

**Tennessee Trails Association
Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting by Zoom
February 3, 2026, at 7:30 ET / 6:30 CT**

President Will Latham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. ET.

Secretary Susan Brand called the roll. Present were: Will Latham, Susan Brand, Bryan Brand, Jane Coffey, Wayne Drown, Jenny Fitzgerald, Hal Beckham, Alice Cannon, Marti Owensby, Phyllis Long, Nina Heckler, Maria Martinez, Karen Shoemaker, Patty Deen, Tommy Black, Nancy Wark, Cheryl Smith, Dianna Richter, Norm Brinsley, Lucy Cahill, and Cathy Moran.

Absent: June Callahan and Michael Hernan.

Guests: Libby Francis, Nominating Committee Chair, and Chris Fitzgerald, Web Administrator and Lora McBride, Murfreesboro chapter representative.

Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the October 2025 meetings (Annual Membership Meeting, Special Organizational and Quarterly Board Meeting) were sent out to the BOD with the agenda. President Latham asked if there were any corrections or additions. There were none. Alice Cannon moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Wayne Drown and was approved by the BOD.

Strategic Plan

Patty Deen Presented the strategic planning process and results, including a proposed mission statement, vision, pillars and next steps. After discussion, Bryan Brand moved to adopt the strategic plan as presented, seconded by Jane Coffey. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Financial Report

Bryan Brand, Treasurer, presented the 2025 financials, and the budget for 2026. Wayne Drown moved to accept the financial report and approve the 2026 budget, seconded by Nina Heckler. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Membership Committee Report

Marti Owensby noted that the report was provided to the Board with the agenda. There were no questions.

Communications Committee Report

Patty Deen reported that the Communications Committee has not met yet in 2026. Chris Fitzgerald was welcomed as the new Webmaster, who briefly discussed some initiatives he is working on. Improvements are being made for the official emails for the Board officers, that are used by the current occupants of the board positions (i.e., President, Treasurer, Webmaster, Chapter Chairs). This provides a consistent email address for the public, while allowing Board officers and chapter chairs to rely less on their personal email addresses for TTA business. A TTA Google workspace has been created, so that files for TTA business can reside centrally, with access determined by the webmaster.

Audit and Risk Management Committee Report

Hal Beckham presented the committee members and discussed some of the initiatives/projects that the committee is working on. These include insurance policies review, clarification of policies around car-pooling, external 2025 financial Agreed Upon Procedures review, and first aid training, kits and related policies.

Evan Means Grant Committee Report

Wayne Drown discussed 2 grant proposals that were included in the board agenda materials.

Friends of David Crockett State Park and Still Hollow Natural Area

A motion was made by Jane Coffey and seconded by Karen Shoemaker to approve \$825.00 to purchase trail tools for the volunteers to use for maintenance and improvements to the parks 11 miles of hiking trails in the two areas. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Friends of Harpeth River State Park:

A motion was made by Norm Brinsley and seconded by Alice Cannon to approve \$860.00 to purchase Weed Wrenches for volunteers to use in removal of invasive plants, which is needed to maintain the trails and provide safe access points. The motion was approved by the BOD.

2026 Annual Conference Report

Norm Brinsley reported on the efforts underway to prepare for the annual conference, as outlined in the attachment provided to the BOD with the agenda. The planning group asked if it was possible to move the Board meeting from Sunday morning to Saturday afternoon, to allow Board members to hike on Sunday. Mr. Latham will explore this, to see if there are any issues with timing and sequence regarding Board business.

Mr. Latham noted the historical list of the chapters who hosted annual conferences, in the attachments. If adopted, the repeating cycle of hosting chapters list would help chapters identify several years in advance when their next turn is. Wayne Drown motioned, seconded by Patty Deen, to adopt the schedule as proposed, for sharing with chapters and to post it on the TTA website. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Nominating Committee Report

Libby Francis presented the committee's activities and challenges as outlined in the attachment provided to the BOD with the agenda.

It was noted that the Vice President position is currently vacant, and board members were asked to contact the President if they were willing to serve in that role.

There is a vacant Director-At-Large position, which has a term extending through 2027. The committee recommends Lora McBride from the Murfreesboro Chapter to fill this role. A motion was made by Lucy Cahill and seconded by Cheryl Smith to appoint Lora McBride to this position.

There are several Board of Directors whose terms are expiring at the end of 2026. The Board was

reminded that there is an ongoing need to identify people within the Organization to serve on the Board and the various committees.

President's Report

Will Latham reviewed the proposed committees and committee members included in the attachments provided to the BOD with the agenda. A motion was made by Patty Deen and seconded by Jane Coffey to approve the proposed committees and members. The motion was approved by the BOD.

It was noted that there will be additional committees formed as part of the strategic planning process, and the Strategic Planning Team will be reaching out to individuals to serve on those committees.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Bryan Brand and seconded by Wayne Drown to adjourn at 9:13 p.m. ET or 8:13 p.m. CT.

Minutes submitted by Susan Brand, Secretary

Date for future TTA Board of Directors meetings:

- May 5, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 7:30 pm Eastern, 6:30 pm Central - via Zoom.
- August 4, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 7:30 pm Eastern, 6:30 pm Central - via Zoom.
- October 25, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 8:00 am Central - To be held at TTA Annual Conference on Sunday.



Agenda for Tennessee Trails Association Board of Directors Meeting

7:30 pm ET, 6:30 pm CT, February 3, 2026 by Zoom

7:20 ET/6:20 CT pm	Initiate Zoom
7:30 ET/6:30 ET pm	Call to Order

1. **Call to Order** and Welcome, Will Latham, President
2. **Roll Call**, Susan Brand, Secretary
3. **Approval of Annual Membership Minutes, Special Organizational Meeting minutes, and Quarterly Board of Directors Minutes**, Susan Brand, Secretary – Attachment #1
4. **Strategic Planning Presentation and Next Steps** – Patty Deen – Attachments #2 and #3
 - a. PRESENTATION, QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION
 - b. DECISION – Adopt Strategic Plan
5. **Financial Committee Report** Bryan Brand, Treasurer – Attachment #4
 - c. PRESENTATION OF BUDGET AND QUESTIONS
 - d. DECISION – Adopt 2026 Budget
6. **Membership Committee Report**, Marti Owensby, Chair – Attachment #5
 - e. QUESTIONS
7. **Communications Committee Report**, Patty Deen, Chair – Attachment #6
 - f. QUESTIONS
8. **Audit and Risk Management Committee Report** – Hal Beckham, Chair – Oral Report
 - g. QUESTIONS
9. **Evan Means Grant Committee Report** – Wayne Drown, Chair – Attachment #7
 - h. QUESTIONS
 - i. DECISION: Approve grant proposals
10. **2026 Annual Conference Report**, Norm Brinsley – Plateau Chapter – Attachment #8
 - j. QUESTIONS
 - k. DECISION: Annual Conference Hosts schedule (put on website?)



11. Nominating Committee Report – Libby Francis, Chair – See Attachment #9

I. QUESTIONS

m. DECISION – Elect Board Member

12. President's Report, Will Latham, President – Attachment #10

n. QUESTIONS

o. DECISION: Approval of Committees and Committee Membership

p. Strategic Planning Committees

13. Old Business

14. New Business

15. Motion to adjourn

Date for future TTA Board of Directors meetings:

- May 5, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 7:30 pm Eastern, 6:30 pm Central - via Zoom.
- August 4, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 7:30 pm Eastern, 6:30 pm Central - via Zoom.
- October 25, 2026 - TTA Board Meeting - 8:00 am Central - To be held at TTA Annual Conference on Sunday.

**Tennessee Trails Association
Annual Membership Meeting
Paris Landing State Park Lodge, Buchanan, TN 38222
October 18, 2025, 6:35 pm CST**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Steve Turner at 6:35 pm who then recognized the outstanding work done by the Annual General Meeting committee. Attendance at the Annual General meeting included 136 registrations.

Steve Turner then presented special recognition to June Callahan for her work as TTA's Treasurer since 2022, and Doug Burroughs who has served as Web Administrator since 2021.

President Will Latham reported on the success of TTA during the past year to include development of a Board orientation packet, launching of a Strategic Planning effort, creation of Chapter leadership documents and other initiatives.

Treasurer June Callahan reported that online registration for the conference and membership registration had proved very successful. TTA is strong financially with a general fund balance of approximately \$161,000 and an Evan Means Grant Fund of approximately \$32,000. She also reported that TTA will be moving to QuickBooks Online for 2026 and this will allow for shared access to financial information to selected members of the Finance Committee.

Mark Hubbard provided an update on the Strategic Planning project and introduced and thanked Ned Murray who was the facilitator of the process.

Libby Francis, chair of the Nominations Committee recommended that the membership accept the following individuals to the Board of Directors:

- For At Large Directors: Wayne Drown, Bryan Brand and Hal Beckham
- For Middle TN Regional Director: Phyllis Long

Steve Turner made a motion to accept this recommendation, Kyle Sequara seconded the motion. President Latham called for nominations from the floor but there were none. The membership approved the nominations as presented by the Nominations committee.

John Conrad received the Tennessee Trails Award as nominated by the Plateau Chapter. Jane Coffey received the Bill Stutz Award as nominated by the Columbia/Franklin Chapter.

Each of the Chapter Chairs or their representative then reported on the progress of their chapter during the past year.

Melissa Love, Plateau chapter, reported that planning for the 2026 Annual Conference is underway. information about the meeting date and location will be included in an upcoming TTA newsletter.

The Annual Membership meeting concluded at 7:50 pm

Minutes submitted by Jenny Fitzgerald/Will Latham

DRAFT

**Tennessee Trails Association
Board of Directors Special Organizational Meeting Minutes
Paris Landing State Park Lodge, Buchanan, TN 38222
October 19, 2025, 8:30 am CST**

President Will Latham called the meeting to order at 8:30 CST am.

President Latham then called the roll. Present were: Will Latham, Steve Turner, June Callahan, Jane Coffey, Wayne Drown, Jenny Fitzgerald, Mark Hubbard, Marti Owensby, Nina Heckler, Sara Pollard, Cinde Jones, Bryan Brand, Karen Shoemaker, Tommy Black, Nancy Wark, Lynn Rosser, Bob Obohoski, and Cathy Moran.

Absent were: Patricia Deen, Susan Woods, Alice Cannon, Lucy Cahill, Phyllis Long, and Michael Hernan.

Guests: Libby Francis, Nominating Committee Chair, Hal Beckham, incoming At-Large Director, Chris Fitzgerald, Web Administrator, Susan Brand, Secretary in 2026, Ned Murray, facilitator of the Strategic Planning process, Rosemary Marshall, Chair of the East Tennessee Chapter.

Election of the Officers for the TTA BOD were as follows:

- Libby Francis moved to elect Will Latham for President, seconded by June Callahan. With no other nominations being made, the BOD approved Will Latham for President.
- Mark Hubbard moved to elect Steve Turner for Vice President, seconded by Wayne Drown. With no other nominations being made, the BOD approved Steve Turner for Vice President.
- June Callahan moved to elect Bryan Brand for Treasurer, seconded by Bob Obohoski. With no other nominations being made, the BOD approved Bryan Brand for Treasurer.
- Nina Heckler moved to elect Susan Brand for Secretary, seconded by Steve Turner. With no other nominations being made, the BOD approved Susan Brand for Secretary.

Approval of committee assignments is still to be determined for 2025. It will be submitted for the first quarterly meeting of 2026. One committee assignment at minimum should be held by each board member.

Bob Obohoski moved to adjourn the special organizational meeting of TTA BOD, Jane Coffey seconded his motion and the BOD approved the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 am CST.

**Tennessee Trails Association
Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Paris Landing State Park Lodge, Buchanan, TN 38222
October 19, 2025, 8:44 am CST**

Call to Order/Welcome/Attendees

President Will Latham called the meeting to order at 8:44 CST am.

President Latham then called the roll. Present were: Will Latham, Steve Turner, June Callahan, Jane Coffey, Wayne Drown, Jenny Fitzgerald, Mark Hubbard, Marti Owensby, Nina Heckler, Sara Pollard, Cinde Jones, Bryan Brand, Karen Shoemaker, Tommy Black, Nancy Wark, Lynn Rosser, Bob Obohoski, and Cathy Moran.

Absent were: Patricia Deen, Susan Woods, Alice Cannon, Lucy Cahill, Phyllis Long, and Michael Hernan.

Guests: Libby Francis, Nominating Committee Chair, Hal Beckham, incoming At-Large Director, Chris Fitzgerald, Web Administrator, Susan Brand, Secretary in 2026, Ned Murray, facilitator of the Strategic Planning process, and Rosemary Marshall, Chair of the East Tennessee Chapter.

Officer Reports

Secretary – Will Latham – action Secretary for this meeting

The minutes of the August 5, 2025 meeting having been sent out to the BOD with the agenda, President Latham asked if there were any corrections or additions. There were none. Wayne Drown moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Steve Turner and was approved by the BOD.

Treasurer - June Callahan

June Callahan had submitted a written report that had been emailed to the Board prior to the meeting.

June discussed her work to establish better continuity in the Treasurer role. This includes her writing a Treasurer's Manual, moving to QuickBooks Online, performing reconciliations for checks and balances and implementing the use of CDs. Redundancy to key positions was discussed.

Bryan Brand is the back-up to the Treasurer position and will become Treasurer in 2026.

There were no decision items concerning this report.

Committee Reports

Strategic Planning Presentation and Next Steps

A report on the status to date of the creation of a TTA Strategic Plan was presented by Ned Murray, facilitator of the Strategic Planning process.. He discussed the four pillars framework being used and a set of action steps that are being finalized which will drive the next 3, 5 and 7 years or more for the TTA. At the next board meeting we can expect a final draft to be presented.

Membership Committee Report – Marti Owensby, Chair

A written report had been submitted by Marti Owensby, Membership Committee Chair, had been emailed to the Board prior to the meeting. Marti discussed the TTA privacy policy, liability insurance in regards to membership information, and job descriptions.

There were no decision items concerning this report.

Communications Committee Report – Sara Pollard, Chair

Sara Pollard, chair of the Communications Committee shared that Patti Deen will be assuming the role of Committee Chair in 2026.

There was a thank you to Chris Hoffman as being the TTA statewide Facebook manager. Individual chapters are encouraged to post Facebook items onto the TTA's statewide Facebook page.

There were no decision items concerning this report.

Evan Means Grant Committee – Wayne Drown, Chair

Wayne Drown, chair of the Evan Means Grant Committee, reported that TTA provided grants that have helped many diverse areas across the States. There were three grants requests received that the Grant committee brought forth and recommended approval as follows:

- Friends of South Cumberland - Fiery Gizzard (Staircase & trail maintenance) \$1,100. The motion was made by Wayne Drown and seconded by Tommy Black. The motion was approved by the BOD.
- Bay Mountain Park Association (replace 75' wooden board walk) \$1,000. The motion was made by Wayne Drown and seconded by Bryan Brand. The motion was approved by the BOD.
- Tennessee River Gorge Trust (Williams Island Boardwalk & Bridge connection and expansion to existing trails/ecosystem) \$1,000. The motion was made by Wayne Drown and seconded by Tommy Black. The motion was approved by the BOD.

A proposal to allow the Treasurer to mail checks to Evan Means Grant Committee members instead of directly to the grant recipients was raised. This will allow committee members to present the award to recipients in person where possible. Mark Hubbard made the motion to approve allowing the Treasurer to mail checks to an Evan Means Grant Committee member and it was seconded by Nina Heckler. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Audit and Risk Management Committee – Bryan Brand, Chair

A written report had been submitted by Bryan Brand, Audit and Risk Management chair, and emailed to the Directors prior to the meeting.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee proposed updating the liability release form to include more comprehensive and protective language, including a space where participants can sign and including record retention instructions.

