



Greater Yellowstone Trail

CONCEPT PLAN | JANUARY 2015



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Warm River and historic West Yellowstone Branch Railroad tunnel

ACRONYMS

BTNF- Bridge-Teton National Forest

CDT- Continental Divide Trail

CTNF- Caribou-Targhee National Forest

CGNF- Custer-Gallatin National Forest

HUD- US Department of Housing & Urban
Development

IDT- Idaho Department of Transportation

NEPA- National Environmental Protection Act

NPS- National Parks Service

OHV- Off Highway Vehicle

TVTAP- Teton Valley Trails & Pathways

USFS- United States Forest Service

WYDOT- Wyoming Department of Transportation





ACTIVE PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS:

Wyoming

Grand Teton National Park
Yellowstone National Park
Jackson Ranger District, BTNF
Teton Basin Ranger District, CTNF
Teton County WY
Town of Jackson
Wyoming Pathways
Friends of Pathways

Idaho

Ashton/Island Park Ranger District, CTNF
Harriman State Park
City of Victor
City of Driggs
City of Teton
Fremont County
City of Ashton
City of Island Park
Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
Ashton Cycling Committee

Montana

Hebgen Lake Ranger District, CGNF
City of West Yellowstone
West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Bike Walk Montana

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The Greater Yellowstone Trail Concept Plan formalizes a vision for a world-class regional trail system that would enhance quality of life, improve access to recreation and public land; and spur economic development opportunities for local communities along the unique and diverse corridor.



Executive Summary

The Greater Yellowstone region is world-renowned for its stunning beauty, natural diversity, wildlife, pristine wilderness and abundant recreation opportunities. Communities within the region have sought to live in harmony with their environment by developing economies that simultaneously embrace, protect and leverage these assets. The concept of the Greater Yellowstone Trail seeks to provide residents and visitors alike with a sustainable, healthy and authentic way to experience the region's unique environment. The Greater Yellowstone Trail Concept Plan formalizes a vision for a world-class regional trail system that would enhance quality of life, improve access to recreation and spur economic development opportunities for local communities along the unique and diverse corridor. The project would link two National Parks, three National Forests and a state park while

simultaneously integrating regional history lessons and recreation opportunities for all seasons. The concept leverages previous investments and existing trails with new projects to develop a unified and consistently branded long-distance trail system. This plan recognizes the future trail as not only a quality of life improvement, but as an economic generator consistent with the priorities of the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant that funded this study. Although the concept plan focuses on the corridor from West Yellowstone to Colter Bay, the Greater Yellowstone Trail sets the stage for possible future improvements along established bikes routes through Yellowstone National Park, such as the TransAmerica Adventure Cycling Route, to create a 260-mile world-class biking loop.



Historic grain elevator along the Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail.

In order to achieve the ambitious vision formalized by this concept plan, widespread coordination has been and will continue to be necessary. The planning process has engaged and been supported by a broad and diverse stakeholder group at federal, state and local levels. Continued cooperation between these entities will be critical in implementing new trail projects and ensuring the long-term success of the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

History, Connectivity and Economic Impact

The Greater Yellowstone Trail offers a experiential history lesson of the region. Historic stories and relics from a variety of periods including early Native American history, 19th and 20th century railroad development and early 20th century agriculture can be observed and interpreted throughout the corridor. These opportunities for heritage tourism add to the broad appeal of the Greater Yellowstone Trail as a regional tourism destination.

The Greater Yellowstone Trail also connects to a variety of local, regional and national trail systems. Cross continent routes such as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Great Western Trail and multiple cross-country Adventure Cycling routes intersect or follow large segments of the trail. This connectivity enhances the Greater Yellowstone Trail's potential economic impact as recent studies have shown touring cyclists spend, on average, more per day than other tourists. In addition, a concurrent economic study is analyzing the potential economic impacts of the Greater Yellowstone Trail. Although the results of this effort were not available at the time of this study, the economic impact analysis

should offer an analytical evaluation of the fiscal impacts of a potential Greater Yellowstone Trail.

Proposed Projects

In order to fully realize the potential benefits of the Greater Yellowstone Trail, a number of proposed projects are needed to eliminate existing trail gaps, improve accessibility and provide a consistent trail experience from West Yellowstone to Colter Bay. In collaboration with project stakeholders, sixteen projects were identified to complete the Greater Yellowstone Trail. These include six projects in Wyoming, nine projects in Idaho and one project in Montana. Projects range from major renovation projects on existing trail segments to entirely new trail construction. Although the various land managers have been supportive of the concept of the Greater Yellowstone Trail, final decision-making regarding each proposed project ultimately lies with each respective agency.

Maintenance Challenges

Throughout the Planning Team's public outreach process, the most commonly cited concern was long term maintenance requirements of the proposed trail. Currently, segments of the trail are being maintained by a mix of non-profit trail groups (Friends of Pathways, TVTAP), city/county maintenance crews (Jackson, Victor, Driggs) or public agencies (Grand Teton National Park, USFS, Idaho State Parks). In particular, public land managers have been increasingly challenged to provide

sustained maintenance levels on their existing facilities with shrinking maintenance budgets.

Implementation and Action Steps

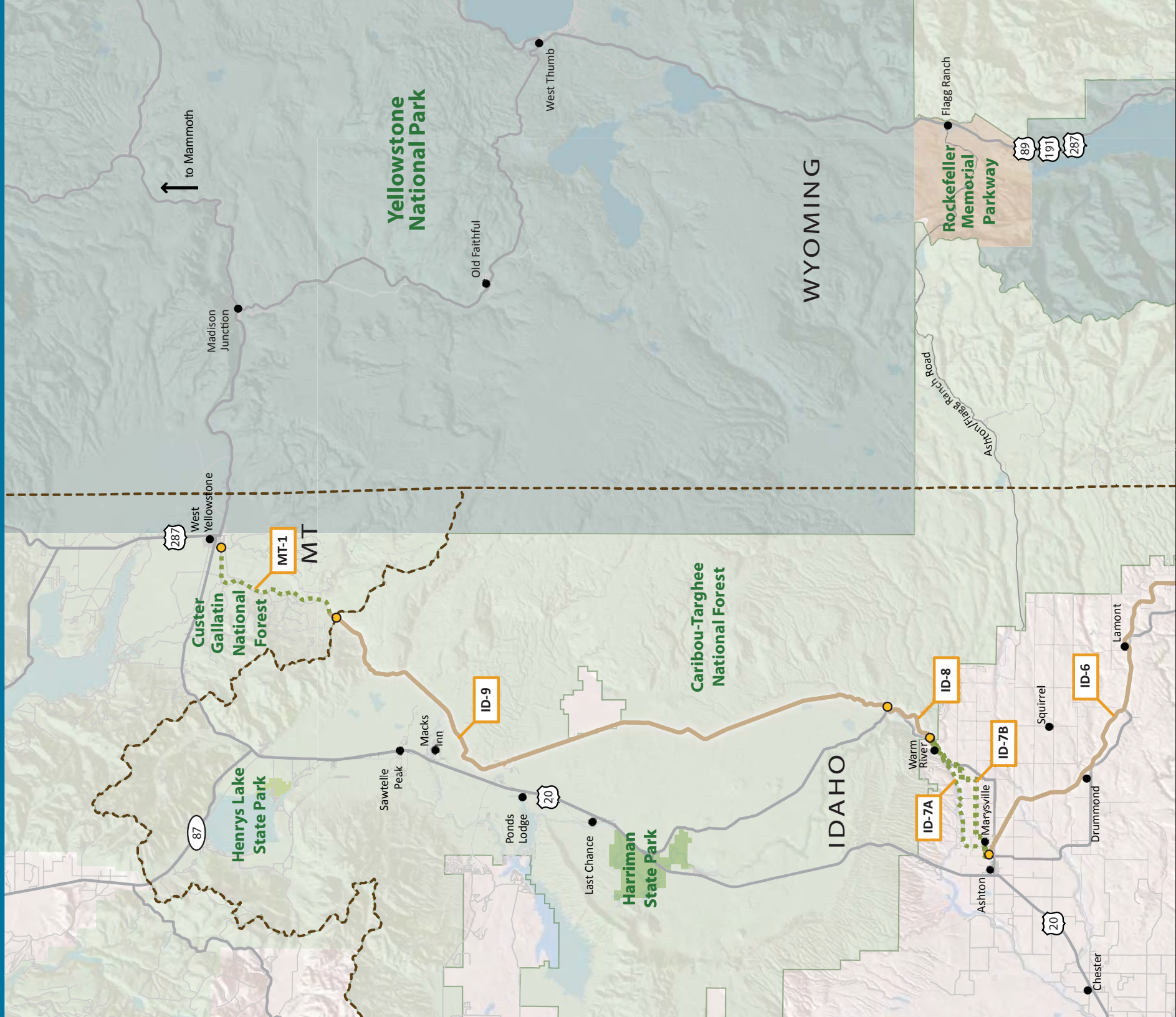
Implementing the vision established for the Greater Yellowstone Trail will likely require widespread coordination and commitment from the various stakeholders involved in this Concept Plan. Creative partnerships will be necessary in developing capital projects and in structuring long-term maintenance.

