



T R A I L S

A photograph of two hikers standing on a trail in a dense forest. The hiker on the left is wearing a dark shirt and a cap, while the hiker on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt and a cap. The background is filled with tall trees and lush green foliage.

# OUTDOOR

A photograph of a group of about ten mountain bikers posing with their bikes in a wooded area. They are wearing helmets and casual riding attire. The scene is set outdoors with many trees in the background.

# RECREATION

A photograph of several kayakers on a river. The kayakers are silhouetted against the water, and the background shows a dense forest with trees in shades of orange and red, suggesting an autumn setting.

# ALLIANCE

*of the Seven Rivers Region*

*2025 Annual Report*

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# Trail Blazing Ahead

This year was a massive year for ORA Trails. The team and community came together to raise nearly \$2.5 million to establish the Community Trail Farm as a community space, now protected forever. Outside of the CTF, we remained committed to trail building, improvements, and stewardship in Hixon Forest on trail reroutes, maintenance and repairs, while also expanding the pump track at Upper Hixon. In 2025 our community stepped up to make some big dreams a reality.

Big dreams and even bigger action at ORA Trails is what brought my family and me back to the Driftless region this past September. The La Crosse community and, more specifically the outdoor recreation community here is truly something special. The abundance of outdoor spaces here is remarkable, but what sets this area apart is the collective dedication to making those spaces more accessible for everyone.

In 2026 ORA Trails is continuing to dream big while remaining grounded as a community-driven, grassroots organization. Increasing and improving our community programming through the La Crosse Area Youth Mountain Bike Team, La Crosse County Adventure Team, youth climbing club, mountain bike clinics, among so much more continues to be a top focus for our team.

We plan to expand trail infrastructure at the CTF with new miles of beginner-friendly trails as well as increase access through an ambitious entryway and parking project which will remove mobility barriers and allow more community members to access the site. At the same time we will be restoring key trout habitat on the banks of Pammel Creek for the half mile that it runs through the CTF. On land we will be establishing two native prairies on the property, focusing on restoring key pollinator ecosystems.

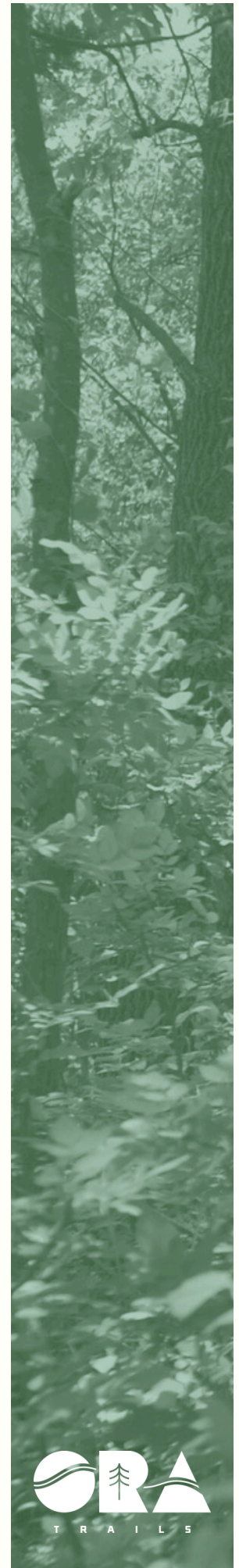
In partnership with the City of La Crosse we will be building a critical reroute of the Bicentennial Trail in Lower Hixon while continuing to maintain more than 30 miles of trails in our local systems.

ORA Trails is growing incredibly quickly, but our grassroots values remain the same: trails, community-driven, sustainable outdoor recreation spaces, getting more people outside. Whether you show up on the trails, at events or programs, volunteer your time, or contribute philanthropically, your support powers everything we do, thank you.

Sincerely,



Tyler Heinz, Executive Director



# Mission

ORA Trails is dedicated to building happy, healthy and resilient communities by providing access to equitable and sustainable outdoor recreation experiences.

# Core Values

## Community

Welcoming all to be part of the greater goal through intentional invitations and radical hospitality.

## Sustainability

Acting in intentional ways that promote ecological, financial, and social balance.

## Impact Through Action

Taking bold action on ambitious visions to advance our mission.

# Vision

We believe in the betterment of the human condition by connecting all people to the natural world.

We will:

- Respect the diverse voices and experiences of all people.
- Be inspired and led by the needs and desires of our community.
- Build meaningful relationships with community partners.
- Acknowledge the value of healthy ecosystems and use recreation as an instrument in raising awareness.
- Make decisions rooted in environmental, social and economic sustainability.



# Who We Are

We are ORA – a passionate community of Trail Friends, champions, staff, and volunteers dedicated to getting more people outdoors. Nature isn't just a backdrop; it's a vital connection to ourselves and each other.



Founded in 2001 as Human Powered Trails, ORA Trails has evolved into a leader in outdoor recreation for the Driftless community. ORA Trails emphasizes innovation, collaboration, and a culture of inclusion and stewardship. Through impactful community initiatives, dynamic partnerships, and engaging events, we strengthen connections among donors, volunteers, and the community. Whether building all-abilities playgrounds, expanding trail networks, or empowering community champions through education, ORA Trails is committed to making outdoor recreation an accessible part of daily life to contribute to a healthier, more connected community.



Scan the QR code to see a preview of the good work that happens.

## Strategic Plans: ORA 2030 Priorities

### PRIORITY #1

Enhance Trail Infrastructure and Outdoor Access



### PRIORITY #2

Elevate Organizational Awareness through High-Impact Initiatives



### PRIORITY #3

Build a Resilient and Sustainable Organization



# OUTDOOR



We thrive outside. Our passion lies in connecting people with nature, and we are dedicated to getting more individuals outdoors by creating key infrastructure to do so. The great outdoors is where we find inspiration, joy, and a sense of community.



## Community Trail Farm

ORA Trails is embarking on its most ambitious project yet: the Community Trail Farm. Located just a short ride from downtown La Crosse, this 287-acre property is being transformed into a vibrant outdoor community hub with more than 15 miles of trails, restored trout stream access, educational spaces, gathering areas, camping opportunities, and inclusive amenities designed to welcome people of all ages, abilities, and interests. This initiative will springboard ORA's impact & further the vision of the Bluffland Traverse. To realize this vision, we have launched a capital campaign to raise \$6 million needed to bring this project to fruition.

