

2022

HOT SPOTS REPORT

LEAVE NO TRACE CENTER FOR OUTDOOR ETHICS



LEAVE
NO TRACE



LEAVE NO TRACE
Hot Spots

2022 HOT SPOTS REPORT



The Hot Spot Program was created to support natural areas that are seeing stark increases in recreation-related impacts. Chosen through a nationwide nominations process, Hot Spots receive a unique blend of Leave No Trace educational programs, trainings, and site-specific recommendations. During the Hot Spot activation, action plans are put into place to ensure that these areas are equipped to bounce back from impacts and recover their natural qualities.

The Covid-19 pandemic created a large increase in visitors to the outdoors, with some sites seeing double or triple their previous annual visitation numbers. This increase in visitation, often paired with decreases in onsite resources, led to a surge in impacts. That's where the Leave No Trace organization and the Hot Spot program stepped in, providing land managers and communities with the resources and expertise needed to bolster visitor education efforts, prevent future impacts, and help create a new cadre of environmental stewards.





NOMINATIONS



In August of 2021, Leave No Trace opened nominations for 2022 Hot Spots. The organization received nominations from land managers, friends groups, and partner organizations across the country. In selecting the areas for the 2022 visits, a Leave No Trace taskforce made up of staff and board members considered the following factors:

- The types and severity of impacts an area is facing
- On the ground staffing resources
- The presence of a collaborative community of stakeholders
- Ability for work to be continued beyond the Leave No Trace onsite activation
- Potential for community and media engagement
- A range of agencies and geographic locations, from city parks to national parks



2022

HOT SPOTS LOCATIONS



February 10-14 | Winter Park, CO
BERTHOUD PASS RECREATIONAL SITE

April 28 - May 2 | Ramona, CA
SAN DIEGO RIVER GORGE

June 23-27 | Pinedale, WY
BRIDGER WILDERNESS

July 14-17 | Westcliffe, CO
SOUTH COLONY LAKES (REVISIT)

July 14-18 | Peachtree City, GA
LINE CREEK NATURE AREA

August 3-8 Forestville, CA
STEELHEAD BEACH REGIONAL PARK

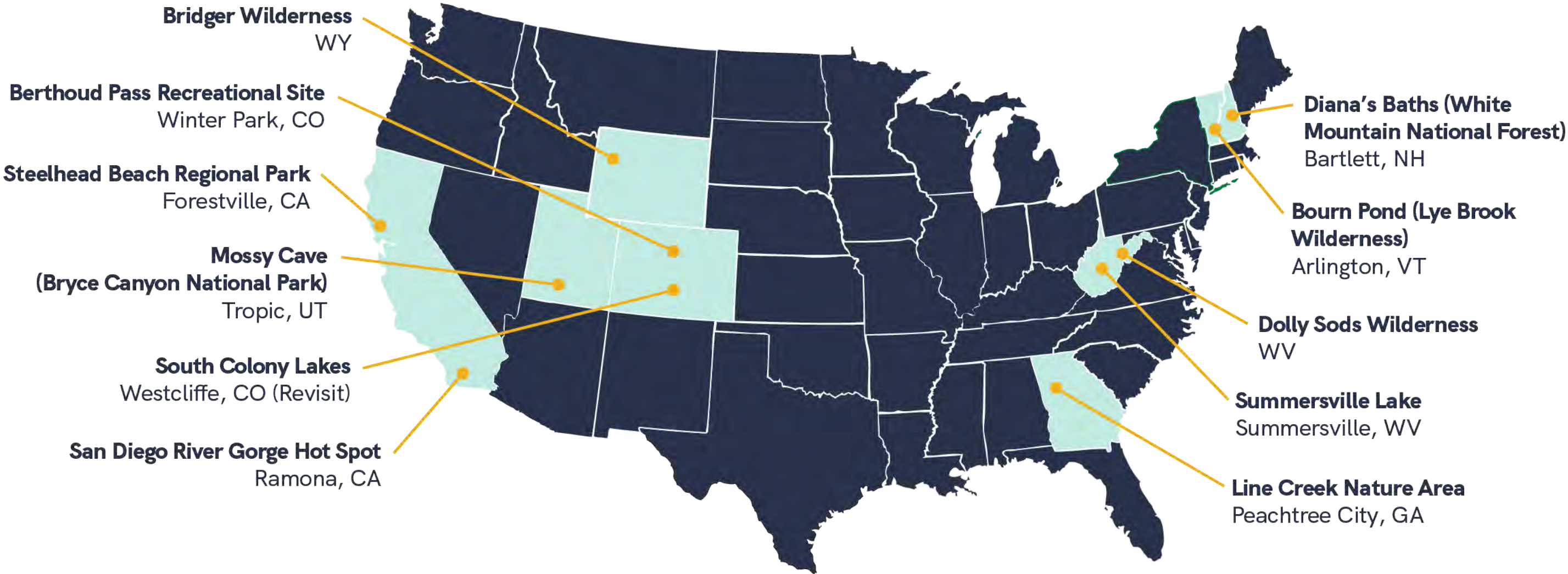
August 11-15 | Summersville, WV
SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