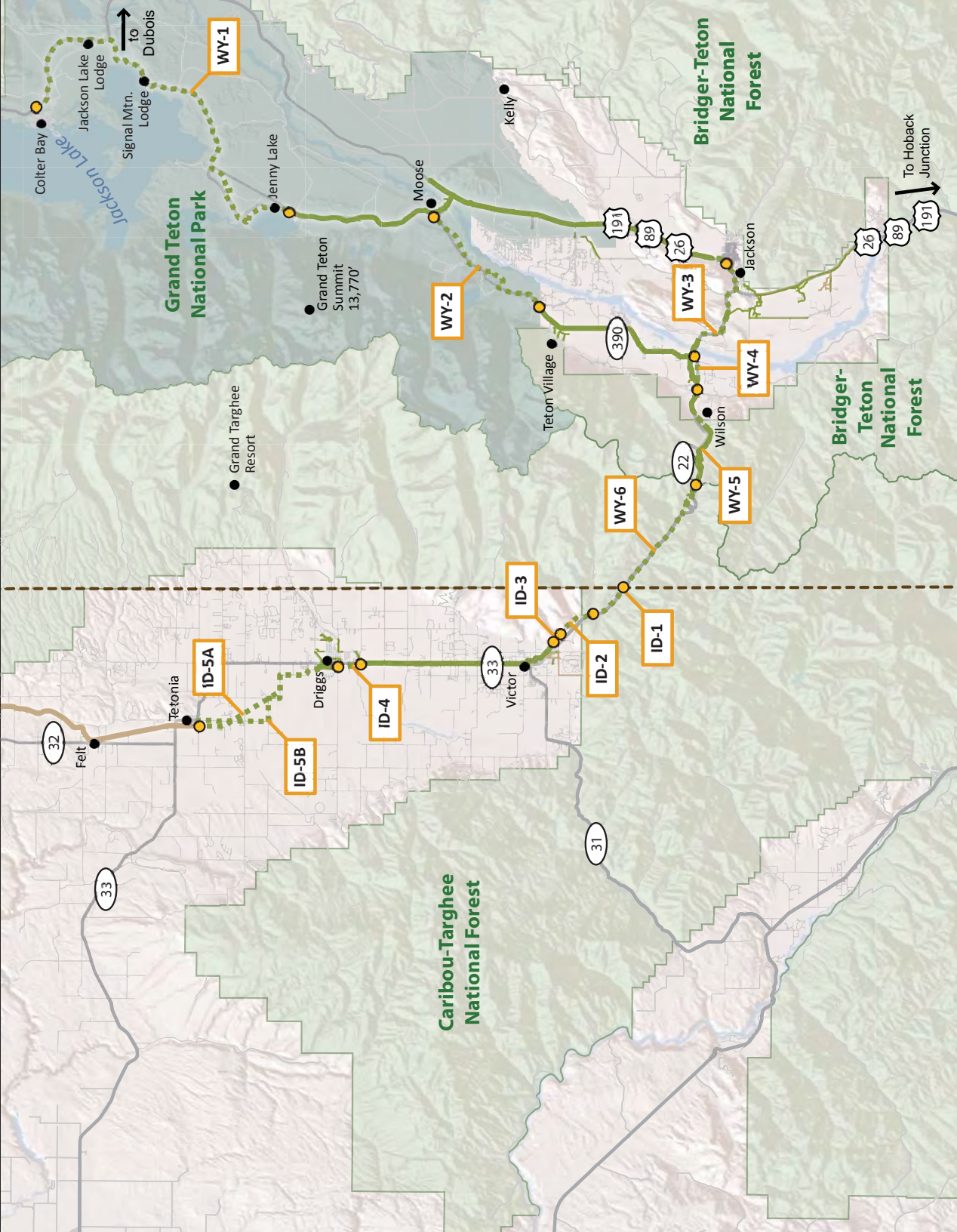
Conclusion

The Greater Yellowstone Trail presents an amazing opportunity to enhance quality of life, improve access to recreation and public lands; and generate economic opportunities for residents of eastern Idaho, southwestern Montana and western Wyoming. Local communities throughout the corridor have already demonstrated a willingness to support, leverage and invest in trail development. The Snake River Pathway Bridge, Moose to Jenny Lake Pathway, the Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail and the Victor-Driggs Pathway are a testament to what agencies and municipalities in this region are capable of achieving in regards to visionary trail projects. The Greater Yellowstone Trail seeks to build upon these past successes and focus future efforts to developing a world class long distance trail that will bring widespread benefits to the entire region.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OVERALL TRAIL CORRIDOR MAP





Greater Yellowstone Trail

The Greater Yellowstone Trail Concept Plan formalizes a vision for a world-class long range trail that would enhance quality of life, improve access to recreation and spur economic development opportunities for local communities along the unique and diverse 130-mile corridor.

LEGEND

- Existing Paved Trails
- Existing Paved Neighborhood Connectors
- Existing Unpaved Trails
- Existing Unpaved Neighborhood Connectors
- Proposed Trails
- Start/Endpoint of Project
- National Park
- National Forest
- State Park



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The Greater Yellowstone Trail links three states, two national parks, three national forests, and one state park.



Conant Creek Trestle on the Ashton to Tetonias Rail Trail

Introduction

The Greater Yellowstone Trail Concept Plan establishes a vision for a world-class regional trail system that would enhance quality of life, improve access to recreation and spur economic development opportunities for local communities along the unique and diverse corridor. The project seeks to leverage existing trails with new projects to develop a unified and consistently branded long-distance trail system. This plan recognizes the future trail as not only a quality of life improvement, but as an economic generator consistent with the priorities of the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant that made the planning process possible.

In order to achieve the ambitious vision formalized by this concept plan, widespread coordination has been and will continue to be necessary. The planning process has engaged a broad and diverse stakeholder group at local, regional and state levels. Continued cooperation between these municipalities, agencies and advocates will be critical in implementing new trail projects and establishing a viable long-term maintenance framework.

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“Not only will this trail be a welcome and well-used connection linking communities and public lands in the Greater Yellowstone region, parts of it will potentially be incorporated into two continent-spanning Adventure Cycling routes—the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail and the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route.”

- Michael McCoy, Adventure Cycling Association



History

Railroad Heritage

Approximately 70 miles of the Greater Yellowstone Trail carries users over the remains of two abandoned railroad branch lines originating in Ashton, ID, where they depart from the main Union Pacific Line. These lines were driven by the tourism potential of Yellowstone National park and regional agricultural business.

The Ashton to West Yellowstone branch was completed in 1908 and connected passengers and freight to West Yellowstone, MT, which is the west entrance to Yellowstone National Park. This line was approximately 54 miles in length and followed the Henry's Fork river east from Ashton before joining the Warm River and climbing up to the Island Park plateau and ultimately climbing Reas Pass to 6,834 feet. At Reas Pass the line

crossed into Montana and dropped into the south arm of the Madison River valley before reaching West Yellowstone. This line served as one of the primary tourist routes to Yellowstone National Park and gained notoriety for its monumental effort to clear the tracks of snow each spring which could result in trains passing through snow drifts up to 30 feet in depth. Railroad operations were terminated in 1978 with the line being abandoned in 1979. The majority of the line traverses National Forest and within the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Idaho, the rail bed was preserved as a trail accessible to motorized and non-motorized uses. The first eight miles from Ashton to the Warm River Campground has reverted to private ownership and represents a gap in the existing trail system. Within the Custer-Gallatin National Forest in Montana the rail

bed has been abandoned and is currently not in use. Five bridges over the upper Madison River have been removed and would need to be restored to reactivate the railroad bed as a trail.

The 45 mile Ashton to Victor railroad branch was completed in 1913 and features three impressive trestles on its way to Teton where it eases into the Teton Valley passing through Driggs and finally terminating in Victor, ID. This line served both passenger and freight uses carrying agricultural equipment and products such as cattle, seed, farm machinery and potatoes. The line was abandoned south of Teton in 1981 and fully abandoned in 1990. Fortunately, the line's significant natural beauty and historical significance were recognized and two sections of the line have been preserved as non-motorized trails. The 30-mile Ashton to Teton portion was opened as an unpaved rail-to-trail in 2010 and is maintained by Idaho State Parks. with the Driggs to Victor Portion developed as a paved trail in the late 1990s.

Native American History

The route of the Greater Yellowstone Trail has a rich history traversing the territorial ranges of the Crow, Blackfoot, Shoshone, Flathead, Gros Ventre and Nez Perce tribes – none of which were year-round residents. The trail route has significant opportunity to educate local residents and visitors about the unique cultures of various tribes, local history such as first contact with mountain men and trappers and battles. In fact, the route is traversed

by the Nez Perce national historic trail which passes near Henry's Lake in Island Park.

Agricultural Heritage

From Ashton to Teton, trail users will note historic wood grain elevators situated approximately every five miles along the rail to trail route. These elevators serviced the railroad and were centered within a one-day horse drawn wagon's range. Many of the elevators and associated outbuildings have unique architecture and construction methods including some outbuildings which have walls made from boards stacked on their sides.

Teton Pass

From the earliest days of settlement after the Homestead Act of 1862 Teton Pass was a difficult and arduous journey with pack horses. Starting in 1913, the Old Pass Road opened to wagons and became the primary transportation corridor for conveying materials. Today WY 22 utilizes modern advancements in engineering to force its way over Teton Pass with grades of over 10 percent and significant retaining structures. Still, some sections of the old pass road remain and could be reactivated in an independent trail alignment away from the existing highway. On the east side of Teton Pass, trail users currently use the Old Pass Road as a popular hiking and bicycling route in conjunction with the Wilson Millennium Trail.



Historic grain elevator along the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail.

Regional Trail Connectivity

The Greater Yellowstone Trail intersects and connects several local, regional and national trail and bikeway corridors. These connections will provide benefits to local residents, day trip tourists, cross-county hikers and touring bicyclists. Other potential trail corridors, such as the Shields and Paradise Valley rail trails could eventually connect to the Greater Yellowstone Trail and create an even more extensive trail system.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

The Continental Divide Trail (CDT) spans across 3,100 miles and five states between Mexico and Canada. The CDT is part of the National Scenic Trail system and makes up the longest and most difficult leg of the “Triple Crown of Hiking” along with the Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail. The CDT crosses the historic railroad grade at Reas Pass at the Idaho-Montana State line. The Greater Yellowstone Trail would serve as an import access point for CDT hikers and provide a direct route to services and lodging available in Island Park or West Yellowstone.

