

Funding accessibility with trail data

Goal

Validate the need for funding to revitalize a popular accessible boardwalk trail in Sand Point Nature Preserve.

Impact

- **Awarded a grant to rebuild a boardwalk trail** that improves usability and the visitor experience
- **Justified the need for the grant** using 100+ documented reviews on current trail conditions and visitor usage trends
- **Kept visitors informed and up-to-date** with curated trail page information and updates on construction

“It was helpful to have the AllTrails usage data in justifying the grant and producing a statement of need for the foundation. Having documentation of visits that supported our own observed data about trail traffic made it easy to show the need for this funding.”

Zachary Branigan, Executive Director at Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy

Background

Saginaw Land Basin Conservancy acquired Sand Point Nature Preserve in 2008. It is the largest preserve protected by the conservancy, which it has maintained and continues to allow public access to. In 2015, the preserve built a 400-foot wooden boardwalk for public use, which allowed visitors to enjoy the most biologically diverse site along the Saginaw Bay shoreline in a safe and responsible manner.

Challenge

After 10 years of continuous public use, the conservancy knew the boardwalk needed repairs but needed to raise funds for the project. To strengthen their ask, they needed to prove both the boardwalk's conditions and its popularity among the public.

Approach

- Saginaw Land Basin Conservancy observed usage trends on AllTrails and cited many reviews that mentioned “rising water levels” and trail blockages that disrupted public access
- The observations led the Conservancy to begin researching and applying for grants with its local foundation, allowing them to easily show the impact a new boardwalk would have on the community
- The conservancy posted an alert on the trail page to warn visitors to be cautious on sections of the trail that can be submerged underwater, keeping them safe and informed

Outcome

Using AllTrails reviews, the conservancy was awarded funds from their county's grant program to begin replacing the boardwalk, improving access and resiliency for years to come. Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy plans to have the boardwalk fully funded and built by the summer of 2025.