In 2025, the project continued to gain momentum. ORA Trails acquired an additional 10 acres connecting the property to the Hagen neighborhood, expanding access and strengthening connections between surrounding communities and the trail system. This strategic addition supports the long-term vision of creating an accessible outdoor destination that is integrated with nearby neighborhoods.



In April, we celebrated with a Ground Breaking Ceremony as that marked the kick off of trail building. Trail construction moved forward in a significant way with five miles of professionally built trails completed, including a mix of shared-use trails, foot-only paths, and all-weather surfaces designed to expand accessibility. By December, these trails were opened to the public for bike and pedestrian access, marking the first opportunity for community members to experience the property firsthand.

In 2025, the CTF served as a host site for International Trails Summit pre-conference workshops, welcoming trail professionals from across the country. These hands-on sessions highlighted best practices in trail development, land stewardship, and community-centered outdoor access - recognition and relevance at a national level.

Throughout the year, ORA Trails and its partners focused on laying the groundwork for the site's future. Hundreds of hours were dedicated to site restoration, cleanup, and stewardship, including invasive species management and early habitat restoration work along Pammel Creek.

Project funding to date has enabled major progress toward bringing the Community Trail Farm to life. These investments have supported land acquisition, early infrastructure planning, and trail development, including \$2.6 million in acquisition-related costs and more than \$200,000 invested in trail construction. Funding has also supported land stewardship work, community engagement, early programming, and the capacity needed to move a project of this scale forward.



Through a \$6 million capital campaign, ORA Trails has secured \$4 million in project funding, including a \$1.15 million Wisconsin DNR Knowles-Nelson Land Acquisition Grant that permanently protects the land as community space.

Even in its early stages, the Community Trail Farm has become a space for learning and connection. Educational and community programming is a key component of our vision. The Community Trail Farm is anticipated to have this impact annually:

**15,000**

**K-12 Students**

**2,000**

**Staff Development Professionals**

**5,000+**

**people reached through Community Programming**

**5,000**

**College & University Students**

In addition to educational programming, many community organizations, partners, and volunteers contributed their time and expertise to help shape the space through both hands-on work and thoughtful input into the project's future.

The property has become a living classroom. K-12 and college students participated in hands-on learning experiences that blended outdoor recreation, science, and social connection. College-level research conducted on site included electrofishing and trout sampling in Pammel Creek, GIS mapping, plant identification, and ecological assessments - work that will directly inform future restoration and management decisions.





Throughout 2025, ORA Trails focused on reducing acquisition-related debt, expanding the trail network, piloting programming with schools and community partners, and advancing engineering plans for a safe public entryway and parking area anticipated in 2026.

ORA Trails staff, board members, and campaign committees are actively planning the first major phase of public-facing infrastructure. This phase will focus on safe access off Highway 33, initial parking, expanded trail development, and foundational amenities, while advancing prairie and trout stream restoration. Bridge reconstruction across Pammel Creek is targeted for 2027–2028. Trail expansion, building restoration, and habitat restoration will continue through 2026 and beyond, building on groundwork established in 2025.

At its core, the Community Trail Farm is not just a place, it is a community-powered effort. Every cleared acre, restored streambank, built trail, and learning opportunity exists because people showed up: volunteers, donors, educators, students, partners, and neighbors who believe access to nature matters.

**This project belongs to the community, and its future depends on continued collective investment. Join us in shaping what comes next. Gifts to support the Community Trail Farm can be made at: [www.oratrails.org/trail-farm](http://www.oratrails.org/trail-farm)**



## West Salem Bike Playground

Though completed in 2024, one of the year's standout highlights was the West Salem Bike Playground. Construction wrapped up in fall 2024, creating a new wheeled-sports recreation area for the community. ORA Trails collaborated closely with the Village of West Salem, local businesses, and individual supporters to bring this project to life. Since opening, the playground has quickly become a popular community destination and a place where riders of all ages can build skills, confidence, and a love for being outdoors.

The project thoughtfully utilized the site's existing terrain and features an intermediate flow track alongside a smaller, entry-level track designed for beginners. A "stroll and roll" path connects the parking area to the gazebo, making the space accessible and welcoming for riders and visitors of all abilities.



## Trail Projects

ORA Trails staff and volunteers continue to care for and improve the region's trail systems through an incredible amount of hands-on work.

In 2024, the upper half of the Bicentennial Trail in Lower Hixon was rebuilt to modern trail grade standards, helping reduce erosion while improving long-term trail sustainability and the overall user experience. Volunteers also helped construct cross-country trails at Camp Decorah, laying the groundwork for future outdoor programming and trail events. That same year, ORA Trails again hired a summer trail crew to support trail development and maintenance across the trail systems.



That momentum continued in 2025, when ORA Trails hired five trail crew members to carry forward trail construction, maintenance, and improvement projects. Over the course of the year, the crew completed more than 50 unique projects across Hixon Forest, the Gateway Trail System, the Community Trail Farm, and beyond.

ORA Trails also expanded opportunities for riders to build skills and confidence. In 2025, the organization completed Phase 2 of the Upper Hixon Pump Track expansion, adding three progressive jump lines and new skills features, including rock riding elements and tight technical turns, creating a safe and fun environment for riders of all levels.



Volunteer support remained at the heart of this work. Hundreds of community members joined trail days throughout the year, contributing their time to activities such as tree clearing, trail building, and general maintenance. Volunteers alone cleared more than **103** downed trees on municipal land, contributing over **100** hours of labor to keep trails safe and accessible.

A big thank you to everyone involved in these projects! It takes a committed community to turn big plans into reality, and we're grateful for the constant effort and enthusiasm!



# OUTDOOR

# RECREATION



We believe in doing rad stuff in nature! Our mission comes to life through a variety of programs, events, and volunteering opportunities that celebrate the excitement of outdoor recreation.

## Programs

The **La Crosse Area Mountain Bike Team**, is an integral program of ORA that promotes physical activity, social interaction, and nature exploration in various outdoor settings. We saw continued growth and support for the middle school and high school Mountain Bike Team, which boasts over 90 student athletes and 47 dedicated coaches. These teams collectively contributed more than 500 volunteer hours from students and an additional 500 coaching volunteer hours over the 16 weeks of practices and five race weekends.

These programs keep youth active while building community and a love for the outdoors. Thank you to the volunteer coaches and sponsors who make it possible!



