

# ACCESSIBILITY DOESN'T STOP INDOORS: EXTENDING ACCESS TO TRAILS



# WHAT PEOPLE THINK ACCESSIBILITY IS

- ❖ Paved paths
- ❖ ADA ramps
- ❖ Indoor facilities



Equipment alone does not create access

# WHAT ACCESSIBILITY ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE IN NATURE

- ❖ Natural environments are inherently uneven, dynamic, and often exclusionary by default.
- ❖ Access is created through systems. That includes staffing, policies, communication, and site selection.



# WHAT IS AN ALL-TERRAIN WHEELCHAIR?

- ❖ An all-terrain wheelchair is a motorized mobility device designed to travel over surfaces that traditional wheelchairs cannot, such as sand, gravel, mud, snow, and uneven trails
- ❖ many models use rubber track systems instead of wheels
- ❖ Electric-powered and joystick controlled
- ❖ up to ~7 miles range
- ❖ ~400lbs
- ❖ Length: ~52 inches

# PLANNING → PROCUREMENT → SITE SELECTION → TRAINING → OPERATIONS → MAINTENANCE

- ❖ Understand full program lifecycle
- ❖ Evaluate sites with habitat + seasonality
- ❖ Apply lessons for implementation
- ❖ Identify staffing + policy needs



# PROCUREMENT

- ❖ State purchasing requirements
- ❖ Vendor coordination
- ❖ Equipment + accessories
- ❖ Storage + transport planning

# STAFF TRAINING

- ❖ Transfers + safety
- ❖ Equipment operation
- ❖ Visitor interaction
- ❖ Program ownership

# INTERNAL POLICY

- ❖ Liability considerations
- ❖ Use agreements
- ❖ Reservation rules
- ❖ Supervision requirements

# SITE SELECTION

- ❖ Trail width + surface
- ❖ Slope + grade
- ❖ Parking + facilities
- ❖ Distance + access points
- ❖ Sensitive habitats
- ❖ Seasonal restrictions
- ❖ Species activity
- ❖ Resource protection

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program across multiple parks

All-terrain wheelchairs for varied terrain

Reservation system

Staff-supported model

# WHAT PEOPLE DON'T THINK ABOUT

- ❖ Storage (these things are massive)
- ❖ Transport to trailhead
- ❖ Staff capacity
- ❖ Liability + safety protocols
- ❖ Maintenance cycles
- ❖ Seasonal use constraints

More than 75 all-terrain wheelchair reservations were made in 2025 - we expect this number to grow with improved access in 2026



# PARTNERSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

- ❖ Disability advocacy groups
- ❖ Healthcare providers
- ❖ Adaptive recreation organizations

# DEMO DAY

- Hosted a hands-on Demo Day at Dinosaur State Park to introduce the all-terrain wheelchair program
- Invited disability advocacy organizations and community partners to participate
- Provided an opportunity for participants to test the chairs on real trails, not just view them
- Gather direct feedback from the disability community before full program rollout
- Identify barriers related to trail conditions, equipment usability, and the reservation process
- Ensure the program is shaped by user experience, not assumptions



# FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

- Post-visit survey sent to all users after their reservation
- Collects feedback on:
  - trail experience
  - equipment usability
  - overall program experience
- Feedback used to:
  - refine trail selection
  - improve operations and safety
  - inform future program expansion

## Media and Storytelling Participation

- Optional opt-in included in survey for users interested in sharing their experience. Users can choose whether they want to be contacted by media
- Created to:
  - protect user privacy
  - prevent unsolicited media outreach in parks
  - give users control over their participation
- Supports those who want to share their stories while respecting those who do not



“For the first time in years, I was able to explore trails, get deep into nature, and take in views I thought I’d never see again.

The freedom these chairs offer is incredible. I felt safe and connected to the outdoors in a way I’ve truly missed.”



## Reflection Question

**If you had to launch an all-terrain wheelchair program in your agency tomorrow, what would be the first thing you realize you are not prepared for, and what does that reveal about your systems?**