August 18-22 | Arlington, VT
BOURN POND

August 25-29 | Tropic, UT
MOSSY CAVE

September 15-19 North Conway, NH
DIANA'S BATHS

September 29- October 3 | Cortland, WV
DOLLY SODS WILDERNESS





OVERALL IMPACT



The 2022 Hot Spot program supported 10 new parks and protected areas, with one additional revisit to a site which previously held a Leave No Trace Hot Spot. Each activation provided for the coming together and training of key staff, volunteers, and various stakeholders directly involved with the stewardship of each location. Leave No Trace efforts were strengthened both on the ground and with site-specific recommendations that each Hot Spot received upon completion. The Subaru/Leave No Trace Teams provided a total of 67 educational programs, each tailored to the specific needs of the site.

Through these efforts, over 2,700 people engaged in the stewardship of public lands, contributing 180+ volunteer hours and removing over 100 pounds of trash. Not only did land managers, key stakeholders, volunteers, and community members engage over the course of each Hot Spot — through the action planning meetings at the end of each activation week a roadmap of support was laid out, leading to the continued revival of each of the 11 Hot Spots.



2,770
Land Managers,
Key Volunteers and
Community Members
Inspired



127 lbs
of Trash
Removed



184
Volunteer Hours



67
Educational Programs
Conducted



BERTHOUD PASS RECREATIONAL SITE

Problem:

Known as a popular backcountry skiing/snowboarding and winter recreation destination, Berthoud Pass Recreational area has seen a significant increase in use due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the surging popularity of backcountry skiing in recent years. As visitation increases, with some information suggesting a 200-300% increase, so have the overall impacts to the site, both in ecological and social aspects. The most prevalent issues involve litter, pet waste, human waste, illegal parking, and visitors unprepared for conditions.

Solution:

Through the Hot Spot effort, the Headwaters Trails Alliance, Arapaho National Forest, and Leave No Trace came together with the goal of creating a culture of Leave No Trace throughout Grand County. This can be accomplished with increased Leave No Trace training opportunities for both staff and volunteers, bolstering onsite and online messaging as Berthoud Pass serves as the gateway to Grand County, and increasing onsite programming opportunities. By setting visitors up for success and empowering them to protect Berthoud Pass and the surrounding areas, a sustainable path will be created for outdoor recreation in Grand County moving forward.