## YOUTH CLIMBING CLUB



With startup support from La Crosse SOUP and La Crosse Adventure Films, ORA Trails launched the **Youth Climbing Club** in 2025 in partnership with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The five-week pilot program for youth ages 7–12 sold out within minutes and welcomed 20 participants. Community volunteers stepped up to serve as volunteer coaches, completing UWL’s required climbing wall training.

Throughout the program, youth were introduced to both bouldering and top-rope climbing in a fun, supportive environment. Climbing helps build confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills while encouraging both individual growth and teamwork.



The success of the pilot program established a strong foundation for expanded Youth Climbing Club sessions in 2026 and beyond, and we are incredibly excited about the future of this growing program.

Additionally, ORA Trails launched adult **Mountain Bike Clinics** in 2025. Several BICP coaches stepped up to lead the program, and participated in a Bicycling Instructor Certification Program (BICP) clinic, earning their instructor certifications and helping expand our local coaching capacity.

Our first six-week clinic session was held in fall 2025 with more than 10 adult participants. The progressive program focused on building confidence and trail skills, covering topics such as climbing and descending terrain, cornering, and essential bike handling.



The pilot was a big success, and we're excited to continue growing the program in 2026 and beyond, including exploring additional formats like weekend skill retreats. Thank you to the volunteer coaches who helped make this program possible.



ORA Trails is a proud sponsor of the **La Crosse County Adventure Team**, a youth development team that uses mountain biking as a vehicle to build strong minds, bodies, and communities. Through structured programming, youth have the opportunity to develop confidence, resilience, leadership skills, and a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors. Youth riders and adult coaches engage in regular practices and team-based activities that emphasize goal setting, teamwork, and personal growth, regardless of skill level or prior experience. The program creates an inclusive environment where all students are encouraged to challenge themselves, support one another, and discover what they are capable of achieving.



La Crosse County Adventure Team promotes healthy, active lifestyles while fostering a strong sense of community connection. The program also encourages stewardship of local trails and outdoor spaces, helping youth build a deeper relationship with the natural environment.

In November 2025, members of the ORA Trails staff team attended **Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor Training** in Ashland, where they spent time learning together, exploring nearby trail systems for inspiration, and participating in an immersive training experience along the shores of Lake Superior.



“The Wisconsin Master Naturalist program supports a network of well-informed volunteers and instructors dedicated to conservation service, leadership, and lifelong learning. Through expert-led trainings out in nature and in the classroom, Master Naturalists are equipped to address environmental challenges facing the state. Make a positive impact through stewardship, citizen science, and educational activities.” - *WI Master Naturalist*

ORA Trails is excited to host a Wisconsin Master Naturalist training at the Community Trail Farm in October 2026. Participants will explore topics including trout stream restoration, prairie and forest rewilding, sustainable trail design, and conservation storytelling. Learn more at <https://wimasternaturalist.org>



## Events

We love to **#getoutside** and have fun! Whether it's competitive mountain bike races, paddle events, candlelight hikes, or simply gathering around a campfire, we always have a blast! We strive to offer a diverse range of events that encourage everyone to **#getoutside!**

Our events are designed to bring people together, celebrate outdoor recreation, and strengthen the vibrant trail community that surrounds ORA Trails. In 2025, ORA hosted the third annual **ORA Trails Fest**, sponsored by Trek and Dahl Subaru, welcoming 675 participants and 120 volunteers to Upper Hixon for a full weekend of racing, riding, and community.



Trails Fest continued to be a highlight of the season, featuring a WORS race weekend with both downhill enduro and cross-country events, alongside music, food trucks, and activities for the whole community.



For those who enjoy time on the water, the **Goose Island Grind** offers a fun and challenging 7-mile paddle around Goose Island on the Mississippi River, welcoming competitive canoeists, recreational kayakers, and stand-up paddleboarders alike. This growing event brought together more than 30 participants in 2025 for a day of paddling, camaraderie, and river adventure.



The race includes both morning and afternoon heats, followed by a group lunch and awards, creating a laid-back atmosphere where participants can connect and celebrate a day on the water. Events like the Goose Island Grind help expand ORA Trails' mission beyond the bluffs, encouraging people to explore the region's incredible waterways.



Our **Candlelight Hikes**, usually falling around a full moon, remain a crowd favorite and drawing hundreds of participants to these free winter events each year. Guests are invited to enjoy an easy-to-moderate evening hike illuminated by candlelight, followed by cozy moments around the campfire with s'mores and hot chocolate.



Hosted at locations such as Chad Erickson Park, Lower Hixon, and the Gateway Trails, these evenings offer a magical way for the community to experience the trails in a new light during the winter months.

Volunteers play a key role in making the event possible, helping set hundreds of candles along the trail, keeping the fire stoked, and making sure marshmallows and cocoa are always ready.



We also host **community cleanup events** each year to help care for the outdoor spaces we all share. Volunteers gathered at Lueth Park and the Gateway climbing area to remove trash, install picnic tables, and improve the overall condition of these popular recreation spots. These efforts help ensure our public outdoor spaces remain clean, welcoming, and enjoyable for everyone.



## Recreation Through Service

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of ORA: the true trailblazers behind everything we accomplish. With hundreds of dedicated individuals actively participating in every program, event, and project, you'll find an ORA volunteer passionate about our mission and the great outdoors in every community connection we make.

**A simple reminder for trail users: if you're leaving tracks, turn back! Riding or hiking on muddy trails can cause significant damage, creating rough terrain and increasing the maintenance burden on volunteers, often requiring additional tools, time, and dollars to repair.**

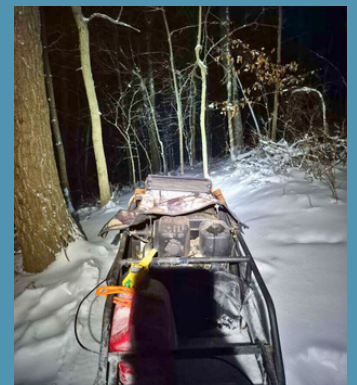




ORA Trails boasts robust volunteer engagement, featuring over 700 volunteers who collectively contribute thousands of hours each year to maintaining ORA-managed spaces, projects, and events. This commitment is rooted in our dedication to empowering our volunteers through education, training, and mentorship, resulting in a proficient network of individuals known as the "people who get the work done."