Great Western Trail

The Great Western Trail is a continuous trail system that extends from Canada to Mexico and crosses through Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. The trail is marked by the Great Western Trail symbol and

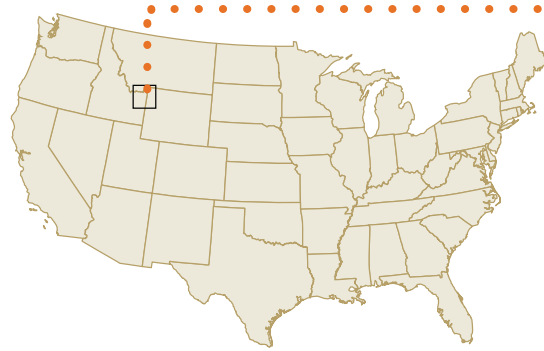
has sections open to hikers, bikers, horseman, and Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs). Previous efforts have sought to establish the Great Western Trail as a National Scenic Trail though the designation was never formally granted. Currently, the Great Western Trail follows sections of the Ashton-Tetonia Rail Trail and the abandoned railroad grade through the CTNE.

Nez Perce Trail

The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail was designated in 1986 and commemorates the 1877 war and flight. The 1877 flight of the Nez Perce from their homelands while pursued by U.S. Army Generals Howard, Sturgis, and Miles, is one of the most fascinating and sorrowful events in Western U.S. history. Chief Joseph, Chief Looking Glass, Chief White Bird, Chief Ollokot, Chief Lean Elk, and others led nearly 750 Nez Perce men, women, and children and twice that many horses over 1,170 miles through the mountains, on a trip that lasted from June to October of 1877. ¹ Today, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail consists of an auto route and interpretive sites that roughly follow the path of the Nez Perce from Wollowa Lake, OR, to Chinook, MT.



The Continental Divide Trail near Mile Creek



Shields Valley, Montana Rail to Trail

The Shields River Branch Line consists of approximately 23 miles of disused railroad that generally parallels U.S. Highway 89. It departs the main line seven miles east of Livingston, MT and travels north through primarily agricultural land through the Town of Clyde Park and terminating in the Town of Wilsall. The line was opened in 1909 and provided passenger and freight service twice per week and mainly hauled livestock and grain. Service was suspended in 1977. In 1988, Montana Rail link acquired the branch line, but has never operated the railroad. The line has 26 river, stream or ditch crossings.

Several areas of the line have been found to have asbestos contamination and designated as State Superfund (Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act [CECRA]) sites. Since the line has been abandoned for more than 30 years it is possible that some portions of the line have reverted to adjacent landownership. Several groups over the last decade have expressed interest in developing the line as a rail-to-trail project. These groups include the Yellowstone Heritage Trail Association, local residents and Park

Adventure Cycling Routes

The Great Divide Mountain Bike Route is Adventure Cycling's premier off-pavement cycling route, crisscrossing the Continental Divide north to south. This route offers incredible scenery that covers five different regions and over 200,000 feet of elevation gain. The route joins the abandoned West Yellowstone branch railroad grade near Island Park and continues south the CTNF before heading east via Ashton-Flagg Ranch Road to Rockefeller Memorial Parkway and Grand Teton National Park.

Adventure Cycling's TransAmerica Trail also approaches the Greater Yellowstone Trail in West Yellowstone. The 4200-mile route travels from Astoria, Oregon to the Chesapeake Bay and travels through Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.



Great Western Trail marker along the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail



Continental Divide Trail marker at the Idaho/Montana state line



Great Western Trail Marker at Warm Springs Campground

County. Discussions with Montana Rail Link have been undertaken and there is the potential for the railroad to transfer ownership of the line pending details of existing and future environmental cleanup obligations. Park County is interested in examining the potential for a trail in greater detail.

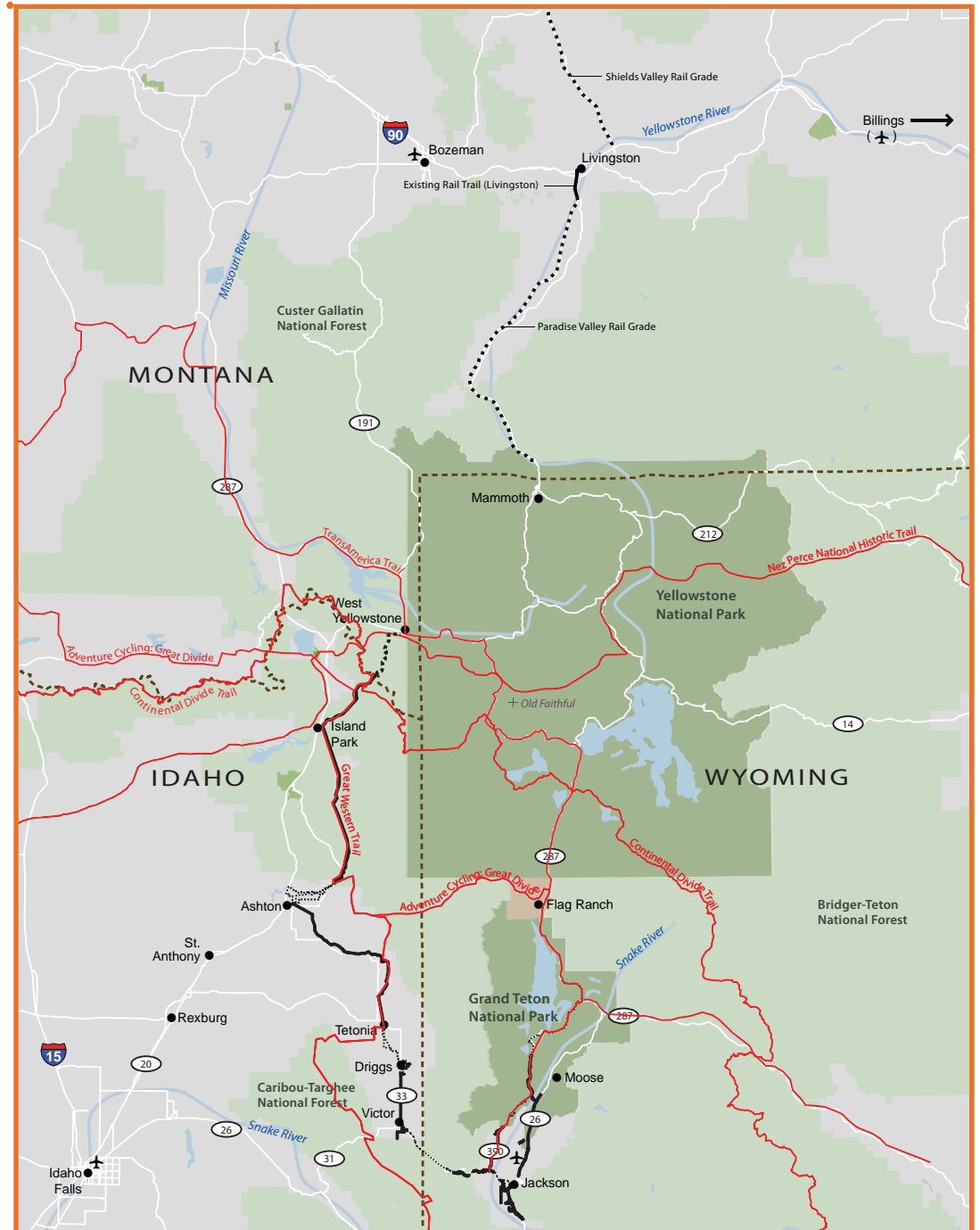
Paradise Valley, Montana

The Park Branch Line was partially opened in 1883 with the ultimate extension to the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park in Gardiner, MT, in 1903. The Gardiner Depot was designed by Robert Reamer, the architect of the Old Faithful Inn. The line parallels the Yellowstone River and U.S. Highway 99. In 1948 passenger service was discontinued with freight service continuing. Ultimately, with revenues declining the line was abandoned in 1981 by Burlington Northern Railroad. When the line was abandoned the railroad right-of-way reverted to adjacent land ownership. Park County, MT, is now interested in exploring a future trail through the corridor that could include sections within the U.S. Highway 93 right-of-way and in partnership with willing landowners to restore portions of the historic grade to a trail.

- Regional / National Trails
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- National Park
- National Forest
- State Park



Source: US Department of Interior,
US National Park Service, Interactive
Numeric & Spatial Information Data
Engine Idaho, Montana State,
Wyoming GeoLibrary, ESRI



3

“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 Sego Skis



Economic Opportunities

The Greater Yellowstone Trail presents many opportunities for local communities to benefit from the development of the trail. Enhanced quality of life, improved access to recreation, and additional transportation options are just a few benefits that the trail would offer. In addition, significant economic benefits could also be possible given the quality of the trail experience provided by the Greater Yellowstone Trail. Tourism already is a major economic driver in the region with the popularity of Yellowstone

and Grand Teton National Parks. Skiing, fly fishing, mountain biking, fat biking, hiking, and snowmobiling are also major tourism draws for the region. The Greater Yellowstone Trail offers synergies with all of these activities. Significant opportunities exist to combine many of these activities within the overall experience of the Greater Yellowstone Trail resulting in a unique, authentic and profitable tourism asset for the local communities in all three states.

Tourism-related Benefits



Touring cyclists along the abandoned railroad grade in CTNF

Tourism is a major economic driver in nearly all of the communities along the Greater Yellowstone Trail. The region's vast biking and hiking opportunities serve as a major draw for visitors and residents alike. A 2011 study by the University of Wyoming found biking and hiking trails generated an annual economic benefit of more than \$18 million annually.

A recent study by the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana found significant economic impacts from Montana's touring cyclists¹. The study found that touring cyclists on average spent eight or more nights in Montana and spent at on average \$75/day. Comparing only cyclists who spent, the average daily spending was \$102 per day. The true average daily spending is most likely \$75-\$102 per day because of the large percentage of respondents who did not spend or did not answer the expenditure questions. Communities such as Twin Bridges, MT have made bicycle camps for touring cyclists to spend a night, shower, and relax while on their trip. In turn, this has led to increased spending in restaurants/bars and grocery stores in the community.