A motion was made to approve the proposal by Mark Hubbard and seconded by Bob Obohoski. It was suggested that this motion be amended to have the form include telephone numbers of the participants and this was accepted by Mark and seconded by Nina Heckler. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Nominating Committee – Director Vacancy Election – Libby Francis, Chair

Jan Lyons stepped down as an At-Large member the Board. Per the TTA By-laws the Board can elect a replacement to serve the remainder of the term.

Libby Francis, Nominating Committee Chair proposed Alice Cannon of the Nashville Chapter to serve the remainder of the departing Director's term. The BOD approved the proposal.

President's Report – Will Latham

Will Latham, President shared the Presidents Report.

The challenge with the Upper Cumberland chapter was discussed. It is down to 9 members, no Chapter Treasurer and Chairperson ready to step down with no replacement.

A motion was made by Bryan Brand and seconded by Steve Turner to dissolve the Upper Cumberland chapter, allow current Upper Cumberland members to move to a different chapter, and those who did not move would eventually be moved to Unaffiliated status. The motion was approved by the BOD.

Old Business

There was no old business to come before the Board.

New Business

There was no new business to come before the Board.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jane Coffey, seconded by Bob Obohoski, and approved by the Board. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am CST.

Dates for future TTA Board of Director Meetings:

- February 3, 2026, at 7:30 pm, ET 6:30 pm CT, via Zoom
- May 5, 2026, at 7:30 pm, ET, 6:30 pm CT, via Zoom
- August 5, 2026, at 7:30 pm, ET, 6:30 pm CT, via Zoom

- 2026 Annual Meeting - TBD

Minutes submitted by Jenny Fitzgerald/Will Latham

DRAFT



Strategic Plan

Trail Map for a Strong TTA

Submitted for TTA Board Approval by the
Strategic Planning Team

February 5, 2026

Table of Contents

- 1. Background – Why Strategic Planning and Why Now?**
- 2. Strategic Plan Summary — Mission, Vision, Pillars and Goals**
- 3. Next Steps**
- 4. Appendices**
 - A. Strategic Planning Team Participants*
 - B. Strategic Planning Process and Timeline*
 - C. Survey Results*
 - D. Summary of Focus Group Conversations*

Our reality:

- ❖ Spinoff of Cumberland Trail Conference
- ❖ Expansion of chapters across the State
- ❖ More group hikes; less trail building
- ❖ Membership growth not matching population growth

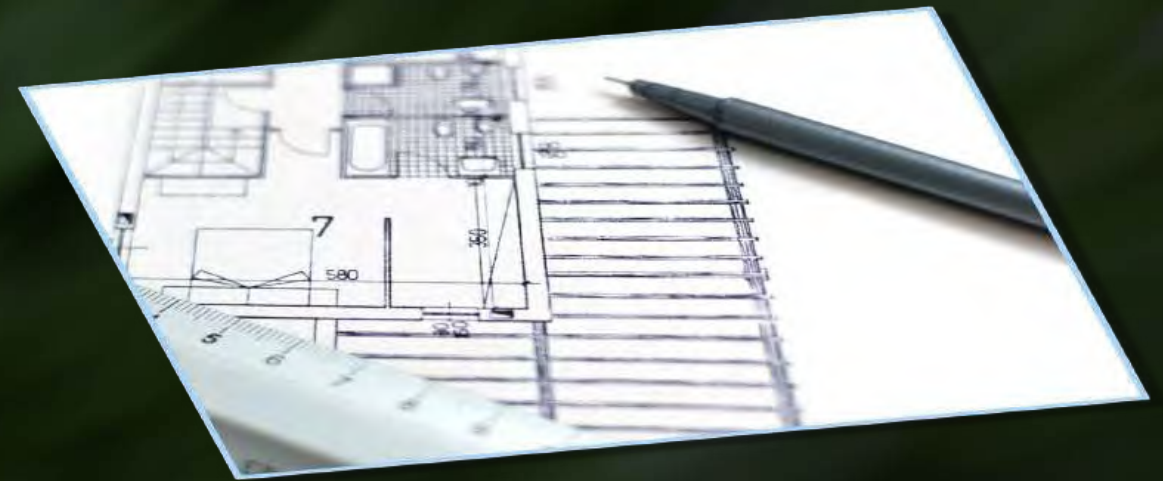


**Yet, opportunity
was calling!**

Our assignment:

Develop a plan for a strong, sustainable TTA that reaches its maximum potential to serve Tennesseans.

Keep focused on how to enhance what has made TTA successful & special.



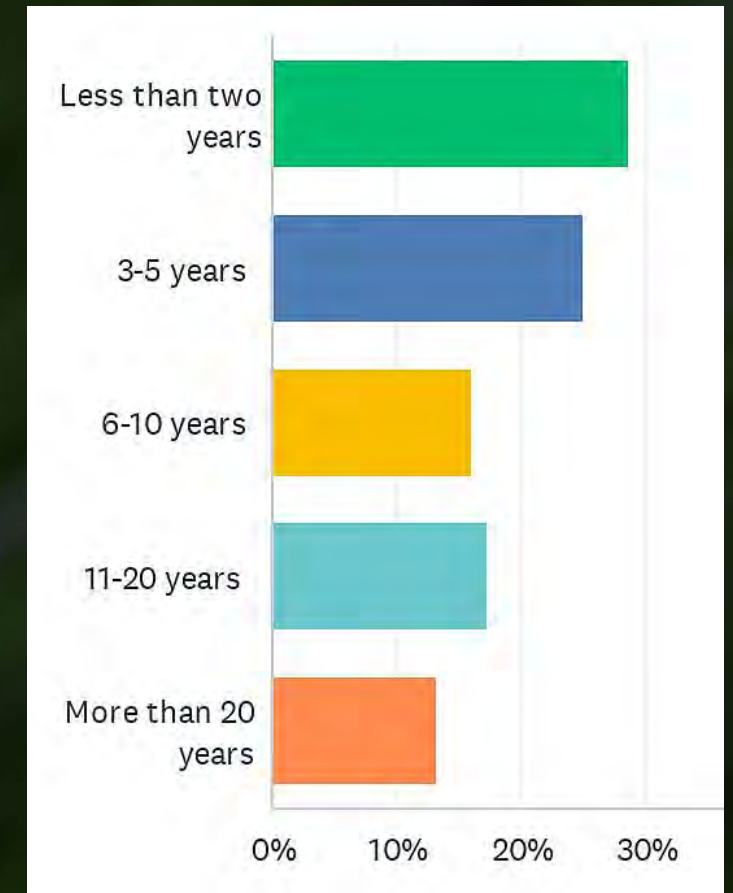
Team Challenge

- ❖ Identify key strategic questions
- ❖ Identify key “pillars” (areas of focus)
- ❖ Develop questions for a membership survey and chapter focus groups



Member informed, data driven

- ❖ Survey results collected from 291 members (33% of each chapter's membership)
- ❖ 7 focus group discussions with 35 members from 11 different chapters.



Analyze and Interpret

ATTACHMENT @



- ❖ Team discussions
- ❖ Subgroup discussions
- ❖ Leadership discussions

- ❖ Strategic pillars & goals
- ❖ Mission & Vision
- ❖ Recommended action steps



Proposed Mission Statement:

TTA brings people together through hiking—to enjoy nature, promote well-being, support trails, and build lasting friendships.

Recognizes a transition that has already taken place



Proposed Vision Statement:

TTA's vision is to become the most welcoming and connected hiking community in Tennessee.



Four pillars

- ❖ **Supporting chapters**
- ❖ **Supporting trails**
- ❖ **Improving communication**
- ❖ **Building organizational sustainability**

All Pillars and Goals are oriented towards improving the association, enhancing member experience, and supporting our mission.



Supporting chapters

Goals:

Expand hike number & variety

Develop, promote and support best practices



Supporting trails

Goals:

Encourage volunteer service on trails at chapter and organizational levels

Effectively review requests and award Evan Means Grants



Improving communication and messaging

Goals:

Improve internal and external communication to increase member engagement, participation, and hiker satisfaction



Building Organizational Sustainability

Goals:

**Strong board and committee structure; robust
systems and processes**

Resources (people and financial)

Outreach to build strategic relationships

Review & update Bylaws & Charter



Next Steps I

1. Special Committees aligned with Strategic Plan Pillars

- ❖ Supporting Chapters Special Committee
- ❖ Supporting Trails Special Committee
- ❖ Strategic Partnerships Special Committee
- ❖ Bylaws Special Committee



Next Steps II

- 2. Rename and refocus Communications Committee to “Strategic Communications and Messaging Committee”**
- 3. Align Committee Structure to ensure clarity of purpose and effective coordination**



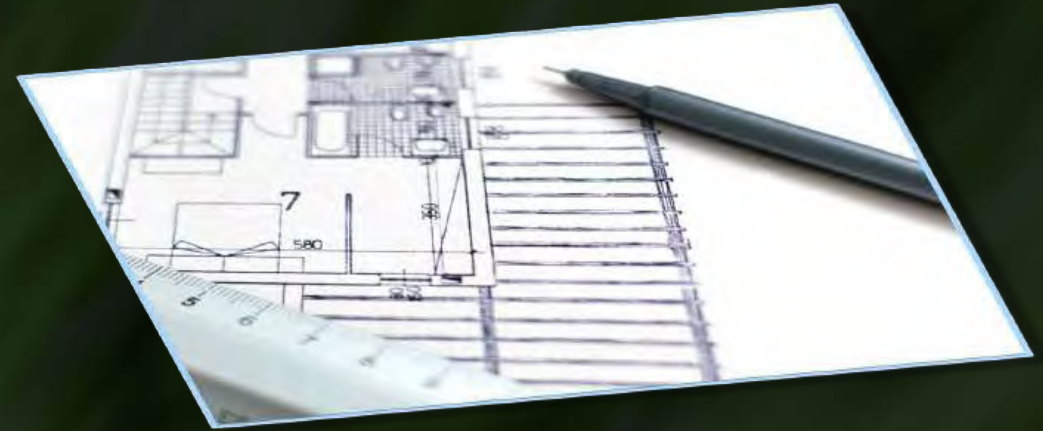
Next Steps III

- 4. Actively recruit and appoint committed individuals for service on committees**
- 5. Guide Implementation & Ensure Accountability with Strategic Planning Team partners**



The Plan is the Beginning...

This strategic plan
took a year to build...



It will take three to
five years to
implement.



It will take Everyone!

Success of
plan
implementation
depends on
volunteers &
resources

Board

Committees

Chapters

Membership





Tennessee Trails Association

Strategic Plan

Draft for Board Review

Table of Contents

1. Background – Why Strategic Planning and Why Now?
2. Strategic Plan Summary — Mission, Vision, Pillars and Goals
3. Next Steps
4. Appendices
 - A. *Strategic Planning Team Participants*
 - B. *Strategic Planning Process and Timeline*
 - C. *Survey Results*
 - D. *Summary of Focus Group Conversations*

1. Background – Why Strategic Planning and Why Now?

In Spring of 2024, members of the TTA board — specifically then-President Duane Frichtl and then-Communications Committee Chair Will Latham — began to explore the idea of engaging a strategic planning process for the organization. In addition to the fact that it had been many years since TTA had embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process, there were additional conditions that led the board to engage this important process:

- The spinoff of the Cumberland Trail Conference into a separate, unassociated organization in 2016 had inadvertently shifted the focus and priorities of TTA.
- The expansion of chapters across the state — each with unique characteristics, opportunities, and challenges — had created additional challenges to establishing organizational identity and priorities.
- The main programming of the organization had organically rebalanced to more group hikes and less trail building and maintenance, and it was time to reflect this shift in the organization’s mission, vision, and planning.
- Since 2000, Tennessee’s population has grown by an estimated 32%, due largely to people moving to the state. Although membership and participation in TTA had grown over the same period, that growth was incremental and disproportionate to the potential.

At the same time, the Board recognized that there were significant strengths in place that represented opportunities on which to capitalize for the benefit of the organization and its members:

- Membership had steadily grown from a small group of dedicated people to a much larger collection of people across the state with a deep passion for the many benefits of hiking with others in the natural world.
- Over the previous few decades, and especially during the Covid era, interest and participation in outdoor recreation skyrocketed in Tennessee.
- Also during that era, the state of Tennessee significantly increased the number of state parks and expanded public lands and trails, creating exciting new opportunities to introduce participants to new parts of the state.

As a result of these and several other factors, Frichtl, Latham, and later TTA Vice President Steve Turner and Ned Murray of NRM Consulting, began designing a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process intended to achieve the following goals:

- Update, clarify, and articulate TTA's current identity, mission, and vision.
- Become better stewards of our resources (time, talent, and treasure) by establishing priorities and creating more efficient and effective systems.
- Strengthen the organization in fundamental ways to increase its effectiveness, efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.
- Introduce more people to the benefits of hiking in nature in groups by increasing participation and membership.

The next section of this document includes the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Team in regards to TTA's Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Goals that TTA will pursue over the next 3-5 years.

Several appendices are included with this document to provide additional context in regards to how these recommendations were developed:

- A. Strategic Planning Team Participants*
- B. Strategic Planning Process and Timeline*
- C. Survey Results*
- D. Summary of Focus Group Conversations*

2. Strategic Plan: Mission, Vision, Pillars and Goals

Mission: TTA brings people together through hiking—to enjoy nature, promote well-being, support trails, and build lasting friendships.

Vision: TTA’s vision is to become the most welcoming and connected hiking community in Tennessee.

Pillar – Supporting Chapters

- Goal: Encourage and help chapters to expand the number and variety (type, length, scheduling, strenuousness/difficulty) of hike options.
- Goal: Develop, promote and support best practices for chapter operations to improve sustainability and member participation.

Pillar – Supporting Trails

- Goal: Encourage and support chapter-level volunteer service on trails.
- Goal: Promote trail maintenance activities and opportunities organization-wide.
- Goal: Promote effective grant distribution through the Evan Means Grant Program.

Pillar – Improving Communication & Messaging

- Goal: Improve messaging about TTA's identity, purpose, and the benefits of participation.
- Goal: Increase member engagement, participation and satisfaction through improved internal communication.
- Goal: Increase new participation and membership through improved external communication.

Pillar – Building Organizational Sustainability

- Goal: Ensure a strong and capable Board and Committee structure along with robust operating systems and processes (including on-going strategic planning) to implement the Mission Statement.
- Goal: Ensure that the organization has sufficient resources (people and financial) to implement its mission and plans.
- Goal: Improve outreach efforts to build strategic relationships, partnerships and gain resources.
- Goal: Ensure that founding and underlying documents (By-laws, Charter) are updated to reflect the Mission Statement.

3. Next Steps

TTA will advance this Strategic Plan over a three- to five-year horizon, with the Board providing leadership, oversight, and accountability throughout its implementation.

To launch the plan and build early momentum, TTA will take the following near-term actions:

1. **Activate Strategic Leadership Through Committees:**

TTA will establish Special Committees aligned with key Strategic Plan Pillars to focus energy, expertise, and innovation on priority areas, including:

- **Supporting Chapters Special Committee** – Advancing strategies that strengthen, connect, and support TTA chapters.
- **Supporting Trails Special Committee** – Promoting a culture of stewardship by encouraging chapter-level volunteer service and coordinated trail maintenance efforts across the organization.
- **Strategic Partnerships Special Committee** – Expanding TTA’s reach by cultivating strategic relationships, partnerships, and new resources that advance the mission.
- **Bylaws Special Committee** – Ensuring TTA’s governing documents evolve in alignment with the Strategic Plan and support the organization’s long-term vision.

