Greater Yellowstone – Teton Trail

Trail Concept Plan

Stakeholder Meeting
11.21.14
Project Partners:

- City of Victor HUD grant
- Partnership between three state trail advocates
- Alta Planning + Design, a leading trail design and planning firm
Concept Plan Objectives

- Establish a shared vision for a future trail corridor
- Identify opportunities and challenges
- Identify and engage stakeholders
- Inventory local planning efforts that could contribute to the vision
Previous Ideas Concerning Development of a Regional Rail Trail

- The ideas regarding development of a regional rail trail has existed for years.
- Current website (Charlie Otto) promotes and describes the journey.
Victor-Driggs Rail Trail
Warm River
Historic railroad grade at MT / ID state line
Wetlands near West Yellowstone
Historic railroad grade near West Yellowstone
• Major portions of the corridor are already accessible to the public

104
Miles accessible today

67
Proposed miles of trail
16 Projects across 3 states to complete the vision

- Wyoming 6 Projects
- Idaho- 9 Projects
- Montana- 1 Project
**Project Status:** NEPA decision completed 2007 / unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 20 miles

**Project Description:**
- Proposed shared use path from the Jenny Lake Visitor’s Center to Colter Bay through Grand Teton National Park.

**Stakeholders:** Grand Teton National Park, Teton County Wyoming, Wyoming Pathways
**Project Status:** EIS Management Plan underway / unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 7.3 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Proposed shared use path from Moose to the south border of Grand Teton National Park, would connect to the Teton County Pathway System near Teton Village.

**Stakeholders:** Grand Teton National Park, Teton County Wyoming, Teton Village Association, Friends of Pathways, Wyoming Pathways
Project Status: In Construction and fully funded, Completion summer 2015

Corridor Length: 5 miles

Project Description:
- A one mile Cycle Track on West Broadway/US26/89, and 4 mile shared use Pathway along WY-22 and Snake River Pathway Bridge connecting Jackson to existing Wilson Centennial Pathway and Moose-Wilson Pathway.

Stakeholders: Wyoming Pathways, Teton County Wyoming
Project Status: Planned, Land secured, unfunded

Corridor Length: 1.3 Miles

Project Description:
• Proposed shared use path connection from existing Teton Pass Trail in Wilson along the south side of Hwy 22 connecting to the new Snake River Pathway Bridge. Improves existing gravel trail, would include pathway bridge over Fish Creek.

Stakeholders: Wyoming Pathways, Teton County Wyoming
**Project Status:** Completed/Partial funding for ongoing maintenance

**Corridor Length:** 5.7 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Routine maintenance on existing 1-mile pathway Wilson to Trail Creek Road
- Additional asphalt repairs and drainage work on Old Pass Road.
- Reinforce shared roadway environment on 1-mile long Trail Creek Road
- Implement shared roadway markings and wayfinding signage.

**Stakeholders:** Teton County Wyoming, Friends of Pathways, Jim Verdone/friends of Teton Pass; Wyoming Pathways

**Wyoming Millenium Trail & Teton Pass Old Pass Road**
**WY-6  Teton Pass Summit to Idaho Stateline**

**Project Status:** Environmental, planning, preliminary engineering, phase one construction / Partially funded

**Corridor Length:** 6.5 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Connects from the existing pathway at the top of Teton Pass west towards the Wyoming/Idaho state line.
- Partially funded through $500,000 FLAP grant
- The preferred alignment would provide maximum relief from high-speed vehicular traffic along the road while balancing environmental concerns.

**Stakeholders:** CTNF Teton Basin Ranger District, Teton County Wyoming, WYDOT, Wyoming Pathways, Friends of Pathways
**Project Status:** Funded / Under design, Construction 2016

**Corridor Length:** 1.9 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Develop a shared use path from Moose Creek up Teton Pass on the north side of ID-33 to the state line.
- Idaho FLAP grant secured. Project is currently scheduled for construction in 2016. NEPA permitting is complete, and design is scheduled to start in 2015.