The University of Montana study also analyzed touring cyclist participation in other tourism activities. Consequently, many of the popular secondary activities

(in relation to bicycle touring) exist along portions of the Greater Yellowstone Trail corridor. These activities and the corresponding percentage of touring cyclists who engaged in these activities are:

- Road biking 92%
- Visited other historical sites 40%
- Wildlife watching 37%
- Day hiking 33%
- Nature photography 30%
- Experience local breweries 29%

Yellowstone Grand Teton Trail Economic Impact Study

Simultaneous to the development of this concept plan, the City of Victor has contracted an impact study to estimate the economic benefits of a 262-mile non-motorized trail within the greater Yellowstone and Grand Teton area. In addition to the 180 miles of trail outlined in this concept plan, the economic study also assumes an additional 80+ miles of trail through Yellowstone National Park. The economic study will provide a more detailed outlook on potential economic benefits of the Greater Yellowstone Trail. The results of the impact study will enhance the ability for these locally owned small businesses to plan for future growth as the trail is completed.

¹Analysis Of Touring Cyclists: Impacts, Needs, And Opportunities For Montana, Institute For Tourism And Recreation Research, Univ. Of Mt

Touring cyclists along the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail

TETON COUNTY, WY ECONOMIC BENEFITS

“Biking and hiking trails in Teton County, Wyoming create an annual economic benefit of more than \$18 million. The trail system cost \$1.7 million to build over the last decade.”

Kaliszewski, N., 2011 - Jackson Hole Trails Project Economic Impact Study, University of Wyoming

MONTANA TOURISM TRENDS



BICYCLE TOURISTS |
SPENT

\$75+ / DAY

STAYED

8 NIGHTS



OTHER TOURISTS
SPENT

\$69 / DAY

STAYED

5 DAYS

4

“The Greater Yellowstone Trail has the potential to connect all Forest users to the incredible natural resources found in the Greater Yellowstone Area.”

- Liz Davies, Ashton-Island Park Ranger District, Caribou-Targhee National Forest



Stakeholder Outreach Summary

The Planning Team conducted a two phase stakeholder outreach process with representatives from all reaches of the proposed trail corridor. Public land managers, city and county government officials, trail advocates and economic development interests were all invited to engage in developing the vision for the trail corridor and identifying opportunities and constraints.

Field Visit and Stakeholder Interviews

In late October, the Planning Team (represented by Wyoming Pathways, Bike Walk Montana, the Idaho Walk Bike Alliance and Alta Planning + Design) conducted an intensive two-day site visit to tour existing and proposed segments of the trail corridor and meet with stakeholders from all of the local communities. In total, the Planning Team met face to face with over 40 stakeholders and coordinated via phone and e-mail with countless more. Agencies and jurisdictions engaged in this process included:

- Yellowstone National Park
- Grand Teton National Park
- Jackson Ranger District, BTNF
- Teton Basin Ranger District, CTNF
- Hebgen Lake Ranger District, CGNF
- Ashton-Island Park Ranger District, CTNF
- Harriman State Park / Idaho State Parks
- City of Driggs, ID
- City of Victor, ID
- City of Island Park
- City of West Yellowstone
- Town of Jackson
- Fremont County, ID
- Teton County, WY
- West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
- Ashton Cycling Committee
- Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
- Friends of Pathways (WY)

Following the initial field visit and interviews in October, the Planning Team held an all partner stakeholder meeting at Harriman State Park. Over 60 stakeholders from throughout the study area were invited with 25 attending.

benefits. Following the presentation, two breakout activities were conducted with the stakeholders. Both activities asked groups to state the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The first activity grouped stakeholders by region. Meeting attendees from Montana, Wyoming, Fremont County, and Teton County, ID were separated into groups and asked to think about local issues. For the second activity, participants were broken out by stakeholder type. This included a project-wide SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis by land managers (State Park and USFS districts), City/County staff and elected officials, and advocates.

SWOT Analysis			
This sheet is for planning (Strategic) Level Managers - Advantages - Agency Staff		This sheet is for process (operational) - Station Study Area - Weymouth - Weymouth	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Urban Colony City </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Weymouth </div>	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES		
The aim is to identify the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the project strengths? What unique capabilities and resources does your group or area possess? 	The aim is to identify the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the project weaknesses? 		
External Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in identifying current & future trends for our local projects Proximity to Plymouth Grand Return Alerts Proximity to disaster terrain Proximity to north station (emergency services) 	Internal Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in identifying current & future trends for our local projects Proximity to Plymouth Grand Return Alerts Proximity to disaster terrain Proximity to north station (emergency services) 		
Internal Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in identifying current & future trends for our local projects Proximity to Plymouth Grand Return Alerts Proximity to disaster terrain Proximity to north station (emergency services) 	External Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in identifying current & future trends for our local projects Proximity to Plymouth Grand Return Alerts Proximity to disaster terrain Proximity to north station (emergency services) 		



Nov. 28th stakeholder meeting at Harriman State Park

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and diversity of groups, and funding for construction and maintenance. Opportunities included showcasing the history and beauty of the area and increasing tourism. There were many ideas to promote the project and to build in existing and potential new events to the trail. Threats included potential future OHV/bicycle conflicts north of Ashton, lack of maintenance funding, and inability to promote the trail on a national scale.

Bike Walk Montana

City of West Yellowstone
West Yellowstone Chamber
Hebgen Lake Ranger District
Freeheel & Wheel

City of Island Park
Harriman State Park

Fremont County
City of Ashton
Ashton Cycling Committee
Ashton/Island Park Ranger District

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance

City of Teton
City of Driggs
Teton Basin Ranger District

City of Victor
Teton Valley Trails and Pathways

Stakeholder Representation

Yellowstone National Park

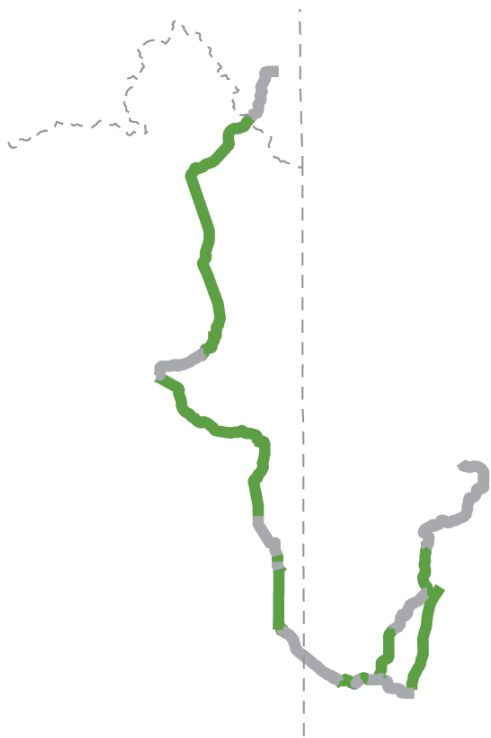
Wyoming Pathways

Grand Teton National Park

Friends of Pathways
Teton County WY
Jackson Ranger District
Town of Jackson

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Over 114 miles of the proposed 182-mile Greater Yellowstone Trail system is currently in place and publicly accessible.

