

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Celebrating Quality Service”

2017 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: BLAZING TRAILS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: NOVEMBER 2014
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2016)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) maintains more
2 than 200 miles of urban, desert, foothill, mountain and coastline multi-use recreational
3 trails. These trails are used by hikers, bikers and equestrians, and connect to hundreds
4 of miles of additional trails that are managed by other municipalities. Before the creation
5 of the **Trails.lacounty.gov** website, it was challenging for residents to obtain factual
6 information about County trails. Their previous sources for information included hard-to-
7 find paper maps, unofficial websites and word-of-mouth, which in many cases proved
8 inaccurate. Also, these unofficial resources often contained misleading and potentially
9 unsafe information that put trail users in harm’s way. With the launch of this innovative
10 and dynamic trails website, there is now a one-stop, officially sanctioned, frequently
11 updated and comprehensive online tool for all trails-related information to serve a
12 rapidly growing population. This is meant to meet increased public demand for accurate
13 and rapid information available from anywhere in Los Angeles County, related to hiking,
14 biking and horseback riding as part of a healthy and recreational outdoor lifestyle. The
15 website has simply revolutionized easy access to desired County trails information.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Parks and Recreation 510 S. Vermont Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90020		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-738-4251
PROGRAM MANAGER’S NAME Michelle O’Connor		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-351-5136 EMAIL moconnor@parks.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME) Elizabeth Mendez Original on File	DATE 06/30/17	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-738-3040 EMAIL lmendez@parks.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE John Wicker Original on File	DATE 06/30/17	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-738-2953 EMAIL jwicker@parks.lacounty.gov

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success. Use Arial 12 point font.

THE CHALLENGE:

The demand for recreational trails in Los Angeles County is increasing rapidly, as more and more people look for ways to improve or maintain their health through physical activity. In its 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” the Outdoor Foundation stated running/jogging/trails, bicycling and hiking ranked among the top five most popular outdoor activities among youth and young adults ages 6-24, and adults ages 25 and older. As the popularity and demand for trail usage increased, DPR faced significant challenges in providing residents with easily accessible trails-related information such as geographic location, multi-use trail etiquette and trail user safety. Prior to this website, the inventory of County trail assets for decades relied on institutional knowledge and outdated paper maps. The lack of organized and authorized online information about County trails, coupled with inaccurate trail data provided by private websites and word-of-mouth, was a cause for great concern due to safety issues for both trail users and private property owners. In fact, unauthorized County trail information often led to reported incidents of trespassing, ill-prepared trail users navigating through dangerous terrain, and the disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas.

THE SOLUTION:

In response to inadequate and inaccurate trail information being provided to the public, DPR recognized a critical need to establish an officially County-sanctioned world-class trails website. In preparation, DPR led a team of multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional partners. With support from all five County Supervisorial District Offices, DPR contracted with the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department to develop the website. DPR also engaged key agencies that operate local and adjoining trail networks, including the National Park Service, California State Parks, Mountains Restoration Trust, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. Trails data from within the County and participating partners was gathered from numerous physical and digital sources. For instance, DPR collected more than 200 miles of trails data by foot. This included an assessment of the overall condition of the trails, cultural resources, and the unique presence of plants and wildlife. This data was then researched, digitized, processed and organized to create an informative, visually pleasing and user-friendly website. The website also shows the connectivity of all available trails within the County and its 4,084-square-miles of terrain. This includes trails operated by other jurisdictions.

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THE BENEFITS:

The development and implementation of the **Trails.lacounty.gov** website has resulted in a variety of meaningful benefits to County constituents.

