

The WV Land Trust Yellow Creek Natural Area



What Public Health Problem Was Addressed?

Yellow Creek Natural Area (YCNA) is a remote but popular property owned by WV Land Trust. Home of the infamous "Moon Rocks" and miles of trails stewarded by local partners, it attracted novice and expert trail recreationists from all over the country. However, with no road frontage, poor and misleading signage, and unmarked trailheads, users of YCNA and the Camp 70 Trails System (which leads to YCNA) needed help to find, access, and navigate the area. This project developed and installed markers, signs, and kiosks for YCNA and the greater Camp 70 trails system. Together, these resources support the selection and safe use of trail routes by all types of visitors so that they can meet recreation goals with more comfort, security, and confidence.

What Approach Did They Take?

The West Virginia Land Trust partnered with Blackwater Bicycle Association (BBA) to develop informational trailhead kiosks and maps for the Camp 70 Trails System and YCNA. BBA and other WVLT partners installed the kiosks at three popular parking areas on partner lands: First Energy Foundation, National Youth Science Center, and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, who all host parking lots and trailheads for the Camp 70 Trail System that leads to the YCNA. Mike Blackburn from Natural By Design and Lauren Lamb from Skull House Group collaborated with WVLT and BBA on the design of the kiosks.



What Were The Results?

One prong of WVLT's mission is to create a conservation movement throughout the state, and they believe that includes supporting people in spending time outside in nature. The new trailhead kiosks, designed with accurate trail system information and detailed maps and installed at popular parking areas, were created to supply people to the information they need to use the Camp 70 trail system. The new welcoming kiosks for the trail system leading to Yellow Creek Natural Area aim to encourage more visitors to engage in more outdoor activities in Tucker County. As WV Land Trust team members were installing the signs, a local man taking his family on a bike ride stated, "this is good for West Virginia" and expressed appreciation for the new signs. Time will allow more feedback to reach WVLT and BBA on the full impact of the project.

What's Next?

The property contains 4+ miles of trails to Moon Rocks, HooDoo Rocks, and Yellow Creek, linking to 20+ miles of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System (of which the Camp 70 trails are a part). This property is permanently protected and open for public recreation. Another 2021 project underway for Yellow Creek Natural Area is a trail improvement project to fix eroding trail segments to benefit the environment and further improve trail user safety.