 Colorado



408
People
Educated



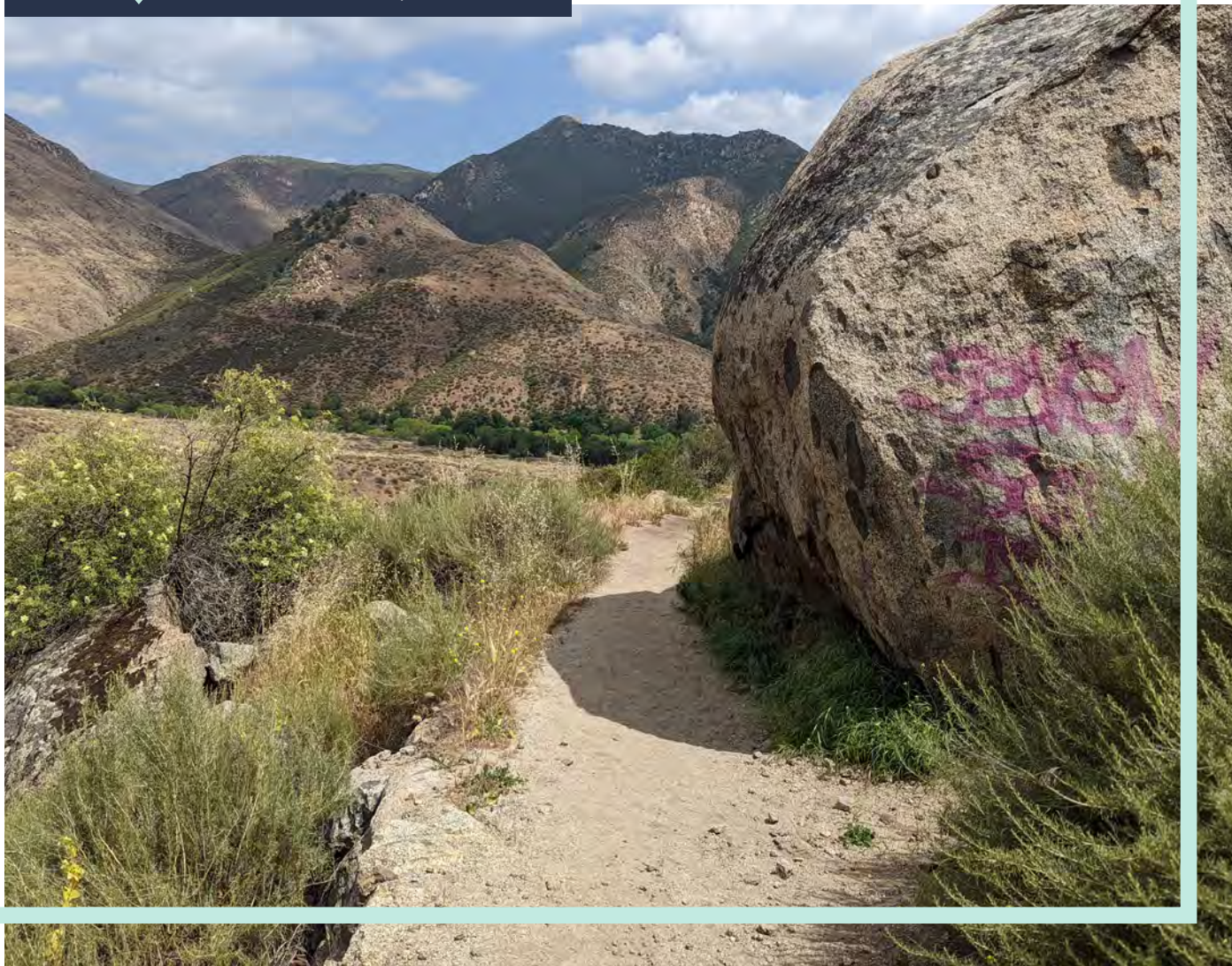
10
Educational
Programs Over
5 Days



8+
Organizations
Involved

SAN DIEGO RIVER GORGE

California



111
People
Educated



36
Volunteer
Hours



25 lbs
Of Litter
Removed and 9
Trails Restored

Problem:

The San Diego River Gorge includes two of the Cleveland National Forest's highest trafficked trails: the San Diego River Gorge Trail and the Three Sisters Trail. These trails draw visitors in from nearby San Diego and beyond for their scenic views and swimming opportunities. This area is prone to extreme heat, and both trails are highly exposed, creating potential for dangerous conditions. Safety issues and the frequency of rescue are one of the most concerning impacts, with the Forest reporting over 100 rescues a year. As crowding on this trail has increased, recreation-related impacts have also become more prominent. These include trash, pet and human waste, trail erosion, as well as vandalism/theft.



