



Kids in Parks

Providing a network of TRACK Trails
designed to get kids and families “unplugged”,
outdoors and active, for both their health
and the health of our parks

Steps to Installing a TRACK Trail at your site

Agree to Agree



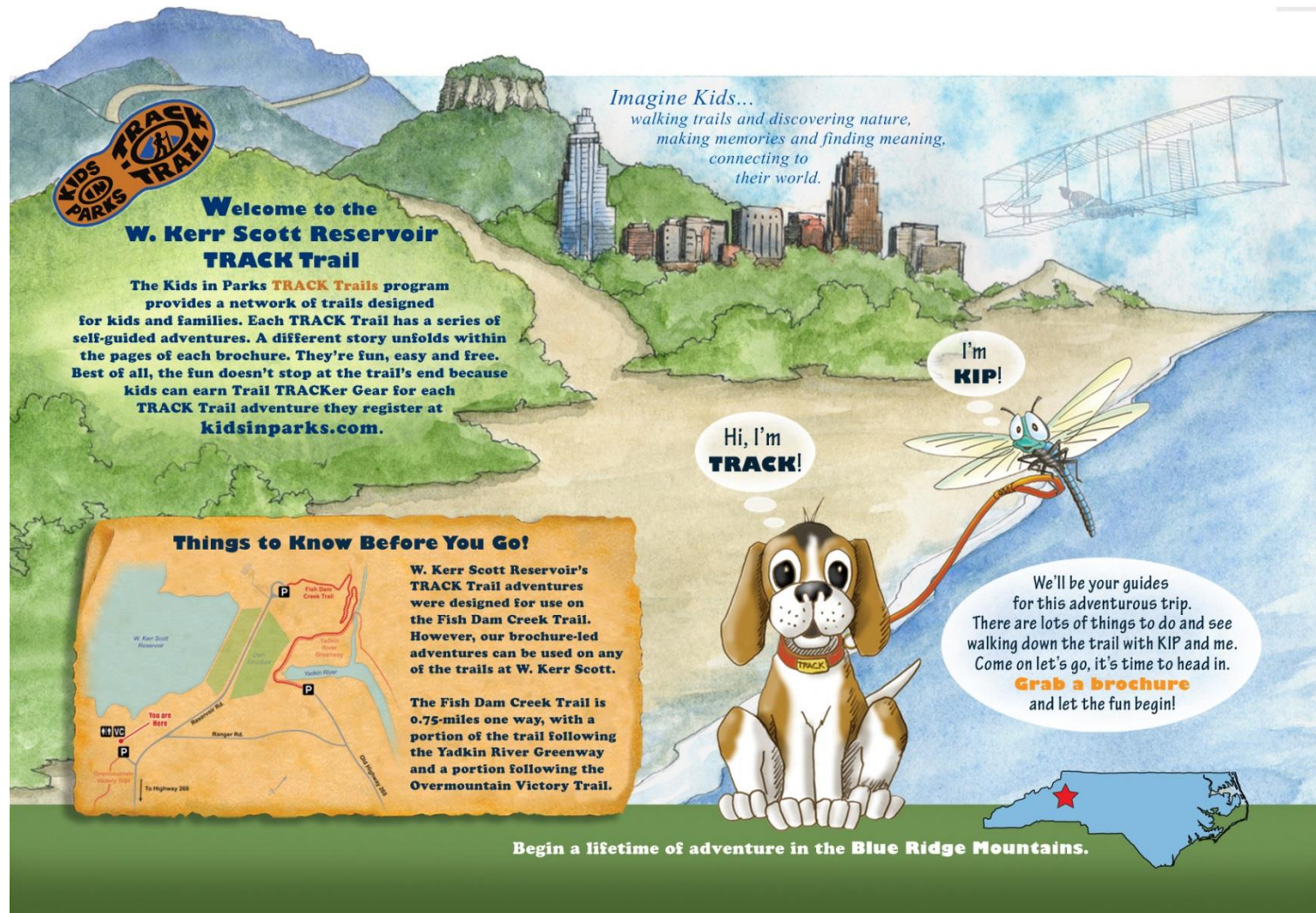
Enter into an MOU with the Kids in Parks program.

