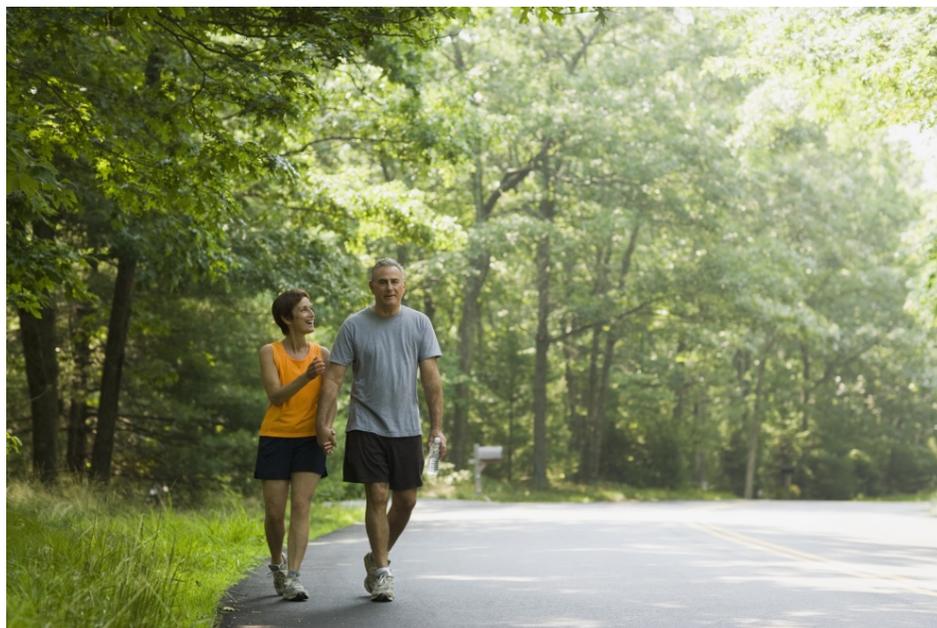


Collaboration Makes QCTrails.org Premier Resource for Outdoor Physical Activity

by: Be Healthy QC

SUMMARY

Community partners in the Quad Cities, Illinois/Iowa launched QCTrails.org in January 2016, a website with information on over 300 miles of land and water trails. The website promotes better access to opportunities for physical activity on the community's vast trail network. This extensive collection of trails must be kept up-to-date for continued trail user engagement. Project leaders have secured fifteen trail managers in a sustainable partnership program, enlisting their help in keeping information current.



CHALLENGE

QCTrails.org offers valuable information on over 80 trails in the Quad Cities. Trail users of any skill level can utilize the website to find trail maps, mileage, hours of operation, and much more. Keeping these key features current, especially when there are trail closures, re-routing, potential hazards, and new trails open for use is challenging for the staff of the lead organization behind the website, Bi-State Regional Commission (the local metropolitan

planning organization). In addition, user-submitted comments and photos on the website must be approved. Project staff currently stays abreast of this critical trail information through social media, email notifications, media alerts, and contact with local trail managers. In the future, this work will be accomplished through increased project partner involvement.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

This work was made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in support of Be Healthy QC. Administered by the Quad City Health Initiative, the Be Healthy QC project seeks to increase access to healthy food and beverage options and physical activity opportunities through the implementation of policy, systems and environmental change across the community. Follow our progress at behealthyqc.org and on Facebook by searching for Quad City Health Initiative.

"QCTrails.org is a vital tool for distributing trail information within a centralized and user-friendly environment. Having tools to keep this content updated, real-time, creates an invaluable resource for finding opportunities for trail experiences."

- Todd Green (City of Moline)

Contact

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SOLUTION

Bi-State staff is coordinating the maintenance of the QCTrails.org website through a two-pronged program. Efforts involve a system of recurring communication with local trail managers and also putting tools for editing website content in the hands of the staff at larger trail manager organizations. Establishing partnerships with local partners allowed the project lead staff at Bi-State to utilize local knowledge of trail information for the initial development of the website and also for maintaining the site in the future. Fifteen partner settings have agreed to help manage updates related to trail content, alerts, and user-submitted comments and photos.

RESULTS

Through (at minimum) quarterly reminders to partners, Bi-State staff solicits updates to trail content. For small partner settings with limited staff, Bi-State will manage the revisions through a Content Management System (CMS) on the back end of the website. For large partner settings, with more staff, Bi-State has provided access to the CMS and partners were trained on using this tool. These staff are utilizing the CMS as needed to create alerts and fresh content related to trail maintenance, natural or man-made hazards, re-routing, or new trail features or enhancements. When trail users submit photos or comments related to trails on the website, Bi-State staff immediately receives email notice and it is forwarded to the appropriate trail manager(s) for approval.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Partnering with local trail managers to maintain the QCTrails.org website creates a win-win situation for the project lead, Bi-State Regional Commission, trail manager organizations, and trail users. Trail managers from small partner settings can depend on Bi-State staff to keep trail information up-to-date on the website. Trail managers from large partner settings have integrated maintenance of the QCTrails.org trail content into the physical maintenance and oversight of trails and have been trained on content management tools to revise information in real-time. This system ensures that QCTrails.org remains a current and reliable resource for Quad Cities residents to find opportunities for physical activity on QC Trails.