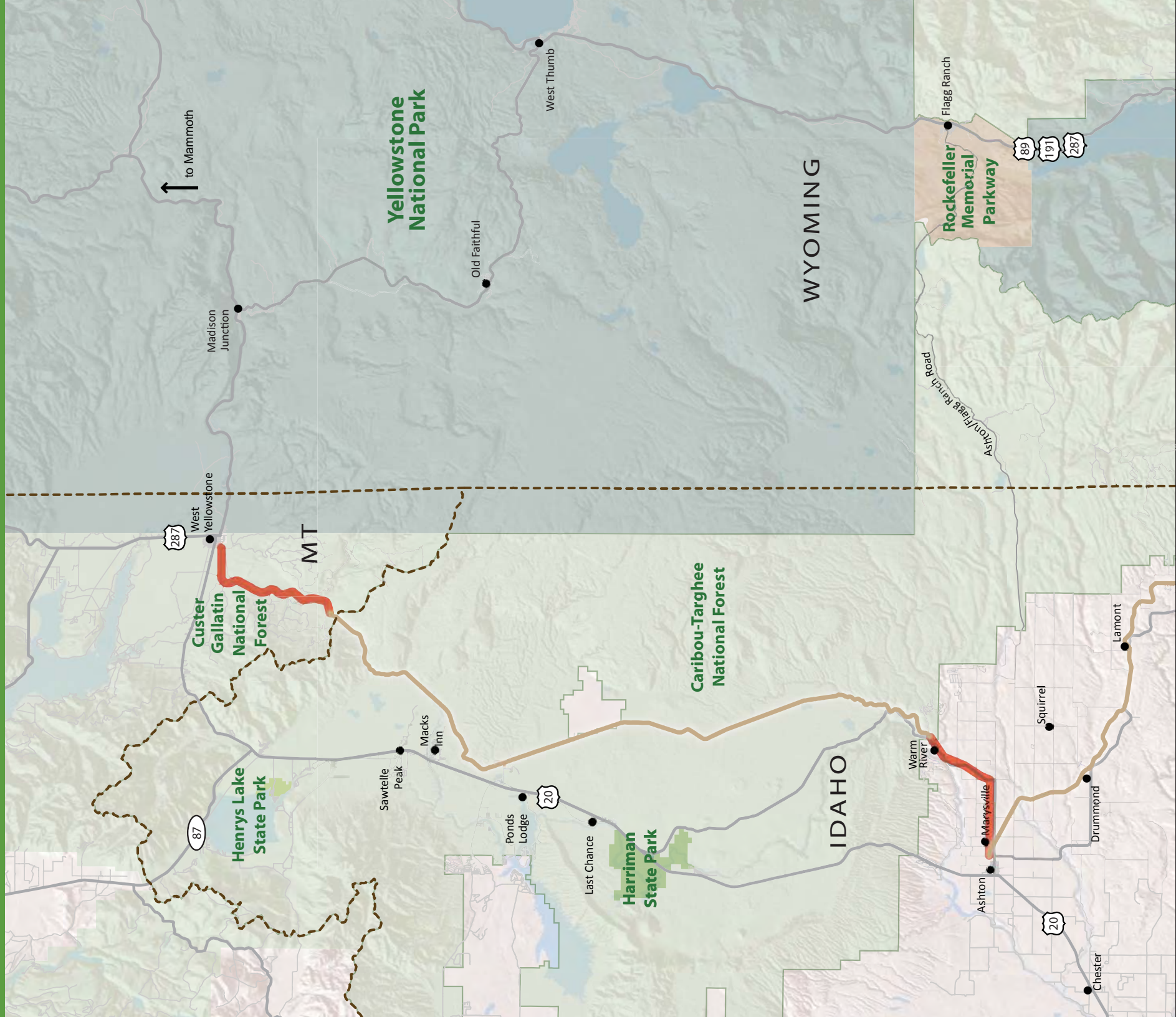


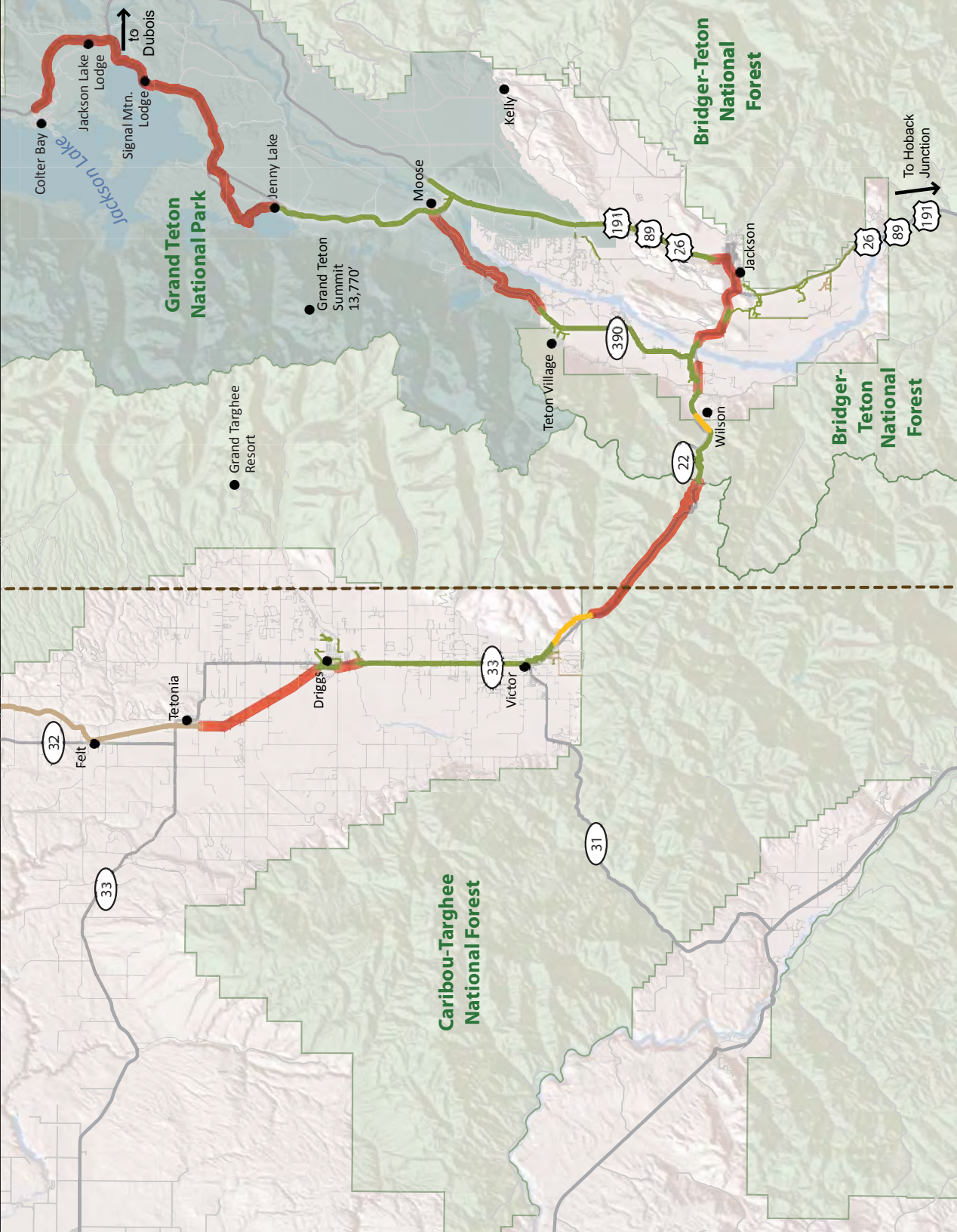
Existing Trails & Accomplishments

Trail development throughout the study area has made tremendous gains over the past twenty years. Land managers, cities, counties and advocates in all regions have continuously displayed strong support for trails, and specifically, trails that provide connections to public lands. Recent and successful trail implementation examples can be found in every part of the corridor from the Rendezvous Ski Trails in West Yellowstone to the Snake River Pathway Bridge in Wilson. A complimentary calendar of events and races also illustrates how local communities have embraced and leveraged these trails to produce tangible economic impacts. The Greater Yellowstone Trail seeks to link these communities' energy and accomplishments into a unified and branded trail network for the benefit of the entire region.

Each area of the corridor possesses a unique mix of existing trail assets. For example, West Yellowstone boasts an impressive network of backcountry and nordic trails while Teton County, WY contains an extensive paved trail system. Each region offers new and high quality trail experiences. This diversity is part of what makes the Greater Yellowstone Trail so special. The following section describes recent trail accomplishments for each of the states, specifically noting existing trails that could become part of the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

EXISTING PROJECTS & GAPS





Greater Yellowstone Trail

LEGEND

- Existing Trail Gaps
- Existing Paved Trails
- Existing Shared Roadways
- Existing Paved Neighborhood Connectors
- Existing Unpaved Trails
- Existing Unpaved Neighborhood Connectors
- National Park
- National Forest
- State Park



WY

EXISTING TRAILS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Moose to Jenny Lake Pathway





EXISTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Moose to Jenny Lake Pathway
Jackson Moose Wapiti Pathway
Moose Wilson Pathway
Path 22 / Snake River Pathway Bridge
Wilson Millennium Trail
Old Pass Road

EXISTING GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRAIL MILEAGE:

36.5 Miles



Wyoming

The Jackson Hole Community Pathways system had its start with the visionary 1991 Pathways Master Plan. By the mid-1990's, Teton County and the Town of Jackson had completed the first four miles of trails, and with strong public support, began additional trail planning and construction. Another ten miles of paved trails were constructed on the west side of Jackson Hole by 2003 that linked Teton Village to Wilson.

Following an environmental review and approval by the National Park Service, the Grand Teton National Park pathways started around 2007. With key leadership from US Senator Craig Thomas and the Wyoming Delegation, funding was secured to construct a high-quality paved trail from Jenny Lake in Grand Teton National Park to the Town of Jackson, adding a distance of 20 miles to Jackson Hole's



Wilson Millennium Trail



Winter fat-biking along the Snake River Pathway Bridge



trails. The National Park Service is also studying a new proposed trail along the 6.5-mile Moose-Wilson Road that would create a remarkable 35-mile loop.

The next important trail connection is the WY-22 Pathway, planned to connect the critical missing link between Jackson and Wilson via the new Snake River Pathway Bridge. The \$3.2 million bridge was completed in September 2014, and the connecting trails are currently under construction. When completed in 2015 this will provide a safe, connected paved trail system from Jenny Lake to the top of Teton Pass.

The goal of a safe trail over Teton Pass builds on earlier efforts for the Teton Pass Millennium Trail completed between 1999-2004 with Federal Land Highway funding. An ongoing Wyoming FLAP project has initiated planning and environmental work for the 6 miles between the ID/WY state line and the top of Teton Pass. The Wyoming FLAP committee has also invited future grant requests for that section.

Several nonprofit advocacy groups have contributed to the implementation, maintenance and support of the extensive Jackson Hole Pathway system. Friends of Pathways supports trail development efforts in and around Teton County (WY). The group supports the County's pathway construction efforts and helps provide encouragement and education programming. Wyoming Pathways has also made significant contributions to the region's pathway system. Most recently Wyoming Pathways helped to research, write and develop the FLAP grant applications that resulted in \$2.2 million in funds for pathway construction efforts.

Existing Victor-Driggs Pathway





EXISTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Victor-Driggs Pathway
Mountainside Village Park Sidepath
Old Jackson Highway Shared Road
Ashton to Tetonai Rail Trail
Warm River Campground-Bear
Gulch Non-Motorized Trail
CTNF Railroad Grade Shared Use
Trail



EXISTING GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRAIL MILEAGE:

76.7 Miles

Idaho Trails

Eastern Idaho boasts an impressive inventory of existing trails, many of which make up the proposed Greater Yellowstone Trail. Trail development in Idaho started with the forward thinking of the Idaho Transportation Department, which paved the 7-mile rail trail from Victor to Driggs in 1998 with a Transportation Enhancement grant. Over the years, the cities of Victor and Driggs have continued to leverage this investment by redeveloping additional portions of the historic railroad grade and by improving trail connections to the rail trail. The Teton Pass Millennium Trail project extended the trail and shared roads 3.5 miles from Victor to Moose Creek by 2003.

To continue efforts to connect the trail over Teton Pass, the City of Victor and Teton County, WY, successfully

Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail



Snowmobilers along the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail



Bicyclists on the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail



secured \$2.2 million in Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grants in 2013-14 for the Wilson to Victor section. Wyoming Pathways and nonprofit partners assisted in the grant writing and generating public support for these grants. The two National Forests, Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee, are key partners in the Teton Pass connection. Design work is underway for the Victor project, which will connect the trail two more miles from Moose Creek to the WY state line in 2016. The Wyoming FLAP project is starting planning and environmental work for the remaining 6 miles to connect between state line and the top of Teton Pass.