2. **Elevate Strategic Communications and Messaging:**

TTA will rename and repurpose the Communications Committee as the **Strategic Communications and Messaging Committee**, reflecting an enhanced focus on clear, consistent, and compelling communication in support of the Strategic Plan.

3. **Align Committee Structure for Impact:**

As implementation proceeds, responsibilities of Standing Committees may be refined or reassigned to Special Committees to ensure clarity of purpose, effective coordination, and alignment with strategic priorities.

4. **Engage and Empower Leaders:**

TTA will actively recruit and appoint committed individuals to serve on Special and Standing Committees, building leadership capacity and broad ownership of the Strategic Plan.

5. Guide Implementation and Ensure Accountability:

Members of the Strategic Planning Team will partner with each committee to:

- Review relevant Pillars, Goals, and recommended Action Items.
- Assist committees in prioritizing initiatives across the three- to five-year implementation timeline.
- Support the development of initiatives that are brought forward for Board review and approval in accordance with TTA governance practices.

Through these steps, the Board and committees will work together to translate TTA's vision into sustained action over the life of the Strategic Plan.

4. Appendices

Appendix A: ***Strategic Planning Team Participants***

Appendix B: ***Strategic Planning Process and Timeline***

Appendix C: ***Survey Results***

Appendix D: ***Summary of Focus Group Conversations***

Appendix A - Strategic Planning Team Participants **

Norm Brinsley (Plateau), Past Chapter Chair
June Callahan (Nashville), TTA Board Treasurer
Patty Deen (Highland Rim), TTA Board Member, Chapter Chair
Libby Francis (Nashville)
Nina Heckler (Jackson), TTA Board Member, Chapter Chair
Mark Hubbard (Nashville), TTA Board Member
Will Latham (Scenic City), TTA Board President
Marti Owensby (Scenic City), TTA Board Member
Sara Pollard (Murfreesboro), TTA Board Member
Steve Turner (Clarksville), Chapter Chair, TTA Board Vice President

Ned Murray, (Consultant), President NRM Consulting

** Not all participants were included in all aspects of the planning process.

Appendix B – Strategic Planning Process and Timeline

A year-long process was designed to be as inclusive and engaging as possible. The intentions were to utilize the diverse collective experience and perspective of members while also engaging a process that helped to deepen members' engagement and understanding of the organization. The following is a summary timeline of that process.

January - February, 2025

- NRM Consulting was engaged to facilitate the process.
- A ten member Strategic Planning Team (“SPT”) was formed — including the president, vice president, and treasurer of the board — with representation from 7 chapters across east, middle, and west Tennessee.
- NRM Consulting conducted a review and analysis of several years worth of relevant organizational data including history, membership, financials, and a review of the website and social media presence, as well as documents such as the hiking handbook and hike leader manual.
- Through a series of Zoom meetings, the SPT engaged several in-depth conversations and writing assignments in order to begin to identify core aspects of TTA's identity and purpose, as well as key strategic issues, challenges, and opportunities before the organization.

February – March, 2025

- The SPT used all of the above information and work to develop and deploy a state-wide membership survey.
- Survey results were collected from 291 respondents representing at least 33% of each chapter's membership and a wide range of tenure and levels of engagement.
- The SPT used the survey analysis to shape questions and issues to be further explored with members through small focus group discussions facilitated via Zoom by NRM Consulting.
- Seven focus group discussions were conducted with thirty-five members from eleven chapters participating, including a range of tenures from brand new to “life members.”

April, 2025

- The SPT used the analysis of the survey and focus groups to identify four main areas of priority on which to focus and build over the next three to five years. We call these “pillars” — Supporting Chapters, Supporting Trails, Improving Communication & Messaging, and Building Organizational Sustainability.
- With the Pillars established, the SPT next finalized the structure and terminology for the strategic plan (Pillars > Goals > Action Items) and began to brainstorm suggestions for each level to help clarify and shape the final plan.
- Subgroups of the SPT were formed, and each subgroup adopted a Pillar for the purpose of writing Goals and suggesting Action Items for that Pillar.

May - June, 2025

- The subgroups continued to work on their Pillars, which were compiled into a single document for the SPT to review and revise.

July- August, 2025

- The SPT, as a committee of the whole, reviewed, revised, and re-ordered the proposed goals and action items into a more cohesive and actionable proposal.
- The SPT explored the organization’s capacity to implement the draft plan by beginning to identify who (individuals, existing committees, potential new committees, etc.) might implement the necessary action items.
- A subgroup met to draft an updated mission statement and vision statement for Tennessee Trails Association, which is subsequently revised and approved by the SPT for submission to the Board for approval.

September, 2025

- The SPT met to approve a final draft of Pillars, Goals, and Assignment of Responsibilities for submission to the board, and outlined the final steps and timeline for the strategic planning process.

October, 2025

- The current draft mission statement, vision statement, strategic pillars, goals, and assignment of responsibilities were presented as an update to membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- The current draft mission statement, vision statement, strategic pillars, goals, and assignment of responsibilities were sent in advance to board members, who had an opportunity to review, ask questions, and discuss at the board meeting immediately after the Annual General Meeting.

November - December, 2025

- The SPT reviewed any feedback from the Annual General Meeting and board meeting and finalized the draft to be submitted for Board approval.

February, 2026

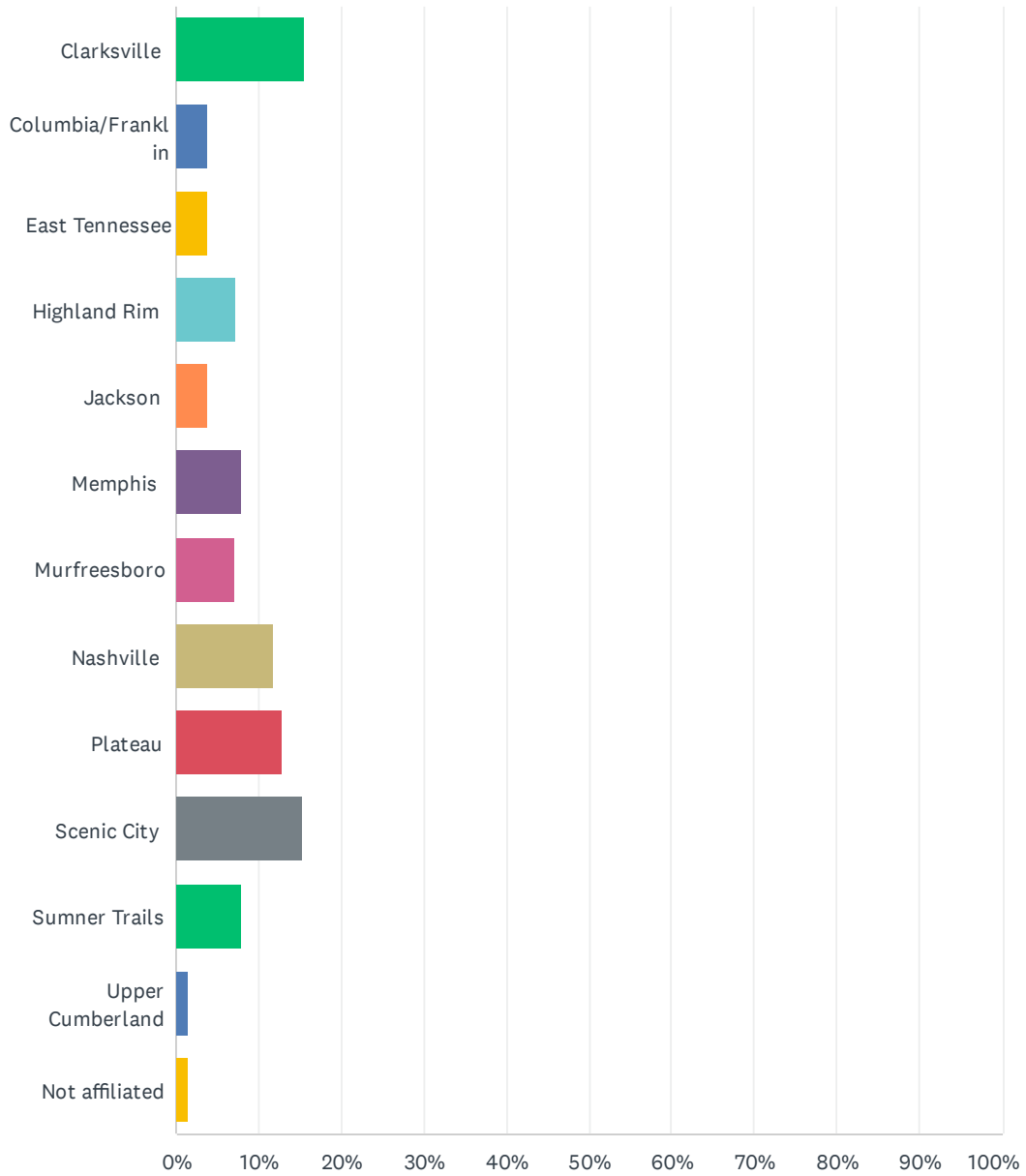
- A final proposed draft of mission statement, vision statement, and strategic pillars, goals, and responsibilities will be presented to the Board for approval.

February, 2026 and beyond

- As indicated by the approved draft plan, the document will be distributed to the necessary committees and individuals to begin implementation.
- Using the action items proposed by the SPT, those responsible for implementing the plan's goals will be asked to prioritize goals and action items and begin developing proposals for initiatives to be implemented in the near term. These proposals will be presented to the Board for review and approval before implementation.

Q1 Which TTA chapter are you a member of?

Answered: 288 Skipped: 3

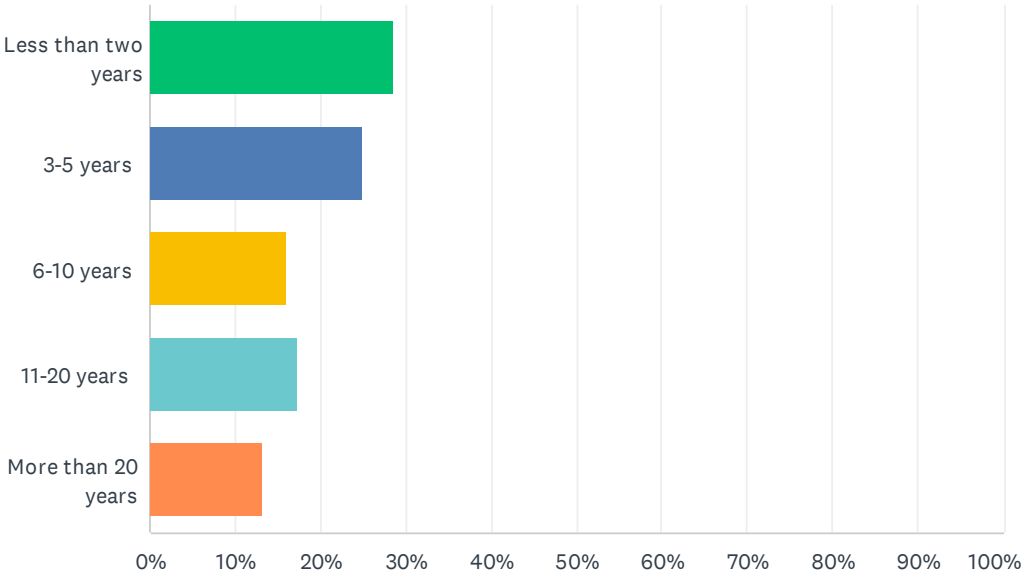


TENNESSEE TRAILS ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC SURVEY

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Clarksville	15.63%	45
Columbia/Franklin	3.82%	11
East Tennessee	3.82%	11
Highland Rim	7.29%	21
Jackson	3.82%	11
Memphis	7.99%	23
Murfreesboro	6.94%	20
Nashville	11.81%	34
Plateau	12.85%	37
Scenic City	15.28%	44
Sumner Trails	7.99%	23
Upper Cumberland	1.39%	4
Not affiliated	1.39%	4
Total Respondents: 288		

Q2 How long have you been involved with TTA?

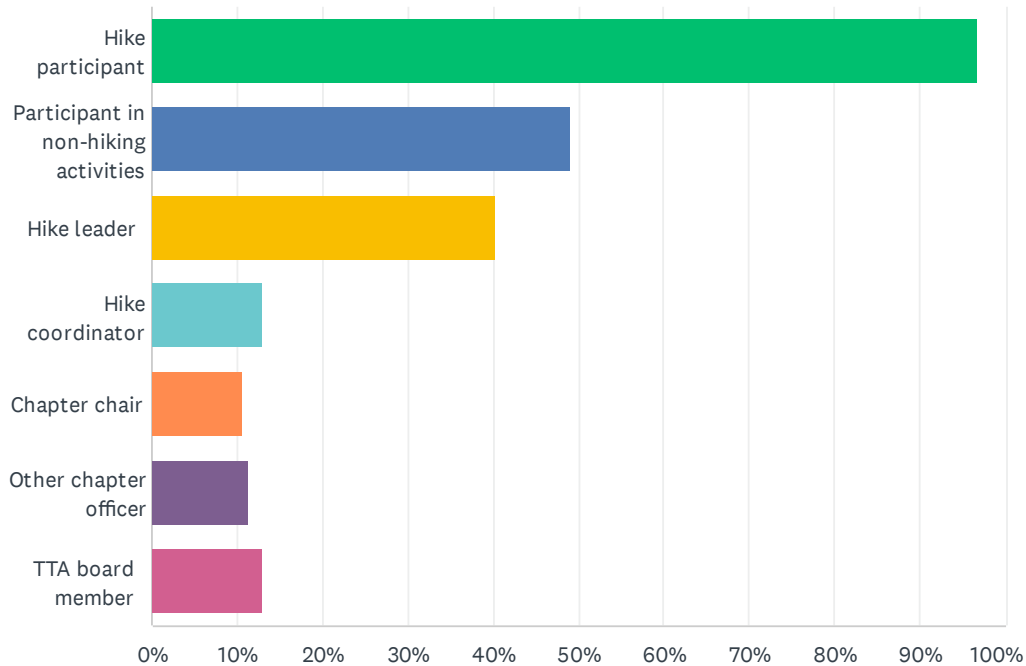
Answered: 288 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than two years	28.47%	82
3-5 years	25.00%	72
6-10 years	15.97%	46
11-20 years	17.36%	50
More than 20 years	13.19%	38
TOTAL		288

Q3 Which of the following roles have you held with TTA? (select all that apply)

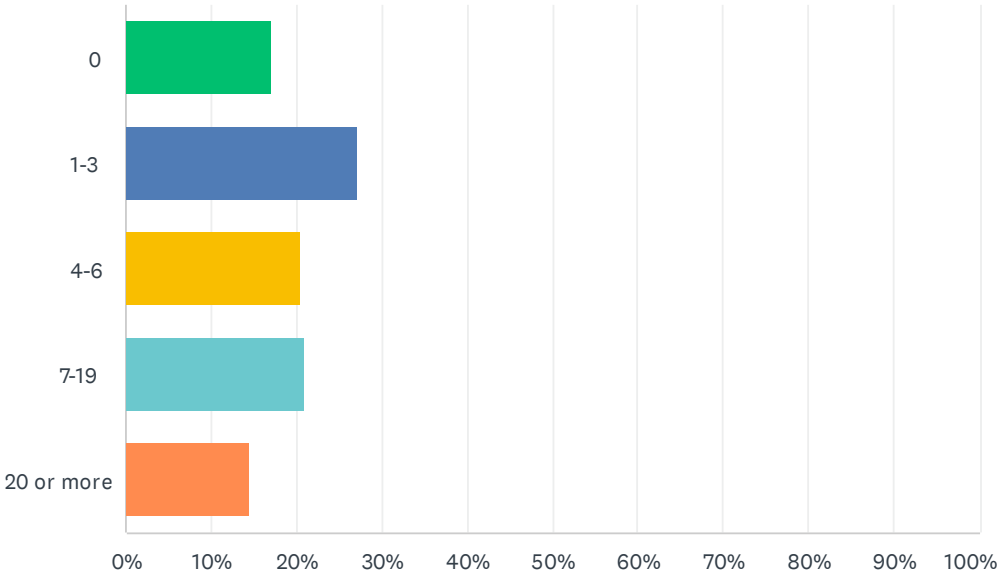
Answered: 283 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hike participant	96.82%	274
Participant in non-hiking activities	49.12%	139
Hike leader	40.28%	114
Hike coordinator	13.07%	37
Chapter chair	10.60%	30
Other chapter officer	11.31%	32
TTA board member	13.07%	37
Total Respondents: 283		

Q4 In the past year, how many TTA hikes have you participated in?