Select a Trail at Your Site



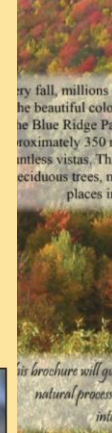
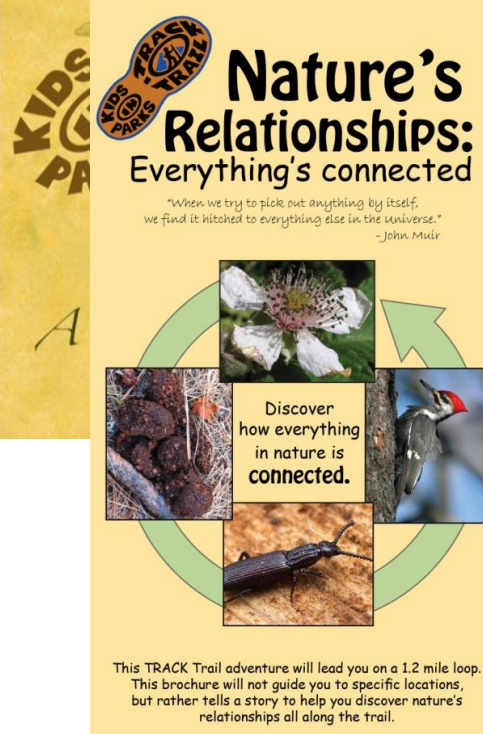
TRACK Trails are installed upon a site's pre-existing trail(s), requiring no additional maintenance for the park. TRACK Trails should be on a kid and family friendly trail that's safe, with lots of things to see and do.

Design Trailhead Sign



The Kids in Parks staff will work with you to design the map portion of the sign. The trailhead sign takes approximately 2 months to design and fabricate.

Select your Brochures



Kids in Parks has more than 50 different brochures to choose from, and can create custom site-specific trail brochures for an additional fee. Each trail gets four brochures.

Examples of Brochures

Hide and Seek



Animal Athletes

☐ Hummingbird Hand-swings

Look for ruby-throated hummingbirds feeding on flowers around woodland edges and fields. Hummingbirds flap their wings over 50 times per second! 50 wing-beats per second equals 1500 wing-beats in 30 seconds.



How many times can you flap your "wings" in 30 seconds?

☐ Ant Strength Training

Ants are very strong insects, able to lift objects much heavier than their own bodies. Can you lift your own body weight? An easy way to find out is by doing push-ups.



Find a clear, safe spot on the trail and see how many push-ups you can do!

☐ White-tailed High Jump

Keep your eyes and ears open for white-tailed deer in the woods and meadows. In order to move quickly through the tall grasses and shrubs, white-tailed deer leap very high —sometimes over 6 feet in the air!



How high can you leap straight up in the air?

☐ Green Frog Hop

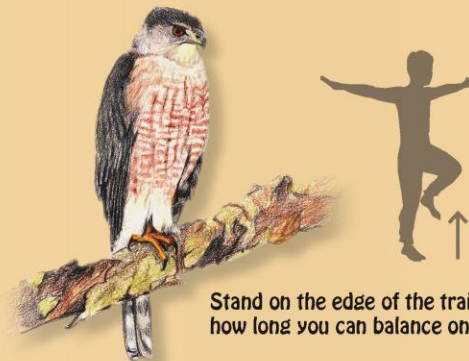
Listen for the "gunk!" sound of the green frog around ponds and streams. Green frogs make a tasty snack for predators such as snakes and herons. To escape quickly, frogs use their strong back legs to hop away.



Pretend you're being chased by a predator and hop like a frog down the trail.