Solution:

Through the Hot Spot effort, the Cleveland National Forest and Leave No Trace organization began working to create a culture of Leave No Trace locally and to help provide visitors with necessary information for safe and low impact trips. During the activation, many San Diego River Gorge staff participated in an Effective Communication of Leave No Trace workshop to help establish a base level of knowledge among staff as well as to help promote opportunities for more site-specific messaging for visitors. Additional opportunities include incorporating Leave No Trace education into the trail hosts duties and backcountry ranger outreach as this can help to provide a critical high traffic touchpoint to reach visitors onsite.

BRIDGER WILDERNESS

Wyoming



Problem:

The Bridger Wilderness is located in Wyoming within the Wind River Mountains, and is part of the larger Bridger-Teton National Forest. It extends 80 miles along the Continental Divide and hosts hundreds of high alpine lakes, glacial cirques, and picturesque valleys. The main impacts that the Bridger Wilderness is experiencing are centered around the massive increase in visitation, especially from backpackers. Specific impacts include visitors camping too close to lakes and trails, human waste, improper campfire management, and altitude preparedness.

Solution:

Throughout the Hot Spot activation, Leave No Trace had the opportunity to collaborate with the Friends of Bridger-Teton, the Wind River Wilderness Alliance, and the Pinedale Ranger District to help address the impacts happening in the Bridger Wilderness. Moving forward, this collaborative effort will primarily involve revamping and creating new on-site trail information, and bolstering Leave No Trace messaging in educational materials, website/social media information, and in community partner programming such as with the Great Outdoors Shop, Wind River Brewing Co., and Pinedale Aquatic Center.



250
People
Educated



3
Leave No Trace
teams



6
educational programs
over 5 days



SOUTH COLONY LAKES

(REVISIT)

Problem:

The South Colony Lakes Basin gives easy access to three 14,000 foot peaks (14ers) which have become increasingly popular destinations. Trailhead register data indicate 3,500 to 4,500 persons (7,000 to 9,000 visitor days) visit the small (1,500 acre) upper basin at the head of the South Colony drainage during the summer season. Due to this, the basin sees impacts from improper disposal of human waste, damage to vegetation from the proliferation of campsites, and water resource impacts.

Solution:

As a Hot Spot Revisit, work during the activation focused primarily on changes the South Colony Lakes Basin has seen since the 2018 activation. Opportunities to address continued impacts include development of guidelines specific to 14ers, additional Leave No Trace training for Forest Service staff as well as guides and outfitters, and bolstering minimum impact messaging at trailhead kiosks.