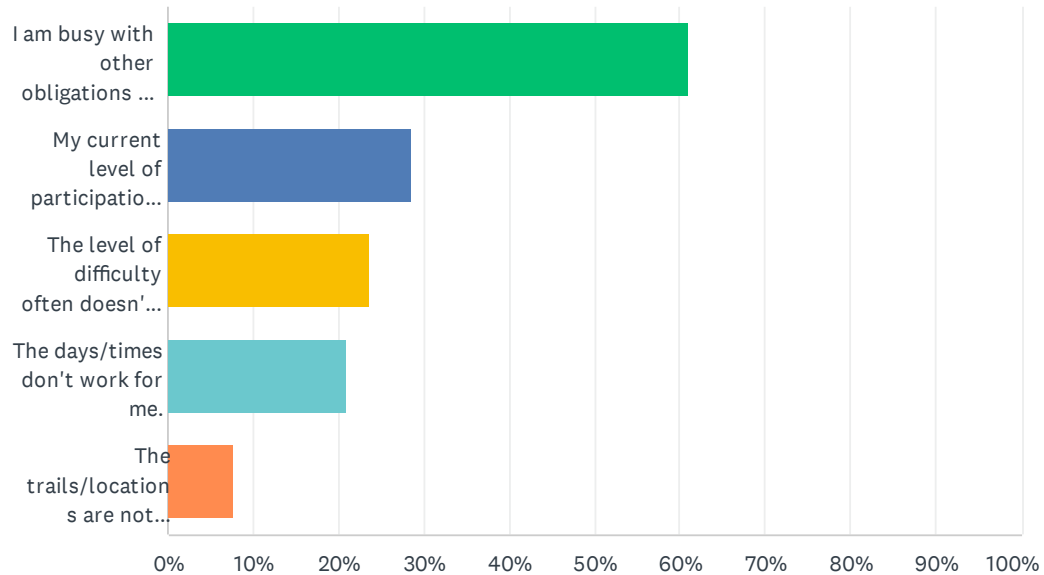
Answered: 288 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0	17.01%	49
1-3	27.08%	78
4-6	20.49%	59
7-19	20.83%	60
20 or more	14.58%	42
TOTAL		288

Q5 What keeps you from participating in more TTA organized hikes? (choose all that apply)

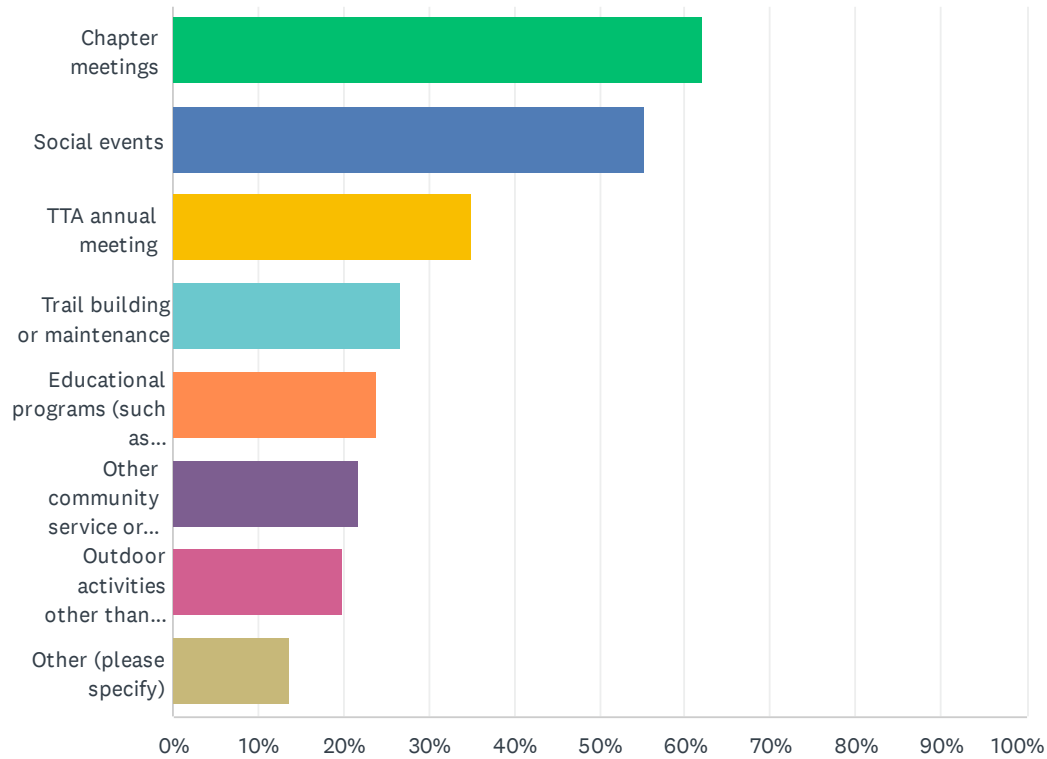
Answered: 249 Skipped: 42



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am busy with other obligations and activities.	61.04%	152
My current level of participation is about right for me.	28.51%	71
The level of difficulty often doesn't match my abilities.	23.69%	59
The days/times don't work for me.	20.88%	52
The trails/locations are not appealing to me.	7.63%	19
Total Respondents: 249		

Q6 In the past year, what non-hiking TTA organized activities have you participated in? (choose all that apply)

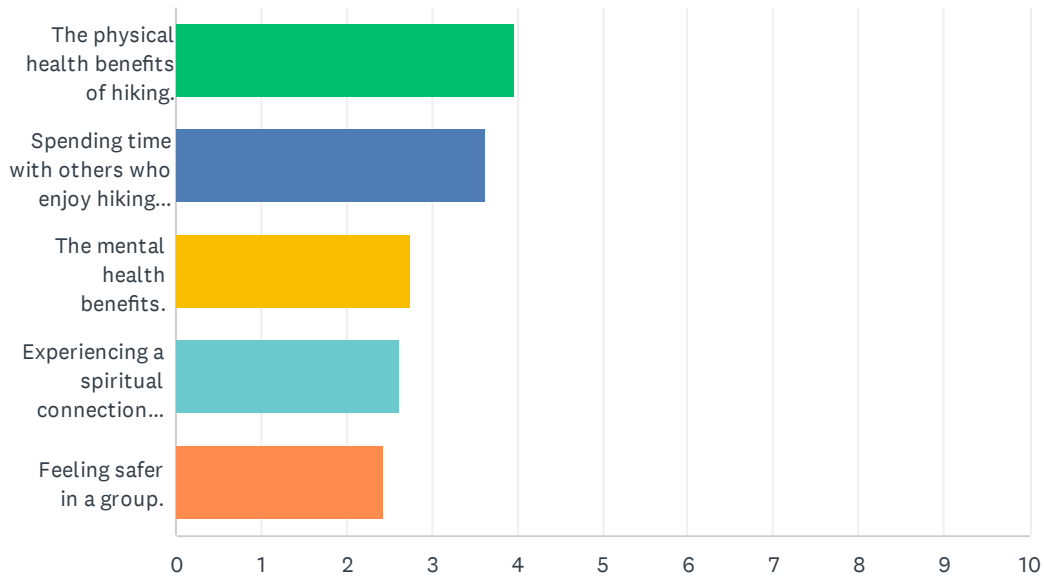
Answered: 226 Skipped: 65



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Chapter meetings	61.95%	140
Social events	55.31%	125
TTA annual meeting	34.96%	79
Trail building or maintenance	26.55%	60
Educational programs (such as presentations, workshops, lectures, etc.)	23.89%	54
Other community service or outreach activities	21.68%	49
Outdoor activities other than hiking (such as paddling, overnight backpacking, etc.)	19.91%	45
Other (please specify)	13.72%	31
Total Respondents: 226		

Q7 An important part of TTA's identity and purpose is the opportunity we provide to experience and enjoy the many benefits of hiking. Please rank order the following TTA hiking benefits in order of importance to you (1 being most important, and use n/a if you think it's not at all important).

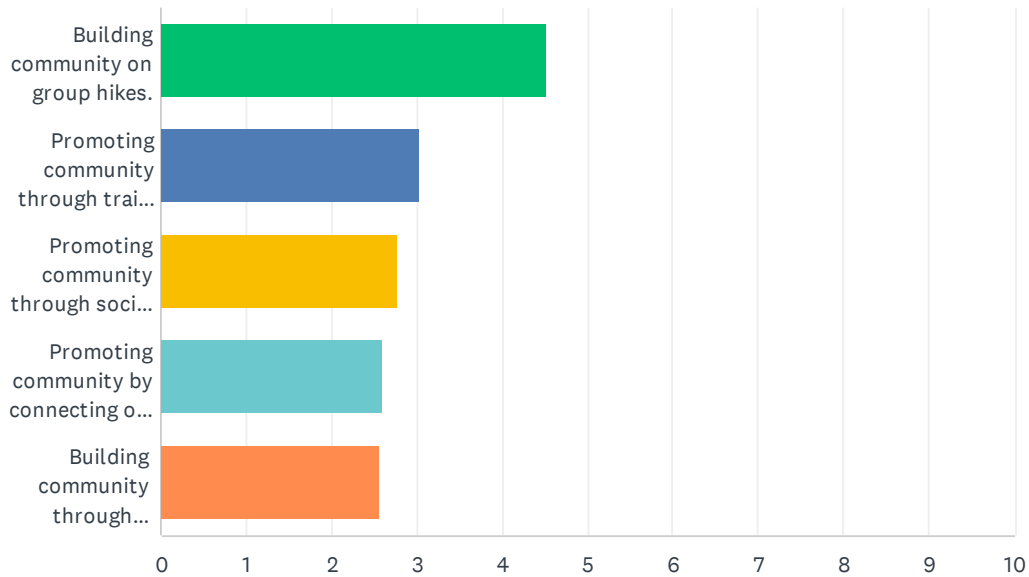
Answered: 265 Skipped: 26



	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
The physical health benefits of hiking.	41.60% 104	28.80% 72	18.40% 46	6.40% 16	4.40% 11	0.40% 1	250	3.97
Spending time with others who enjoy hiking and care about trails.	31.64% 81	28.13% 72	17.58% 45	13.67% 35	7.81% 20	1.17% 3	256	3.63
The mental health benefits.	8.49% 22	16.60% 43	29.73% 77	25.10% 65	15.83% 41	4.25% 11	259	2.76
Experiencing a spiritual connection through nature.	10.12% 26	13.23% 34	18.68% 48	26.46% 68	20.62% 53	10.89% 28	257	2.62
Feeling safer in a group.	11.72% 30	13.67% 35	12.50% 32	20.70% 53	34.38% 88	7.03% 18	256	2.44

Q8 An important part of TTA's identity and purpose is building community, connecting people to each other and nature. Please rank order the following ways TTA can promote a sense of community (1 being most important, and use n/a if you think it's not at all important).

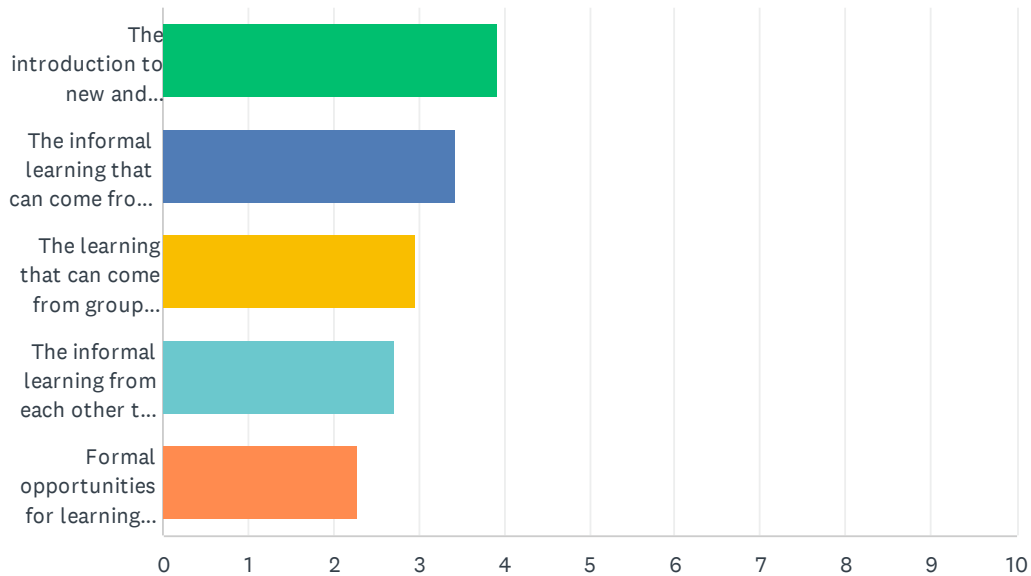
Answered: 259 Skipped: 32



	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Building community on group hikes.	71.83% 181	13.49% 34	5.95% 15	2.78% 7	3.57% 9	2.38% 6	252	4.51
Promoting community through trail building or maintenance.	8.06% 20	30.65% 76	25.81% 64	18.55% 46	12.50% 31	4.44% 11	248	3.03
Promoting community through social activities.	6.91% 17	20.73% 51	23.58% 58	26.02% 64	14.63% 36	8.13% 20	246	2.77
Promoting community by connecting our organization to the broader community in meaningful ways (such as service projects, advocacy, educational programs, etc.).	9.02% 22	13.11% 32	27.05% 66	18.44% 45	25.00% 61	7.38% 18	244	2.60
Building community through non-hiking activities.	5.62% 14	21.69% 54	14.46% 36	22.89% 57	25.30% 63	10.04% 25	249	2.55

Q9 An important part of TTA's identity and purpose is creating opportunities for lifelong learning. Please rank the following ways TTA can support learning (1 being most important, use n/a for not at all important).

