



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.



Session 3: Safety & accessibility

All about who's going to be using your trails — how to build and support a trail that will welcome them and help them have a great experience.

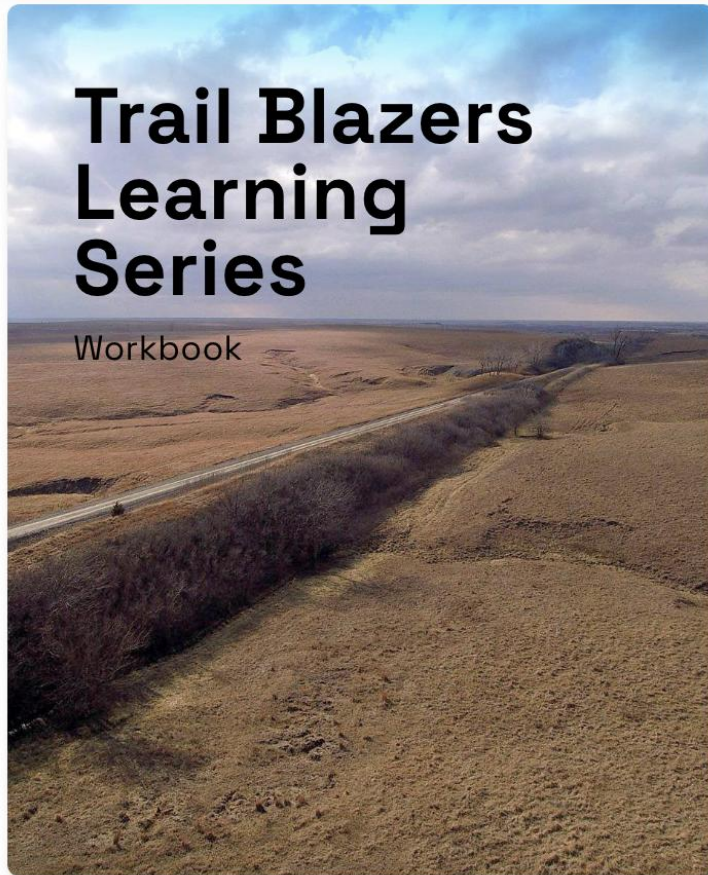
- Your vision for your trail and its users
- Helping different users be and feel safe and happy on the trail
- Building the culture you want on your trail
- Safety for trail volunteers
- Accessible trails, part 2
- Wrap-up and next session



