

BECKLEY AREA TRAILS

2025 - 2029
Strategic
Plan



Prepared by:  West Virginia University
BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

Adopted 9/25/2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following people on the Beckley Area Trails (BAT) leadership team contributed to the creation of this Strategic Plan: Andrew Hitchcock, Alyce Almond, Ben Desiderato, Bill Garrett, Elizabeth Raney, Gary Morefield, Marissa Ansaroff, Ryan Cook, Mitch Lehman & Mark Allen.

BAT would like to thank Corey Lilly and Jessica Sutton of the Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative at WVU for supporting and facilitating BAT in developing this plan through the West Virginia Outdoor Non-Profit Development Hub.



INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the values and principles of Beckley Area Trails (BAT) and sets forth the goals and strategies that will guide the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers over the next five years.

HISTORY

Beckley Area Trails (BAT) was founded in the fall of 2024, born from a shared vision among local business owners, nonprofit leaders, and local outdoor enthusiasts committed to advancing trails as a driver of community health, pride, and economic development in the Beckley and New River Gorge Area. The group initially organized informally to show public support for the City of Beckley's adoption of the Beckley Outdoors Economic Action Plan. Recognizing the need for a dedicated partner to help implement the plan's goals, BAT soon formalized as a grassroots organization focused on trails, stewardship, community development, and strategic advocacy.

The group also formed in response to broader regional opportunities, particularly the need to support the newly designated New River Gorge National Park and Preserve and to help achieve an IMBA Bronze-Level Ride Center designation. BAT aims to ensure Beckley is a key contributor to the area's outdoor recreation economy and a welcoming hub for residents, students, and visitors.



Today, BAT is leading and supporting multiple trail projects in partnership with landowners, agencies, and community organizations. Guided by a shared love of mountain biking, hiking, and outdoor living, BAT works to unlock the region's underutilized outdoor spaces and celebrate the heritage that defines southern West Virginia.

ROAM. JOIN. VOLUNTEER.

BAT ENVISIONS

An Appalachian community where outdoor recreation drives connection, health, and sustainable economic growth.

BAT'S PURPOSE

Beckley Area Trails exists to elevate Beckley's future through the development, stewardship, and promotion of human-powered outdoor recreation. By building accessible trails, connecting outdoor assets to downtown, and fostering wellness, inclusion, and sustainable land use, we strengthen community, support the local economy, and celebrate our Appalachian identity.

BAT'S CORE VALUES

- **Stewardship:** We responsibly build and maintain trails to protect the land and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Community:** We believe trails are strongest when built, shared, and supported by the people they serve.
- **Access:** We are committed to making trails open, safe, and welcoming to all.
- **Health & Wellness:** We promote outdoor recreation as a pathway to mental and physical well-being.
- **Economic Vitality:** We support trails as tools for sustainable growth, tourism, and local job creation.
- **Appalachian Pride:** We celebrate the landscapes, culture, and heritage that make our region unique.
- **Trust & Collaboration:** We work in partnership with others to achieve shared goals and build lasting impact.

BAT'S MISSION

To create, enhance, and activate human-powered trails in the greater Beckley Area.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since its formation in 2024, Beckley Area Trails (BAT) has emerged as a leading voice for trail advocacy & outdoor recreation in the Beckley and New River Gorge region. BAT has played a vital role in advancing the goals of the Beckley Outdoors Economic Action Plan by supporting trail development projects, organizing community volunteer efforts, fostering local partnerships, & promoting a culture of human-powered recreation.

In its first months BAT has built, maintained & improved local trails, advocated for new trail construction, hosted group rides & events to build community, & launched a coordinated branding & outreach effort to connect more people to the outdoors & each other.

Passage of the Beckley Outdoors Economic Action Plan

BAT played a key advocacy role in the successful adoption of the Beckley Outdoors Economic Action Plan by Beckley City Council. The group organized local support to demonstrate public interest in trail development and helped position outdoor recreation as a strategic priority for the city's future growth.

WV Outdoor Non-Profit Development Hub Smith OEDC

BAT was selected to participate in the Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative's Nonprofit Development Hub. Through this program, BAT receives technical assistance, strategic guidance and leadership development to support long-term organizational growth.

Trail Development

BAT supported the development and implementation of the Cranberry Creek Overlook Trail at Piney Creek Preserve, contributing to planning, community engagement, and volunteer support. The trail enhances public access to scenic natural areas and adds a new destination to the Beckley-area trail network.

\$24k Awarded for Trail Design

BAT helped secure \$24,000 in funding to support two major projects: the design of the Beckley Rail Trail Bike Skills Park and trail design work for the New River Drive Trail System. These projects represent significant steps toward growing Beckley's trail network and expanding recreation opportunities.

Branding Strategy and Website

To build community awareness and present a unified identity, BAT was awarded \$9,300 to launch a professional branding strategy, website, and content package. These tools strengthen outreach efforts, improve communications, and establish BAT as a trusted regional leader.

Free Trail Building Workshop

BAT successfully secured an Intro to Trail Building Workshop for Raleigh County residents, that took place in September 2025. The workshop will offer hands-on skills training and education in sustainable trail construction, helping to build local capacity for trail work in outdoor stewardship.

Goal #1: Create a Sustainable Organization

1.1 Build a Diversified and Sustainable Financial Base

- a. Strategy: Grow and retain an active membership base by developing a tiered membership program (Individual, Family, Trail Sustainer, Business) with escalating benefits to encourage retention and engagement.
- b. Strategy: Pursue small- to mid-sized grant opportunities that align with the organization's current capacity, with an emphasis on manageable funding sources that help establish a strong financial track record.
- c. Strategy: Launch BAT-branded merchandise for sale in local businesses.
- d. Strategy: Pursue a Trail Stewardship Partnership with the City of Beckley per the recommendation in the Beckley Outdoors Plan to assist in the maintenance capacity of trail systems and to bring additional jobs and visitors to the City (page 123).
- e. Strategy: Plan at least one annual fundraising effort coupled with a yearly membership drive event.