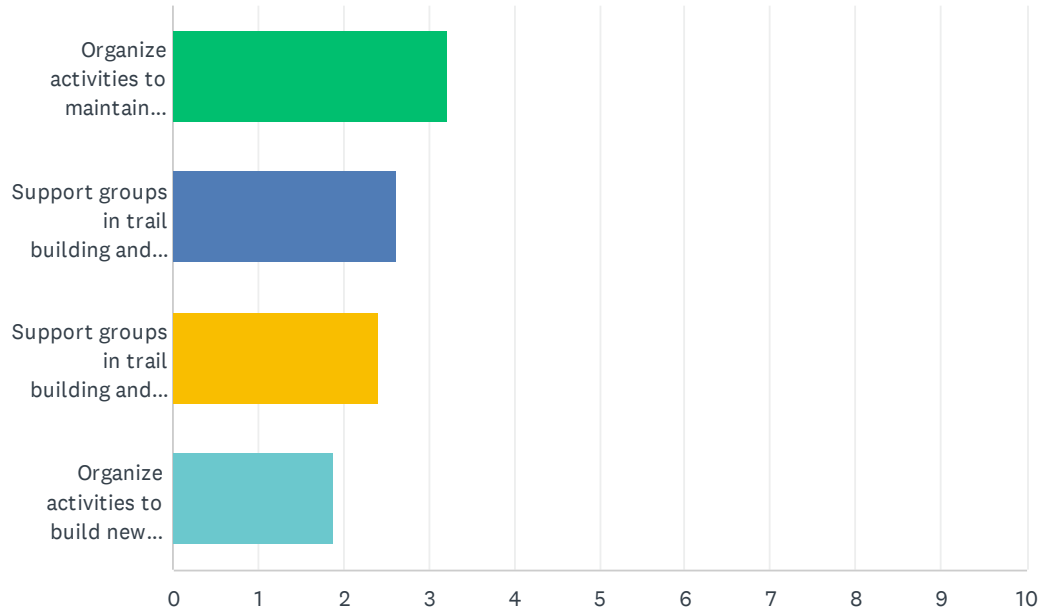
Answered: 262 Skipped: 29



	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
The introduction to new and interesting places and trails for hiking.	46.03% 116	23.41% 59	12.70% 32	6.75% 17	8.73% 22	2.38% 6	252	3.93
The informal learning that can come from each other about the natural world - what we are seeing when we hike.	23.32% 59	26.88% 68	22.92% 58	15.42% 39	8.30% 21	3.16% 8	253	3.43
The learning that can come from group hikes focused on a theme or topic led by an expert.	14.00% 35	18.40% 46	21.20% 53	31.60% 79	9.20% 23	5.60% 14	250	2.96
The informal learning from each other that takes place about that art and science of hiking and hiking safety.	9.60% 24	17.60% 44	24.40% 61	20.40% 51	21.60% 54	6.40% 16	250	2.71
Formal opportunities for learning such as speakers, workshops, webinars, etc.	8.40% 21	13.20% 33	15.60% 39	16.80% 42	39.60% 99	6.40% 16	250	2.29

Q10 Historically, an important part of TTA's identity and purpose has been to promote hiking and community through trail building and maintenance. Please rank order the following ways TTA can support trails (1 being most important, use n/a for not at all important).

Answered: 255 Skipped: 36



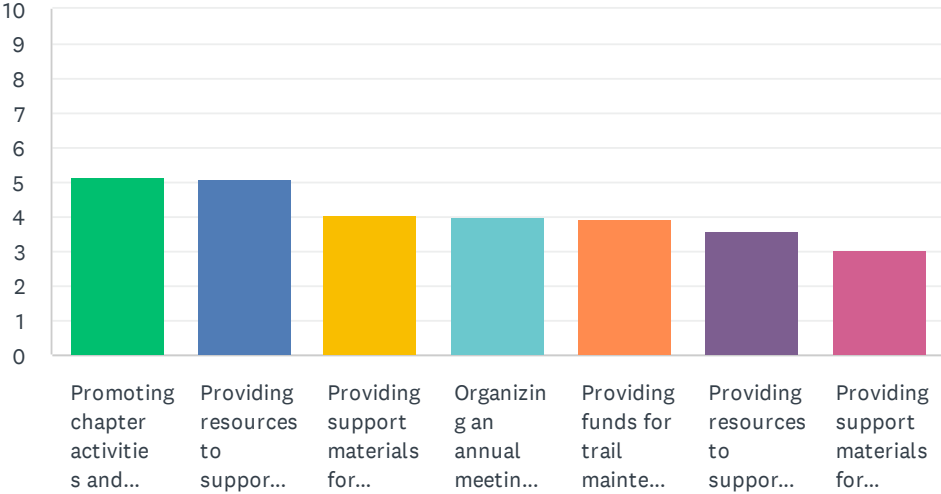
	1	2	3	4	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Organize activities to maintain existing trails.	50.20% 125	22.89% 57	18.47% 46	4.82% 12	3.61% 9	249	3.23
Support groups in trail building and maintenance through grants such as the Evan Means grant program.	26.72% 66	21.86% 54	29.15% 72	16.19% 40	6.07% 15	247	2.63
Support groups in trail building and maintenance by promoting their events (e.g. in the newsletter, social media, etc.)	15.57% 38	31.15% 76	26.64% 65	22.13% 54	4.51% 11	244	2.42
Organize activities to build new trails.	6.15% 15	20.49% 50	19.26% 47	44.67% 109	9.43% 23	244	1.87

Q11 Feel free to add any additional thoughts or suggestions related to TTA's identity and purpose.

Answered: 34 Skipped: 257

Q12 Please rank order in terms of importance to you for TTA to support its chapters by:

Answered: 227 Skipped: 64

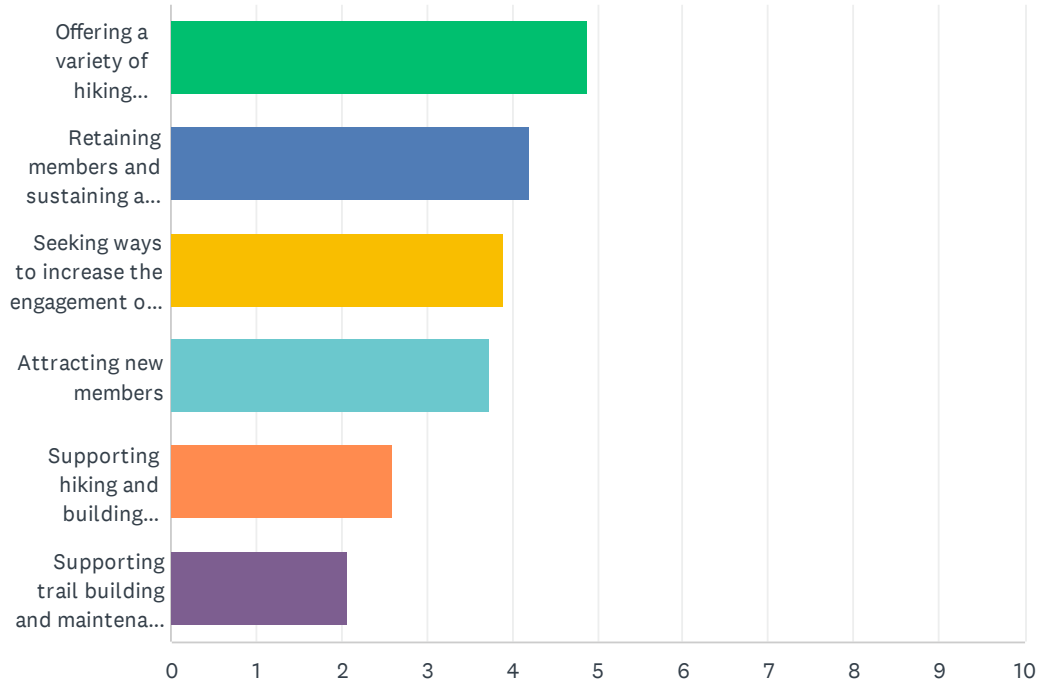


TENNESSEE TRAILS ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC SURVEY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Promoting chapter activities and cross-chapter learning (e.g. through the newsletter, social media, etc.).	33.03% 73	15.38% 34	14.48% 32	14.48% 32	10.41% 23	5.88% 13	3.17% 7	3.17% 7	221	5.16
Providing resources to support hike leaders/organizers (e.g. guidance documents, training, checklists, etc.)	26.03% 57	20.09% 44	20.09% 44	12.33% 27	8.22% 18	6.85% 15	3.20% 7	3.20% 7	219	5.10
Providing support materials for member recruitment and retention.	9.35% 20	14.49% 31	15.89% 34	14.02% 30	14.49% 31	14.95% 32	8.41% 18	8.41% 18	214	4.04
Organizing an annual meeting where we can connect, share, and learn.	13.49% 29	16.74% 36	9.30% 20	13.95% 30	16.28% 35	12.56% 27	13.49% 29	4.19% 9	215	4.01
Providing funds for trail maintenance (such as through Evan Means grants) and other service projects.	11.63% 25	10.23% 22	18.14% 39	15.81% 34	12.56% 27	14.42% 31	12.56% 27	4.65% 10	215	3.94
Providing resources to support organizational effectiveness (such as suggestions/best practices for chapter organization, job descriptions, volunteer recognition, etc.)	4.15% 9	16.13% 35	9.22% 20	15.21% 33	14.75% 32	15.67% 34	15.21% 33	9.68% 21	217	3.58
Providing support materials for marketing and promotion.	4.67% 10	7.94% 17	10.75% 23	9.81% 21	15.89% 34	17.29% 37	25.23% 54	8.41% 18	214	3.07

Q13 Please rank order in terms of importance to you ways that chapters can support the mission, effectiveness, and sustainability of TTA:

Answered: 225 Skipped: 66



	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Offering a variety of hiking activities for a range of people and abilities.	49.54% 107	16.20% 35	15.74% 34	11.57% 25	3.24% 7	3.24% 7	0.46% 1	216	4.88
Retaining members and sustaining a welcoming culture	19.27% 42	26.15% 57	24.77% 54	16.51% 36	5.96% 13	5.96% 13	1.38% 3	218	4.19
Seeking ways to increase the engagement of current members.	13.36% 29	27.65% 60	20.28% 44	20.74% 45	8.22% 18	8.76% 19	0.02% 0	217	3.91
Attracting new members	14.02% 30	20.09% 43	20.56% 44	21.03% 45	16.36% 35	7.01% 15	0.93% 2	214	3.73
Supporting hiking and building community through trails-related service projects.	3.76% 8	8.45% 18	8.92% 19	20.19% 43	36.15% 77	19.25% 41	3.29% 7	213	2.61
Supporting trail building and maintenance by raising funds to increase Evan Means grants.	3.30% 7	3.77% 8	9.91% 21	8.02% 17	24.06% 51	46.23% 98	4.72% 10	212	2.06

Appendix C - Page

Q14 Nonprofits often have aspirations greater than their capacity. To help identify priorities, please rank order the following potential strategic initiatives in terms of priority to TTA in the coming years.

Answered: 212 Skipped: 79



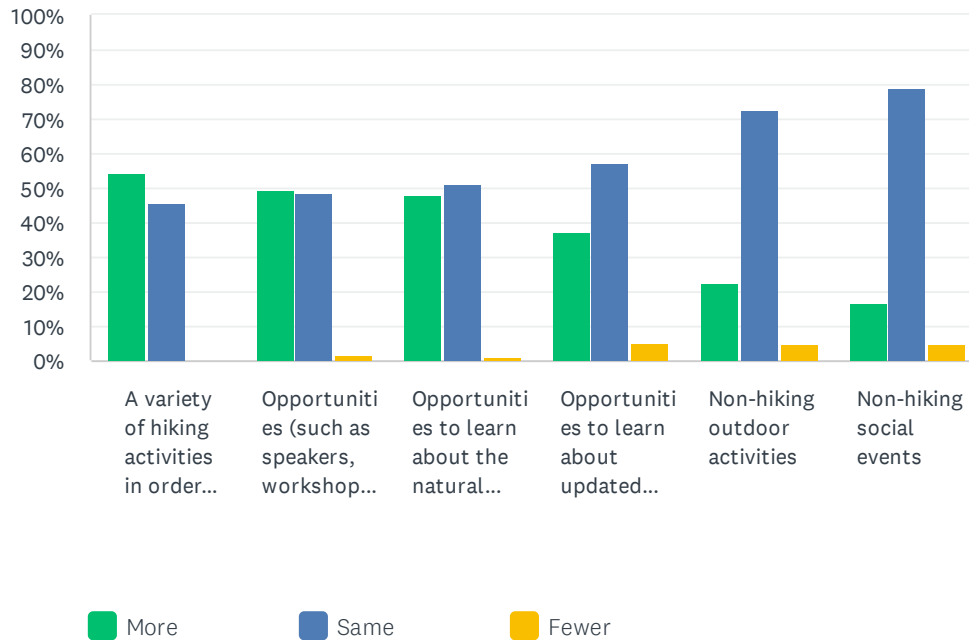
TENNESSEE TRAILS ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC SURVEY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	N/A	TOTAL	SCORE
Promoting TTA activities and their benefits (to current members and beyond).	34.16% 69	19.80% 40	17.33% 35	9.41% 19	5.94% 12	4.46% 9	3.96% 8	2.48% 5	2.48% 5	202	6.26
Improving internal communication (through updating/better use of website, newsletter, social media, apps, etc.).	18.13% 35	18.65% 36	12.44% 24	15.54% 30	11.40% 22	7.25% 14	9.33% 18	2.59% 5	4.66% 9	193	5.42
Improving external communication (marketing, promotions, recruitment, etc.) through updating/better use of website, newsletter, social media, apps, etc.	14.89% 28	16.49% 31	16.49% 31	15.96% 30	10.64% 20	8.51% 16	6.91% 13	4.79% 9	5.32% 10	188	5.28
Promoting chapter effectiveness and efficiency.	11.83% 22	17.20% 32	20.43% 38	8.60% 16	12.37% 23	10.75% 20	5.91% 11	4.84% 9	8.06% 15	186	5.21
Supporting recruitment efforts.	13.09% 25	14.66% 28	15.71% 30	13.09% 25	16.75% 32	8.38% 16	8.38% 16	5.24% 10	4.71% 9	191	5.05
Updating the mission statement and bylaws to better reflect our current identity and purpose.	8.02% 15	4.28% 8	8.56% 16	8.02% 15	10.70% 20	13.37% 25	12.83% 24	14.97% 28	19.25% 36	187	3.83
Reorganizing committee structures to better align with our identity, purpose, and vision.	3.76% 7	6.45% 12	4.84% 9	10.75% 20	9.14% 17	12.37% 23	18.82% 35	12.90% 24	20.97% 39	186	3.57
Fundraising to increase our capacity for impact.	1.64% 3	4.37% 8	6.01% 11	11.48% 21	12.57% 23	17.49% 32	12.02% 22	20.77% 38	13.66% 25	183	3.30

Appendix C - Page

Q15 Please tell us if you would like to see your chapter offer more, fewer, or about the same amount of the following activities:

Answered: 229 Skipped: 62



	MORE	SAME	FEWER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
A variety of hiking activities in order to make the benefits available to more people and abilities.	53.98% 122	46.02% 104	0.00% 0	226	1.46
Opportunities (such as speakers, workshops, themed hikes, etc.) to learn safe, responsible hiking practices such as best practices, wilderness first aid, safety equipment, etc.	49.55% 111	48.66% 109	1.79% 4	224	1.52
Opportunities to learn about the natural world (such as speakers, workshops, themed hikes, etc.)	48.00% 108	51.11% 115	0.89% 2	225	1.53
Opportunities to learn about updated environment and conservation issues.	37.44% 85	57.27% 130	5.29% 12	227	1.68
Non-hiking outdoor activities	22.62% 50	72.85% 161	4.52% 10	221	1.82
Non-hiking social events	16.67% 37	78.83% 175	--	---	1.88

Appendix C - Page

Q16 Please feel free to add any other final thoughts or suggestions related to chapter support and engagement.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 261

Q17 Please feel free to offer any final comments or suggestions.