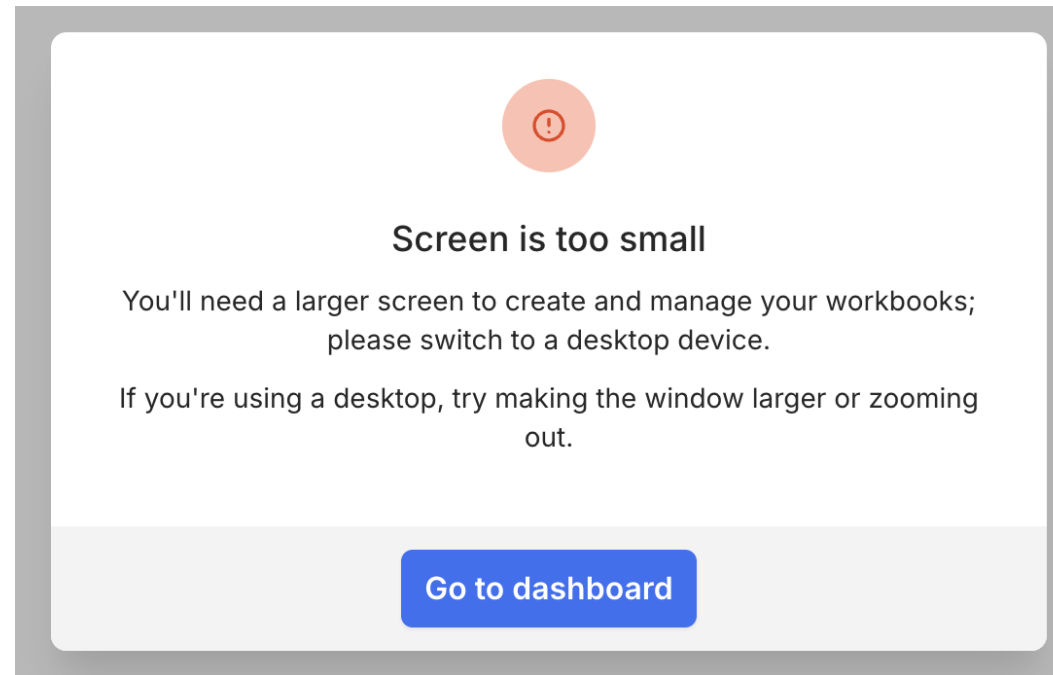
A few details

- American Trails membership and resources
- We're all friends here. Please turn your camera on, but mute your audio. Questions? Jump in, unmute yourself or raise your hand. Use the chat if you have a question on a different topic.

Workbooks



- Part of a complete Trail Blazers experience!



Joining us today



< Mike Goodwin



Mike Scanlon >



Kelli Mark



First up: Why do we need to think about “trail users”?

“Rules of the road” and beyond



Remember this?

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.



Let's Talk

What kinds of experiences do you want people to have on your trails?

Who do you want to have using your trails?

Do you foresee any potential conflicts among users?

What are you doing that will make your trails more accessible and safe for people using your trails?



Zen and the Art of Trail User Management



Mike Scanlon rode 700 miles across Kansas last year, visiting dozens of trails. Plus, he's a recovering city manager and runs Kansas Trails Inc. He's seen a few things on trails.



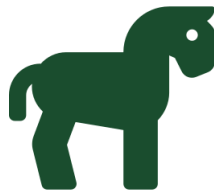
Sharing the Trail

Yield Rules & Etiquette for Multi-Use Trails

Including Guidance for Personal Mobility Devices

The Yield Hierarchy

Who yields to whom on a shared trail?



Horses

Always have the right of way



Cyclists

Yield to horses & hikers



Hikers

Yield to horses only



Yield Rules in Practice

Horses

yields to Everyone:

Horses ALWAYS have the right of way. All other users must step aside, speak calmly, and let horses pass first.

Cyclists

yields to Horses & Hikers:

Cyclists yield to horses and hikers. Slow down, announce yourself calmly, and pass only when safe and invited.

Hikers

yields to Horses:

Hikers yield to horses. Step off the trail on the downhill side, speak calmly to the horse, and avoid sudden movements.

Horses on the Trail

Right of Way & Safe Passing Practices for Equestrians



Right of Way

- ▶ Horses always have the right of way on multi-use trails — no exceptions
- ▶ All other users (cyclists, hikers, mobility device users) must yield
- ▶ Equestrians are not required to yield to any other trail user
- ▶ This rule exists because horses are unpredictable prey animals (fight or flight) — safety first



Best Practices

- ▶ Announce your presence calmly from a distance (**that doesn't mean 10ft think 100ft**) — avoid sudden sounds or movements
- ▶ Ask the rider how to pass safely — follow their specific guidance
- ▶ Step to the downhill side of the trail and stand quietly until the horse passes (**if approached from behind**)
- ▶ Never run, wave objects, or make loud noises near a horse on the trail

Personal Mobility Devices

Wheelchairs & Sit-Down Scooters on Multi-Use Trails



Right of Way





- ▶ Mobility device users are treated as pedestrians/hikers under most trail rules
- ▶ They yield to horses only
- ▶ Cyclists must yield to mobility device users
- ▶ Yield rules apply equally regardless of device type



Best Practices

- ▶ Announce yourself when approaching — a simple 'on your left' is courteous
- ▶ Keep speeds reasonable — consistent with safe pedestrian flow
- ▶ Sit-down scooters should behave as pedestrians, not cyclists
- ▶ Paved and hard-packed trails offer the best surface access

Quick Reference: Who Yields to Whom

Trail User	Yields to Horses	Yields to Hikers	Yields to Cyclists
 Horse Rider	N/A — Right of Way	No	No
 Cyclist	Yes ✓	Yes ✓	N/A
 Hiker / Runner	Yes ✓	N/A	No
 Mobility Device	Yes ✓	N/A	No

Note: 'Mobility Device' includes personal wheelchairs and sit-down scooters. These users are treated as pedestrians under standard multi-use trail etiquette.