☐ Hawk Stance

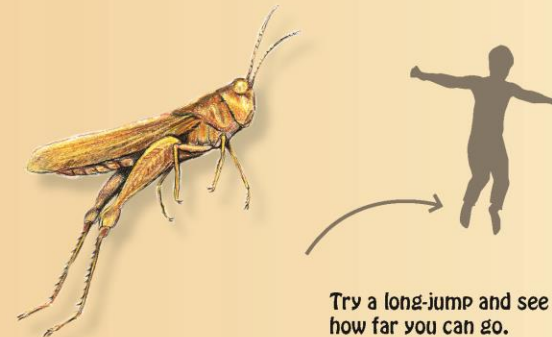
To conserve heat and energy, birds of prey such as sharp-shinned hawks often perch on one leg. Locking tendons in their feet allow birds to balance on one leg for hours at a time.



Stand on the edge of the trail and see how long you can balance on one leg.

☐ Grasshopper Long Jump

You may glimpse grasshoppers in areas with short grass or gravel. Grasshoppers can jump 20 times the length of their own body. If you could do that, you would be able to jump almost 100 feet!



Try a long-jump and see how far you can go.

Music of the Blue Ridge

Songs from the Wood ☐ Check the box next to each tree you find on your hike.

the Face (front)

The face of the instrument vibrates and transmits sound like a speaker. For the best sound, a soft wood needs to be used. In the Blue Ridge Mountains, red spruce is the best choice. If red spruce cannot be found, white pine can be used instead.

Red Spruce ☐

Red spruce is an evergreen that grows at higher elevations. Red spruce trees have short needles with sharp points that branch out from all sides of the twig. Look for round cones that are a little larger than an egg.



White Pine ☐

White pine is an evergreen tree with long needles in bundles (fascicles) of five. The cones are long and thin. The tree trunk is straight.



the Sides and Back

When a string is plucked, sound waves travel down inside the instrument. For the best sound, a hard wood is needed to reflect the sound back out through the face of the instrument.



Sugar Maple ☐

Sugar maple has been the favorite hard wood for the back and sides of stringed instruments in the Blue Ridge Mountains for years.

The sugar maple leaf looks like a hand with five fingers. They have winged seeds, called *sumaras*, that spin as they fall from the tree.

Mandolin

the Fingerboard

The fingerboard is a thin piece of hard wood that is glued to the front of the neck. Because the metal strings would dig into a softer wood over time, an extremely hardwood, like dogwood, needs to be used.

Dogwood ☐

Dogwood bark looks like a worn checkerboard with crooked squares. In spring, dogwoods have yellow flowers with four white modified leaves, called *bracts*.