1.2 Strengthen Operations, Administration, and Communications

- a. Strategy: Finalize an organizational insurance package.
- b. Strategy: Establish a BAT centralized Google Suite with a Shared Drive for document management and board collaboration.
- c. Strategy: Align all social media and communication tools with the BAT brand.

1.3 Board Development & Governance

- a. Strategy: Develop a committee structure that aligns with the strategic plan and bylaws.
- b. Strategy: Adopt the Roberts Rules
- c. Strategy: Adopt the R.A.C.I. project management tool
- d. Strategy: Create a Board Onboarding Toolkit, including mission alignment, expectations, and conflict-of-interest policies.



Goal #2: Launch a Trail Stewardship Program

2.1 The BAT Trail Crew

- a. Strategy: Conduct a comprehensive area of focus trail inventory and create a Trail Maintenance Prioritization Index based on condition, use, and enhancement potential.
- b. Strategy: Define and Develop a formal Trail Maintenance Program that matches BAT's current capacity and land manager needs with scheduled work days and clear reporting procedures to land managers.
- c. Strategy: Register BAT as trail administrators on platforms such as Trailforks, and actively manage trail updates, closures, and reports.
- d. Strategy: Build and manage a trail tool cache to support volunteer work days.
- e. Strategy: Provide training programs for volunteers and board members, including trail tool use and sustainable maintenance techniques.
- f. Strategy: Establish MOUs or partnerships with current key landowners and agencies:
 - i. City of Beckley
 - ii. Raleigh County
 - iii. WV Land Trust
 - iv. National Park Service
 - v. WV State Parks
 - vi. Beaver Land Company
 - vii. White Oak Land Company



Goal #3: Support Professional Trail Development and Enhancements

3.1 New Trail Development

- a. Strategy: Implement the Beckley Rail Trail Bike Skills Park in partnership with the City of Beckley and the Beckley Outdoors Coalition.
- b. Strategy: Develop new trail system at the Stanford Grove of the West Virginia Land Trust's Piney Creek Preserve with BAT volunteer trail crew.
- c. Strategy: Advance the New River Drive Trail project with IMBA Trail Solutions, White Oak Land Company, Beaver Land Company, and the City of Beckley.
- d. Strategy: Initiate a trail design project at Lake Stephens, in collaboration with Raleigh County and the Beckley Outdoors Coalition.



Goal #4: Activate the Beckley Area Trails Community

4.1 Programming

- a. Strategy: Group rides/hikes that start and end at local businesses, designed to support economic activity and welcome both riders and non-riders by ending with a community social event.
 - i. Explore the feasibility of diverse offerings such as:
 - ii. Women's ride
 - iii. Beginner ride
 - iv. Intermediate ride
 - v. Skills Clinics
 - vi. Pursue collaborative programming with regional bike/hike clubs and community groups with emphasis on underserved communities

4.2 Branding, Marketing, & Communications

- a. Strategy: Create and distribute BAT elevator pitch
- b. Strategy: Develop a one-pager that distinguishes the roles of:
 - i. Beckley Area Trails
 - ii. Beckley Outdoors
 - iii. Beckley Outdoors Coalition
- c. Strategy: Finalize and adopt the BAT brand package with Go Duck Media
- d. Strategy: Launch the official BAT website
 - i. Implement a BAT donation portal on the website
 - ii. Add an email sign-up form to collect contacts for a mailing list
 - iii. Launch a monthly, quarterly, or bi-annual newsletter that shares updates, events, trail work opportunities, and advocacy efforts.
- e. Strategy: Build a digital content library of photos, videos, and marketing templates.
- f. Strategy: Align all digital platforms with the new BAT brand.
- g. Strategy: Launch group chats for rides, volunteers opportunities, and general updates.



Goal #5: Support Economic Growth Through Trails

5.1 Local Business & Tourism Engagement

- a. Strategy: Produce and distribute (GoDuck) trail content package (photos, videos, ride ideas, itineraries) to tourism boards, counties, cities, the board of realtors, higher education institutions, and economic development agencies to use at their own will.
- b. Strategy: Partner with local business for:
 - i. Group rides and event hosting

5.2 Policy & Representation

- a. Strategy: Maintain active participation in key working groups and councils, including:
 - i. NRG Ride Center / NRG Destination Trails Collaborative
 - ii. Beckley Outdoors Coalition
 - iii. Regional Chambers of Commerce
 - iv. Local Tourism Boards



BECKLEY AREA 
TRAILS



Roam. Join. Volunteer.

Volunteer with BAT

Volunteers are the heart of BAT. Whether you're digging dirt on a trail day, helping at events, offering behind-the-scenes skills, joining a board meeting, or just showing up for a group ride — there are plenty of ways to get involved and support Beckley's trail community.

Donate to BAT

BAT relies on donations to build and maintain high-quality trails in the New River Gorge area. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we depend on your support to keep our trails open, safe, and fun for all riders. Every dollar makes a difference.

BECOME A BAT MEMBER

When you join BAT, you help maintain and improve the trails we all love to hike & ride. Your support strengthens local advocacy efforts, funds essential tools & materials for trail care, & fuels community-building events like group rides.



FOLLOW US! and join our FB group:
Beckley Area Trails.

Instagram: @BeckleyAreaTrails

Facebook: @BeckleyAreaTrails

For further inquiries and information

*Visit beckleyareatrails.org or email
Info@beckleyareatrails.org*

*3100 Robert C Bryd Dr,
Beckley, WV 25801*