Some of the multi-use trails with hikers/bikers/horses

- **Flint Hills Trail** — 117 miles (at full build out)
 - **Kanopolis State Park Trails** — 30 miles
- **Hillsdale State Park / Saddle Ridge** — 48 miles
 - **Milford State Park Trails** — varies
- **Pomona Lake / South Shore & Rock Haven Trail** — 30 miles
 - **Eisenhower State Park / Crooked Knee Trails** — varies



E-Bikes & E-Scooters

Kansas Law on the Trail & the Road

Understanding E-Bike Classes

Kansas law (KSA 8-1489) defines three classes — each treated differently on trails and roads

Class 1



- ▶ Motor assists **ONLY** while pedaling
- ▶ Max motor-assisted speed: 20 mph
- ▶ Most widely permitted on shared-use trails
- ▶ Allowed: Johnson County Parks trails, Lenexa streets/sidewalks/trails, KDWP trails approved for bikes

Class 2



- ▶ Motor may assist **WITHOUT** pedaling (throttle)
- ▶ Max motor-assisted speed: 20 mph
- ▶ More restricted — some agencies prohibit on shared trails
- ▶ Restricted: Johnson County Parks prohibits Class 2 on shared-use paved trails

Class 3



- ▶ Motor assists **ONLY** while pedaling
- ▶ Max motor-assisted speed: 28 mph
- ▶ Higher speed — often limited to roadways or dedicated lanes
- ▶ Allowed: Johnson County Parks trails (along with **C** caution near

All e-bikes are excluded from the definition of a motor vehicle under Kansas law. Motors must be less than 750 watts.

KDWP: E-Bikes on State Park Trails

Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks



The Core KDWP Rule

E-bikes that cease to provide motor assistance at 20 mph may be used on trails within state parks that are approved for bicycle use. E-bikes are not permitted on trails closed to bicycles.

What This Means in Practice

- ▶ Class 1 e-bikes (pedal-assist to 20 mph): **PERMITTED** on bike-approved KDWP trails
- ▶ Class 2 e-bikes (throttle, 20 mph max): **PERMITTED** — motor ceases at 20 mph
- ▶ Class 3 e-bikes (pedal-assist to 28 mph): **NOT PERMITTED** — motor exceeds 20 mph threshold
- ▶ E-scooters: Not addressed under the KDWP bike trail policy — check individual park rules

Kansas Cities with Local E-Bike / E-Scooter Rules

Cities may add restrictions beyond state law (KSA 8-1592b, KSA 8-15,113) — local ordinances vary

Wichita

- ▶ No DUI law for E-bikes (state), but illegal locally
- ▶ E-scooters: max 20 mph

Topeka

- ▶ Riders must be 16+ to operate e-scooters
- ▶ Helmet required for riders under 18

Lawrence

- ▶ E-scooter speed limit: 15 mph on certain sidewalks
- ▶ Riders/passengers under 15 must wear helmet

Lenexa

- ▶ Class 1 e-bikes: allowed on streets, sidewalks, parks & rec trails
- ▶ E-scooters: streets under 25 mph only

Overland Park

- ▶ E-scooter speed limit: 15 mph
- ▶ E-bike speed limit: 20 mph

Johnson County Parks

- ▶ Class 1 e-bikes: ALLOWED on shared-use paved trails
- ▶ Class 2 e-bikes: PROHIBITED on shared-use paved trails

Statewide Rules All Users Must Follow

Rules of the Road Apply

Cyclists and e-scooter riders must obey traffic signals, signal turns, follow speed limits, and yield to pedestrians (KSA 8-1401 et seq.)

Keep Right

Ride as near to the right side as practicable when traveling below normal traffic speed — with exceptions for passing, left turns, and hazard avoidance

Use the Path

When a usable path runs adjacent to the roadway, riders must use the path, not the road

Lights Required at Night

White front light visible 500 ft, red rear reflector or light, and pedal reflectors visible 200 ft front and rear (sunset to sunrise)

Riding Two Abreast

Cyclists may not ride more than two abreast except on exclusive bike paths or dedicated lanes

3-Foot Passing Rule

Motor vehicles must pass cyclists and scooters with at least 3 feet of clearance to the left; passing in no-passing zones allowed only if safe

Dead Red Exception

Bikes and motorcycles may proceed through a steady red light that fails to cycle — but must yield to any vehicle in or near the intersection

Local Rules May Be Stricter

Cities and counties may add restrictions or outright prohibit e-bikes/e-scooters on specific roads and sidewalks beyond state law

Keeping trail volunteers safe



Trail in a Box: Just add volunteers!