Colorado



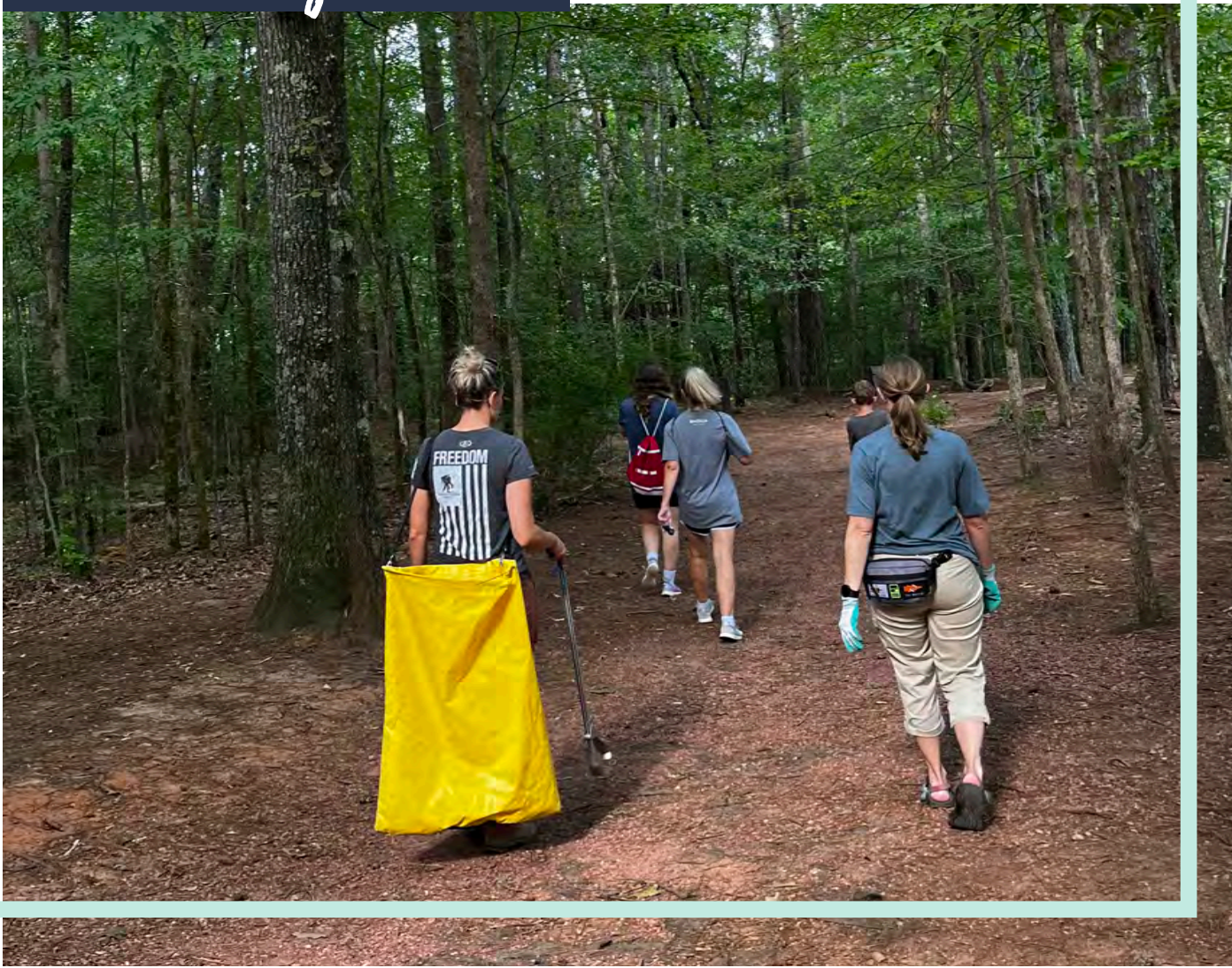
126
People
Educated



3
Educational Programs
Over 4 Days

LINE CREEK NATURE AREA

Georgia



158
People
Educated



48
Volunteer
Hours



35 lbs
Of Litter
Removed

Problem:

Line Creek Nature Area is a 70-acre waterfront public preserve tucked away in the middle of highly developed, suburban Peachtree City. This popular woodland nature area offers a mix of scenery as well as a small pond, fishing dock, gazebo and nearly three miles of trails. Impacts have been increasing over the years with a particular focus on litter, water pollution, vandalism and theft, as well as introduction of invasive species. In 2022, management of the nature area turned over from the Southern Conservation Trust (SCT) to Peachtree City. During the managerial handoff it has become apparent that without the stewardship techniques implemented by SCT the area may soon face significant impacts.



Solution:

During the Hot Spot effort, Leave No Trace, Peachtree City, and SCT had the opportunity to work together. The managerial change provides an opportunity for focused Leave No Trace implementation and is a great time to tap into the community's inherent love for this space. Continued Leave No Trace activation through training, programming, and messaging will empower community members to become stewards of the area, helping to strengthen a sense of shared responsibility while also easing the pressure on Peachtree City as it takes over management of the area.



STEELHEAD BEACH REGIONAL PARK

California

Problem:



Steelhead Beach is a destination for summer fun on the Russian River in Sonoma County, California. Favorite summertime activities include swimming, tubing, and barbecuing. It is also a popular year-round destination for fishing, birding, and wildlife viewing. The main impacts that Steelhead Beach is experiencing are centered primarily around the high increase in visitation, specifically from river floaters and paddlers. In turn, the high traffic is amounting to an increase in litter, human waste, and dog waste.



