



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Trans Canada Trail Wins Bid to Host 2024 World Trails Conference in Canada**

#### **City of Ottawa Will Welcome Trail Sector Leaders and Organizations from Across the Globe in Early Fall 2024**

**Montreal, April 14, 2023** – Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is delighted to announce that the World Trails Network (WTN) has selected Ottawa, Canada as the location for the next World Trails Conference (WTC), to be held in 2024. Trans Canada Trail submitted the bid, in partnership with Ottawa Tourism. The conference will be held in early fall 2024, with exact dates to be announced soon.

The World Trails Conference is a global gathering of trail experts, trail managers and builders, trail destinations, enthusiasts and academics, who meet every two years to network and share knowledge, to ensure that trails, and the benefits they offer society, continue to be sustainable and supported around the world. This is the first time that the conference will be held in Canada.

“We are delighted at this opportunity to bring the WTC to Canada, and to work together with trail sector leaders in Canada and around the world to do so. Together, we will build an exciting conference agenda, that aligns with what we are seeing in Canada – and around the world. Trail use grew significantly during the pandemic and those trends are holding. That growth presents opportunities including economic development through sustainable tourism as well the chance to share strategies to challenges such as increased visitation,” said Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail.

“This is a rare opportunity to host a global forum where leaders in the sector will share expertise and best practices to deal with global challenges, including the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Canada is well placed as a country to convene a global discussion on these critical issues, particularly given the success of the recent COP 15 UN Biodiversity Conference, hosted in Canada,” McMahon noted.

Ottawa offers a number of significant benefits to hosting the conference, including the close proximity and presence of leading agencies, such as Parks Canada, and government officials – Members of Parliament, Senators and Cabinet Ministers – particularly those in relevant disciplines including Infrastructure, Tourism, Environment and Climate Change.

The nation's capital also offers an opportunity to engage the diplomatic community in Ottawa to elevate the awareness of trail organizations and trail issues internationally by liaising with Canada's diplomatic representatives and bringing them together with their respective country's trail organizations and leaders.

Trail discussions are at the forefront of both government and community conversations, as Canadians' trail use, which rose during the pandemic, remains high, according to Trans Canada Trail's Léger Marketing Surveys.

In 2022, the federal government made an investment in the Trans Canada Trail of \$55M over five years, based on these growing numbers and the opportunities for trails tourism. Further, Canada is in the process of renewing its National Active Transportation Strategy and the Canadian government recently hosted the COP 15 conference, where a new Global Biodiversity Framework was achieved.

"This is Canada's moment to shine as we convene the World Trails community to Ottawa. This is a unique opportunity to lead important discussions on climate, biodiversity and nature, trails tourism and sector sustainability. To host it in our nation's capital in a city that is so well known for embracing the great outdoors in all seasons, is particularly significant," noted McMahon.

Jackie Randle, chair of the World Trails Network, states, "We will look forward to having Ottawa host our 2024 conference, and we are delighted that Trans Canada Trail will lead a coalition of organizations in developing a stellar program at a time of burgeoning interest in trails around the world."

"The fact that key decision and policy makers are located in Ottawa will facilitate important discussions with government officials, as well as diplomatic representatives from around the world. Holding this conference in Ottawa represents an important opportunity to elevate the sector, the issues it faces – like the changing climate – as well as the positive role that trails play in climate mitigation and biodiversity enhancement," Jackie notes.

"We are happy to see the conference coming to Canada, and we will support Trans Canada Trail in welcoming trail organizations from around the world," says Michael McDonald, CEO of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

"Ottawa Tourism is thrilled to welcome the World Trails Conference to the nation's capital in 2024," says Michael Crockatt, President & CEO of Ottawa Tourism. "Trans Canada Trail and Ottawa Tourism have been partners for many years as we share values around sustainability and the benefits that outdoor recreation offers to communities, and so it is fitting to be joining forces to bring this prestigious international conference to our city to share knowledge, network, and showcase the linkages that Ottawa has with our country's own national trail network."

Further details about the conference, including the delegation, presenters and agenda will be shared in the coming weeks. The event will be a carbon neutral, zero-waste conference.

## Resources

- [Explore a map](#) of the Trans Canada Trail.
- Download our Trans Canada Trail [fact sheet](#).
- Watch our [Ode to the Trail](#).
- For images and B-roll of the Trans Canada Trail, visit the [photo gallery](#) and [video gallery](#).
- Read Trans Canada Trail's [Léger survey research](#) on trail use in Canada
- Read Trans Canada Trail's [Conference Board of Canada report](#) on the health, environmental and economic benefits of Canada's trail system

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## About Trans Canada Trail

The Trans Canada Trail (the Trail) is the longest recreational trail in the world, spanning over 28,000 kilometres on land and water. Linking three oceans – the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic – the Trail connects 15,000 rural, urban and Indigenous communities across every province and territory. It is a ribbon that connects Canada's diverse landscapes, seasons, people and experiences, and fosters unity, collaboration and connectedness. Trans Canada Trail is a registered charity and stewards this national trail in collaboration with local Trail partners. With funding from the Government of Canada through Parks Canada, and investments from all levels of government and generous donors, Trans Canada Trail is the largest investor in trail infrastructure projects in Canada, supporting improvements, growth and enhancements for generations to come. [tctrail.ca](http://tctrail.ca)

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