



American Trails brought 16 Emerging Leaders to the Symposium on scholarship through the Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Program. These young men and women (ages 20-25) are from all over the United States, Nicaragua, Ghana, Russia, and Canada. Recipients were immersed in learning best practices and trends in the field to help pave the path to careers in trails, conservation, and outdoor recreation. Many attendees met and mentored these aspiring young trail professionals at the Symposium to encourage them on their way to becoming tomorrow's trail leaders.

The Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Program provides training and mentoring opportunities at the American Trails International Trails Symposium to inspire young adults to choose a career path so they too, can leave a lasting legacy on the world—as Hulet did.

Three of the youth scholars provided their thoughts after the Symposium:

Brian Anderson from Arizona

It is an amazing opportunity for a young person to be exposed to the wide variety of occupations, professionals, and discussions in the world of trails. American Trails brought together a cohort of sixteen individuals who all have a relationship with trails. That relationship was unique to each individual. However, the common thread that tied us all together is we all feel deeply about a path that gets people out of vehicles and recreating out of doors. Tied together by this commonality we were able to have meaningful discussions, and be rejuvenated by meeting young people from all over the country and world who are working to confront the issues that our generation faces and even broader the issues that confront our world.

I feel incredibly blessed to have had the opportunity to meet this group of individuals, as it is comforting to get to know a broad base of individuals who are contributing their passions and their time to the perils that confront our world. I want to take the time to thank American Trails, all the financial contributors, and the amazing group of people who made this program possible. Gatherings of like-minded passionate people allow for reflection and growth, and this symposium did both for me. Thank you for the opportunity.

Sarneshea Evans from Washington, DC

Being at the symposium, in all honesty, was a life changing experience. Never before had I been surrounded by so many individuals who are changing the way that we interact with communities and provide individuals of all ages with access to the outdoors. From many of the sessions and outings, I learned what it means to actively engage nearby communities; how to recruit, maintain, and create exciting experiences for volunteers on trails; and understand the significance of multiuse trails by actually working on my first trail.

One major highlight for me was having conversations with my fellow Emerging Leaders. There were times of lightheartedness, laughter, and lightning rounds of all kinds of questions, but there were also moments of grave seriousness as we discussed issues close to our hearts. These varying perspectives in addition to information gained from my time at the symposium caused several lightbulbs to go off in my head. How can I take everything that I now know and flip the world on its head?

On the flight back home, my mind was filled with nothing but ideas and potential projects to work on. Being at the symposium was the motivation that I needed to figure out how to

incorporate my love of the outdoors and share that same passion with others. As easy as it seems the reality is that because of aggressive gentrification, loss of employment, and countless other issues that plague many of us— especially those who are socio-economically disadvantaged— spending time on trails and in the outdoors is not a priority. My life goal is to make the outdoors more accessible and appealing to those who traditionally have been reluctant to spend time in many of the world’s most beautiful green spaces.

Corrie Parrish from New Mexico:

I’ve never thought of myself as an “emerging leader.” I was chosen, along with the fifteen others, out of a pool of over 100 applicants for this scholarship. I couldn’t see what was so special about me. I could see it in my peers, though. And despite all of our diverse backgrounds, we all had amazing stories to tell when it came to working on trails, and banded together to make sure our stories were heard for the benefit of the American Trails future.

That wasn’t without the help of our mentors though. When we first arrived in Portland the day before the symposium, we barely acknowledged each other due to shyness. My mentor, Kathie Brennan, has been working as an Ozark Trail volunteer for several years. Even with her active work and family life, she manages to find time to clear and maintain dozens of miles of trail along the Ozark trail and she also has found numerous volunteers to work to help her maintain a great trail system in Missouri, even to the point where someone once made her get off the trail because she was too sick to work. With her help and the help of the other mentors, we were able to grow together as a family and be “welcomed” into the American Trails ITS family, as well.

I think the biggest take-away from this symposium for me was how diverse we are as a group and how many different stories we can tell as a result of our experiences working outdoors. When it comes down to it though, our stories are what tie us together. Trails connect one place to another. It’s our passion and most importantly, our trail stories, that bring us together. And that is why I’m an Emerging Leader; I may just be beginning but I already have one hell of a story to tell.