the Neck

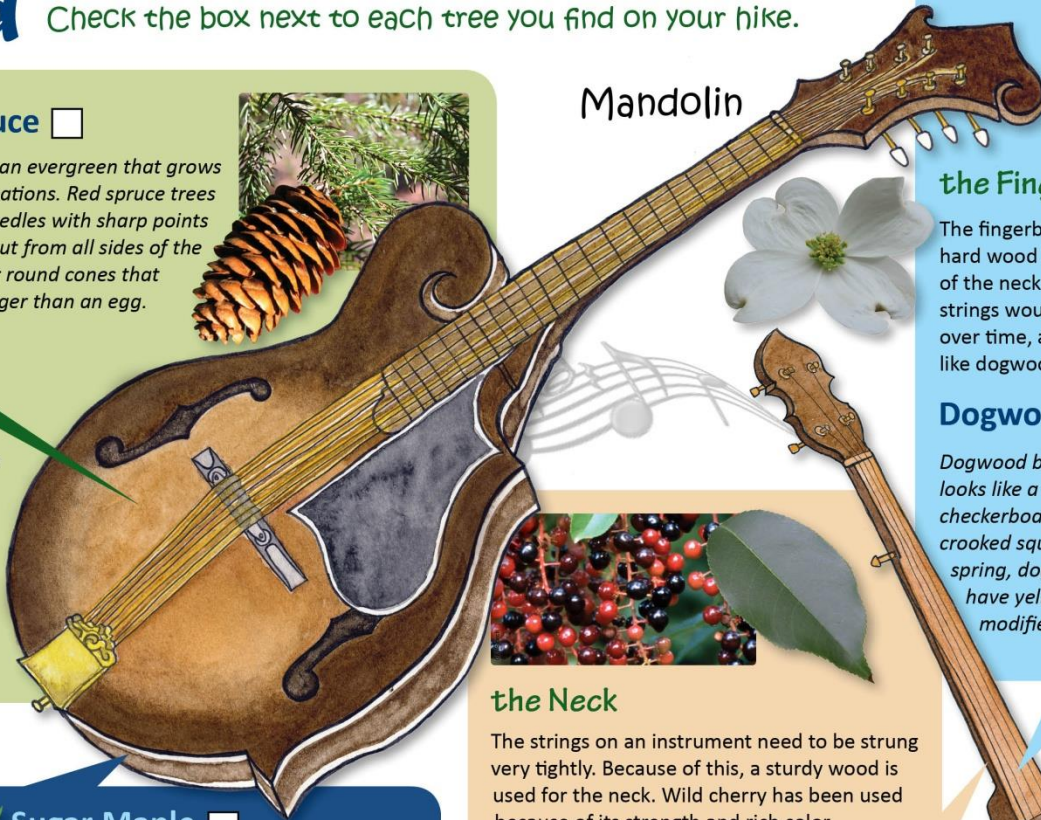
The strings on an instrument need to be strung very tightly. Because of this, a sturdy wood is used for the neck. Wild cherry has been used because of its strength and rich color.

Wild Cherry ☐

A young cherry tree has smooth dark bark, with horizontal stripes called *lenticels*. A lot of trees have thick cracked bark when older.



Mountain Banjo



Overmountain Victory Trail

Surviving Life in the Wilderness

The Overmountain Men's trek to and from Kings Mountain took months. See if you can find some of the following items that they needed to survive the journey:



Doing Battle with a Muzzle-loader

The long, heavy guns used during the American Revolution were called muzzle-loaders because the bullets were loaded through the "muzzle," or front of the gun. Soldiers on both sides could only fire about 3 rounds per minute. *What do you think the Battle of Kings Mountain would have been like if the Overmountain Men had the weapons of today?*

An Overmountain Man had to follow these steps every time he fired his rifle:



1. Pour gunpowder in the pan and down the muzzle.



2. Load the wad and ball through the muzzle.



3. Push the ball down with the ramrod.



4. Pull the firelock to fully-cocked position.



5. Take aim and fire!

From Hunters to Soldiers

The Overmountain Men did not march in rows and fight out in open fields like the British expected. Instead, they adopted Native American methods of hunting and fighting in the woods. One of these methods was being **stealth** (hard to find) so that the enemy didn't know you were there.



Try walking like an Overmountain Man:

1. Be quiet, stop talking and make no sounds or sudden movements.
2. Walk slowly and carefully to avoid snapping twigs or crunching leaves.
3. Don't wave your arms or make any sudden movements.
4. Stop every few steps and listen.
5. If you see something (like a rabbit or bird) slowly crouch down and stop.

Now, take turns having one person in your group close their eyes, and see if you can sneak up on each other without being heard.

These techniques can also help you see more wildlife and hear more sounds, and you'll be moving through the woods just like the patriots did when they were sneaking up on Patrick Ferguson and the British Loyalists at Kings Mountain!

Fun with Fungus

Fungus Fruit

When you find a mushroom in the woods, you are seeing only a small part of the fungus. The mushroom is the "fruit" of the fungus, where spores ("seeds") are produced. Different types of mushrooms have different ways of releasing their spores.



