

Mariposa Trails Strategic Plan 2025



Image. Nov-2023.
Campsite of *American
Conservation
Experience* trail crew
who worked 8 days
repairing the Savage-
Lundy Trail in Sierra NF.

"The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination." — John Schaar

I. Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY3

OUR VISION & MISSION4

- Vision
- Mission
- Guiding Principles

WHO WE ARE5

- Our Challenge
- Organization Background
- Geographic Scope

WHAT WE DO6

- Trail Access
- Outdoor Education
- Operations
- Funding
- Advocacy and Partnerships

OUR ROADMAP7

- Goals and Policies

GETTING WORK DONE8

- Our Capabilities
- Our Progress
- Our Metrics
- Our 2027 Aspirations



In Memoriam--Marty Acree was an original Trailblazer and a *Mariposa Trails* supporter. He inspired our motto - ***Building Trails and Community.***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dear Friends of Mariposa Trails,

It is with much gratitude that I thank our board, volunteers and consultant for their efforts in preparing this *2025 Strategic Plan*, and related 3-year action plan. These plans enable us to create a path to achieving our aspirations: a larger board, diversified local funding, expanded community engagement and partnerships, and greater capacity to restore and maintain Mariposa's non-motorized trail network.

Since 2018, Mariposa Trails has held 199 trail-tending events to restore 45 miles of local trails with 251 individual volunteers, tallying 7,813 volunteer hours valued at \$240,000. However, Mariposa Trails is much more than trail statistics. To many, a trailhead is just a place to park and start a hike or ride, but for Mariposa Trails, it is the place where a relationship between the user and nature begins. We strive to align our programs with the values of reciprocity, gratitude and belonging. *Building Trails and Community* is our motto.

Join us in building a path to community prosperity.

Bill King

Founder/President/Executive Director
Mariposa Trails



OUR VISION AND MISSION

Vision

We believe that individuals, communities and the planet can all thrive together, and that this health is attained through relationships of reciprocity. Inspired by the book, "Braiding Sweetgrass," we strive to align our programs with the values of reciprocity, gratitude and belonging.

Mission

Our mission is to provide trail access and promote its use for adventure, health, stewardship, education and community prosperity. Through respectful use, be it hiking, riding, camping or trail-tending, we embrace trails as gifts, and in gratitude, invite you to build comradery with one another and with nature.

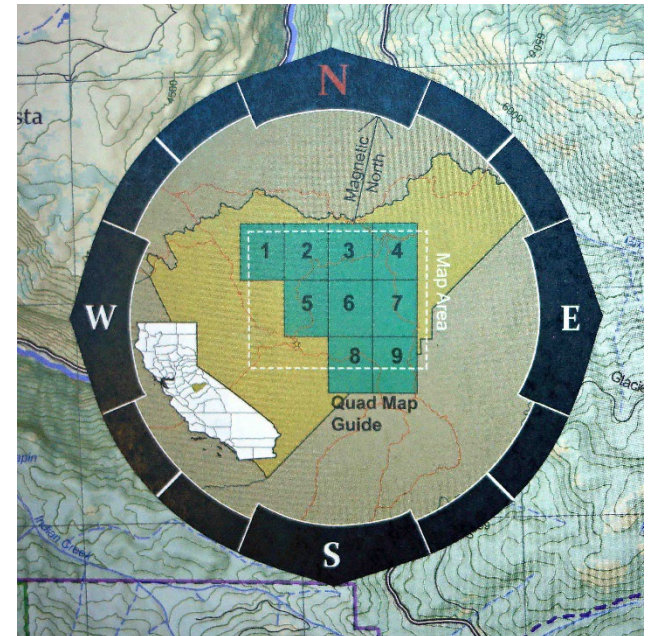
Guiding Principles

Our Compass

- points to understanding that through healing and sustaining the natural world, the natural world sustains us as well.
- includes a bearing that encourages people to nourish and teach a meaningful relationship of reciprocity with the earth and all her beings, to mindfully listen and learn from the natural world, and in gratitude, share and apply that knowledge.

Our Map

- charts the recognition that it is essential to gather, support and celebrate the diverse gifts of individuals and organizations to enable achievement of shared missions.
- reveals that exploring, tending and experiencing the natural world brings understanding that nature is an essential element of humanity.



