



The Sipsey Wilderness needs your help! Recognizing the desperate need to fix existing trails and mitigate social trails, Wild Alabama, with support and input from the Bankhead National Forest, applied for a grant through American Trails. The Legacy Trails Fund was established to provide funding to organizations that are working to fix trails and hopefully improve safety for wilderness visitors and protection for wildlife. We are pleased to relay that we received full funding from this program and are actively recruiting user groups such as universities, small businesses, scout troops, hiking groups and any constituents that use the wilderness for outdoor activities.

The Sipsey Wilderness is an Alabama gem and wonder, a legacy that is ours to enjoy, value and protect. The heart of our mission is to inspire people to get out and enjoy, learn to value, and in return protect the resource. The Sipsey Wilderness was established as a federally designated wilderness area in 1975. The value was recognized by many people including the Forest Service, the Alabama Conservancy (now Alabama Environmental Council), and many private citizens and politicians. 26,000 acres in size, it has 53 miles of official trails and about twice as many in social trails (trails not maintained or recognized by the Forest Service). Thousands of people come to the Sipsey year round to backpack, fish, horseback ride, participate in research projects and more. It is truly a gem to be cherished. But with all good things comes a downside. Footsteps, wild hogs and flooding events have contributed to erosion which causes sedimentation in the creeks and the main artery of this watershed, the Sipsey Fork. The Sipsey Fork is Alabama's only federally recognized Wild and Scenic River established by an act of congress in 1988. It is home to many species, including the federally listed endangered Black Warrior waterdog and threatened flattened musk turtle. Threats to their habitat include sedimentation which means they are not getting the pristine water they need to thrive and survive.

Let me introduce the key players in the execution of this project, me and Lindsay Madison. I am the Wilderness Stewardship Coordinator for Wild Alabama. I've been volunteering and working on trails in the Sipsey Wilderness for over a decade. Lindsay is the Bankhead Stewardship Coordinator and lead on this project. She will be leading and coordinating the field projects. Lindsay has been recreating and working on these trails for years. I will be leading work days as well but my main role is to assist in recruitment and showcasing the project as it moves forward.

We are calling on your group to consider scheduling a work day. The work can be tailored to your group to accommodate time constraints, physical limitations or advantages and any specific requests. It may involve trail reroutes, building water drainage structures, or covering up confusing social trails. We would love to hear from you as soon as possible. We are working hard during the months of June and July to set up work days for not only the remainder of the summer but for the duration of the project.. The project continues through the end of 2024 but don't wait, time flies when we are having fun in the woods! Email Kim Waites to get the conversation started. kim@wildal.org or call/text 205-516-8029. Visit our website for complete details about the need and the project's expectations. [Legacy Trails Project, click here](#)

For the wild!

Kim and the staff at Wild Alabama