Playing it Safe!

- Personal Protection
- Personal Safety
- Safety of Others
- Power equipment



Playing it Safe!

- Sturdy boots
- Long pants
- Long sleeves
- Hat (maybe hard hat)
- Gloves
- Safety Glasses
- Hearing Protection
- Sunscreen
- Water

Personal Protection



Playing it Safe!

Personal Safety

- No tools on the shoulder
- Keep your distance
- Keep cutting/digging tools sharp
- Wear chain saw protective gear
- Hydrate



Playing it Safe

Safety of Others

Keep your
Distance

Circle
of Pain

Blood
Bubble



Playing it Safe!

Equipment Safety



Hand Tools

- Pulaski



- McLeod



Power Equipment

Trimmer

Blade



Kickback

String



Debris

Power Equipment

Stay 30 feet away from front

Brush cutter



Power Equipment

Chaps



Chain Saw



Helmet

Power Equipment

Blower

Hearing protection

Eye protection



Playing it Safe!

Watch your step.....



Let's talk about the "L" word

Any concerns about liability risks on your trails?

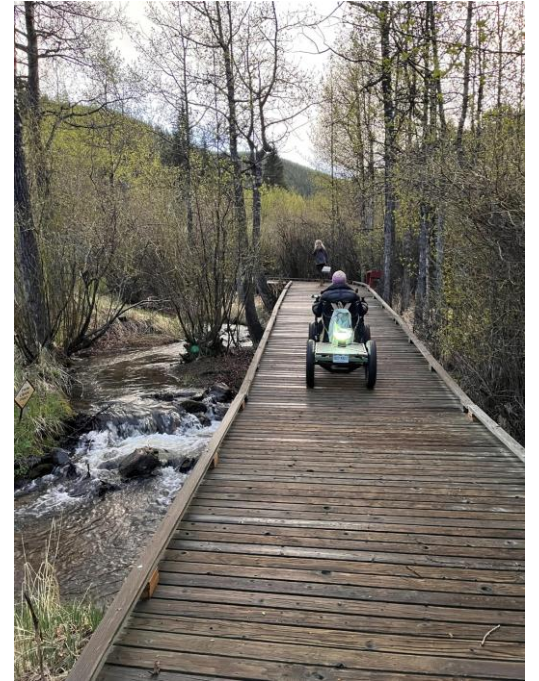
Who ELSE could we welcome?

Tap back into your vision for your trail.

This is a template for continually expanding your invitation to trail users.



Mineral Belt Trail, Leadville, CO



Wilderness On Wheels, CO

What we *think* accessible trails look like

What ELSE can accessible trails look like?