**Stakeholders:** CTNF Teton Basin Ranger District, City of Victor, Idaho, Teton County Idaho, Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP), Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, Teton Valley Business Development Center
Project Status: Shared use road completed /Routine Maintenance

Corridor Length: 2.2 Miles

Project Description:
- Reinforce shared roadway environment from Moose Creek to Victor park and trailhead.
- Implement branding, shared roadway markings and wayfinding signage.

Long Range Plan: Explore an off-street, shared use path along the Old Jackson Highway to connect the existing Victor shared-use path system to the proposed pathway at Moose Creek.

Stakeholders: Teton County Idaho, City of Victor, CTNF Teton Basin Ranger District, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
**Project Status:** Undefined /Unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 0.5 Miles

- **Project Description:**
  Reconstruct the failing Mountainside Village sidepath from the Mountainside Village Park to Baseline Rd.

- **Upgrade trail to 8’-0” minimum facility.**

**Stakeholders:** Mountainside Village, City of Victor, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
Project Status: Preliminary planning completed / Unfunded

Corridor Length: 1.1 Miles

Project Description:
• Connect from the existing rail-trail end at Teton Creek south of Driggs to the newly constructed shared use path in the Huntsman Springs development at Bates Road.
• Property acquisition may be necessary

Stakeholders: City of Driggs, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
**Project Status:** ROW research, preliminary planning completed /Unfunded

**Project Status:** Preliminary planning completed /Unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 7.7 Miles

**Project Description:**

**Stakeholders:** City of Driggs, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
Project Status: ROW research, preliminary planning completed / Unfunded

Corridor Length: 6.5 Miles

Project Description: Redevelop the historic railroad grade as a rail-trail. Easements or property acquisition would need to be secured for segments that had reverted to adjacent owners. Special considerations should account for agricultural machinery access and heavy equipment crossing of the rail trail.

Stakeholders: City of Driggs, City of Tetonia, Teton County Idaho, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, private property owners, agricultural interests
**Project Status:** Undefined / unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 29.6 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Grade the trail to provide a more consistent surface.
- Evaluate potential trail paving and selective trail widening projects.
- Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the corridor.

**Stakeholders:** City of Tetonia, City of Ashton, Fremont County Idaho, Harriman State Parks, TVTAP, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
**Project Status:** Undefined /Unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 8.0 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Connect Ashton to Warm River via the historic railroad grade. Potential acquisition or easements may be necessary.
- Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the route.

**Stakeholders:** City of Ashton, Fremont County, private property owners, Ashton Ranger District, Ashton Cycling Committee, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
**Project Status:** Undefined/Unfunded

**Corridor Length:** 8.7 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Connect Ashton to Warm River via low-volume county roads and SR 47.
- Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the route.

**Stakeholders:** City of Ashton, Fremont County, private property owners, Ashton Ranger District, Ashton Cycling Committee, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
Project Status: Undefined /Unfunded

Corridor Length: 11.7 Miles

Project Description:
• Connect Ashton to Warm River via US 20 and Fisherman Dr. along the Warm River.
• Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the route.

Stakeholders: City of Ashton, Fremont County, private property owners, Ashton Ranger District, Ashton Cycling Committee, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
**Project Status:** Existing / Renovation and reconstruction

**Corridor Length:** 3.0 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Utilize the existing non-motorized portion of the railroad grade north from Warm River campground to the Bear Gulch Trailhead.
- Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the route.

**Planning Level Cost Estimate:**

**Stakeholders:** CTNF Ashton Ranger District, Idaho State Parks, Fremont County, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, Ashton Cycling Committee
Project Status: Existing gravel trail / Renovation or Reconstruction

Corridor Length: 35.2 Miles

Project Description:
- Redevop the historic railroad grade into dual or shared facilities for OHV and non-motorized users.
- Implement branding and wayfinding signage along the route.

Stakeholders: Ashton Ranger District, Fremont County, Harriman State Park, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, OHV interests, City of Island Park
Bear Gulch Trailhead
To Montana State Line
Shared Facility Option

10-12' Shared Motorized / Non-motorized Path

2'-0" Shoulder

2'-0" Shoulder
**Project Status:** Abandoned old Rail line / Reconstruction and reuse

**Corridor Length:** 8.3 Miles

**Project Description:**
- Utilize the historic railroad grade to connect to West Yellowstone.
- Install five bridges along the corridor that have been removed.
- Address environmental concerns in the area.