Solution:



There is an opportunity for Leave No Trace to collaborate with Sonoma County Regional Parks (SCRP) to address the impacts happening at Steelhead Beach. Many of these efforts cross over to the partnership between the Leave No Trace organization, Sonoma County Tourism, and Sonoma County Regional Parks as the wider county implements Leave No Trace in many areas that complement traditional outdoor recreation. Based on the Hot Spot activation week, recommendations for increased Leave No Trace implementation primarily focus on educational materials, volunteer engagement and training, and opportunities for programming internally and through partnerships with local businesses/outfitters.



246
People
Educated



5
Educational
Programs
Over 5 Days



2
Beach Clean
Ups and 1 Kayak
River Clean Up

SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

West Virginia



Problem:

As West Virginia's largest lake, Summersville Lake boasts ample recreation opportunities including boating, fishing, swimming, water-skiing, picnicking, hunting, biking and more. As a popular recreation destination with over 600,000 visitors each year, impacts have been increasing. Litter from picnickers, anglers, and partiers washes up all around the lake. Social trails beneath popular climbing routes and undesignated campsites on remote beaches have caused harmful erosion, and improper disposal of human waste in these areas presents a real threat to water quality.

Solution:

Throughout the Hot Spot activation, Leave No Trace had the opportunity to collaborate with the Army Corps of Engineers and various other stakeholders in the area including Active Southern West Virginia and the Access Fund. The implementation of Leave No Trace through further staff and volunteer training, bolstering of site-specific minimum impact messaging, and expanding interpretive programming opportunities will help to empower visitors to become stewards of the lake. Leave No Trace provides an accessible framework for the Army Corps to utilize, ultimately helping to ease the strain on agency resources.



137
People
Educated



24
Volunteer Hours



30 lbs
of Trash Removed

HOT SPOT REPORT 2022

BOURN POND



Problem:

Bourn Pond, located in the Lye Brook Wilderness near Arlington, VT, is a popular spot for hiking, camping, and fishing. Part of the Green Mountain National Forest, Bourn Pond is a day's drive for approximately 70 million people. Impacts from increased recreation are becoming more and more evident at Bourn Pond. Some of the most concerning impacts include damaged vegetation, water resource impacts, litter, campfire impacts and campsite sprawl.

Solution:

The Hot Spot activation included collaboration between Leave No Trace, the Manchester Ranger District of the Forest Service, and Vermont-based trail stewardship organization the Green Mountain Club (GMC), to address the impacts happening in Bourn Pond and the Lye Brook Wilderness. Through facilitated meetings and training sessions, primary opportunities for continued impact reduction include the development of site-specific trail information and bolstering Leave No Trace messaging throughout educational materials and outreach, website/social media information, and in programming with local community partners.



304
People
Educated



5
Educational
Programs
Over 5 Days



3
Wilderness
Campsites
Restored



 Utah



327
People
Educated



9
Educational
Programs
Over 5 Days



1
family-friendly
outreach session

MOSSY CAVE

Problem:

Mossy Cave is the northernmost hike in Bryce Canyon National Park. Over the years, Mossy Cave has become increasingly more popular due to a surge in social media posts about the trail as well as an overall increase in visitation to Bryce Canyon National Park. This increased visitation has led to impacts such as trail erosion, vegetation trampling, litter, and geologic resource impacts.

Solution:

The Hot Spot effort provided a meaningful opportunity for Leave No Trace and the National Park Service to come together in an effort to address the impacts happening at Mossy Cave. Primary opportunities include visitor education through consistent, educational trail signage, increasing Leave No Trace messaging throughout the park and surrounding businesses, and strategically closing undesigned trails.



DIANA'S BATHS

 *New Hampshire*

Problem: . . .