A user-friendly “one-stop” resource: The website provides a comprehensive trails database covering 367 linear miles of trails digitized through GPS mapping, and organized by using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Regardless of their level of hiking, biking or horse-riding experience, constituents can now easily navigate the website to learn more about the wide range of available trails and how to access them. Also, users can obtain extensive trail knowledge such as connectivity (e.g. how the 30-mile Schabarum-Skyline Trail in Covina connects with the 35-mile San Gabriel River Trail that ends in Seal Beach), elevation, and the presence of natural wildlife, all of which gives them an accurate depiction of each trail’s individual character. As such, this website has become an invaluable one-stop online tool that users can rely upon for accurate, up-to-date and real-time information on trails throughout the County. Through this dynamic and unique website, the County is also able to provide updated trail information to the public. This includes accurate printable maps, physical descriptions of each trail, a “Get Directions” link, trail-length, as well as permitted uses and time-sensitive alerts that include updated air quality and weather reports.

Increasing the County’s online presence: One of the most important accomplishments achieved by this website is the County’s increased presence in the digital world. As more and more people obtain their information electronically through computers, smart phones and tablets, this website today provides the public with instant information available at their fingertips. The website has grown in viewership since its launch in November 2014, and its update in February 2015. The average increase of visitors has been 20%. The number of page views since the launch has reached more than 231,000, and analytics show the vast majority of visitors are newcomers to the website. This shows the County is developing interest among new hikers to visit our trails, as well as meeting the needs of experienced hikers.

Providing unified standards: DPR built this website to enable residents to easily navigate a comprehensive, dependable and user-friendly source for online information. By providing answers to frequently-asked-questions, DPR no longer has to spend extensive time and resources responding to phone inquiries from individual trail users. The website also provides a wide range of credible information on preparedness and proper trail etiquette. Additionally, trail users can now easily communicate trail maintenance requests and related concerns to DPR staff, who take action in a timely manner.

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Additional information not previously available to trail users includes safety guidelines, trail etiquette, trip planning, interactive digital maps to view steepness or surface type of trails, elevation profiles, native geology, a trail rating and review system, and tools to report maintenance issues. All of those are now made possible in a quick and user-friendly way thanks to the website.

While accessing the internet on a trail can be difficult in remote areas, the trails website offers downloadable and printable Quickguides. These include – but are not limited to – trail descriptions, maps, directions, photos and elevation profiles. The Community Corner portion of the website is regularly updated with activities, programs and events targeting various groups such as children and families, seniors, and fitness enthusiasts. There are also ways to learn about volunteer and stewardship opportunities throughout one’s community.

Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

This project supports County Strategic Plan Goal 3: *Realize Tomorrow’s Government Today* by pursuing operational effectiveness and providing customer-oriented and efficient public services in the form of a “one-stop” user-friendly trails database and resource website. The project also supports Goal 2: *Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities* by expanding access to recreational and cultural opportunities and accommodating growing multi-use trail recreation groups and their demand for well-organized trails data.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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Thanks to the establishment of this website, many qualitative benefits can be concluded thanks to its creation. First, **Trails.lacounty.gov** provides real-time alerts on its homepage or by specific trail, notifying potential visitors of hazards, closures, or other dangerous occurrences. This will potentially reduce costly accidents that could result in bodily harm and costly liability claims as fewer people find themselves in harm’s way.

Prior to the development of **Trails.lacounty.gov**, trail users also spent much money purchasing previously published maps, or bought expensive maps of County trails. Furthermore, prior to this website, DPR absorbed the high cost of plotting and printing large-scale reference maps for a variety of uses. By digitizing and posting already collected trails data to the website, DPR has significantly reduced internal overhead expenses (such as printing costs), while passing along savings to its constituents.

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FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – 1849 C STREET NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20240	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS – 1416 9 TH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY – 570 W AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100, LA, CA 90065	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY - 570 W AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100, LA, CA 90065	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS MOUNTAINS RESTORATION TRUST – 23075 MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY, CALABASAS, CA 91302	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE N/A Original on File EMAIL: _____	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 7 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT – 1100 N. EASTERN AVE., LA, CA 90063	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File LETICIA PEREZ EMAIL: LPEREZ@ISD.LACOUNTY.GOV	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original on File SCOTT MINNIX EMAIL: SMINNIX@ISD.LACOUNTY.GOV