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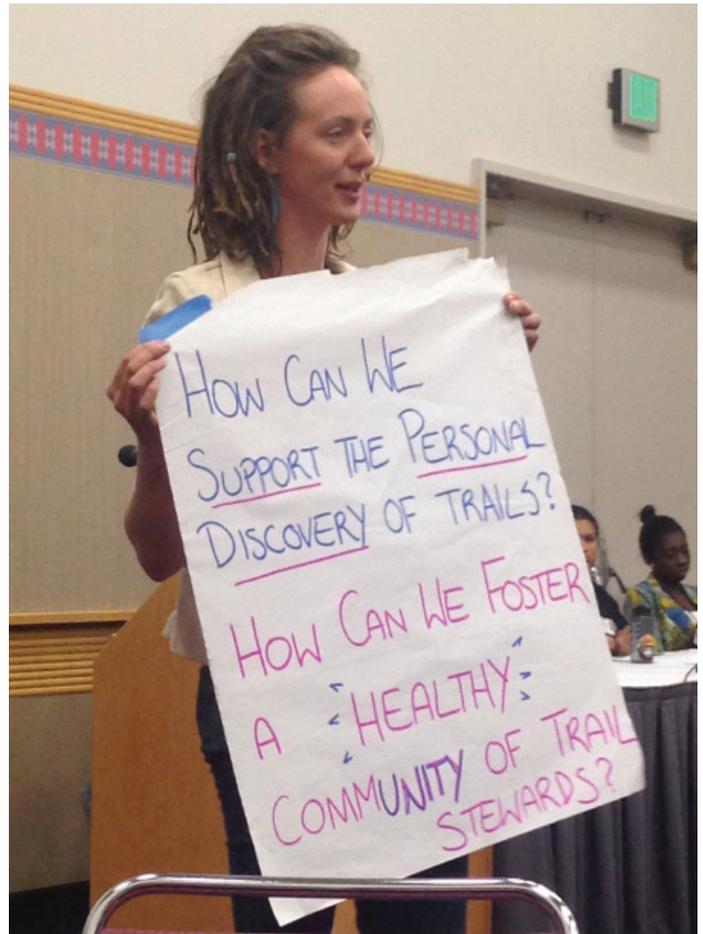
Roger Bell was made Honorary Chair of the Hulet Hornbeck



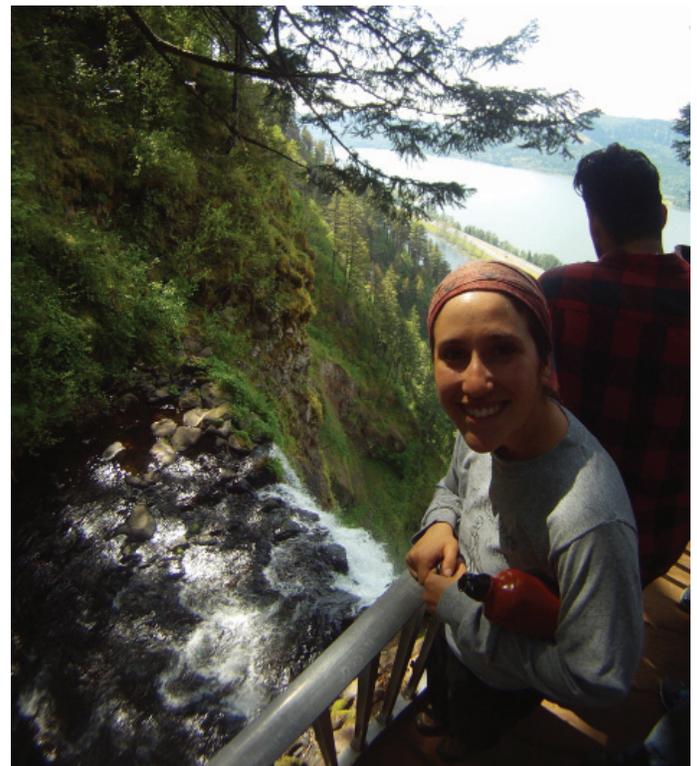
Hulet Hornbeck

Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program due to his role as a funder, committee member, mentor, and active participant that has made the program a better one indeed. Read more about Roger on page 35.

Learn more about the program and meet all the 2015 Emerging Leaders at www.AmericanTrails.org/ee/index.php/symposium/2015-youth.



Bree Kullman giving a presentation to the group



The youth scholars on a field trip at the Symposium