Summer trail work typically begins in April or May, with regular summer work nights held several evenings each month to help keep the trail system in top shape. Volunteers play a critical role in maintaining these trails, ensuring they remain safe, sustainable, and enjoyable for everyone.

And, when we have snow, ORA volunteers continued winter grooming operations in Hixon Forest using its UTV groomer to expand access and opportunity for cross-country skiing and fat biking!



**To engage in the outdoors safely and effectively, we offer specialized training for our volunteers, including Chainsaw Training and Trail Master Courses.**



The Chainsaw Course is a two-day program that teaches participants how to safely operate a chainsaw, fell trees, and manage fallen trees on trails. By completing this course, volunteers earn certification to use chainsaws on public property...and our volunteers truly jump at the sound of a falling tree!

Meanwhile, the Trail Master Courses, available as either full-week or weekend classes, focus on trail design and sustainability. For those eager to support our local trails, this course provides essential knowledge on how to use equipment effectively, build sustainable trails, and conduct necessary repairs.



# RECREATION

# ALLIANCE



ORA Trails is continually inspired by the needs and desires of our community. Through participation in community initiatives, we are on an intentional path to respect and honor the diverse voices and experiences of all individuals. The relationships cultivated are essential and empower us to enhance outdoor spaces and advocate for better and more access.

## Bluffland Coalition Participation

ORA Trails is an active member of the Bluffland Coalition, a regional partnership of local governments and nonprofit organizations working to conserve and responsibly steward the Upper Mississippi River Blufflands in the La Crosse–La Crescent region. The coalition brings together communities and partners to protect these iconic landscapes while expanding opportunities for recreation, habitat restoration, and public access.

Through this partnership, ORA Trails continues to advance the vision of the Bluffland Traverse: a point-to-point route connecting communities along the Mississippi River bluffs from the northern end of La Crosse County to the southern end. The long-term goal is to create a continuous off-road trail experience that links public lands, neighborhoods, and outdoor recreation opportunities across the region.

In 2025, through Bluffland Coalition participation, ORA Trails made several meaningful contributions to Bluffland conservation and connectivity:

- Expanded the Community Trail Farm with the acquisition of an additional 10.5 acres, creating new neighborhood access and strengthening the Bluffland Traverse corridor. This expansion was supported in part by Bluffland Coalition grant funding through La Crosse County.
- Mapped more than 50 miles of the Bluffland Traverse, advancing trail marking and future trailhead kiosk installations to improve navigation, safety, and the user experience.
- Conducted three controlled burns on municipal lands to reduce invasive species and accelerate native prairie and habitat restoration.
- Removed invasive species across nine acres at the Community Trail Farm, using best management practices and goat grazing, also supported in part by Bluffland Coalition grant funding.

Together with coalition partners, including municipalities, conservation organizations, and regional planning groups, ORA Trails is helping advance a shared vision for healthy landscapes, connected communities, and accessible outdoor recreation throughout the blufflands.

Find more info on the Bluffland Traverse and the Bluffland Plan on our website:

<https://www.oratrails.org/trails/bluffland-traverse/>

## Government Relationships

ORA, as a non-profit entity in La Crosse County, works closely with municipalities, land owners, recreation groups, conservation groups, sustainability groups, etc. in a few different capacities, including local events and programs, land conservation and sustainability, and specialty projects. We establish professional relationships and work together to accomplish shared goals using trained and experienced professional staff accompanied by trained and experienced volunteer help. By using MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding), we establish shared goals, accountability plans, fundraising responsibilities, expertise areas and a plan to accomplish them in tandem. By drafting an agreement, ORA is able to build, maintain, and advocate for recreation on public spaces. ORA helps the community achieve more ways for people to get outside.

## Partners in Service

Each year, we are grateful to engage with a diverse array of businesses and schools that support our volunteer efforts. We have hundreds of employees from Trane Technologies, friends from Altra Federal Credit Union, and students from K-12 schools and colleges joining us on the trails. These examples highlight the incredible support we receive, and we warmly invite participation from many more businesses to contribute to our collective efforts. Hosting these opportunities in public spaces yields positive effects, strengthening ORA's connection to the community and fostering a shared sense of purpose. These hands-on projects allow volunteers to contribute to initiatives larger than themselves, cultivating a sense of community well-being. By participating, they foster a culture of stewardship and advocacy for their environment, instilling a sense of ownership and care for community objectives. Collectively, we drive impactful change, enhancing the quality of life for everyone in our community.



With Community as one of our core values, we firmly believe that to create impactful change and drive dynamic action, active participation is essential. We are committed to doing our best in engaging with community gatherings and events, amplifying diverse voices, and welcoming everyone to be a part of our flourishing community.



## Building Community Through the Outdoors

ORA Trails recognizes that building a strong outdoor community means showing up not just for our own programs, but for the partners and organizations doing great work alongside us. We are proud to collaborate on events and initiatives that align with our mission to get people outside, connect with nature, and create welcoming opportunities for all skill levels and interests.

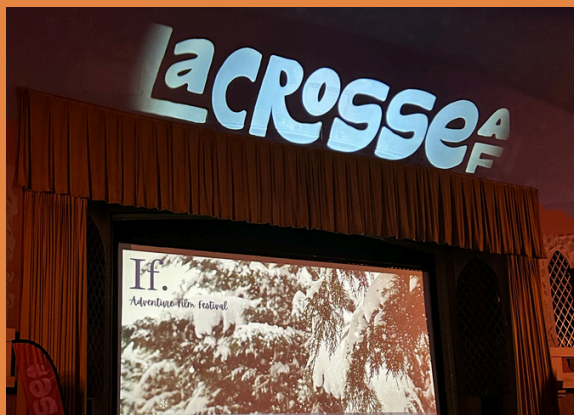
These partnerships reflect the shared effort it takes to make meaningful experiences happen. We're grateful to support these events in any way we can and equally grateful for the organizations that step up to lead, organize, and bring these opportunities to life.

In 2025, ORA Trails hosted the inaugural **Tails & Trails** event in partnership with the Coulee Region Humane Society at the Community Trail Farm. The event brought together more than 20 vendors offering products, resources, and information for pet lovers. Attendees enjoyed hiking the trails with their dogs, participating in fun activities, and grabbing a bite from a local food truck.



Tails & Trails introduced new audiences to the Community Trail Farm and the outdoors while also connecting community members with the Coulee Region Humane Society and its mission. The event showcased the power of nonprofit collaboration and created a fun, welcoming space for people and their pets to enjoy the outdoors together.

