

Alabama State Parks Trail Sign-Map Project 2016

Alabama State Parks wish to fund a project to increase the quality of our trail signage and trail maps to improve user confidence, knowledge and safety by using current technology to produce and provide high quality trail maps, trail kiosks and trail signage.

What good is a trail system without signage or a good trail map? Realistically, the answer is the trail system still has a high value for the experienced user, but to the new user, the quality goes way down. Alabama State Parks wish to provide a worthy experience to all trail users, new and experienced.

For the new trail user, the security of knowing where you are and where you're going is paramount to keep them hiking and biking for the future. If they have a negative experience, we could lose them forever.

For the experienced trail user, trail signs and maps give them option for alternate routes to keep it fresh.

Trail maps and the trail user's skill level to read a map is so varied, it makes the need for, on the ground, in person, trail signs and high quality trail maps a monumental necessity. A professional and legible trail sign is pretty important too.

Informative and interpretive signs serve a purpose for all....knowledge!

The Alabama Trail Sign and Map Project will serve to boost usage, give needed confidence, provide educational knowledge of our environment and history and provide much needed directional information to prevent confusion and create a safer trail experience for everyone.

The basic trailhead kiosk serves to set the tone of the trail experience by providing necessary alerts, trail information and safety.

Trail directional signage has high value to keep folks pointed along their desired route and provide information for alternatives and key points of interest.

From my 27 years of State Park experience, a good trail map is like a security blanket for the trail users. Even if they aren't skilled map readers, just having it makes them feel better.

Informative and interpretive signs could be defined as the most important: they provide information to keep trail users safe and provide interesting fact and points to keep their journey interesting. How many times have you hike right past something unique and noteworthy, only to find out about it after your return to the trailhead?

Alabama State Parks are chocked full of wildflowers, historical sites and geological features that are all special and deserve recognition.

As with everything, technology has allowed us the opportunity to address the trail sign issue with incredible style. A laser engraver can now create high detail signage and pictures to go along with it on a variety of materials. A GPS and plotter would allow for high quality trail maps. This equipment would allow a long term investment of trail signage and Trail Map design well after the completion of this project.