

# Be Active WV Mini-Grant Program 2020 Success Story

## HEALTHY BERKELEY Improving and Bringing Awareness to Local Trails

### What Public Health Problem Was Addressed?

Physical activity can improve your brain health, help with weight management, reduce chronic disease, strengthen your bones and muscles, and improve your ability to do everyday activities. The role of the built environment, such as trails, sidewalks, parks, and gyms, is important for encouraging physical activity in communities. Research shows that individuals who live closer to these built environments are more likely to be physically active. According to recent County Health Rankings, 30% of the residents of Berkeley County are sedentary, meaning they engage in little or no physical activity, and less than half of the residents have access to physical activity opportunities, such as trails and gyms, close to their homes. Additionally, residents are not fully aware of trails in their own backyard and many commonly used trails do not have way-finding signs and markings, making it difficult for participants to use trails.

### What Approach Did They Take?

The goal of the Healthy Berkeley Trail Project is to increase physical activity of Berkeley County residents by promoting trails and walking paths that are accessible to all. Many residents are not aware of physical activity opportunities available within their communities. The first steps of the Trail Project were to inventory trails in Berkeley County, upload the trail inventory to the WV Health Connection website, and then promote the website and trails to public and health professionals in Berkeley County. The project then made improvements to local trails by adding a Trail Map and directional signs to the trail at Poor House Farm Park, and will be adding exercise equipment to a trail being developed on the campus of Berkeley Medical Center. Finally, the Trail Project is working with WVU Medicine Cancer Institute to promote the BMC trail and exercise stations that will be installed.

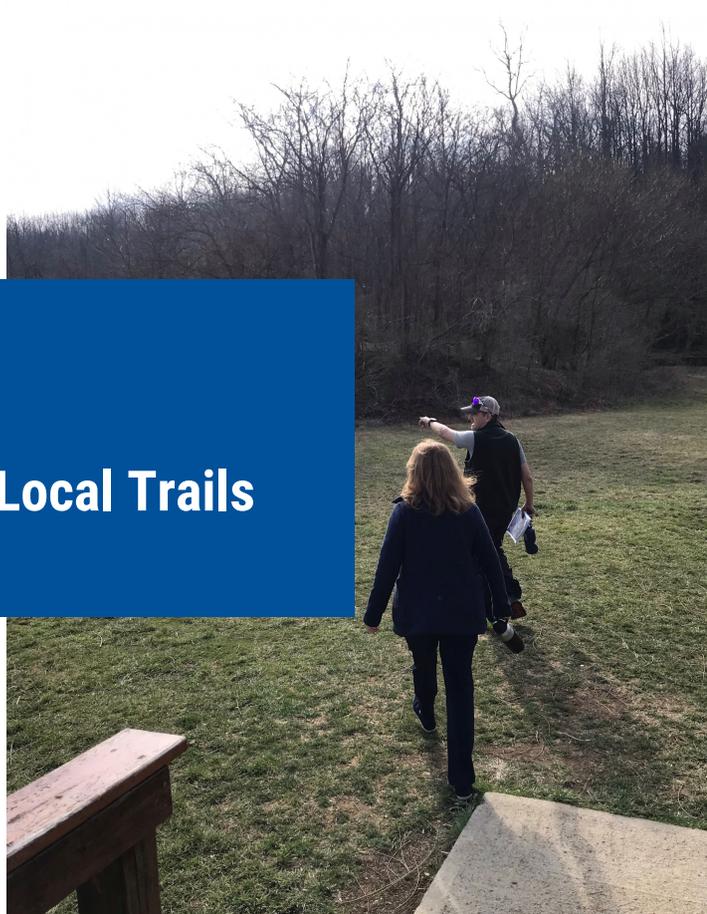
### What Were The Results?

Healthy Berkeley is increasing awareness of trails to the local community through trail improvements and promotion. The partnership created with Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks and Recreation, Disc Golf Course developer, Mountain Bike Trail developer and Hersick+Webster Creative Partners was integral to making the improvement at Poor House Farm Park. They worked to improved 5 miles of trails at Poor House Farm Park by mapping the walking and mountain biking trails, as well as the disc golf course, and installing 285 directional signs throughout the trails. The Trail Project also inventoried 43 trails throughout Berkeley County to be added to the WV Health Connections website and to be used for the Community Connect Rx to prescribe physical activity to patients.

### What's Next?

With the support of WVU Health Sciences Center, Healthy Berkeley plans to build a trail and install exercise stations at Berkeley Medical Center. Planning has also begun for a cancer prevention program with the WVU Medicine Cancer Institute. The project will include community education on exercise, weight management and nutrition for cancer prevention using new ACS guidelines through Facebook live and/or YouTube presentations. The presentations on exercise for cancer prevention will encourage use of the BMC trail and exercise stations as well as all trails in the county.

<https://www.wvhealthconnection.com/berkeley-trails-and-walking-paths>



“The Berkeley County Trails Project's goal was to bring awareness to what is available in our community. If we have convenient, easily accessible places to be active, it will increase our physical activity. The project includes bringing awareness to the trails we have and also improving existing and new trails.”

-Dana M. DeJarnett, Health Promotion Coordinator

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