Our partnership with **La Crosse Adventure Films** is another collaboration we are grateful to be part of. Through film screenings at the Rivoli Theatre, La Crosse Adventure Films brings inspiring outdoor stories to the community, highlighting themes such as women in the outdoors, accessibility in adventure, and expeditions like climbing Mount Everest.



In addition to several film nights each year, the organization also spearheaded the **La Crosse Adventure Festival**, a week-long celebration of outdoor recreation that brings together local partners to host a variety of experiences. Activities included Leave No Trace training with WisCorps, kayaking and SUP adventures with KayoeSUP, storytelling at Mt. La Crosse, and Tails & Trails at the Community Trail Farm, among others.



As part of Adventure Festival Week, ORA Trails hosted students from Logan Middle School for an outdoor adventure day at the Community Trail Farm. Students rotated through hands-on experiences including fly fishing, nature photography, trail building, and outdoor exploration.



ORA Trails is also grateful to be the beneficiary of community-led events such as **Root Down Yoga's Mindful Triathlon**. This unique morning experience includes a hike through the Gateway Trails, a yoga session atop Grandad Bluff, and a guided meditation.

The event offers a beautiful opportunity to slow down, connect with nature, and enjoy movement alongside others, bringing the community together in a meaningful way while supporting ORA Trails' mission to expand access to the outdoors.



We continue to support numerous local partner events, including the Hixon 50, River City Running Club's Trail Series, Mini Donut Half Marathon, Beer By Bike Brigade, La Crose Omnium, and the Governor's Conference on Tourism, by providing staff support, digital promotion, volunteers, and equipment to help make these events successful....and FUN! #GETOUTSIDE!



## OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation also plays an important role in supporting local economies. Especially in the years following the pandemic, more people are seeking opportunities to spend time outside. The La Crosse region is a special place that draws thousands of visitors each year to explore its trails, waterways, and outdoor events.

ORA Trails is proud to help contribute to this growing outdoor economy in the La Crosse region. We work closely with partners such as Explore La Crosse and the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce to promote outdoor events, support regional tourism, and connect new community members and visitors with opportunities to get outside.



**“Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry had a record-breaking year in 2024, contributing \$12 billion to the state's GDP and surpassing the previous record set in 2023 by 3.8%. Outdoor recreation supported 100,139 jobs accounting for 3.2% of all Jobs in Wisconsin. These historic numbers reinforce the importance of the outdoors and the outdoor industry to the Wisconsin economy and Wisconsinites.”**

**-Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation**

ORA Trails values the power of partnership in creating happy, healthy, and resilient communities. By collaborating with local organizations, businesses, and community groups, we help expand access to outdoor experiences that bring people together. We're always excited to connect with new partners who share our passion for getting people outside and strengthening our community.



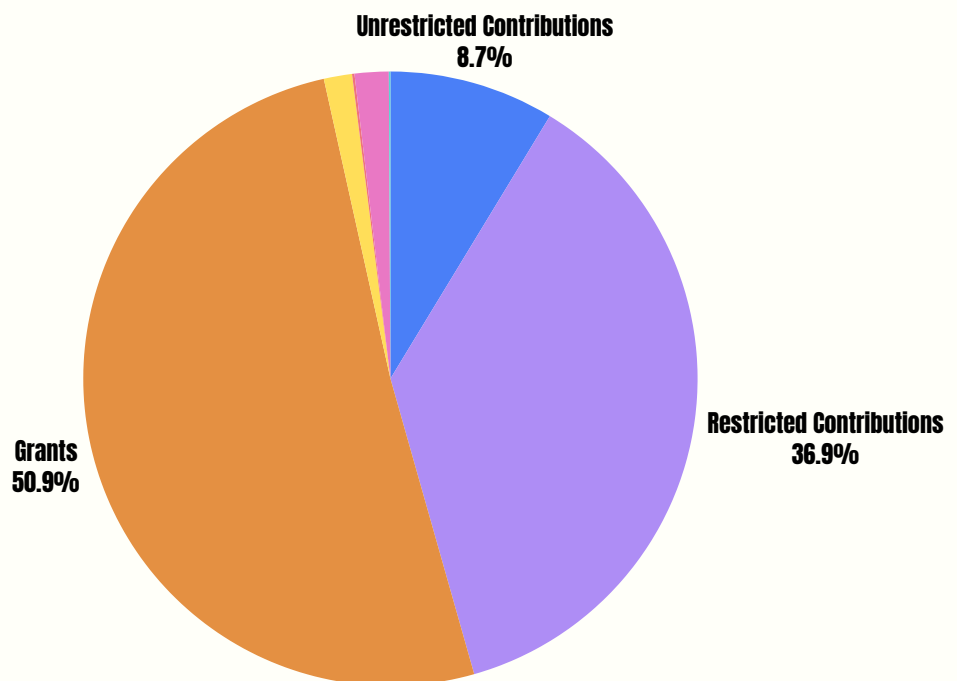
# ALLIANCE

# Financial Summary

2025 was an exciting year of growth and momentum for the Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the Seven Rivers Region (ORA Trails). Thanks to the generosity of donors, strong partnerships with public agencies, and successful grant support, ORA generated \$2.49 million in revenue to advance outdoor recreation across the region. These resources helped expand trail systems, support youth and community programming, and strengthen the infrastructure that makes outdoor experiences accessible to more people throughout the Seven Rivers Region.

One of the most significant milestones of the year was receiving \$1.15 million through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant, which allowed ORA Trails to pay off the mortgage on the Community Trail Farm property. This achievement secures the long-term future of the Trail Farm as a place for recreation, stewardship, and community connection for generations to come.