Giant Puffball
Calvatia gigantea

Puffballs do not have a stalk or an open cap and spread their spores by puffing them out of a hole. Puffballs grow in a variety of sizes. Some look like eggs while others look like sport balls.

Puffballs ☐

Chanterelles ☐

Chanterelles are shaped like a trumpet and can be found in many colors. The gills are found on the underside of the cap that continue down the stalk.



Golden Chanterelle
Cantharellus cibarius

You Are Where You Eat

Unlike plants, fungi do not make food from sunlight, but rather absorb nutrients from other living and dead organisms around them. Fungi are usually found growing in or on their food. Find a fungus near the trail. Can you find its food source? _____

Boletes ☐

Boletes have a stalk and a round cap but unlike gilled mushrooms, the underside of the cap is spongy.



Old Man of the Woods
Strobilomyces floccopus

Gilled Mushrooms ☐

Gilled mushrooms are shaped like umbrellas; they have an open cap and a stalk. Gilled mushrooms have tiny ridges (gills) on the underside of the cap



Honey Fungus
Armillaria mellea

The Destroying Angel

Amanita bisporigera

Although this mushroom is beautiful, it is deadly. If eaten, this mushroom can kill an adult person.



Mushrooms and Fungi
Check the box next to each type of fungus you find on your hike.



Turkey Tail
Trametes versicolor



Chicken of the Woods
Laetiporus sulphureus

Oh Mycelium

The mycelium, or "body" of the fungus, is usually hidden underground. The mycelium is made up of thread-like cells called hyphae which release enzymes and absorb nutrients. Turn over a decomposing stick. Can you find the threads of a mycelium? _____

Fungus Functions

Fungi play an important role as decomposers, helping to break down and recycle organic matter back into the soil. Without fungi, the forest floor would be littered with leaves, logs, and animal waste. Can you find a log that is being decomposed by mushrooms? _____

Install the Trailhead



Kids in Parks has several different kiosk options ranging from completely custom, to traditional H-frames, traditional NPS style bases, and custom wall mounts.

Plan the Grand Opening



It's always nice to celebrate the grand opening of your TRACK Trail with members of the community. Kids in Parks grand openings have ranged in size from festivals to just a few community members. KIP staff will work with you to plan your event.

Invite the Press



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Oconaluftee Track Trail opens

October 7, 2012

By SCOTT MCKIE B.P.

ONE FEATHER STAFF

Thanks to a new program, children will now be able to learn about wildlife and nature and Cherokee culture all while getting in a nice walk for exercise.



Tony Geiger, Kids in Parks program, leads a nature walk on Saturday, Oct. 4 on the new Oconaluftee Track Trail near Cherokee. (SCOTT MCKIE B.P./One Feather photos)

The Oconaluftee Track Trail officially opened on Saturday, Oct. 4 and offers youth hikers a chance to learn from four different pamphlets provided at the trailhead including: "Animal Athletes", "Nature's Hide & Seek", "The Power of Plants: Herbal secrets of the Cherokee" and "The Need for Trees and Cherokee Remedies".

Each pamphlet contains information on various local wildlife and how Cherokee people have used plants and communed with nature for centuries. Cherokee syllabary is used throughout each

pamphlet.

The Oconaluftee Track Trail is a partnership between the Kids in Parks program, the Eastern

Articles in the local paper are a great way to get free publicity about your trail.
Be sure to invite the local press to the grand opening celebration.

Let Kids Cut the Ribbon



A grand opening celebration is a great way to kick off the trail, while getting local and visiting kids and families excited about using the TRACK Trail.

Let Kids Use the Trail



56% of TRACK Trail users intentionally came to the park for the TRACK Trail. More than 40% were first time visitors to the park. 13% were first time hikers.

Incorporate Trail into Programs



Rangers have incorporated the brochures into their guided hike programs. The brochures provide great take-home value and remind kids to register on the Kids in Parks website.

Contact Information



For more information about how you can get a TRACK Trail at your site, please contact:

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1(866) 308-2773