Independence Trail,
Bear Yuba Land Trust,
California



Autism Nature Trail,
Letchworth State Park, NY



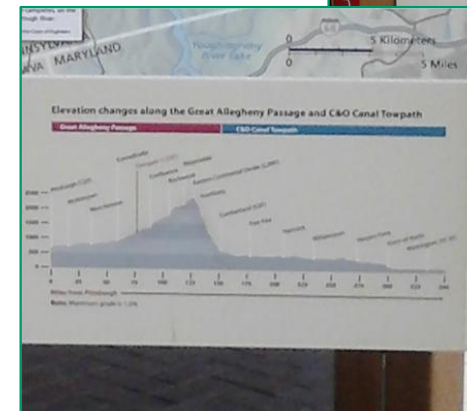
Small changes... big difference



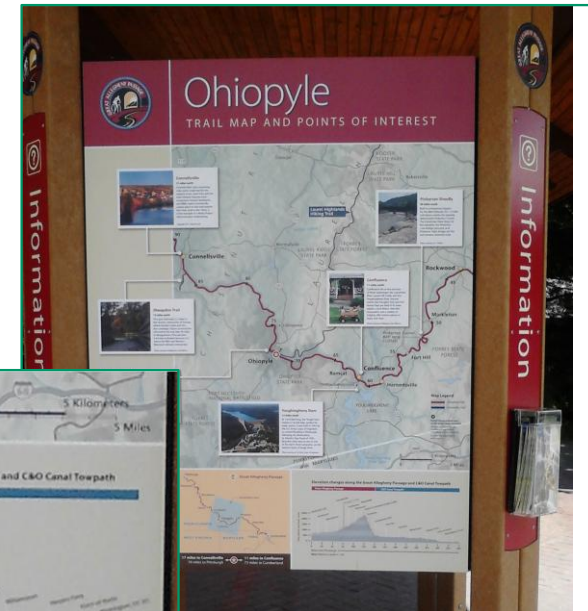
Move a boulder a few inches



Find a new place for sand



Show the path ahead



Small changes... big difference



Reorient drainage gaps



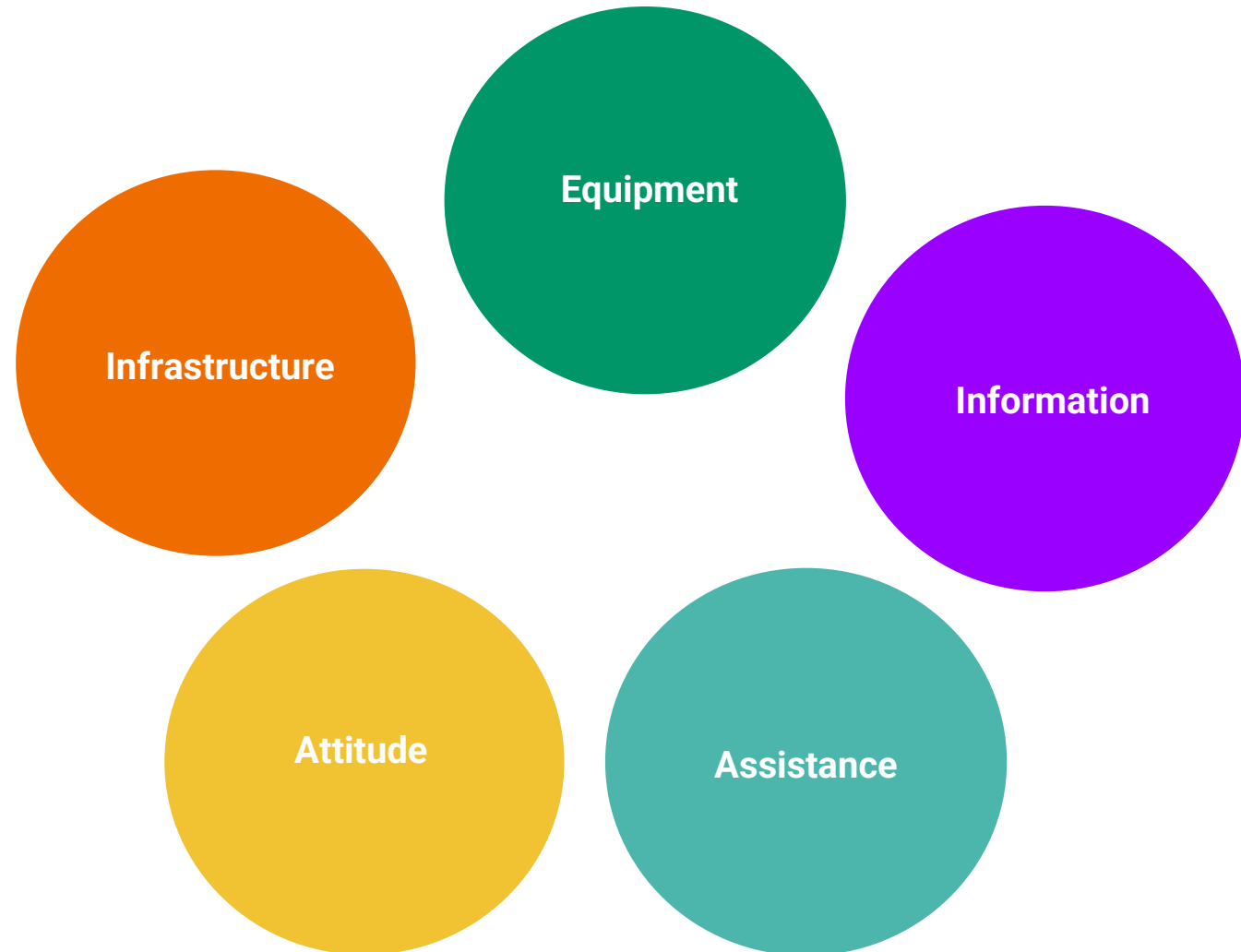
Add places to rest



We build trails so people can use them

What helps more people use trails?

