



Trails are fun, outside spaces where all different types of people can come together to be active in the ways they choose. Many trails are created from old railroad corridors, which means they're mostly flat and perfect for doing all different types of outdoor activity. You can learn about nature and history while being active outside!

Across the country, there are thousands of trails totaling more than 40,000 miles. In west central Florida, [you can find 29 trails](#)—that's a lot of different places, close to home, where you can get outside, be active and explore your community!

People can do a lot of different things on trails—bike, run, walk with their family, walk their pet, scooter or even ride a horse! In most places, though, trails are considered “non-motorized.” This means that trails are only for activities that use our bodies instead of a car, truck or motorcycle. That's one of the great things about trails—they create space for us to be outside, where we can connect with nature and be active without having to interact with cars.

With so many different people and activities happening on trails, close to nature, we have to be thoughtful so that we can all use trails together. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, an organization that works to create trails in every state in the country, has fun videos to teach us what it means to “[Share the Trail](#),” and guidelines to help us all make trails welcoming and safe places for everyone.

It's always important to share the trail, but during COVID-19, it's more important than ever. Lots and lots of people are finding adventure and outdoor activity close to home on the trails in their neighborhood. That means there are more people visiting trails than ever before. As a Girl Scout, you can learn what it means to share the trail and to [recreate responsibly](#) whenever we spend time outdoors.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, millions of people have flocked to the outdoors. Spending time outside is one of the safest things we can do. As people seek out spaces near their homes to be active at a safe physical distance, trails have proven to be so important to so many—spaces to play, commute, walk, bike, run and explore. Below are 12 steps that will help you learn the rules of being good stewards of our trails.

- For Daisies and Brownies, complete 3 of the following steps to earn your patch.
 - For Juniors and Cadettes, complete 6 steps to earn your patch.
 - Seniors and Ambassadors, complete 8 of the 12 steps to earn your patch.
1. Visit RailstoTrails.org/SharetheTrail and learn the 6 rules of Share the Trails and what each mean.
 - Use Safe Speeds.
 - Keep Right, Pass Left

- Standing Still? Stand Aside.
 - Mind Your Pets.
 - Be Alert.
 - Know and Follow the Rules
 - Leave No Trace
2. Take the Share the Trail Pledge! Calling all trail users! Be the best you can be on America's pathways. With your family or your troop, share 2 ways you'll live out this pledge to be mindful and respectful of others and nature while you're on the trail.
 3. Learn about your state's trails. Identify at least two rail-trails in your county and learn their rules—like when do they open, or what activities do they allow? Can't find two in your county? Learn about other multiuse trails like canal towpaths and greenways in your state. Rail-trails and multiuse trails are often built from historic transportation routes—can you learn anything about the history of the trails you found in your state? To get started, visit Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's trail-finding website and app, [TrailLink](#).
 4. Prepare for a trip on the trail! Pick a local trail, research the hours and talk with an adult about what to pack for your planned trip. Make a list of the supplies you will need.
 5. Hydrate! Proper hydration is important for any physical activity. Research how much water you should drink in a day and for a week, try to drink that amount of water. When you're ready to hit the trail, make sure to pack enough water for the entire trip.
 6. Prepare a trail snack. Research what makes a good trail snack. Do you need it to be packed of protein? Carbs? Sugar? Once you have done your research, find a recipe and make a snack at home.
 7. Hit the trail. With your family or troop, visit a local trail and enjoy the outdoors. You can choose to bike, walk, run or hike! You can even share the trail with your family pet! Check all of the local trail's rules (find contact information and links to local trail websites on [TrailLink](#)) and remind yourself of the [Share the Trail guidelines](#) before planning your activity.
 8. Keep a journal of your adventures. Write how you feel when you are out on the trail or sketch what you see. Write down the dates of your trip on the trail and compare the seasons.
 9. Share your adventure! Take pictures, or ask an adult to take a picture, and share with another troop and the Girl Scout council. Submit the pictures with 1 to 2 sentence description when ordering the patch [here](#).
 10. Girl Scouts always leave a place better than they found it! One of the [principles of "Leave No Trace"](#) is to dispose of waste properly. If you see litter and it's safe to do so, pick it up and place it in a trash can. Make sure you pack any of your own trash out.
 11. Take it a step further and find a community cleanup program. With your troop or family, join in on the clean-up. Not one in your area? Take action and look into organizing one.

12. Using a rail-trail as a starting point or your entire adventure, work on the Trail Adventure badge for your Girl Scout level.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails advocacy organization. Learn more about rail-trails and trails across the country by visiting www.railstotrails.org and following [@railstotrails](https://twitter.com/railstotrails) on social media. You can find close-to-home trails for outdoor activity, walking and biking at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's trail-finding website and app, TrailLink.com.