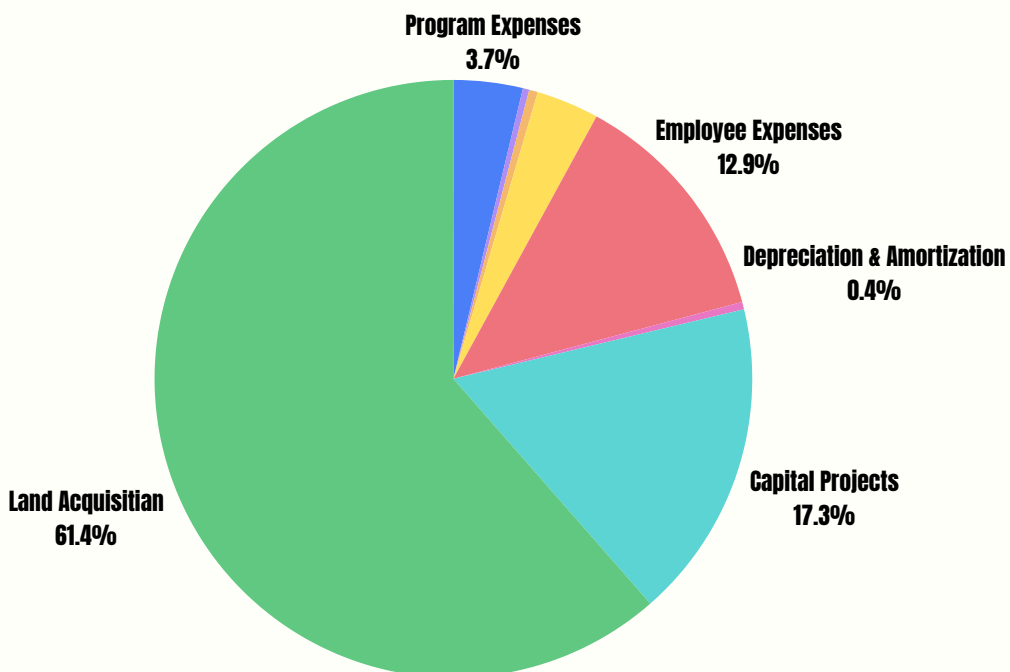
How Our Work Was Funded in 2025	
Grants	\$1,270,000.00
Restricted Contributions	\$920,706.44
Unrestricted Contributions	\$216,736.01
Earned Revenue	\$44,579.34
Sponsorships	\$37,061.55
In-Kind	\$3,150.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$2,056.90



Throughout 2025, ORA continued investing in programs that bring people together outdoors. New initiatives such as the Youth Climbing Club and Adult Mountain Bike Skills Clinics created opportunities for participants of all ages to build skills, confidence, and community. At the same time, volunteers and partners continued the vital work of trail stewardship across the region, while ORA supported the expansion of the Upper Hixon Pump Track, further enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities in the La Crosse area.

In total, ORA invested more than \$1.06 million directly into programs, infrastructure, and operations during the year. By the end of 2025, the organization remained in a strong financial position with \$2.85 million in total assets, \$208,825 in liabilities, and \$2.64 million in net assets. These results reflect ORA Trails' ongoing commitment to responsible stewardship and investing community support back into the trails, landscapes, and outdoor experiences that help build happy, healthy, and resilient communities.

How Funds Were Used in 2025	
Land Acquisition	\$1,777,471.38
Capital Projects	\$477,410.41
Employee Expenses	\$356,555.61
Program Expenses	\$103,316.53
Administrative	\$93,715.17
Marketing	\$13,002.02
Depreciation & Amortization	\$11,051.67
Fundraising	\$9,546.03





## Powered by People - Monthly Giving Program

In 2025, ORA launched Powered by People, a monthly giving program designed to support and sustain ORA’s general operations. While still growing, the program has already made a meaningful impact—adding more than 30 new monthly donors and generating over \$10,000 in annualized revenue.

We introduced the program through the *Behind Every Trail* campaign, reminding our community that behind every trail built, every trail maintained, every tree cleared, and every outdoor space someone enjoys are the people who make it possible. People show up.

**Donor dollars help make that possible by allowing ORA to provide the tools, volunteer trainings, and coordination needed to steward a thriving community of volunteers, summer crews, and supporters.**

We will continue growing this program in the years ahead to strengthen the sustainability of ORA’s work. You may even recognize the Powered by People yard signs popping up around town, each one representing a monthly donor helping power the trails we all enjoy!

### THANK YOU TO OUR MONTHLY DONORS

Abigail Lee  
Adam Johnson  
Amber Moesch  
Andrew Scott  
Andy Clements  
Bill Walters  
Christina Taylor  
Douglas Wilken  
Dustin Luecke  
Erin Kaczmarowski  
Greg Aleckson

Greg Cochrane  
Jacob Bentzen  
Jacob Buisman  
Jamie Mannion  
Jeff Boyle  
Jeni Burckart  
Jeremiah Burish  
Jeri Sebo  
Joe & Katie Steingraeber  
Jon Toomey  
Jonathon Lortie

Joseph Steingraeber  
Josh Hein  
Josh Miner  
KathiJo Jankowski  
Kayla Ryan  
Kiel Hynek  
Kristin and Aaron Koepke  
Marshall Quackenboss  
Marvin & Michelle Wanders  
Mary McLain  
Michael Langrehr

Morgan Farmer  
Nikki West  
Patrick Campbell  
Scott & Amy Cooper  
Scott Escher  
Stephanie Hein  
Stephen Cohen  
Tyler Heinz



### POWERING THE WORK MEANS:

- Trail building & maintenance on municipal lands
- Seasonal crew wages & volunteer equipment
- Tools, gas, signage
- Seeding trail projects
- Free community events
- Day-to-day operations: staff time, planning, project start up
- Happy, healthy, resilient communities

## Powered By Partners - Corporate Sponsorship Program

Similar to Powered by People, ORA also launched Powered by Partners, a corporate sponsorship program designed to give businesses the opportunity to support ORA Trails philanthropically while also benefiting from promotional and marketing opportunities that highlight their partnership with our work. This is another program ORA will continue building in the years ahead, and we are incredibly grateful to Dahl Automotive for stepping up as our inaugural \$25,000 partner.

Dahl supported ORA in many ways throughout the year. Through their different opportunities, they contributed to several initiatives: serving as the lead sponsor of Trails Fest through Subaru, supporting the Trail Teaser event at the Community Trail Farm by helping generate funds through the Bronco Wild Fund, and even showing up to volunteer and build trail at the Community Trail Farm. In recognition of their commitment to the community, Dahl Automotive was also named ORA's 2025 Organization of the Year at our annual Trail Lovers Ball.



We know it takes a community to accomplish great things. It takes businesses and organizations willing to show up and invest in the places that make our community special. ORA is proud to steward partnerships like these and support the organizations that choose to support our work.

Thank you to Dahl Automotive for helping set the tone for the future of Powered by Partners.