Diana’s Baths is a series of pools and small waterfalls on Lucy Brook located in New Hampshire. Only a day’s drive for the millions of people coming from New York City or Boston, visitation to the area has been increasing as people have been drawn to the photogenic beauty of Diana’s Baths promoted by travel sites and social media. Impacts from increased recreation are becoming more and more evident at the Baths. Some of the most concerning impacts include human and dog waste, damaged vegetation, litter, and erosion.



Solution: . . .

The Hot Spot activation highlighted the opportunity for Leave No Trace, the Forest Service, Carroll County Conservation District, and the Mount Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce to collaborate in an effort to address the impacts happening in Diana’s Baths and the White Mountain National Forest. Proposed solutions primarily revolve around creating better signage and messaging on or near the site, and including Leave No Trace messaging in educational materials and outreach, website/social media information, and in programming led by community organizations.



352
People
Educated



5
Educational
Programs
Over 5 Days



1
Trivia
Night

DOLLY SODS WILDERNESS

Problem:

Located in West Virginia, Dolly Sods Wilderness in the Monongahela National Forest contains much of the Red Creek drainage. There has been a continuing trend of increased visitation at Dolly Sods over the past two decades, with a significant spike during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to an increase in impacts, most prominent of which have been damage to vegetation and trees, camping-related impacts, and group use impacts.

Solution:

By implementing Leave No Trace education opportunities, Dolly Sods will be able to instill best practices among those who visit the area and help to provide a framework for common ground among the varied user groups. Education opportunities primarily revolve around staff and volunteer training, bolstering online information, and onsite programming efforts. There is an opportunity for continued collaboration between Leave No Trace, the Forest Service, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and the numerous guides and outfitters that work within Dolly Sods to help curb impacts.