Answered: 37 Skipped: 254

Appendix D – Summary of Focus Groups Conversations

Prepared by Ned Murray, Consultant

OVERVIEW

Between March 11 and March 19, 2025, I conducted seven focus group meetings via Zoom. Thirty-five members from eleven chapters participated. Their tenures with the organization ranged from “Life Members” to a new member for whom the focus group was her very first TTA organized event – and a wide variety in between.

For the most part, the meetings followed the same structure outlined in this agenda:

1. *(4 min) Welcome, thanks, and self-introduction of facilitator: brief background, how I got involved, and what my role is. Also emphasize confidentiality of these discussions.*
2. *(7 minutes) Group introductions - briefly: name (first name only is fine if you prefer), chapter, how long a member, and ..how did you find TTA, what did you expect when you joined, and how has your experience aligned with that - or not?*
3. *(2 min) Collect any questions or expectations you are coming into this with — questions about the process or anything you are unclear about and expectations for the outcome...I want to know if you have expectations or questions so I can be sure to address them.*
4. *(10 min) Brief review of the process and survey results (see slides).*
5. *Open Discussion using the questions noted below*
6. *Thanks, wrap-up, contact information*

Generally the sessions began approximately 3 - 4 minutes after the hour and roughly followed the above estimated time stamps, leaving a solid 30 minutes for attendees 'questions, comments, and insights. At the one-hour mark, attendees were invited to leave if they needed to, but also were invited to stick around as much as 30 more minutes for continued conversation per their preference. Four of the seven groups extended beyond the hour with two continuing for the full 90 minutes allocated.

QUESTION 1: *How did you find TTA, what did you expect when you joined, and how has your experience aligned with that - or not?*

The most predominant way people reported finding TTA was through an individual connection “ –someone told me about it” - including neighbors, colleagues, and someone on the trail. In one case, the person was introduced to TTA by someone in New Zealand!

The second most common theme was that people found TTA when they were relatively new to the area. However, the motivation and process varied within this group. Most found TTA when looking for places to hike or people to meet, or both. Most were already hikers that found TTA when looking for hiking opportunities in their new community. However, more than one said they had not been regular hikers but thought TTA might be a fun way to meet people and maybe do more hiking. Another said, “Quite honestly, I intended to join TTA for a little while in order to learn the trails in the area then strike out on my own...but I really enjoyed the group hikes..so I’m still here!”

Two participants specifically indicated that TTA had been difficult to find when they were looking – to which comment several other participants indicated agreement.

Additionally, two participants indicated that they found TTA through MeetUps. One still does both; one prefers the smaller groups and better structure/organization of TTA hikes.

One person said they saw an ad in the paper, one said a bumper sticker, and one a brochure.

QUESTION 2: *What expectations/wishes do you have for this meeting or for the strategic planning process?*

Almost no participants expressed any agenda or expectations. Most indicated they were simply curious. One participant did say, “I hope we can get some help figuring out how to attract new members.”

SUMMARY OF OPEN CONVERSATION

Approximately 90% of the conversation about the strategic questions fell into three main (and interrelated) categories:

1. How can TTA improve communication?
2. How can we attract new members?
3. How can we recruit more hike leaders?

Among the other topics that emerged in the open conversation, two of the more prevalent were: 1) hike pace; and 2) chapter growth.

- 1) Hike Pace:** A fundamental component of TTA's identity and value is hiking in groups, and yet most recognize that there also are inherent challenges to group hiking. The consequences of a hiker being a "mismatch" for a hike were often discussed, as were ideas about how to mitigate those consequences. Hike pace emerged as an important component of this equation that should be addressed in some way.
- 2) Chapter Growth:** The people who expressed concern (or even opposition in one case) about the idea of membership growth, seemed more concerned about their capacity to accommodate that growth than about "change" or cultural impact. They articulated concerns such as, "We don't want hikes with big numbers like MeetUps" or "What are we going to do with them; we don't have enough hike leaders!" When asked, they all acknowledged that the organization must attract new members (in these cases I often referred to the bar graph of years of membership to illustrate natural attrition patterns) to stay viable.

IN CONCLUSION:

Finally, toward the end of each session, I asked every group, in a variety of ways, what their general impressions were — are we asking the right questions? Are we missing anything? Do you think we're moving in a good direction? All of the feedback was positive. Many said things such as, "Yes, I think you are asking the right questions." Nobody suggested important priorities that had not already been named. And many expressed gratitude to the TTA board for engaging this process and to the Strategic Planning Team for doing this good work.

Based on these results I encourage TTA to make these three topics high priorities in the strategic plan:

1. How can TTA improve communication?
2. How can we attract new members?
3. How can we recruit more hike leaders?

Tennessee Trails Association – Financial Report 4th Quarter 2025

Recognition

Many thanks to June Callahan, for her years of service as Treasurer. She has made innumerable improvements, including moving the accounting and reporting system to web-based QuickBooks Pro. Her efforts supporting the annual meetings have been critical. She has endured many hours of tutoring the incoming Treasurer and agreed to remain on the Finance Committee as a valued resource.

Financial Reports

The financial reports for the fourth quarter are shown below. The quarter shows a deficit of \$3,945.29. The year shows a surplus of \$3,106.42. The annual meeting raised \$7,764.82 for the Evan Means Grant Fund.

2026 Budget

The draft budget has been reviewed by the Finance Committee and is submitted for the Board's approval. The draft budget is shown on the sixth page of this report along with 2025 actuals and the 2025 budget. Details of the Communication Committee's budget is also included.

Projects for 2026

- Financial Audit AUP (Agreed Upon Procedures) of 2025

Statement of Activity - General Fund - Monthly
Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.
October 1-December 31, 2025

Distribution account	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	Total
Income				
4000 Donations				
4050 Donations - Unrestricted			10.00	10.00
Total for 4000 Donations			10.00	\$10.00
4100 Memberships				
4150 Individual	875.00	1,050.00	1,025.00	2,950.00
4200 Family	525.00	455.00	490.00	1,470.00
4350 Supporting Individual	125.00	150.00	175.00	450.00
4400 Supporting Family	35.00	35.00	0.00	70.00
Total for 4100 Memberships	1,560.00	1,690.00	1,690.00	\$4,940.00
4450 Other Income				
4500 Bank & CD Interest	28.13	411.13	345.29	784.55
Total for 4450 Other Income	28.13	411.13	345.29	\$784.55
Total for Income	1,588.13	2,101.13	2,045.29	\$5,734.55
Gross Profit	1,588.13	2,101.13	2,045.29	\$5,734.55
Expenses				
6050 Accounting, Legal & Other Reviews	6,874.48	224.34		7,098.82
6250 Merchant Charges	68.56	66.64	68.66	204.06
6300 Newsletter Editing	750.00			750.00
6550 Awards		205.00		205.00
6800 Website & Supporting Software	426.92	972.52	22.52	1,421.96
Total for Expenses	8,119.96	1,468.50	91.38	\$9,679.84
Net Operating Income	-6,531.83	632.63	1,953.91	-\$3,945.29
Net Other Income				
Net Income	-6,531.83	632.63	1,953.91	-\$3,945.29

Statement of Activity - General Fund - Quarter
Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.
January 1-December 31, 2025

Distribution account	Jan 2025 - Mar 2025	Apr 2025 - Jun 2025	Jul 2025 - Sep 2025	Oct 2025 - Dec 2025	Total	2025 Budget
Income						
4000 Donations						
4050 Donations - Unrestricted	1,030.00		1,175.00	10.00	2,215.00	1,200.00
Total for 4000 Donations	1,030.00		1,175.00	10.00	\$2,215.00	\$1,200.00
4100 Memberships						
4150 Individual	3,700.00	1,825.00	2,450.00	2,950.00	10,925.00	10,800.00
4200 Family	1,470.00	1,015.00	770.00	1,470.00	4,725.00	5,200.00
4250 Lifetime - Individual	25.00	12.00			37.00	25.00
4310 Student	15.00		0.00		15.00	15.00
4350 Supporting Individual	250.00	200.00	200.00	450.00	1,100.00	1,200.00
4400 Supporting Family	120.00	70.00	175.00	70.00	435.00	260.00
Total for 4100 Memberships	5,580.00	3,122.00	3,595.00	4,940.00	\$17,237.00	\$17,500.00
4450 Other Income						
4500 Bank & CD Interest	778.91	48.92	2,516.58	784.55	4,130.96	4,200.00
Total for 4450 Other Income	778.91	48.92	2,516.58	784.55	\$4,130.96	\$4,200.00
Total for Income	7,388.91	3,170.92	7,288.58	5,734.55	\$23,682.96	\$22,900.00
Gross Profit	7,388.91	3,170.92	7,288.58	5,734.55	\$23,682.96	\$22,900.00
Expenses						
6050 Accounting, Legal & Other Reviews	3,000.00			7,098.82	10,098.82	12,500.00
6100 Allocations to Chapters	2,370.00	1,075.00			3,445.00	3,345.00
6200 Insurance - Directors & Officers		670.00			670.00	715.00
6210 Insurance - General Liability		649.00			649.00	1,155.00
6250 Merchant Charges	217.17	120.08	147.42	204.06	688.73	690.00
6300 Newsletter Editing	375.00	375.00		750.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
6350 PO Box & Office Supplies		244.00			244.00	260.00
6400 State & federal Filing Fees	70.46				70.46	100.00
6550 Awards				205.00	205.00	200.00
6800 Website & Supporting Software	180.50	81.51	1,221.56	1,421.96	2,905.53	6,039.00
Total for Expenses	6,213.13	3,214.59	1,368.98	9,679.84	\$20,476.54	\$26,504.00
Net Operating Income	1,175.78	-43.67	5,919.60	-3,945.29	\$3,106.42	-\$3,604.00
Net Other Income						
Net Income	1,175.78	-43.67	5,919.60	-3,945.29	\$3,106.42	-\$3,604.00

Statement of Activity - EMGF by Quarter
Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.
January 1-December 31, 2025

Distribution account	Jan 2025 - Mar 2025	Apr 2025 - Jun 2025	Jul 2025 - Sep 2025	Oct 2025 - Dec 2025	Total
Income					
4000 Donations					
4060 Donations - Restricted				70.00	70.00
4070 Donations - Board Directed	380.00	280.00	460.00	7,764.82	8,884.82
Total for 4000 Donations	380.00	280.00	460.00	7,834.82	\$8,954.82
Total for Income	380.00	280.00	460.00	7,834.82	\$8,954.82
Gross Profit	380.00	280.00	460.00	7,834.82	\$8,954.82
Expenses					
6600 Evan Means Grants Given		4,652.00		3,100.00	7,752.00
Total for Expenses		4,652.00		3,100.00	\$7,752.00
Net Operating Income	380.00	-4,372.00	460.00	4,734.82	\$1,202.82
Net Other Income					
Net Income	380.00	-4,372.00	460.00	4,734.82	\$1,202.82

Statement of Financial Position by Fund
Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.
As of December 31, 2025

Distribution account	1 Gen Fund	2 EMG Fund	Total
Assets			
Current Assets			
Bank Accounts			
Total for 1000 TTA Chapters	9,172.96		\$9,172.96
1200 TTA Center			
1220 Regions Bank - CD Accounts	45,659.51	20,000.00	65,659.51
1240 Regions Checking 8364			
1241 EMGF - Regions 8364		12,061.82	12,061.82
1242 General Fund - Regions 8364	3,133.83		3,133.83
Total for 1240 Regions Checking 8364	3,133.83	12,061.82	\$15,195.65
1260 Regions MM 8867	5,162.57	5,000.00	10,162.57
1270 Edward Jones Investments	103,989.86		103,989.86
1280 Stripe Account	427.63		427.63
1290 PayPal Account	0.00		0.00
Total for 1200 TTA Center	158,373.40	37,061.82	\$195,435.22
Total for Bank Accounts	167,546.36	37,061.82	\$204,608.18
Other Current Assets			
1420 Deposits - Future Annual Meetings	0.00		0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	0.00		\$0.00
Total for Current Assets	167,546.36	37,061.82	\$204,608.18
Total for Assets	167,546.36	37,061.82	\$204,608.18
Liabilities and Equity			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities			
2100 Prepaid Membership Dues	936.00		936.00
Total for Other Current Liabilities	936.00		\$936.00
Total for Current Liabilities	936.00		\$936.00
Total for Liabilities	936.00		\$936.00
Equity			
3002 Opening Balance Equity	163,503.94	35,859.00	199,362.94
3100 Retained Earnings			
Net Income	3,106.42	1,202.82	4,309.24
Total for Equity	166,610.36	37,061.82	\$203,672.18
Total for Liabilities and Equity	167,546.36	37,061.82	\$204,608.18

Statement of Cash Flows by Fund
Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.
January 1-December 31, 2025

Full name	1 Gen Fund	2 EMG Fund	Total
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Net Income	3,106.42	1,202.82	4,309.24
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:			
1420 Deposits - Future Annual Meetings	390.00		390.00
2100 Prepaid Membership Dues	463.00		463.00
Total for Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:	853.00		\$853.00
Net cash provided by operating activities	3,959.42	1,202.82	\$5,162.24
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
NET CASH INCREASE FOR PERIOD	3,959.42	1,202.82	\$5,162.24
Cash at beginning of period, January 1st 2025	163,586.94	35,859.00	\$199,445.94
CASH AT END OF PERIOD, 31st Dec 2025	167,546.36	37,061.82	\$204,608.18

Friday, January 09, 2026 04:56 PM GMTZ

2026 Proposed Budget

Tennessee Trails Association, Inc.