WHO WE ARE

Organization Background

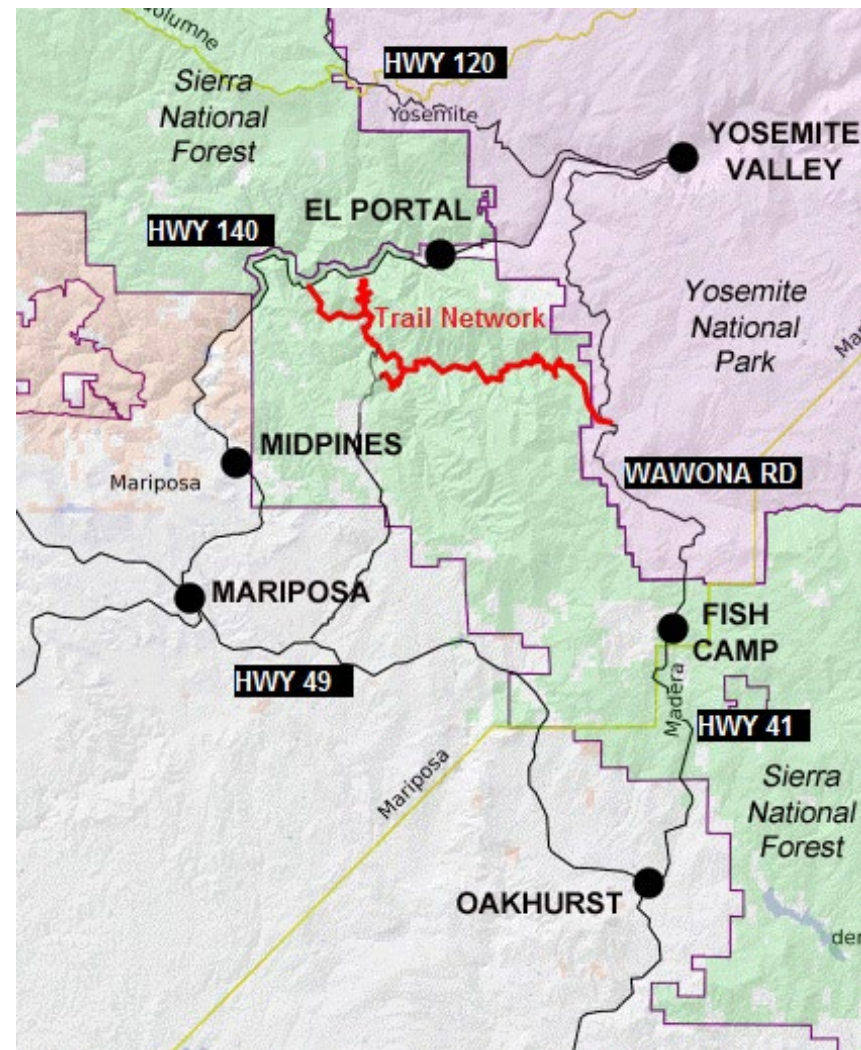
In 2016, a small group of local Mariposa County trail enthusiasts, calling themselves “The Trailblazers,” sought to restore the trail network in the South Fork of the Merced River. In 2018, the Ferguson Fire burnt through the South Fork, necessitating an “all-hands-on-deck” response, and within a few years of the Hite’s Cove Trail closure, the Trailblazers had restored it, winning a national award in 2021 for the effort. In 2020, the organization now by the name of *Mariposa Trails*, became a federally recognized non-profit, and continues their work to open, maintain and promote trail use for the benefit of local residents and tourists.

Our Challenge

Threefold: (1) Our access to nature via trails is in jeopardy of being lost from severe erosion, landslides, impenetrable overgrowth, fallen trees - all the results of drought, bark-beetle infestation, wildfire, floods, snowstorms and lack of public maintenance funds. These threats continue; the perfect storm of trail demise is here, and many trails have already vanished. (2) Individuals are separated from one another, alone behind a computer screen, secluded in a social media bubble or estranged by conflicting ideologies. Finding common ground between people can be a struggle. (3) We find ourselves separated from nature. Fears of the unknown, discomfort in the outdoors, and an abundance of indoor screen-time have each created a significant barrier to the enjoyment of nature and the outdoors.

Geographic Scope

From 2018-2024, our geographic **focus** has been in the area bounded by Hwy 140, the Wawona Road/Hwy 41 and Hwy 49, which encircles the South Fork of the Merced River canyon and multitude of trails located on National Forest lands. While this region will continue to be our focus, opportunities to expand will be considered.



WHAT WE DO



Our programs include readings and discussions of environmental ethics, responsibilities, reciprocity and remembering our purpose of belonging to the natural world.