In the 1990's Idaho State Parks acquired approximately 30 miles of the old rail right-of-way between Teton and Ashton. Opened to the public in 2010, the unpaved trail spans 29.6 miles through scenic eastern Idaho farmland. Three major railroad trestles at Fall River, Conant Creek, and Bitch Creek were rehabilitated when the rail trail was developed and now serve as key highlights of the trail. Numerous historic grain elevators punctuate the rail trail and add to the corridor's rich history. Breathtaking views of the Tetons are also present throughout the corridor. In addition to hiking, biking, and horseback riding, snowmobiles and cross-country skiers can be found along the trail in the winter months.

Trail development in Teton Valley has been enormously supported through the efforts of non-profits. TVTAP supports trail efforts in Teton Valley through fundraising, trail construction, trail maintenance, and

Conant Creek Trestle on the Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail



ATV's along the railroad grade in Caribou-Targhee National Forest



advocacy. TVTAP has even developed a website about the Greater Yellowstone Trail (<http://tetonrailtrail.tvtap.org>) that provides historical background, maps and information for those seeking to ride the trail as it exists today. TVTAP also facilitates a number of events and festivals such as a Summer Trail Work day and the annual WYDAHO mountain bike festival which drew over 450 visitors to the region last year.

Ashton serves as a gateway to Caribou-Targhee National Forest and offers many excellent road biking opportunities on the low-volume county roads surrounding the city. Recent efforts by the Ashton Cycling Committee have sought to promote and improve these cycling routes. Within the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, an extensive network of shared motorized/non-motorized trails exist for use by OHV riders, snowmobilers, bicyclists and hikers. The historic West Yellowstone branch railroad grade (also referred to as ATV Trail 001) constitutes one of these trails and extends 38 miles from Warm River Campground north through Big Springs and up to the Montana state line. Motorized traffic is prohibited on the first three miles of the railroad grade from Warm River Campground to the Bear Gulch Trailhead. Beyond Bear Gulch, motorized vehicles under 50" wide and non-motorized traffic are permitted on the railroad grade.



John Sack's Cabin at Big Springs near Island Park

MT

EXISTING TRAILS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS





Continental Divide Trail

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Rendezvous Ski Trail System
Continental Divide Trail

GREATER YELLOWSTONE TETON

EXISTING TRAIL MILEAGE:

0 Miles



Montana Trails

Although Montana does not contain any constructed portions of the proposed Greater Yellowstone Trail, they have added significant pieces to the local trail network that would directly connect to the Greater Yellowstone Trail. The Rendezvous Ski Area offers over 35 kilometers of rolling, groomed Nordic trails. The trail system and facilities are a product of a partnership between the Town of West Yellowstone, the Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce, the West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. West Yellowstone's innovative "Fair Share" funding program helps support grooming efforts. The program encourages local businesses to contribute a reasonable "fair share" of their winter income for trail maintenance efforts in recognition of the economic importance that trails bring to the community.

The Rendezvous Ski Area hosts a number of popular events throughout the winter months including competitive and social events such as the Spam Cup and the Taste of the

Annual SPAM Cup event at the Rendezvous Ski Trails



CDT near Lionhead Mountain



Trails. In addition to winter activities, the Rendezvous Ski Trails also provide 15 miles of mountain bike trails in the warmer months. A complimentary roster of summer events include a mountain bike biathlon and the annual Yellowstone Rendezvous Trail Run.

In addition to the success of the Rendezvous Ski Area, the Hebgen Lake Ranger District encompasses more than 500 miles of trails in wilderness and non-wilderness areas. The most well-known of these trails is the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). Between 2006-2012, the Hebgen Lake Ranger District spent over \$179,000 on construction (or reconstruction) of 24.7 miles of the CDT. Recent efforts focused on removing the CDT from motorized road beds and providing a single-track non-motorized trail experience in accordance with national CDT goals. In total, all but 1.5 miles of the 54 miles of CDT within the Hebgen Lake Ranger District are routed along single track, non-motorized trails. The proposed Greater Yellowstone Trail would provide a key connection to the CDT. Local residents would benefit from improved access to recreational trails while cross-country hikers and bicyclists of the CDT would benefit from a direct connection to services and lodging in West Yellowstone and Island Park.

Rendezvous Ski Trails

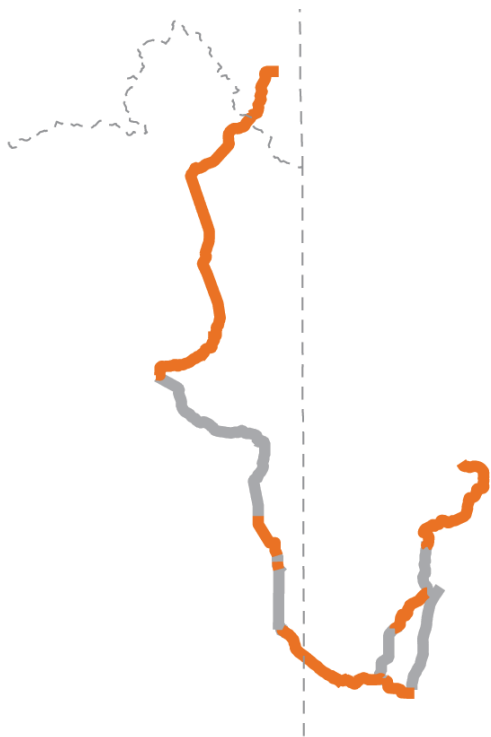


West Yellowstone's 4-mile Frontier Trail surrounds town on all sides, with approximately two-thirds falling on USFS land and the remainder on town of West Yellowstone property. This includes a portion that follows the same historic railroad grade that much of the proposed Greater Yellowstone Trail follows. This project was a collaboration with the Forest Service, Town of West Yellowstone, Montana Conservation Corps, and other local residents.

6

“The Greater Yellowstone Trail is a great opportunity to bring a long distance loop trail through a beautiful landscape that connects communities. The planning team is working with the public and other interested and affected communities to ensure that this trail meets the needs of recreational users in an environmentally sound manner.”

