Trails Day & Walktober

Marketing Connecticut’s Trails
Introduction

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Trails Day -
What

• First weekend of June
• National event – American Hiking Society
• 250 diverse events in two days, largest in the country
• Over 5,000 participants in two days
• Booklet – 12,000 pieces
• Website – 31,943 page views the week before Trails Day
Trails Day – Having fun
Trails Day - Who

- All volunteer
- Variety of activities
- Variety of organizations
  - Organizations use TD to promote their cause
  - They capture names and emails
  - Gain members, donors and FANS!
- Participants are families & kids, old and young
Trails Day - Variety
Trails Day - How

• Planning starts after Thanksgiving
• Eight Constant Contact email blasts go to all past leaders, starting 12/20
• Online registration – Online form
• Help everyone register successfully – personal touch
• Thank leaders with REI summit – fun, food, beer and prizes
• Provide promotional materials – graphics, press releases, posters
• Provide links to resources – AHS, DEEP,
• Share photos
Trails Day – Have more fun!
Trails Day – Observations & Ideas

• Target a demographic
  • Women, kids, adaptive, runners, climbers, etc.

• Engage partners early

• Use a hike to promote your cause
  • Your venue is your platform

• You’ll find loyal leaders and members

• Remember leaders only see their event, share suggestions
Trails Day – Kids and Families
Trails Day – Some examples

• People of all ages and abilities including wheelchair and adaptive bike users are invited to participate in a "Rolling Museum" on the ADA compliant Hop River Trail. Bolton

• Not 1, not 2, but 3 rivers in one paddle!! Amazing you say, unbelievable? Well, come along and you shall have bragging rights. You will see beautiful rivers, likely lots of birds and trees, possibly a beaver home, the mind boggles! – Cromwell

• Guests will join a Phelps-Hatheway guide on a short walk in the town’s historic district. - Suffield
Trails Day – Include Everyone
Trails Day - Success

- Unique events get high attendance
- Success comes from
  - Good practices
  - Good media
  - Good website
  - Good people
- Have fun
Walktober

The Last Green Valley
A National Heritage Corridor
Walktober - What

• 29 Years and counting
• Designed to share the best of a region & it still does
• Was a weekend – now starts around the autumnal equinox thru the first weekend of November
• About 215 unique events – more than 300 opportunities to participate. Not all events are trail based.
• 80,000 annual attendance
• Walktober Guide – 15,000 printed and distributed
• Web version for download
Walktober - Explore The Last Green Valley
Walktober - Who

- One staff member to organize – the rest is volunteer
- More than 200 volunteers from more than 70 organizations
- Sign in sheets allow organizations and TLGV to capture contacts
- Programs they are proud of get a boost
- Walktober events hit almost every age range. Attract participants from all over the world – this year Berlin, Germany
Walktober – Volunteers make it happen
Walktober - How

- Walktober has longevity
- Planning is almost constant
- Thank you to leaders kicks off the next round of planning.
- TLGV provides all materials needed, signs, t-shirts, press releases.
- TLGV Promotes organizers, partnership constantly
- Walktober guide is full-color and beautiful. People want to pick it up. It fits into a full menu of options to get people to Explore!
- Spring Outdoors offers an opportunity to “practice”
Walkober Calendar
Walktober – Observations & Ideas

- Be consistent – and give it time
- Believe in your location, believe in your program
- Recognize your place in the world
- Trails = Tourism, Tourism = Economic Development
- Gain champions thru partnerships – What happens when people are off the trails?
- Social Media extends reach cheaply – More than Facebook
Walktober – It’s Ours To Share!
Questions? - Thank You!