**Stakeholders:** CGNF Hebgen Lake Ranger District, City of West Yellowstone, West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce, Bike Walk Montana, Free Heel and Wheel, local supporters.
Existing OHV Use

- OHV’s (under 50”) are permitted along major portions of the railroad grade through the Caribou-Targhee National Forest
- No intentions of restricting access to motorized users along the corridor
Major portions of the corridor are already accessible to the public. OHV's permitted.
Regional / National Trail Connections

• Nez Perce National Historic Trail (1,170 miles)

• Continental Divide Trail (3,100 miles)

• Great Western Trail (4,455 Miles)
Trail Paving Options

Unpaved

**Advantages:**
- Low Cost
- Pervious / more environmentally-friendly than asphalt
- Natural feel
- Preferred by OHV’s
- Simple maintenance (grading, weed control, etc...)

**Disadvantages:**
- Not as accessible to all users
- Users can cover less distance
- Prone to rutting and erosion
- More frequent maintenance needs

Paved

**Advantages:**
- Accessible to all users
- Allows trail users to cover more distance
- Brings a sense of civilization to remote areas
- Less frequent maintenance needed
- Could be plowed to extend the season

**Disadvantages:**
- High costs
- More complex maintenance (seal coating, crack filling, etc...)

Maintenance & Management Concerns

- Typical paved pathway maintenance costs of $1500-$7000/mile = $200k to $1M/year for the complete trail system

- Typical unpaved pathway maintenance costs of $500-3000/mile = $70k-$400k/year for the complete trail system
Maintenance & Management Concerns

- Develop creative strategies for long-term maintenance
- Concessionaires
- Public / private partnerships
- Need all stakeholders working together: Advocates, Cities, Counties, State Parks, NPS, USFS
"A great variety of trails and a thriving cycling culture are among the reasons we chose to move our business to Idaho's Teton Valley. We ride for fun as well as transport, so we strongly support expanding our trail and pathway system."

- Tim Wells, CEO of Sego Skis
Economic Benefits

- Touring cyclists in Montana spend on average $75.75/person/day and stay 8 nights or more in the state on average.
- Average tourist spends $58/day

By contrast, OHV-related spending for Montana residents was calculated at $37/per person/day

Potential for multi-day bike tourism in Montana to bring in $377 million
Economic Benefits

• Touring cyclists reported other activities participated in during their Montana multi-day cycling trip included visiting historical sites (40%), visiting Lewis & Clark sites (38%), wildlife watching (37%), day hiking (33%), and experiencing local breweries (29%).
Route of the Hiawatha Trail Case Study

- The Route of the Hiawatha is operated in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest by a concessionaire under a U.S. Forest Service Special-Use Permit.
- 15 mile trail
- Concessionaire also offers bike rentals and bike shuttles
Route of the Hiawatha

- Family Friendly Attraction
- Nationwide Draw
- Appropriate for all ages and abilities
- (2% max grade)
- 37,500 paying annual visitors
- ~300/day avg
Historic Resources

- Historic railroad grades and trestles for the Oregon Shortline, Union Pacific and Yellowstone Branch railroads
- Nez Perce National Historic Trail
- Historic agricultural structures
Welcome to the Bitch Creek Bridge along the old grade of the Oregon Southern Railroad. Built in 1922, the double-decked, girder bridge was the grade 125-foot over the creek. The narrow lining and granite piers were added in 1939 by the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation (ODPR). Take note that the other four bridges, Toole and William Cushman, were designed and built by the same engineer. This bridge is unique in that it crosses the old grade and not the new grade. The bridge has been restored and maintained by the Columbia River Audubon Society and the Friends of Historic Oregon Bridges.
Next Steps

- Complete the vision for the Greater Yellowstone – Teton Trail
- Promote and bring awareness to the trail concept through events and races
- Educate local residents and businesses about the potential economic impacts of the trail concept
- Identify and pursue potential funding sources