-Joshua Milligan, Acting District Ranger, Teton Basin Ranger District



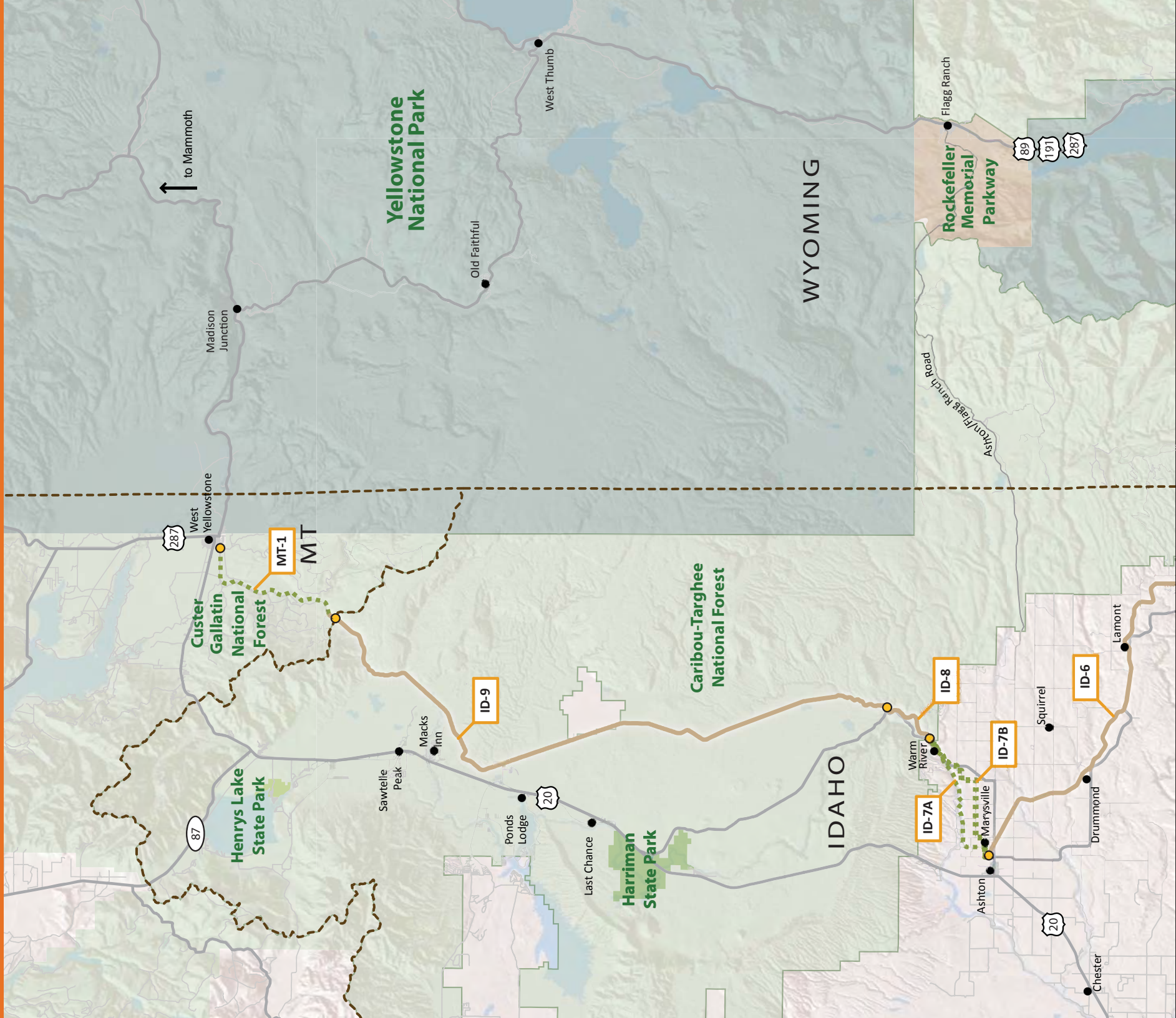
Proposed Projects

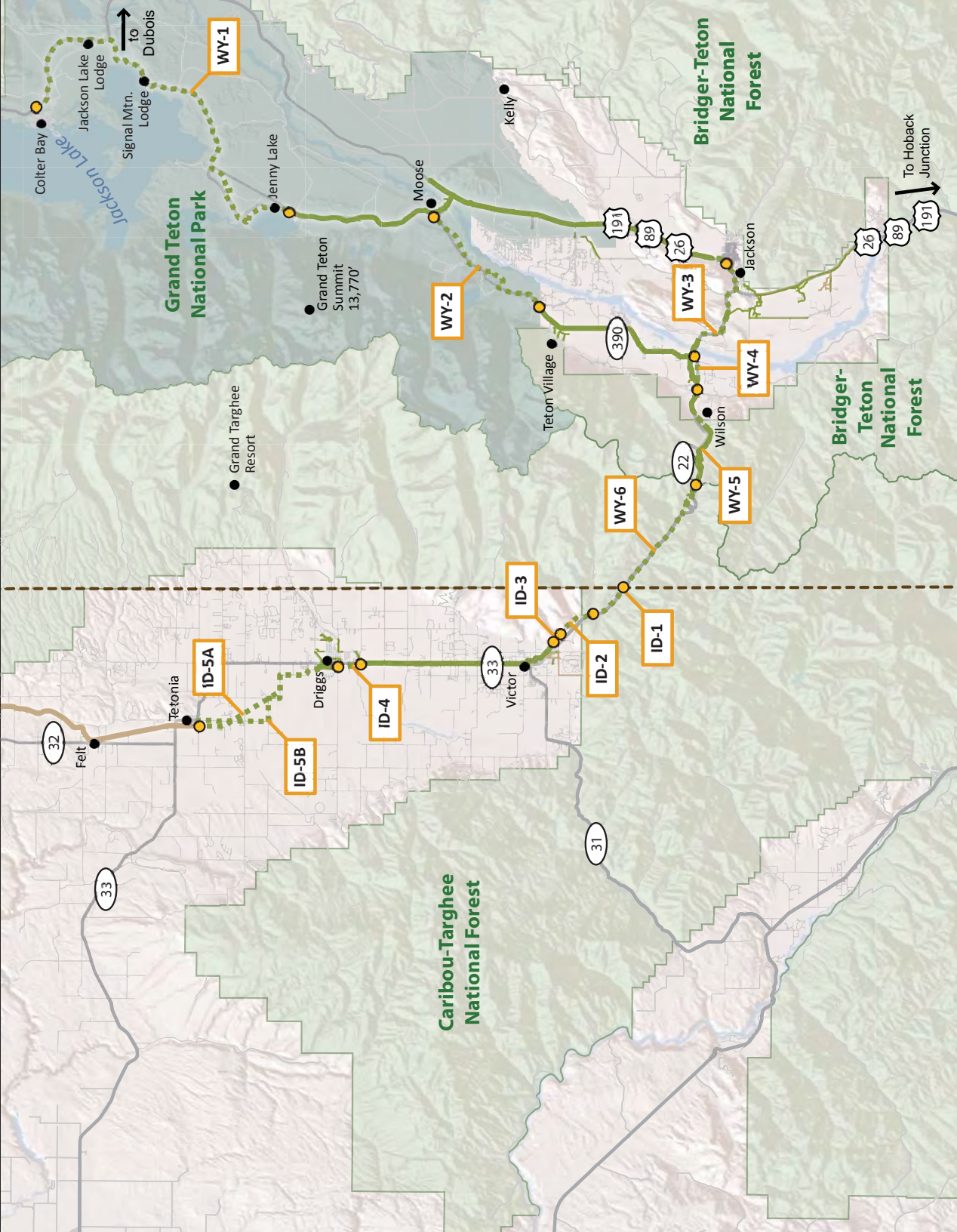
Although significant sections of the Greater Yellowstone Trail corridor are accessible today, a number of proposed projects are necessary to fully connect and realize the ultimate vision of the trail. These projects seek to eliminate existing gaps in the trail corridor, improve accessibility, provide a more consistent trail experience, clarify wayfinding, and address conflicts with other users or adjacent property owners. Although the long-term vision for the trail seeks to provide a separated, off-street non-motorized trail experience, some areas will require trail users to travel on existing roadways until off-street access can be negotiated. In addition to warm season hiking and bicycling, many trails will also be compatible with winter activities. Cross-country skiing and winter fat-biking are popular on many of the region's trail. TVTAP, Rendezvous Ski Trails, Teton County (WY), Grand Teton National Park and Harriman State Park all currently groom trails in

the winter. Grooming could also potentially expand to new trails. Snowmobiling could offer another potential winter-time use, particularly in Idaho and Montana where snowmobiles are already permitted in many areas.

In collaboration with project stakeholders, sixteen projects were identified to complete the Greater Yellowstone Trail. These include six projects in Wyoming, nine projects in Idaho and one project in Montana. Projects range from major renovation projects on existing trail segments to entirely new trail construction. Projects have been coded with the state initials and project number (WY-1 for example) for ease of reference. The following pages provide a brief description of each project as well as important project details such as project status, planning-level costs, project stakeholders and proposed trail mileage.

PROPOSED PROJECT MAP





Greater Yellowstone Trail

Project List

WY-1 Colter Bay to Jenny Lake	ID-4 Victor Driggs Rail-Trail Extension - Teton Creek to Driggs
WY-2 Moose to Teton Village	ID-5 Huntsman Springs to Teton (Multiple Options)
WY-3 Path 22 – Jackson to Wilson	ID-6 Ashton to Teton (Rail Trail Renovations)
WY-4 Wilson Millennium Trail	ID-7 Ashton to Warm River Campground (Multiple Options)
WY-5 Wilson Millennium Trail and Teton Pass Old Pass Road	ID-8 Warm River Campground to Bear Gulch Trailhead
WY-6 Teton Pass Summit to Idaho Stateline	ID-9 Bear Gulch Trailhead to Montana State Line
ID-1 Stateline to Moose Creek	MT-1 State Line to West Yellowstone
ID-2 Moose Creek to Mountaintop Village Park	
ID-3 Reconstruct Mountaintop Village Sidewalk	

LEGEND

-

WY-1

PROPOSED PROJECT

Colter Bay area, Grand Teton National Park





PROJECT STATUS:

NEPA decision completed
2007 / unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

20.0 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$12 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

Grand Teton National Park
Teton County (WY)
Friends of Pathways
Wyoming Pathways



Colter Bay to Jenny Lake

This project would create a proposed shared use path from the Jenny Lake Visitor's Center to Colter Bay through Grand Teton National Park. NEPA has been completed and the project is currently ready to start final design and construction but no funding has been allocated. Future design will need balance environmental impacts with visitor experience and safety. The NPS completed NEPA

WY-2

PROPOSED PROJECT

Overlooking the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve Visitor's Center



**PROJECT STATUS:**

EIS Management Plan
funded and scheduled for
2015

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

7.3 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$4.2 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

Grand Teton National Park
Teton County (WY)
Teton Village Association
Friends of Pathways
Wyoming Pathways



Moose to Teton Village

This project would create a paved trail parallel to the Moose-Wilson Rd. from Moose to the south border of Grand Teton National Park. The trail would ultimately connect to the Teton County Pathway System near Teton Village. The National Park Service currently has an Environmental Impact Statement management plan process underway. The EIS decision will determine the next steps for the trail's implementation.

PROJECT STATUS:

In construction and fully funded; completion summer 2015

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

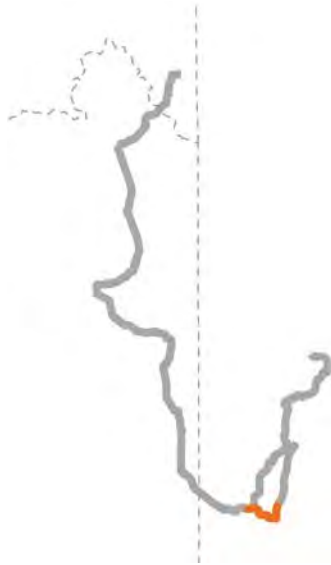
5.0 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$13.3 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

Town of Jackson
Teton County (WY)
Wyoming Pathways
Friends of Pathways



Path 22- Jackson to Wilson

Teton County (WY) and the Town of Jackson are currently completing a connection of the west and east Jackson Hole Pathway system. The project consists of a one mile cycle track and sidewalk system on West Broadway/US26/89, and 4 mile trail along WY-22 to the new Snake River Pathway Bridge and connecting to the Wilson Centennial Pathway and Moose-Wilson Pathway. The project is currently under construction and completion is estimated for the Summer of 2015.



Path 22 Cycletrack in Jackson, under construction

Highway 22 corridor and proposed Wilson Millennium Trail



PROJECT STATUS:

Planned, land secured,
unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

1.3 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$875,000

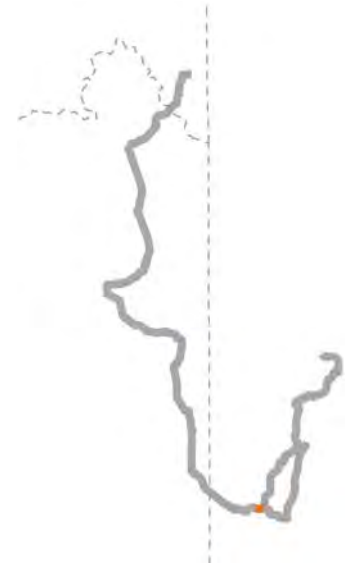
STAKEHOLDERS:

Teton County (WY)

Town of Wilson

Wyoming Pathways

Friends of Pathways



Wilson Millennium Trail

Teton County (WY) is seeking to develop a paved trail from the existing Teton Pass Millennium Trail along the south side of Hwy 22 connecting from Wilson to the new Snake River Pathway Bridge. Property acquisition and/or easements have largely been secured and the project is currently awaiting funding. The project would improve an existing gravel trail and provide a new pedestrian bridge over Fish Creek.



