Establishing the need for trail investment using visitor traffic patterns

Goal

Validate marketing efforts for additional investment in North Carolina trails as well as analyze the impacts on trails after extreme weather events

Impact

- **Confirmed the need for further trail investment** with 90% of North Carolina counties seeing an increase in visitation (+30-40%) during the **Year of the Trail** campaign
- **Unlocked new remote data collection opportunities** through the AllTrails Public Lands program with little impact on financial or volunteer resources
- **Produced a full-length report** that provides detailed results to the community and legislators, helping to fund and promote future initiatives

> "It was extremely helpful to have AllTrails usage data to evaluate the success of our Year of the Trail campaign and report growing trail use in North Carolina to our elected leaders, which helps support our advocacy work for sustained trail funding."
>
> Palmer McIntyre, Coordinator, Great Trails State Coalition

Background

The Great Trails State Coalition was formed in 2020. It works with the North Carolina (NC) state government to coordinate and support trail initiatives throughout all 100 counties in the state. The Great Trails State Coalition worked with the NC General Assembly to designate 2023 as NC Year of the Trail to promote recreation on trails throughout the state.

Challenge

The many trail systems spread throughout the state of North Carolina brought a logistical challenge when collecting consistent visitor data. A streamlined collection of data would require the Great Trails State Coalition and land managers to invest in expensive trail counters or dedicate their limited volunteer resources. But, in order to advocate for future investment, the Great Trails State Coalition needed immediate feedback on the impact of their campaigns, especially during the recovery of key trail systems after Hurricane Helene.

Approach

- **The Great Trails State Coalition used AllTrails visitor data** to identify visitation patterns across North Carolina trail systems

- Using visitor trend data, the coalition can move forward with **advocating for an increase in focused marketing campaigns** for counties that have historically been less popular for trails

Outcome

With the help of AllTrails data, The Great Trails State Coalition was able to pull together a detailed analysis and report confirming the positive impacts their Year of the Trail campaign had on North Carolina counties. With the same data, they also verified the on-the-ground reports of visitor trends to Western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene. They plan to bring this report to stakeholders across North Carolina to support additional community investments including trail building, maintenance, and tourism campaigns.