The Powered by People program is growing in 2026, helping to build sustainable, reliable funding for ORA Trails alongside monthly giving, grants, and event revenue. Interested in supporting ORA Trails while gaining meaningful marketing visibility for your business? Let's connect!

# Investing in Outdoor Community

As ORA continues to grow its impact through trails, programs, and community events, the support of local businesses helps make it all possible. Alongside volunteers who give their time and expertise, philanthropic support keeps our work moving forward. We are grateful to the businesses who showed up to support ORA in 2025.



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# 2025 ORA Trails Supporters

2025 was a remarkable year of support for ORA Trails. From first-time gifts to continued generosity, every contribution played a role in moving this work forward. We are committed to being thoughtful stewards of every dollar, ensuring your support has a lasting impact on the trails and community we all care about. We truly couldn't do this without you. Each name listed here represents someone who chose to invest in this work, and that means everything to us.

Aaron Koepke  
Abigail Lee  
ACRE Properties -  
    Weiss/Peterson Family  
Adam Coole  
Adam & Julie Hatfield  
Adam Johnson  
Alex Weber  
ALM Holding Company  
Amber & Mark Moesch  
Andrew D Clements  
Andrew Hafner & Rick Cornforth  
Andrew & Jenny Scott  
Andrew Strassman  
Andy Clements  
Andy Foley  
Andy Meulemans  
Angela Palomaki  
Anika Bachhuber  
Anna and Trevor Sprague  
Anthony Plopper  
Arthur Bernstein  
Arthur Sexauer  
Attila & Cristina Kovacs  
Austin Fenzl  
Barb Erickson  
Ben Jarman  
Ben Wedro  
Benjamin Aslesen  
Benjamin Vanberg  
Benjamin & Michelle Wilde  
Beth Weiss  
Bill & Cindy Patza  
Bill Walters  
Binsfeld Family Fund  
Blattner MarCom  
Brett Townsend  
Brianna Fanello  
Britney Zeimentz  
Brittany Klocek  
Carey & Susan Falkenberry  
Carl Barnes  
Carolyn & Jay Scott  
Carrie & Tim Leonard  
Cassandra J Mordini  
Cassandra L Grabhorn  
Chad Juel  
Cherie Reinhart  
Cheryl Neubauer  
Chris Kerbaugh  
Chris Stevens  
Christina Taylor  
Clay Smith  
Cleary-Kumm Foundation  
Cory Mason  
Cyndee Rotert  
Dahl Automotive  
Darby McIntyre  
Darby Oldenburg  
Darrell Dickinson  
David Deboer  
David Langer  
David Moxness  
David Nash  
Dean & Linda Nelson  
Dean Nelson  
Deb Prath-Schute  
Deidra Parrish  
Dennis Ekern  
Dirk Bruxvoort  
Douglas Wilken  
Dustin Cherney  
Dustin & Dominique Luecke  
Edd Storey  
Elijah Klessig  
Elliott Family Fund  
Emily Farmer  
Emily & Ben Sturomski  
Emily & LJ Sustar  
Enrico DiGiammrino  
Eric Hallstead  
Eric O'Neill  
Eric Peterson  
Eric Rotert  
Erik and Randi Pueschner  
Erin Kaczmarowski  
Evan & Karna Sandok  
Evan Kemp  
Fowler and Hammer  
Gabe & Annie Berendes  
Gary TerBeest  
Gerald Kann  
Gillette Pepsi Companies  
Glenn & Wendi Larson  
Greg Aleckson  
Greg & Laura Cochrane  
Gregg & Sylvia Attleson  
Gregg Attleson  
Gregory Marso  
Gretchen Kunze  
Heather Rainer  
Heidi & Brian Werner  
Honor DiDonato  
HSR Associates INC  
James Morris  
James Noelke  
Jamie & Julie Mannion  
Janie Pressnall  
Jared Gollnik  
Jean Brady-Gillies  
Jeanne Johnson  
Jeff Boyle  
Jeff Sagen  
Jeff Sexauer  
Jeffry Sagen  
Jeni Burckart  
Jeremiah Burish  
Jeremy Torkelson  
Jeri Sebo  
Jeron Moe  
Jerry hendrickson  
Jesse Emler  
Jesse Kenowski  
Jessica Hamilton  
Jillian & Jeremy Olson  
Jim & JoAnn Wickizer  
Joanne Nordeen  
Jody Lyon  
Joe & Katie Steingraeber  
John Blanchar  
John Ericsson  
John Kovari  
John Pershing  
John Sustar  
John Young  
Jon Bingol  
Jon Rigden  
Jon Toomey  
Jonathon Lortie  
Jordan Kasa  
Joseph and Suzanne Anglehart  
Joseph Vandenberg  
Josh & Stephanie Hein  
Josh Miner  
Julia and Jim Jespersen  
Julie Haas  
Julie Pitsch  
Karen Carreno  
Karolyn Collins  
KathiJo Jankowski  
Kathy & Matt Allen  
Katie Brevik  
Kayla Kemp  
Kayla Ryan  
Kelly Hemmer-Rondestvedt



In Memory of Mike Blokhuis  
Isaac & Kerry Pischke  
Jacob Bentzen  
Jacob Buisman  
Jade Elliott  
James & Mary Nesler  
Kendra Holzer  
Kerrie Reynolds  
Kiel Hynek  
Kim Blum  
Kim Dahl  
Kirsten Gabriel  
Krista Huiras  
Kristin Gonias-Larkin  
Kristin Sullivan  
Kurt Mueller  
Kurt and Julie Schroeder  
Kwik Trip  
L.A. Pinski  
La Crosse Adventure Films  
La Crosse Community Foundation  
La Crosse County  
La Crosse SOUP  
La Crosse Symphony Orchestra  
Lance Miller  
Lane Hansen  
Larry Pischke  
Laura Berry  
Laura Marchiando and Matthew Hanson  
Laura Meyer  
Laura & Travis Pernsteiner  
Laura Prospero  
Lee & Kent Johnson  
Leonardo Silva  
Linda Miller  
Lisa and John Conzemius  
Lisa Bucher  
Lisa Sauer  
Liz Mansky  
Louis McGuire  
Lydia Hale  
Maggie Fournier  
Maiya Nate  
Mariah Hall  
Mark & Kim Schneider  
Mark & Jennifer Brumm  
Mark Domroese  
Mark Frise  
Mark Heffernan  
Mark Lee  
Mark Neuville  
Mark, Krist, Abi & Luke  
Marshall Quackenboss  
Marvin & Michelle Wanders  
Mary Cherney  
Mary Linville  
Mary McLain  
Mathy Family and Businesses  
Matt Sloan