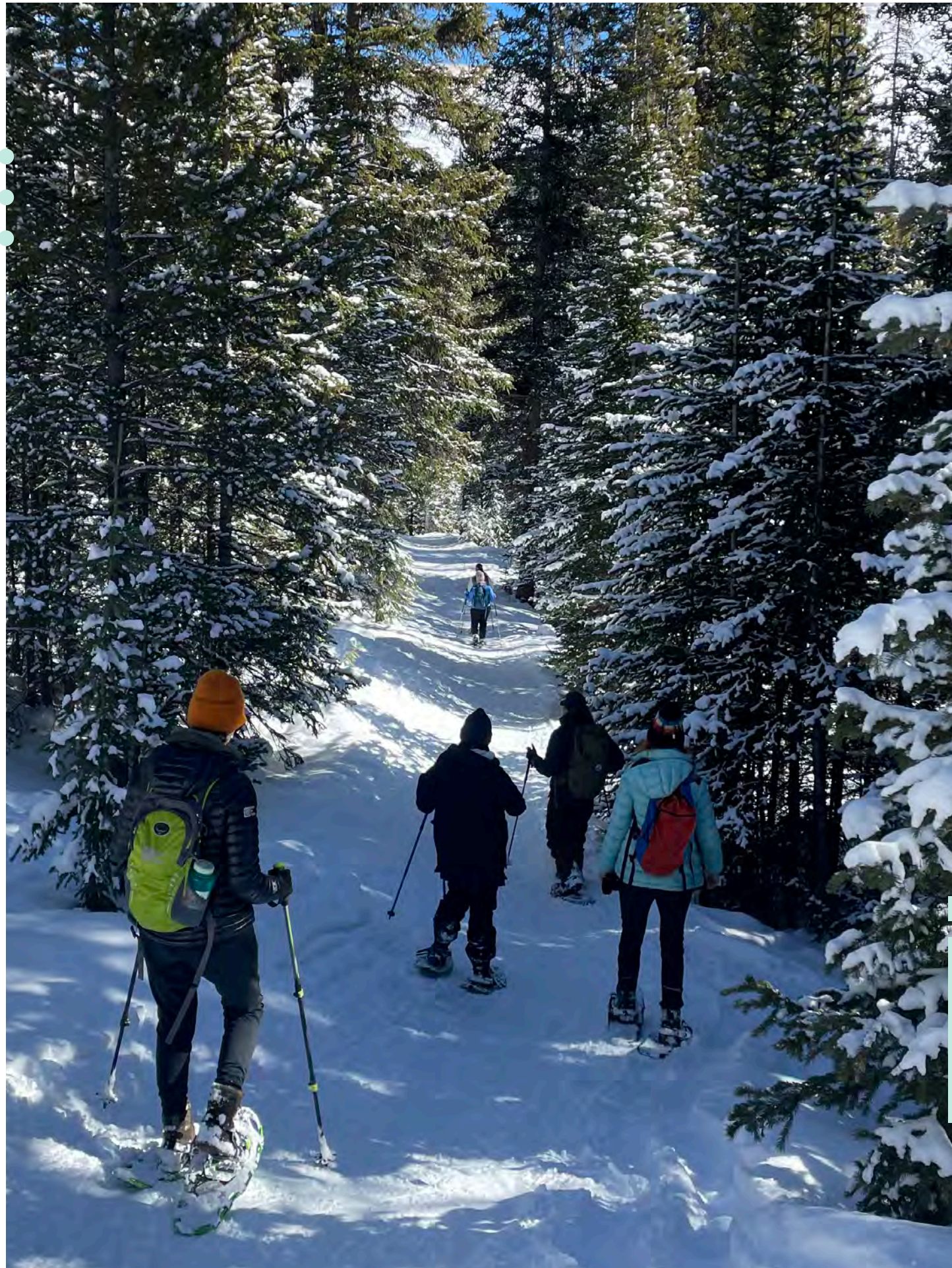
351
People
Educated



6
Educational
Programs
Over 5 Days



60
Volunteer
Hours



LOOKING FORWARD



At Leave No Trace, we believe communities are the solution to most conservation issues. As an organization, we have identified the need to create more opportunities for communities, and the individuals that make them up, to provide solutions. We want to connect Leave No champions to local conservation efforts, and assist even more communities as they tackle challenges. With this goal in mind, we are excited to be launching a new program in 2023 called the Spotlights program.

Spotlights will enhance communities with an even stronger focus on public engagement than Hot Spots. Through three-day activations, Spotlights will bring attention to community conservation, spread education, build momentum, and inspire involvement for the future. Nominations are under review for a

proposed 20 Spotlight activations in 2023.

What does this mean for Hot Spots moving forward? Hot Spots—with their behind the scenes engagement, multiple stakeholder meetings, intensive information gathering, and detailed recommendations on future programs—will transition to a fee-for-service model. Work is already underway for scheduling two USFS Hot Spots for 2023, with additional interest building.

Our outdoor areas are facing many challenges, but with those challenges come people putting local stewardship into action. Through both the Spotlights and Hot Spots programs moving forward, Leave No Trace will continue to support natural areas and the communities surrounding them, providing training, outreach, and highly effective stewardship.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!



L.L.Bean



Abanaki Nation of New Hampshire

The Access Fund

Active Southern West Virginia

**All the Range Mountaineering and
Outdoor Gear**

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Big Trout Brewery

Carroll County Conservation District

Friends of Berthoud Pass

Friends of Bridger Teton

Gad Dam Brewery

Garfield County Office of Tourism

Green Mountain Club

Headwaters Trail Alliance

Line Creek Brewing

Peachtree City

Pure Project Brewing

Society for Wilderness Stewardship

**Southern Appalachian Wilderness
Steward**

Southern Conservation Trust

**State of New Hampshire Division of
Travel and Tourism Development**

Utah Office of Tourism

**West Virginia Highlands
Conservancy**

Wind River Wilderness Alliance

Winter Park Ski Resort

A very special thank you to Subaru of America, KEEN, L.L. Bean, REI and onX Backcountry for their support of the Hot Spot program! The Center would also like to extend a thank you to the organizations listed for their participation in and contributions to the 2022 Hot Spot visits. These programs would not have been a success without all your hard work.



**1000 North Street
Boulder, CO, 80304
800-332-4100
www.LNT.org**

LEAVE NO TRACE