Distribution account	2025 Actuals	2025 Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	
Income				
4000 Donations				
4050 Donations - Unrestricted	2,215.00	1,200.00	1,500.00	Based on 2025 numbers
Total for 4000 Donations	\$2,215.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,500.00	
4100 Memberships				
4150 Individual	10,925.00	10,800.00	11,000.00	Based on 2025 numbers
4200 Family	4,725.00	5,200.00	4,725.00	Based on 2025 numbers
4250 Lifetime - Individual	37.00	25.00	50.00	Based on actual records
4310 Student	15.00	15.00	15.00	Based on 2025 numbers
4350 Supporting Individual	1,100.00	1,200.00	1,100.00	Based on 2025 numbers
4400 Supporting Family	435.00	260.00	400.00	Based on 2025 numbers
Total for 4100 Memberships	\$17,237.00	\$17,500.00	\$17,290.00	Based on 2025 numbers
4450 Other Income				
4500 Bank & CD Interest	4,130.96	4,200.00	3,300.00	Based on current holdings
Total for 4450 Other Income	\$4,130.96	\$4,200.00	\$3,300.00	
Total for Income	\$23,582.96	\$22,900.00	\$22,090.00	
Gross Profit	\$23,582.96	\$22,900.00	\$22,090.00	
Expenses				
6050 Accounting, Legal & Other Reviews	10,098.82	12,500.00	5,500.00	\$4,000 Financial UAP review, \$1,500 continued work on Liability
6100 Allocations to Chapters	3,445.00	3,345.00	3,345.00	Known expenditure
6200 Insurance - Directors & Officers	670.00	715.00	700.00	Based on 2025 numbers
6210 Insurance - General Liability	649.00	1,155.00	649.00	Based on 2025 numbers
6250 Merchant Charges	688.73	690.00	685.00	Based on income activity
6300 Newsletter Editing	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	Known expenditure - Communications Committee
6350 PO Box & Office Supplies	244.00	260.00	260.00	Based on 2025 numbers
6400 State & federal Filing Fees	70.46	100.00	100.00	Based on 2025 numbers
6550 Awards	205.00	200.00	200.00	Based on 2025 numbers
6750 Marketing Materials	0.00	0.00	600.00	Estimate provided by Communications Committee
6800 Website & Supporting Software	2,905.53	6,039.00	4,822.00	Provided by Com Committee/Webmaster see attached for details
Total for Expenses	\$20,476.54	\$26,504.00	\$18,361.00	
Net Operating Income	\$3,106.42	-\$3,604.00	\$3,729.00	
Net Other Income				
Net Income	\$3,106.42	-\$3,604.00	\$3,729.00	

TENNESSEE TRAILS ASSOCIATION
COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET - 2026

<u>VENDOR</u>	<u>FUNCTIONAL ARE FOR</u>	<u>2025 BUDGET</u>	<u>2025 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2026 BUDGET</u> (Proposed)	<u>COMMENTS</u>	
Richards Design Group	Web Admin	Maintenance - \$300 per month	\$ 3,600	\$ 1,875	\$ 3,600	
Dreamhost	Web Admin	Domain name - tntrailsarchive.org	\$ -	\$ 14	\$ 20	Renews on January 24
Dreamhost	Web Admin	Domain name - tennesseetrails.net	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20	Renews on July 2
Dreamhost	Web Admin	Domain name - tntrailsarchive.org	\$ -	\$ 14	\$ 20	Renews on September 14
Dreamhost	Web Admin	Managed WordPress (Primary site hosting)	\$ 168	\$ 155	\$ 156	Renews on October 15
Dreamhost	Web Admin	Shared starter (Archive site hosting)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 94	Renews on October 15
Memberpress	Web Admin	WP Plugin - Annual fee	\$ 269	\$ 249	\$ 249	Renews October 7
WPForms	Treasurer	WP Plugin - Annual Fee	\$ 107	\$ 99	\$ 99	Renews February 8
Mailchimp	Communications	Paid monthly - \$22.52 per month in 2025	\$ 298	\$ 270	\$ 270	Paid monthly
The Events Calendar	Web Admin	WP Plugin - Annual Fee - 9/12/25 thru 9/12/26	\$ 176	\$ 149	\$ 149	Renews on September 13
QuickBooks Online	Treasurer - JMC	Discounted Annual fee via TechSoup		\$ 80	\$ 80	Renews August 18
Adobe	Treasurer - BB	Discounted for TTA (non profit price)			\$ 15	Renews October 23
		Allowance for price increases		\$ -	\$ 50	In 2025 Budget increase included in line item
			<u>\$ 4,618</u>	<u>\$ 2,905</u>	<u>\$ 4,822</u>	
Newsletter Editor		Newsletter Editor	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
		Marketing Materials - to provide a professional presentation at events			\$ 600	
Coms Committee					\$ 600	
TOTAL BUDGET FOR COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE			<u>\$ 6,118</u>	<u>\$ 4,405</u>	<u>\$ 6,922</u>	

TTA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT – February 3, 2026

Submitted by Marti Owensby, Membership Director

Committee Members: Jenny Fitzgerald (Sumner Trails), Cheryl Heckler (Plateau), Will Latham (Director - East Region), Phyllis Long (Director – Middle Region), Nina Heckler (Director – West Region), Patty Dean (Communications Chair)

Membership Report January 2026

Attached is the Membership report for 1st Quarter 2026.

- 175 new members joined from Jan 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Note: this does not mean we had an increase of 175 total membership in 2025. It means we had 175 members who joined TTA for the first time.

Clarksville	29	Murfreesboro	14
Columbia Franklin	16	Nashville	16
East Tn	10	Plateau	11
Highland Rim	3	Scenic City	25
Jackson	11	Sumner Trails	5
Memphis	14	Unaffiliated	21

- We had 121 members who chose not to rejoin in 2025. 107 of those were members for only one year. The remaining members not rejoining had between 2 and 9 years of active membership.

Membership Committee Goals/Projects for 2026:

- Research and determine the need for implementing membership surveys to help in learning how joining members found us and why departing members decided not to rejoin.
- Review and update (if needed), all emails that new and expiring members receive.
- Review and research existing membership reports for the Board and Chapter Chairs. If new ones needed, work with Web Master to develop.
- Work with Web Master to add Gift Membership functionality to the Website.
- Continue to address incoming emails with regard to expiring and new members, aid in questions / problem resolution with regard to the membership matters, and create and send the monthly membership reports.

Items Needing Board Approval: None

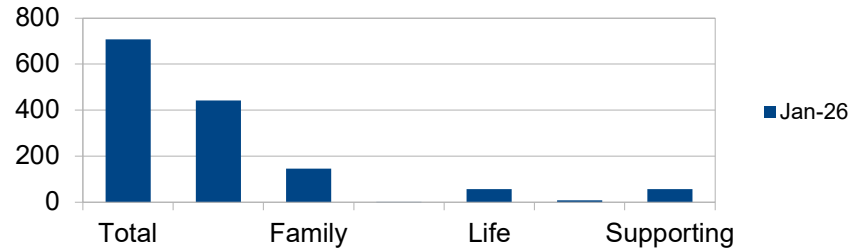
As always, we welcome input from the Board.

Marti Owensby (Scenic City)
423-309-0579 (voice or text)
mlovensby71@gmail.com

TTA Membership Report for February 3, 2026 Board Meeting

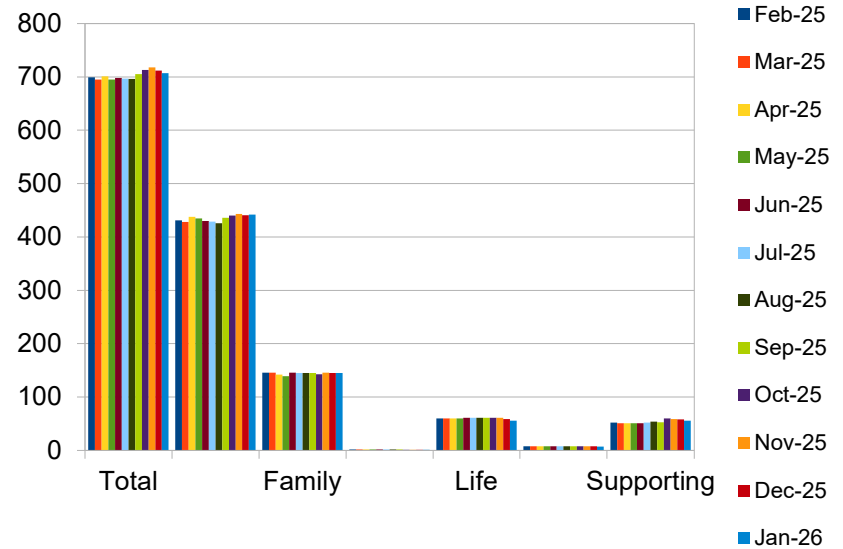
TTA Membership for January 2026

Date	Total	Individual	Family	Student	Life	Family Life	Supporting
Jan-26	707	442	145	1	56	7	56



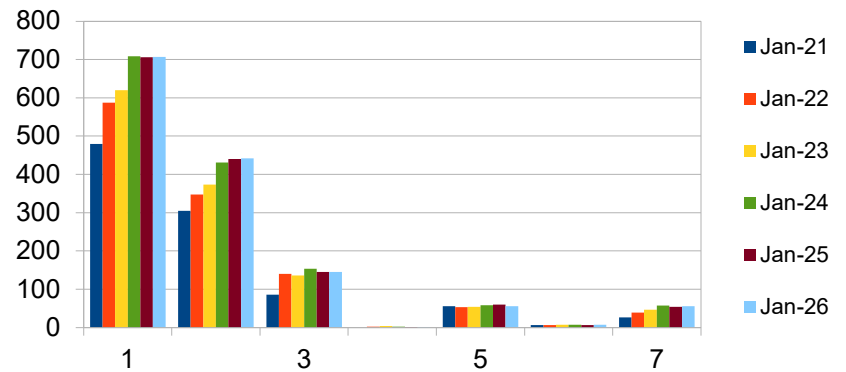
TTA Membership for past 12 months

Date	Total	Individual	Family	Student	Life	Family Life	Supporting
Feb-25	699	431	146	2	60	8	52
Mar-25	695	428	146	2	60	8	51
Apr-25	701	438	142	2	60	8	51
May-25	695	435	139	2	60	8	51
Jun-25	698	430	146	2	61	8	51
Jul-25	697	429	145	2	61	8	52
Aug-25	696	426	145	2	61	8	54
Sep-25	705	436	145	2	61	8	53
Oct-25	713	440	143	1	61	8	60
Nov-25	718	443	146	1	61	8	59
Dec-25	712	441	145	1	59	8	58
Jan-26	707	442	145	1	56	7	56
Inc/Dec	8	11	-1	-1	-4	-1	4



TTA Membership for January in the past 6 years

Date	Total	Individual	Family	Student	Life	Family Life	Supporting
Jan-21	479	305	86	0	56	6	26
Jan-22	587	347	140	2	53	6	39
Jan-23	620	373	136	4	54	7	46
Jan-24	708	431	153	2	58	7	57
Jan-25	706	440	145	1	60	6	54
Jan-26	707	442	145	1	56	7	56
Inc/Dec	228	137	59	1	0	1	30



Chapter	Total	Individual	Family	Student	Lifetime	Lifetime Family	Supporting
Clarksville	78	48	18	0	2	1	9
Columbia Franklin	38	25	8	0	0	0	5
East Tennessee	37	24	4	0	6	0	3
Highland Rim	47	21	14	0	8	2	2
Jackson	31	17	11	0	3	0	0
Memphis	56	37	11	0	4	0	4
Murfreesboro	53	37	8	0	2	1	5
Nashville	92	53	10	0	22	1	6
Plateau	83	61	14	0	3	0	5
Soddy Daisy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scenic City	100	65	22	1	1	0	11
Sumner Trails	52	28	16	0	2	1	5
Upper Cumberland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unaffiliated	40	26	9	0	3	1	1
Totals	707	442	145	1	56	7	56

Communications Committee Report, February 3, 2026

The Communications Committee members include:

- Patty Deen – Chair – Highland Rim – pdeen@palomar.edu
- Chris Fitzgerald – Web Administrator – Sumner Trails – ccodyfitz@gmail.com
- Marti Owensby – Membership Chair – Scenic City – mlovensby71@gmail.com
- Libby Francis – Newsletter Editor – Nashville -- libbyslibbys@comcast.net
- Sara Pollard – Previous chair – Murfreesboro – Sara.pollard@mtsu.edu
- Mark Hubbard – Nashville -- mhubbard@tnhiker.net
- Craig McBride —Murfreesboro – Rutherfordvfd@gmail.com
- Greg Christian – Jackson – Gtchris1@gmail.com

Our committee has not met yet. We have set a meeting for **Monday, February 9 at 1:00pm CT.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Deen, Chair

Evan Means Grant Committee Report

Proposed Grants

1. Friends of David Crockett State Park and Still Hollow Natural Area grant request is to purchase trail tools for the volunteers to use for maintenance and improvements to the parks 11 miles of hiking trails in the two areas. The EMGC reviewed the application determining it meets TTA Grant requirements and recommends the Board approves the for funding for \$825.00.
2. Friends of Harpeth River State Park grant request is to purchase Weed Wrenches for the volunteers to use in removal of invasive plants, which is needed to maintain the trails and provide safe access points. The EMGC reviewed the application determining it meets TTA Grant requirements and recommends the Board approves the funding for \$860.00.

Friends of David Crockett State Park

Evan Means Grant

The Friends of David Crockett State Park are looking to purchase trail tools for David Crockett State Park located in Lawrenceburg Tennessee. These trail tools will help our park to be able to provide tools for volunteers to use during trail volunteer events and for ranger staff use while conducting trail inspections. With these tools we will ensure that our trails at David Crockett State Park and Stillhouse Hollow Falls Nature Area stay safe and cleared for all our hikers.

Overview of trails at David Crockett and Stillhouse Hollow Falls:

David Crockett State Park is over 1,300 acres featuring 6 different trails for a total of 10 miles of hiking across the park. Our trails feature hikes along Shoal Creek, woods, Lake Lindsey, waterfalls, fitness equipment and the historic Trail of Tears.

Stillhouse Hollow Falls Nature Area is 90 acres featuring a 75ft waterfall with two trails for right over a mile of hiking.

Budget:

We are wanting to purchase 15 Loppers and a digital trail level. The loppers that we are wanting to purchase are the Corona Dual link Extendable Bypass Lopper for \$39.95 each, for a total of \$599.95 for all 15 loppers.

Digital trail level is an SmartTool Electronic Level w/23 5/8in rail for \$221.00

This would bring the grand total to \$820.25

The purchase of the items will be through Forestry Supplier

The Benefit to the hikers and volunteers

Throught the year our park hosts multiple volunteer events for trail maintenance and clean ups on our tails. Having the loppers will allow volunteers who are led by our ranger staff to clear the trail corridor of old limbs hanging over trail and or new growth of plant vegetation in or onto the trail. The digital trail level will be very useful for trail routes that we are working on now and plan for into the future. It will allow our ranger staff that have been through the master trail building course to create new trail routes with preferred slopped

grade with better water runoff for a more sustainable trail and a great tread for hikers. The tools purchased will only be used by volunteer and ranger staff.

Project timeline and recognition

Once the grant has been awarded, we will place an order with Forestry Supplier to purchase the 15 loppers and digital level. Once we receive the items, we will have stickers made that will have "Purchased by Tennessee Trails Association". We will also take photos of the tools in use on volunteer events and post on social media about Tennessee Trails Association contribution of the tools to the park and add link to Tennesseetrails.org on our post for our followers to get more information about the organization. These tools will then be used all year around.

Park Ranger Colton Garner  Date 11-11-25

Park Manger Ann ^{PALEY} Payet  Date 11 Nov 2025

Friends of DCSP President  Date 11-11-25

Shopping Cart (16 Items)

PROMO CODE BINGQ4

[More Info](#)

QUICK CART

Add Product By Item #



PRODUCT

QTY

PRICE

TOTAL



SmartTool Electronic Level w/23-5/8" Rail
Item #: 43773 - In Stock

1

\$221.00

\$221.00



Corona DualLINK Extendable Bypass Lopper
Item #: 79052 - In Stock

15

\$39.95

\$599.25



FORESTRY SUPPLIERS



[More](#)

[Add to Cart](#)

Q Search...

[CATEGORIES](#)

[PROFESSIONS](#)

[SIGN IN](#)

[MY LISTS](#)



LAWRENCEBURG TN 38464

[Change](#)

UPS Ground (2 Days)

[Change](#)

Total

\$820.25

[Continue Shopping](#)

[Proceed to Checkout](#)

[REQUEST A QUOTE](#)

[ADD TO MY LISTS](#)

Volunteer Invasive Plant Removal to Improve Trails at Harpeth River State Park

Friends of Harpeth River State Park

(Non-profit partner supporting Harpeth River State Park)

Written by Jack Foresman, Park Ranger at Harpeth River State Park

Project Narrative

Friends of Harpeth River State Park is a non-profit organization that supports the stewardship, maintenance, and public enjoyment of Harpeth River State Park. The organization works closely with Tennessee State Parks staff to engage volunteers in trail maintenance, habitat restoration, and visitor experience improvements. This project will focus on improving trail corridors and adjacent hiking areas by removing invasive woody plant species using volunteer labor. Funding is requested to purchase weed wrenches and related hand tools that will allow volunteers to safely and effectively remove invasive plants along trails and trail access points. This work directly supports the organization's broader mission of maintaining safe, accessible, and enjoyable trails for public use.