Trail Access

- Locate, Repair and Maintain Trails
- Trailhead Improvements

Outdoor Education

- Confident Hiker Program
- Ecology

Adventure Outings

- Dayhikes
- Backpacking Trips

Operations

- Long-Range Planning
- Board Meetings
- Communications

Funding

- Grant Writing and Management
- Map Sales
- Donations

Advocacy & Partnerships

- US Forest Service Recreation Programs
- Mariposa County Outdoor Recreation

OUR ROADMAP

Goals & Policies

Goals 1. A Board Committed to the Success of the Organization

Policy: Align programming with our “guiding principles,” weaving the theme of reciprocity into the actions, events and programs of *Mariposa Trails*

Policy: Inspire confidence in the community.

Goals 2. Secure Sustainable Funding

Policy: Foster a diverse funding stream.

Goals 3. Nurture a Community-Based Organization

Policy: Build a thriving base of members, volunteer-teams and community partners.

Goals 4. Develop Non-motorized Trails through Stewardship Efforts

Policy: Strive to provide a safe environment for all participants.

Goals 5. Promote Trail Use through Education, Recreation and Advocacy.

Policy: Engage local diverse populations.



GETTING WORK DONE

Our Capacity



Equestrian volunteers feeling satisfied after opening up a trail in the Owl Creek area of Jerseydale.

Leadership and Staff

The **Board** is currently comprised of 4 members, with growth of up to 9. At this point, the board is responsible for all work of *Mariposa Trails* (trail stewardship, fundraising, promoting trails, and fiduciary and administration responsibilities). *Mariposa Trails* is volunteer operated without staff.

Community Partnerships

Volunteers are the heart of the *Mariposa Trails* organization, shaping its vision, enlivening its mission, and achieving its goals. From swinging a trail tool to sending out emails, work is performed by volunteers; everyone's contribution is valued and celebrated. Our volunteer base is strong and growing, drawing from the communities of Mariposa County and also from regional sources in the adjacent counties of Merced, Madera and Fresno. Our **Trail Hero** organizations include: Merced Rotary; Merced Rescue Mission; Latino Outdoors (Fresno); GrizzlyCorp (AmeriCorps); and, Senior Hikers. Significant **partners** include the Sierra National Forest; Mother-Lode District/Bureau of Land Management; and, the Sierra Freepackers Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California. Other partners include: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation; Mariposa County Fire Advisory Committee; UC Merced; Yosemite National Park; and the Upper Merced River Watershed Council.

Funding

Funding has been provided by private donations, map sales, local grocery store receipt programs, and grants (Mariposa County Tourism Bureau; National Wilderness Stewardship Association; the Rose Foundation; and, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy)

Assets

Our **tool cache** provides a wide range of tools (hand tools, electric saws and shears, gas-powered chain-saws) and PPE (first-aid kits, gloves, snake chaps, ear and eye protection) to concurrently operate four 6-person trail-tending teams.

Our Progress



The original founding members of *Mariposa Trails*. From left to right- Ursula Stock (Secretary), Bill King (President), and Beth Kellner (Treasurer).

2020

- Non-Profit Status
- Trail Condition Map
- Trifold Marketing Flyer

2021

- USDA National Stewardship Award
- Promo Video
- First Wildflower/History Walk

2022

- Americorp Intern Position
- South Fork Grant
- Confident Hiker Board Game

2023

- Trail Map
- Equestrians on Savage-Lundy Trail
- Equestrians on Bishop Creek Trail

2024

- Kistler Trail Restored
- Black Oak Conservation
- Volunteer Appreciation Party

Our Metrics

Since 2018, *Mariposa Trails* has held 199 trail-tending events to restore 45 miles of local trails with 251 individual volunteers, who have tallied 7,813 volunteer hours valued at \$240,000.

Our 2027 Aspirations

Board: Increase Board membership to 7.

Funding: Diversify funding through community sponsorships and grants.

Community Engagement and Partnerships: Express our vision, mission and programming to the community through PSA's, a newsletter, and frequent social media posts. Expand local partnerships with all demographics, notably with Mariposa Ethos, UC Merced, and Mariposa Safe Families.

Trail Access: Continue to restore and maintain local trail access, notably those described below.

Trail Use: Create "Friends of the Trail" teams for the: (1) Hite's Cove Trail; (2) the Virginia Creek Trail; (3) the Skelton Creek Trail; (4) the Bishop Creek Trail; and (5) the Savage-Lundy Trail.