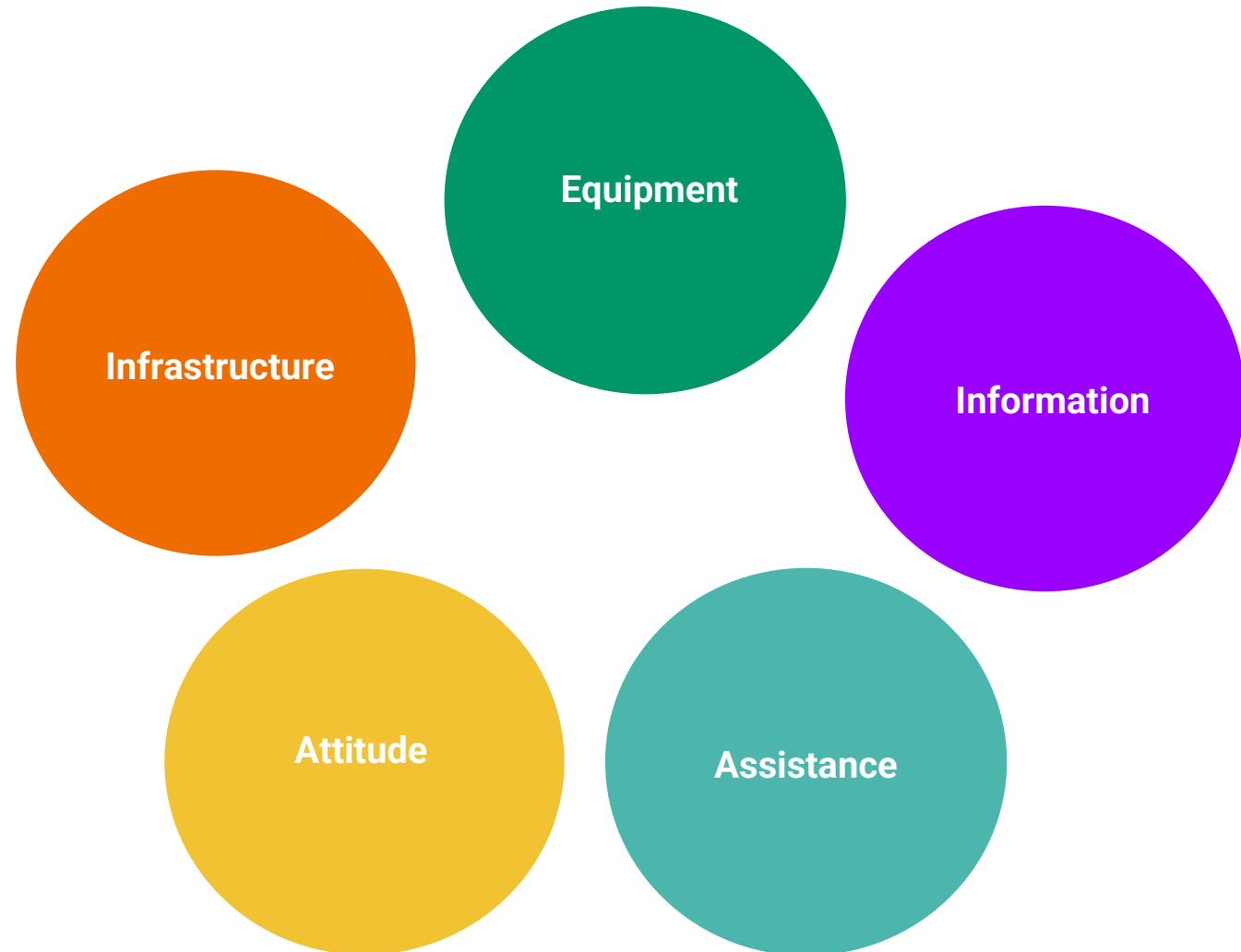
“Trails for whom?” influences everything from trail design to how you need to engage your community to what you can learn from potential trail users.



We build trails so people can use them

What helps more people use trails?

Accessibility in five buckets



Do with, not for



Mindoka, Idaho



Blue Heart Springs, Idaho

Think across the “adventure spectrum.”


How to get folks to the table Lessons from the Idaho Access Project

- Host conversations based on mutual respect, listening, and a desire to learn from one another
- Address barriers to communication and engagement
- Explore your community together to evaluate safety, mobility, and connectivity issues first hand
- Identify shared interests and goals
- Start small, work together, and celebrate success
- Repeat

Workbook & homework

Wobo 11:52 PM
Your instructor has shared a workbook with you
To: Michele Archie

Welcome back to Wobo!

 wobo

Let's get started,

Your instructor has invited you to use Wobo during your online course to help you take notes and work through exercises. Looks like you've used Wobo before, so simply log in to get started.

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 Sunflower Trail Blazers Learning Series
April 19, 2026

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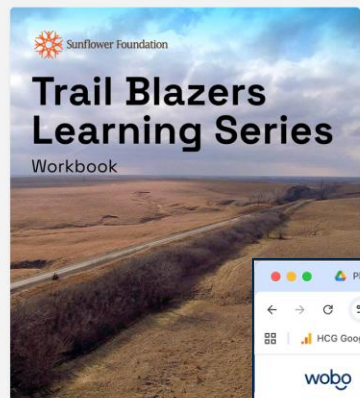
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Sunflower Trail Blazers Learning Series

Workbook cover page

Session 1: Why Invest in Trails?



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Sunflower Trail Blazers Learning Series

Workbook cover page

Session 1: Why Invest in Trails?

- What's your vision for your trail? Who do you...
- What's one thing about your vision you fe...
- On the spectrum from "our organization is...
- On the same spectrum, where do you hop...
- Our May session will focus on Land, Rout...
- What's one small, specific way you could...
- Who do you picture using your trail five ye...
- Name one group of potential users you'd l...
- What's one thing another team shared dur...
- What's one question you brought to the le...

100 = Our community came up with this idea together

1 ————— 100

Our May session will focus on Land, Routes & Partnerships. Which of these do you most want to learn about? (Check all that apply.)

- Mapping potential routes (parks, rail lines, rivers, connectors)
- Understanding land ownership and easements
- Building partnerships with government, nonprofits, schools, and businesses
- Working with adjacent landowners respectfully and effectively
- Other...

What's one small, specific way you could invite community input in the next 60 days — even if you're not planning big community

[Back](#)

What's next?

Deciding On Trails — start reading it or at least browse it

Office hours in May — note different time

Tell us your priorities for the next session — in your workbooks

Use your workbooks — food for thought + ideas to keep moving forward



Thank you!



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