Accessibility in five buckets



Information for accessibility

Carry this practice through to other spaces in your community, too. Accessible is not accessible is not accessible.

Some things to share on your website, trailhead signs, AllTrails listings, KTI directory, etc.

- Distance, surface type, grade, cross-slope, width
- Obstacles (stairs, roots, drops, sand patches)
- Shade, rest areas, bathrooms
- Photos of the actual trail (huge trust-builder)
- Stories and descriptions from trail users
- Sensory information (bright lights, loud noises, dogs off-leash, water crossings)

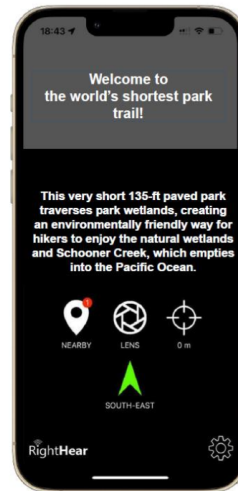


More Information for Accessibility

Audio Format Signage

RightHear:

- Offers a dynamic way for those with low vision or orientation challenges to engage with their surroundings.
- Converts physical cues into auditory signals, providing real-time guidance and transforming how users perceive and navigate spaces.
- Not just for the vision impaired!
- Can translate information into 35 languages



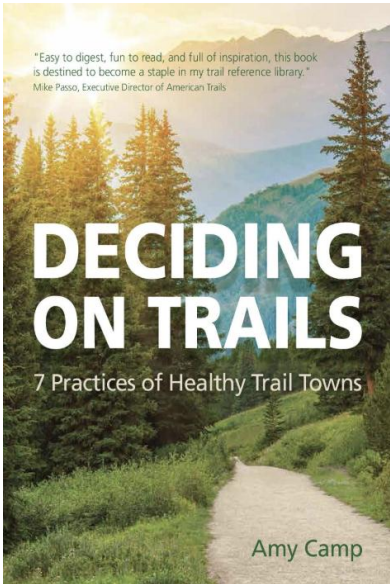
Some other things to consider

- Website & social media accessibility
- Stories and descriptions from trail users and visitors
- Offer printable and offline-friendly info
- Use icons, not just color-coded lines, on wayfinding maps
- Multilingual (even some basic phrases/words)
- Use plain language and consistent formatting
- Don't overcrowd your signs ;-)

Thanks Jeanne Sprague, Lincoln City Parks & Rec!



Who ELSE could we welcome?



Your community's mindset matters

Another way to think about it:

Accessibility = welcoming more people into your trail culture

By Amy Camp, [CycleForward.org](https://www.cycleforward.org).
Learn more about Deciding on Trails (and buy it!) [here](#).

"Creating a Trail Culture" is a core practice.



Sunflower Foundation

Revisiting “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

Not sure who to talk to?

Two ways in:

Start with anyone. If you make your trail work better for one person, that's a real starting point. You don't need a representative sample — you need a conversation.

Let an organization connect you. A Center for Independent Living (CIL) is a disability-led nonprofit in your region. Call and say: "We're trying to make our trail more accessible — who in our area could we talk with?" They know the people and the local landscape.



Find your closest CIL

Search the national directory at ilru.org (Directory of Centers for Independent Living), or

Start with the **Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living — kacil.org**, which lists member centers and the counties each one serves.



What's on your mind?


Any questions or final thoughts?



Workbook & what's next

Sunflower Trail Blazers Learning Series

- Workbook cover page
- Session 1: Why Invest in Trails?
- Session 2: Land, Routes & Partnerships
- Session 3: Safety & Accessibility



Open office hours —
July 7, 12-1 pm

Next session —
Funding & Resources,
July 21, 12-1:30 pm

Loads of resources in
the Learning Library!

Thank you!



Sunflower Foundation

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