Benefit

Harpeth River State Park contains miles of trail that are heavily used by hikers, runners, paddlers, and families throughout the year. Invasive woody plants such as bush honeysuckle and privet encroach on the habitat and trails, which reduce visibility, narrow tread width, and degrade the natural hiking experience. Removing invasive plants along trails will improve sightlines, enhance safety, and restore native vegetation that supports a healthier and more attractive trail environment. Because the park is freely accessible to the public and serves a wide range of recreational users, this project will directly benefit a high volume of hikers and trail users. All work will take place within Harpeth River State Park, which is open to the public without restriction. The improved trails will remain freely accessible to all visitors. Volunteer labor is central to this project. Organized volunteer workdays will be led by experienced park staff. Volunteers will be trained in tool safety and invasive species identification prior to work activities. The requested tools will significantly increase the effectiveness of volunteer efforts while reducing physical strain and minimizing soil disturbance.

Project Timeline

Estimated project start date: Within 1 month of grant award.

Estimated project completion date: Within 12 months of grant award and continuously beyond as long as tools are used by Park. Work will occur during multiple volunteer workdays scheduled throughout the year.

Cost

Total project cost from all funding sources: \$935.22

Light Weed Wrench $\$286 \times 3 = 858 + 0.09 \text{ tax } (77.22) = \935.22

The TTA grant will fully or partially fund the tool purchases needed to complete this project.

Estimated volunteer hours: 100+ hours over multiple volunteer days per month

All invasive plant removal work will be performed by volunteers and park staff.

Tool Ownership and Use

Tools purchased with grant funds will be retained by Friends of Harpeth River State Park for continued use on trail and habitat projects within the park. Tools will not be sold or given to individuals and will be used in accordance with TTA guidelines.

Publicity and Recognition

Friends of Harpeth River State Park will recognize the Tennessee Trails Association's support through acknowledgment at volunteer workdays. When appropriate, TTA will be credited in project descriptions and public outreach related to trail improvement efforts supported by this grant.

If there are any additional requirements or information needed, please contact me at John.p.foresman@tn.gov

Annual Conference Progress Report

As of January 24, 2026

Venue

- **Crossville Shooting Sports Park secured for Oct. 23–25.**
 - They initially declined a deposit, assuring us the dates are reserved.
 - **Next step:** Follow up and offer a down payment as a courtesy and confirmation.
-

Catering

Friday, Oct. 23 – Flying Pig

- Flying Pig will cater Friday's meal.
- Menu selection is in progress.
- They are flexible and attentive to dietary needs.

Saturday, Oct. 24 – Willow Catering

- Willow Catering selected for Saturday dinner.
 - They will also provide **bag lunches for Oct. 24 & 25.**
 - **Deposit:** \$200 paid to secure the date.
 - They will supply **two servers** for setup, serving, and cleanup (**\$75 per server**).
 - Menu options will be presented at the **Feb. 12 meeting**.
-

Finance & Registration

- A **conference checking account** is being opened.
 - Expected completion: **Week of Feb. 26**, pending Cheryl's return and weather conditions.
- **Registration & Finance Team meeting** planned for the **week of Feb. 26.**
 - Process to be document on and timelines established.
- Before leaving, **Cheryl Heckler** contacted:

- **Chris Hoffman** (Columbia-Franklin Chapter) regarding last year's registration form.
 - **Chris Fitzgerald** to request the website forms.
 - Goal: **Reuse as much of last year's materials as possible** to streamline setup.
-

Hikes & Program Planning

- **Deb Westervelt** is drafting the meeting agenda.
 - She is also compiling a list of **local and Big South Fork hiking trails**.
 - A list of **hike leaders** will be assembled in the next couple of weeks.
-

Upcoming Updates

- Additional details on **registration processes and forms** will be available after next week's meeting (12 February).
- More information on **agenda, hikes, and logistics** will continue to be developed through February.

TTA Annual Conferences Past to Present

Year	Hosting Chapter(s)	Conference Site & Location
1981	Upper Cumberland	Camp Cumberland, Crossville
1982		
1983	Cumberland Mountain	Pickett State Park
1984		Beersheba Springs
1985		Tech Agua, Center Hill Lake
1986	Chattanooga	Camp Lookout, Chattanooga
1987	Cumberland Mountain	Bandy Creek, Big South Fork
1988	Memphis	Meeman-Shelby Forest SP, MS River Group Camp
1989	Murfreesboro	Dubose Conf Ctr, Monteagle
1990	Nashville	Montgomery Bell SP
1991	TTA's Board	Overton Lodge at Standing Stone SP
1992	Memphis	Lake Shore Methodist Assembly, Eva
1993	Murfreesboro	Dubose Conf Ctr, Monteagle
1994	Clarksville	Happy Hills Acres Church Camp, Clarksville
1995	Upper Cumberland	Beersheba Springs Hotel Methodist Ctr.
1996	Nashville	Cedars of Lebanon SP, Lebanon
1997	East TN & Plateau	Norris Dam SP, Lafouette
1998	Memphis	Lake Shore Methodist Assembly, Eva
1999	Murfreesboro	Dubose Conf Ctr, Monteagle
2000	Clarksville	Brandon Springs Camp, Land Between the Lakes
2001	Plateau	Carson Springs Conf Ctr, Newport
2002	Nashville & Columbia	Fall Creek Falls SP, Spencer
2003	East TN & Cove Lake & Big South Fork	Best Western Hotel, Townsend
2004	Memphis & Northwest	Pickwick Landing SP, Savannah
2005	Murfreesboro & Highland Rim & Columbia	Dubose Conf Ctr, Monteagle
2006	Clarksville	Brandon Springs Camp, Land Between the Lakes
2007	Plateau & Upper Cumberland	Clyde M. York 4-H Camp, Crossville
2008	Nashville	Indian Creek Youth Camp, Liberty
2009	East TN	Valley View Lodge, Townsend, TN
2010	Memphis & Jackson	Pickwick Landing SP, Savannah
2011	Murfreesboro & Highland Rim & Columbia	Dubose Conf Ctr, Monteagle
2012	Clarksville	Brandon Springs Camp, Land Between the Lakes
2013	Plateau & Upper Cumberland	Fall Creek Falls State Park, Spencer TN
2014	Nashville (and, possibly Sumner Trails ??)	Montgomery Bell State Park, Dickson TN
2015	East TN	Tremont Lodge & Resort, Townsend TN
2016	Memphis and Jackson	Pickwick Landing State Resort, Pickwick Dam
2017	Columbia/Franklin, Highland Rim, Murfreesboro	Dubose Conference Center, Monteagle, TN
2018	Clarksville	Brandon Springs Group Center, Dover, TN
2019	Plateau	Fairfield Glade Comm Conf Ctr, Crossville, TN
2020	Cancelled	
2021	Nashville & Sumner Trails	Montgomery Bell State Park, Burns, TN
2022	East TN & Soddy Daisy	Glenstone Lodge, Gatlinburg, TN

2023	Jackson & Memphis	Natchez Trace State Park, Wildersville, TN
2024	Highland Rim & Murfreesboro	Fall Creek Falls State Park,
2025	Clarksville & Columbia/Franklin	Paris Landing State Park, Buchanan, TN
2026	Plateau	
2027	Nashville & Sumner Trails	
2028	East TN & Scenic City	
2029	Jackson & Memphis	
2030	Highland Rim & Murfreesboro	
2031	Clarksville & Columbia/Franklin	

Nominating Committee Report for the 02/09/26 BOD Meeting

There is a vacancy in the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors that needs to be filled. We need someone already on the Board to volunteer to serve as Vice President. Here are the duties of Vice President as found in the TTA By-Laws:

Vice President. In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice President shall, for the period of such absence or disability, perform all the duties of the President, and shall when so acting have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President.

You would also chair the awards committee:

Awards Committee. This committee shall recommend to the Board candidates for the various recognition awards provided by these bylaws. The chair of this committee shall be the Vice President. Other members of this committee shall be the Regional Directors, and other individuals as appointed by the President and approved by the Board.

There is a vacancy for a Director-At-Large Position. **Lora McBride** from the Murfreesboro chapter has volunteered to serve in that position. We will need to vote to approve at the February BOD meeting. Here is what the by-laws say about that.

The business of the Association shall be conducted by a Board of Directors, herein referred to as the Board, which shall consist of nine Directors-at-large, three Regional Directors, and one Representative from each active Chapter. The term of office for each Director-at-large is three years, with terms staggered so that three directors are elected each year.

We have 3 Board of Directors whose term expires in 2026.

Marti Owensby (eligible for another 3-year term)

Jenny Fitzgerald (has served 6 years and will rotate off the BOD)

Jane Coffey (has served 6 years and will rotate off the BOD)

We have one Regional Director whose term expires in 2026.

Nina Heckler (eligible for another 3-year term)

We are always looking for people to fill any vacancies. Please look in your chapter and find qualified candidates!

2026 TTA Committees

Note – these are short summaries of the role of TTA’s Committees. For an official description of the role and responsibilities of the Committees please refer to TTA’s Bylaws.

Executive Committee Conducts the business and manage the affairs of the Association between meetings of the full Board (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary).

Finance Committee Financial management of income and other investment funds, and budget planning. (This committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer. Two additional members of the Association shall serve on this Committee.).

Membership Committee Oversees membership administration. Works with Treasurer to assure receipt of payments. Reports status to the Board. Recommends actions which promote the attraction and enrollment of new members and retention of current members. (The Membership Committee chair shall be a member of the Board. Other members of this committee shall be the three Regional Directors.).

Communications Committee Responsible for insuring communication between the Association and the public and the membership. Newsletter, Website, Facebook, etc. (The Communications Committee chair shall be a member of the Board. There shall be at least three other members appointed to this committee.)

Evan Means Grant Committee Examines grant project funding for enhancing trails and the hiking experience in Tennessee. (The Evan Means Grants Committee shall consist of four members and a chair, appointed by the President).

Audit and Risk Management Committee Oversees policy compliance, conflicts of interest, ethics and program integrity, and retains auditors for the Association. (The Audit Committee consists of two members of the Board and such additional members as may be designated by the Board).

Nominating Committee Provides a slate of qualified candidates for election to the Board and recommends qualified replacements for any vacancies. (A Member of the Association shall be appointed to serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee. The three Regional Directors and two other members of the Association shall serve as members of this Committee. The President shall not be a member of this committee).

Awards Committee Recommends candidates for various recognition awards provided by the Bylaws and the Board. (The chair of this committee shall be the Vice President. Other members of this committee shall be the Regional Directors, and other individuals as appointed by the President and approved by the Board.).

Special Committees:

Annual Conference Committee Discuss general policies and duties; hosting of future annual meetings.

Strategic Planning Facilitate the creation of a TTA strategic plan in collaboration with a consultant by defining key guiding questions, gathering insights from stakeholders, and analyzing the feedback to craft a clear purpose statement and establish strategic priorities for long-term success.

Other Committees to be established related to the Strategic Plan:

- Supporting Chapters Special Committee
- Supporting Trails Special Committee
- Strategic Partnerships Special Committee
- Bylaws Special Committee

TENNESSEE TRAILS ASSOCIATION					
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP					
2026					
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE					
President	Will	Latham	Scenic City	watham@lathamconsulting.com	Must be Board Member
Vice President	TBD				Must be Board Member
Treasurer	Bryan	Brand	Columbia/Franklin	bryansibleybrand@gmail.com	Must be Board Member
Secretary	Susan	Brand	Columbia/Franklin		Must be Board Member
FINANCE COMMITTEE					
Chair	Bryan	Brand	Columbia/Franklin	bryansibleybrand@gmail.com	Must be Treasurer
	June	Callahan	Nashville	junecallahan2025@gmail.com	
	Tim	Booth	Scenic City	tceebooth@epbf.com	
	Hal	Beckham	Memphis	beckham.hal@gmail.com	
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE					
Chair	Marti	Owensby	Scenic City	mowensby71@gmail.com	Must be Board member
West TN Rep	Nina	Heckler	Jackson	drnheckler@gmail.com	Back-up Membership Director
Middle TN Rep	Phyllis	Long	Sumner Trails	purplehoglady@yahoo.com	
East TN Rep	Will	Latham	Scenic City	watham@lathamconsulting.com	
Comm Chair	Patty	Deen	Highland Rim	pdeen@palomar.edu	
	Jenny	Fitzgerald	Sumner Trails	mrzfitz@gmail.com	
	Cheryl	Heckler	Plateau	heckler54@gmail.com	
	Sara	Pollard	Murfreesboro	sara.pollard@mtsu.edu	
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE					
Chair	Patty	Deen	Highland Rim	pdeen@palomar.edu	Must be Board Member
Webmaster	Chris	Fitzgerald	Sumner Trails	ccodyfitz@gmail.com	
Membership Chair	Marti	Owensby	Scenic City	mowensby71@gmail.com	
Newsletter Editor	Libby	Francis	Nashville	libbyslibbys@comcast.net	
	Mark	Hubbard	Nashville	mhubbard@tnhiker.net	
	Sara	Pollard	Murfreesboro	sara.pollard@mtsu.edu	
	Craig	McBride	Murfreesboro	Rutherfordvfd@gmail.com	
	Greg	Christian	Jackson	Gtchris1@gmail.com	
EVAN MEANS GRANT COMMITTEE					
Chair	Wayne	Drown	Sumner Trails	wetdrown@bellsouth.net	
	Mark	Hubbard	Nashville	mhubbard@tnhiker.net	
	Jane	Coffey	Columbia/Franklin	jecoffey0644@gmail.com	
	Jenny	Fitzgerald	Sumner Trails	mrzfitz@gmail.com	
	Bob	Richards	East Tennessee	trailbob51@outlook.com	
	Karen	Shoemaker	East Tennessee	kbryantshoemaker@gmail.com , kbryanttn@hotmail.com	
AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE					
Chair	Hal	Beckham	Memphis	beckham.hal@gmail.com	
	Karen	Shoemaker	East Tennessee	kbryantshoemaker@gmail.com , kbryanttn@hotmail.com	
	Wayne	Drown	Sumner Trails	wetdrown@bellsouth.net	
	Bob	Obohoski	Plateau	bobobohoski@gmail.com	
	Chuck	Deen	Highland Rim	chuckdeen17@gmail.com	
	June	Callahan	Nashville	junecallahan2025@gmail.com	
NOMINATING COMMITTEE					
Chair	Libby	Francis	Nashville	libbyslibbys@comcast.net	
West TN Rep	Nina	Heckler	Jackson	drnheckler@gmail.com	
Middle TN Rep	Phyllis	Long	Sumner Trails	purplehoglady@yahoo.com	
East TN Rep on this cmt.	TBD	President cannot serve			
AWARDS COMMITTEE					
Chair	TBD				Must be Vice President
East TN Rep	Will	Latham	Scenic City	watham@lathamconsulting.com	
Middle TN Rep	Phyllis	Long	Sumner Trails	purplehoglady@yahoo.com	
West TN Rep	Nina	Heckler	Jackson	drnheckler@gmail.com	
	Michael	Hernan	Sumner Trails	1hernan@att.net	
STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM					
	Patty	Deen	Highland Rim	pdeen@palomar.edu	
	Libby	Francis	Nashville	libbyslibbys@comcast.net	
	Nina	Heckler	Jackson	drnheckler@gmail.com	
	Mark	Hubbard	Nashville	mhubbard@tnhiker.net	
	Will	Latham	Scenic City	watham@lathamconsulting.com	
	Marti	Owensby	Scenic City	mowensby71@gmail.com	
ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE					
Chair	Plateau	Melissa	Love	mellove6011@gmail.com	
WEB ADMINISTRATOR					
	Chris	Fitzgerald	Sumner Trails	ccodyfitz@gmail.com	Backup is Marti Owensby and Richards Design
NEWSLETTER EDITOR					
	Libby	Francis	Nashville	libbyslibbys@comcast.net	Backup is Will Latham and Mark Hubbard