Matthew Glenz  
Maureen Freedland  
Maureen Neuville, Naturally Sculptures  
and Photography  
McLoone Metal Graphics  
Megan & Jacob Runge  
Mettera  
Michael & Allyson Borst  
Michael Fisher  
Michael Galuke  
Michael Langrehr  
Michael Schuyler  
Michele Ericsson  
Michelle & Joe Skemp  
Mike Bohn  
Mike Borst  
Mike Hesch  
Milt Schmida  
Moen Sheehan Meyer, Ltd  
Morgan Farmer  
Nancy Reithel  
Nathan Barnhart  
Nathan Crowder  
Neal Oeltjen  
Nikki West  
Nikole & Eddie Hale  
Nuru Kiyemba  
O'Brien Physical Therapy  
and Wellness  
Patricia Boge  
Patricia Holman  
Patricia Peppers  
Patrick Campbell Campbell  
Patrick DeHaan  
Patrick Griffith  
Patrick Kelly  
Paul Tepp  
Paula Paulus  
Poker Knights  
Quinet Hynek  
Ran Ikeyama  
Randy and Marian Schiesser  
Reuben Vyn  
Richard Auby  
Roger Imes  
Roger & Sue Lundsten  
Ron Rada  
Root Down Yoga  
Rosalie Schnick  
Ruth Dover  
Sam Wood Laura Meyer  
Sandra Frost  
Sara Christiansen  
Sara & Andy Meyers  
Sara Olson  
Schneider Heating & AC  
Scott & Amy Cooper  
Scott Gabriel  
Scott Mills

Shandy & Jeff Scheidt  
Shane Ilstrup  
Shelby Dawson  
Shobi Zietlow & Josh Blum  
Sig & Jean Ann Gundersen  
Spartek Inc.  
Stanley Marti  
Steph Lee  
Stephen & Katie Cohen  
Steve Shultz  
Steven Tanke  
Susan Bulk  
Tammy Wills  
Teresa Ericksmoen  
Terry & Susan Guentner  
The Insurance Center  
Thomas Smith  
Timothy Cox  
Timothy Durtsche  
Tom Davey  
Tom Ley  
Trane Family Foundation  
Trent Beninghaus  
Trent & Clara Ping  
Trenton Adams  
Trust Point  
Turtle Stack Brewing LLC  
Tyler Heinz & Kate Ebert  
Van Meter  
Vincent Schloesser  
Warren Loveland  
WI-DNR  
William White  
Willow Pecha  
Xcel Energy



# VOLUNTEER CHAMPIONS: GETTING INVOLVED



We cannot say it enough: **volunteers are the backbone of ORA Trails**. Their time, energy, and dedication keep our programs, events, and projects moving forward while grounding our work in the grassroots spirit of trail building, maintenance, and advocacy. Thank you to each and every volunteer.

**There are many ways to get involved with ORA through your time, talents, and treasures.** Volunteers help build and maintain trails across the Hixon and Gateway Trail Systems and at the Community Trail Farm, support events as parking attendants or s'mores helpers, coach youth teams, assist with administrative tasks like preparing letters, and share their expertise through gardening, leading school groups or tours, or advocating alongside us for outdoor access.

We regularly share volunteer opportunities through our website, social media, and newsletters, and are launching a volunteer-specific newsletter to help people stay connected with upcoming projects and opportunities.



Interested in getting involved?  
Sign up for the newsletter by scanning the QR code below or at <https://oratrails.app.neoncrm.com/subscribe.jsp?subscription=6>



## Commitment to Trails For All

Trails should be accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone in our community. Our commitment to "Trails for All" ensures that our trails serve as vital social spaces that foster connections and build social capital among community members. By providing welcoming "third spaces" for gathering and engagement, we strengthen community bonds and enhance well-being. Recognizing that trails offer opportunities for interaction and shared experiences, we are dedicated to accessibility, inclusivity, sustainability, and community engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging exploration and appreciation of the natural world.



## Invest in our Trails, Invest in Our Community

Continued support from the community is vital for us to keep doing good work! Your donations help us develop vibrant trails and seed projects that advance our community and benefit La Crosse and surrounding areas. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a direct impact. Think about what the trails mean to you—will you make a gift to help us continue this good work?

# Resources

For more information, refer to these pages on the ORA Trails website.

## Learn More About Projects in Progress

Stay informed about our ongoing initiatives and see how we're making a positive impact in the community. Visit our [Projects tab](#) to learn more.

## Make a Gift to Celebrate and Support ORA

Help us continue our work by making a donation. Every contribution counts! Support ORA with your gift. Check out our [Donate Page!](#)

## Learn More About Trails in Our Areas and Stay Up to Date on Trail Conditions

Find out about the trails in our region and check for the latest updates on trail conditions. Visit our [Trails Page](#) for more information.

## Learn More About Volunteering and How You Can Get Involved

Interested in joining our efforts? Discover volunteer opportunities and find out how you can make a difference. Explore [Volunteer Options](#).

## Join Our Newsletter

Stay up-to-date on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, project movements, community happenings, and more! [Sign Up for Our Newsletter](#).

## Get Offline - Get Outside!

Show up at events and opportunities to engage! Chat with us in real life and let's get outside together! Check Out Our [Upcoming Events](#).

## Board of Directors

### 2025 Executive Officers

**President** - Michael Borst

**Vice President** - Stephen Cohen

**Treasurer** - Andrew Scott

**Secretary** - Scott Cooper

### 2025 Board Members at Large

Jeremiah Burish

Jordan Kasa

Derek Nordeen

Megan Runge

Sam Bachmeier

Randi Pueschner

Andrew Scott

Kurt Schroeder

Jon Bingol

## ORA Trails Staff

### Full Time Staff

Executive Director - Tyler Heinz

Development Director - Willow Pecha

Trail Farm Administrator - Joshua Hein

Admin & Operations Director - Kayla Ryan

### Seasonal Staff

Summer Lead - Keith Lease

Work Crew - Alex Auby

Work Crew - Sam Gauthier

Work Crew - Boden Nesler

Work Crew - Ethan Leonard

Work Crew - Evan Diffor

Work Crew - Soren Minor