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2024 OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL OF APPALACHIA (ORCA) CONSTRUCTION ANNOUNCEMENTS GROW AND IMPROVE RECREATION IN SOUTHEAST OHIO, INCLUDING BRINGING THE BAILEYS TRAIL SYSTEM TO NEAR-COMPLETION

2024 is shaping up to be an exciting, busy year of construction for the Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA), made possible by various funding sources and partnerships. ORCA and its 501©3 nonprofit partner, the Athens-Wayne Outdoor Asset Development Corporation (AWOADC), will be managing 4 different construction projects in the Wayne National Forest at both the Athens and Marietta Units, in addition to ongoing projects. Projects include additional miles of trail at the Baileys Trail System, maintenance enhancements at the Baileys Trail System, and Trail Reroutes and Trailhead construction and improvements in the Marietta Unit.

Phase 5 of Baileys Trail System construction, which will begin this year, will involve the construction of approximately 27 miles of trail, bringing the Baileys Trail System close to completion. Two funding sources have been secured to support this construction, including: ORCA's 2022 Appalachian Community Grant Development Funding in the amount of \$973,530.00 and State of Ohio Recreational Trails Program Funding in the amount of \$150,000, totaling \$1,123,530.00 available for trails. The actual amount of trail built will vary based on contractor availability and on-the-ground conditions.

Also at the Baileys Trail System, made possible by the AWOADC's 2023 National Forest Foundation (NFF) Matching Awards Program Grant, 5.35 miles of existing trail will be improved to allow accessibility for adaptive mountain bikes (A-MTBs). A-MTBs offer recreationalists living with limited mobility in the upper body and/or lower body a way to enjoy the sport of mountain biking. Trail enhancements will include both widening and drainage improvements on Coal Train Trail, Gob Pile Loop, and Bullfrog Loop to accommodate A-MTBs and improve trail user experiences. Funding available for this project totals \$42,701.00, and trail volunteers will be invited to participate in improvements to continue to refine their trail maintenance skills"

In the Marietta Unit of the Wayne National Forest, ORCA will administer a construction project, made possible through the close partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and ORCA. The project includes \$213,000 in construction funding from ORCA's 2021 Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grant. Depending on project costs the project will include up to three trail reroutes, on one equestrian trail and two hiking trails, the relocation and enlargement of one trailhead, enlargements of two other trailheads, and improved maintenance access Forest Service Road.

The four projects from four funding sources totals more than \$ 1.3 million in recreation improvements for southeast Ohio. Projects went out to bid on DATE, and construction will begin as early as May 2024, depending on the availability of qualified contractors. Bid materials can be found at <https://www.orcaohio.com/requests>.