PROPOSED PROJECT

WY-5

PROPOSED PROJECT





Old Pass Road near Teton Pass summit

PROJECT STATUS:

Partially complete / funding for routine maintenance

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

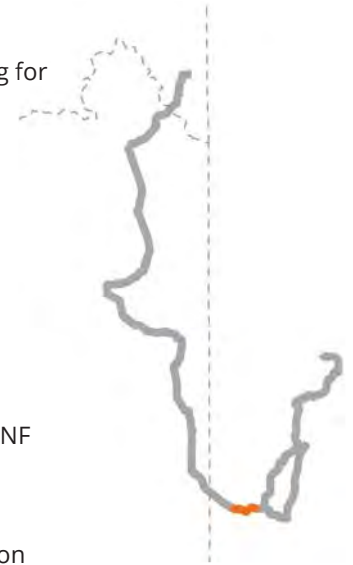
5.7 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$1.1 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

Jackson Ranger District, BTNF
Teton County (WY)
Friends of Pathways
Jim Verdone/Friends of Teton Pass
Wyoming Pathways



Wilson Millennium Trail and Old Teton Pass Road

This project includes routine maintenance on the existing 1-mile Millennium Trail from Wilson to Trail Creek Road. More extensive repairs such as an asphalt overlay and drainage work will be needed on Old Pass Road. The project should seek to reinforce the shared roadway environment on the 1-mile long Trail Creek county road through signage and shared lane markings. Volunteer donations and partnerships made significant repairs in 2012 and future maintenance efforts are underway. The project should also seek to implement Greater Yellowstone Trail branding and wayfinding signage.

WY-6

PROPOSED PROJECT

Old Pass Road, proposed trail corridor



**PROJECT STATUS:**

Environmental, planning,
preliminary engineering, phase
one construction / partially
funded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

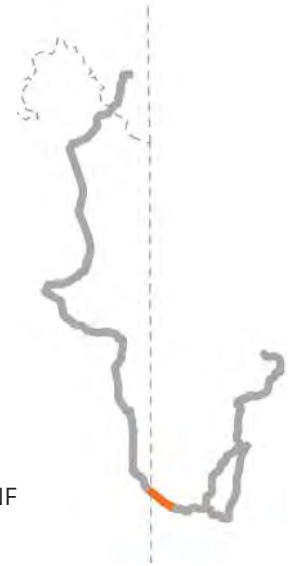
6.5 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$5.0 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

Teton Basin Ranger District, CTNF
Teton County (WY)
WYDOT
Wyoming Pathways
Friends of Pathways



Teton Pass Summit to Idaho State line

This project seeks to develop a new paved trail from the existing trail at the top of Teton Pass west towards the Wyoming/Idaho state line. This project currently is partially funded by a \$500,000 Wyoming FLAP grant that will provide NEPA permitting for the trail corridor from the state line to approximately Coal Creek, and possible construction from state line to Trail Creek Campground. Preliminary alignment options would consider use of the Old Pass Road that is used for the electric transmission line maintenance. Retaining walls and one or more undercrossings of the highway may be necessary pending the final alignment. The preferred alignment should seek to provide maximum relief from the highway while balancing environmental concerns.

PROJECT STATUS:

Funded / under design,
Construction 2016

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

1.9 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$1.7 Million

STAKEHOLDERS:

CTNF Teton Basin Ranger District

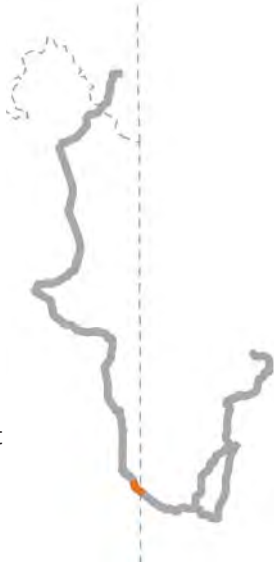
City of Victor

Teton County (ID)

Wyoming Pathways

Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP)

Teton Valley Business Development Center



Stateline to Moose Creek

This project seeks to develop a shared use path from Moose Creek up Teton Pass on the north side of ID-33 to the state line. The project is currently funded through an Idaho FLAP grant and construction is scheduled for 2016. NEPA permitting is complete, and design is scheduled to start in 2015.



Proposed trail corridor

ID-1

PROPOSED PROJECT



Old Jackson Highway shared roadway

PROJECT STATUS:

Partially complete / routine maintenance funded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

2.2 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$7,900

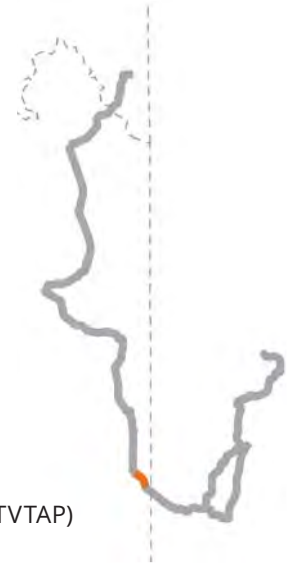
STAKEHOLDERS:

City of Victor

Mountainside Village

Teton Valley Trails & Pathways (TVTAP)

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



Moose Creek to Mountainside Village Park

This project seeks to reinforce the shared roadway environment from Moose Creek to the Mountainside Village park and trailhead. Proposed improvements should include shared lane markings and Greater Yellowstone Trail branding and signage..

Long Range Plan: Develop an off-street, paved trail along the Old Jackson Highway to connect the existing Mountainside Village paved trail to the proposed trail at Moose Creek.

PROJECT STATUS:

Undefined /Unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

0.5 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$205,000

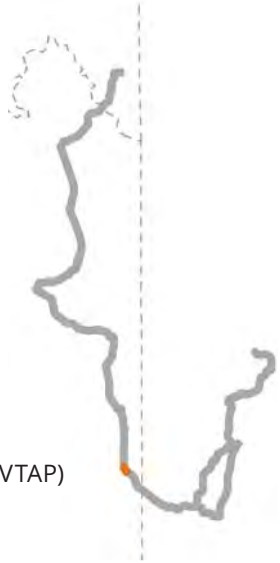
STAKEHOLDERS:

Mountainside Village

City of Victor

Teton Valley Trails & Pathways (TVTAP)

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



Reconstruct Mountainside Village Trail

This project seeks to reconstruct and upgrade the failing Mountainside Village sidepath from the Mountainside Village Park to Baseline Rd. Currently, root intrusion has caused significant damage to the pavement and trail widths are substandard. Reconstruction of the trail should seek to install an 8'-wide minimum facility.

Mountainside Village sidepath



SR 33 trail crossing near the end of the rail trail in Driggs



PROJECT STATUS:

Preliminary planning completed / unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

1.1 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$660,000 (excluding acquisition)

STAKEHOLDERS:

City of Driggs

Private property owners

Teton Valley Trails & Pathways (TVTAP)

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



Victor to Driggs Rail-Trail Extension

This project seeks to develop a new paved trail from the existing rail-trail terminus at Teton Creek south of Driggs to the newly constructed shared use path in the Huntsman Springs development at Bates Road. Property acquisition or easement negotiations will be necessary to route the trail along the historic railroad grade. Four to five parcels appear to have reverted back to adjacent landowners and one barn has been built atop the historic railroad grade. The project would provide a more direct connection to the downtown Driggs shops, restaurants and the newly developed rail trail in the Huntsman Springs development.



PROPOSED PROJECT

ID-5

PROPOSED PROJECT



Option A- Abandoned railroad grade



Option B- Low volume county roads



PROJECT STATUS:
ROW research, preliminary
planning completed /Unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:
6.5 Miles (Option A)
7.6 Miles (Option B)

PLANNING LEVEL COST:
Option A- \$3.9 Million
Option B- \$7,300

STAKEHOLDERS:
City of Driggs
City of Teton
Teton County, ID
Teton Valley Trails & Pathways (TVTAP)
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



Huntsman Springs to Teton

Two alignment options exist for routing trail users between the existing rail trail in Teton and the shared use path in the Huntsman Springs development. A feasibility study should be conducted to evaluate potential costs and impacts of each option.

RAIL TRAIL ALIGNMENT (OPTION A)

Option A seeks to develop the historic railroad grade as a rail-trail. Easements or property acquisition would need to be secured for segments that have reverted to adjacent landowners. Special design considerations should address the need for agricultural machinery access crossings of the rail trail.

COUNTY ROAD ALIGNMENT (OPTION B)

Utilize existing low-volume city and county roads to navigate trail users from the end of the shared-use path in the Huntsman Springs development to the beginning of the Ashton-Teton Rail-Trail in Teton. Evaluate potential paving of shared roads. The first portion of the route along 1000 W, 2500 N and 2000 W would travel along unpaved low-volume roads. After turning onto Packsaddle Rd., and subsequently 3000 W, the route changes to paved before returning once again to gravel at Egbert Rd. and the start of the Ashton-Teton rail-trail. Route improvements would include branding and wayfinding signage.

ID-6

PROPOSED PROJECT

Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail



**PROJECT STATUS:**

Undefined / unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

29.6 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$1.25 Million (Unpaved)

\$15 Million (Paved)

STAKEHOLDERS:

City of Tetonia

City of Ashton

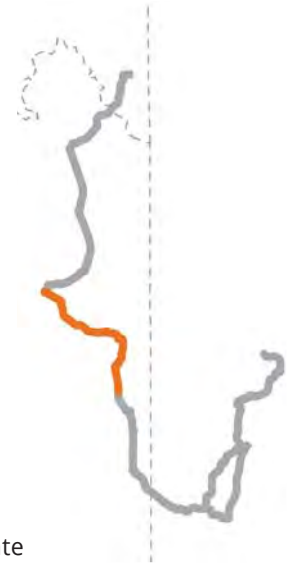
Fremont County

Idaho State Parks (Harriman State

Park)Teton Valley Trails & Pathways

(TVTAP)

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



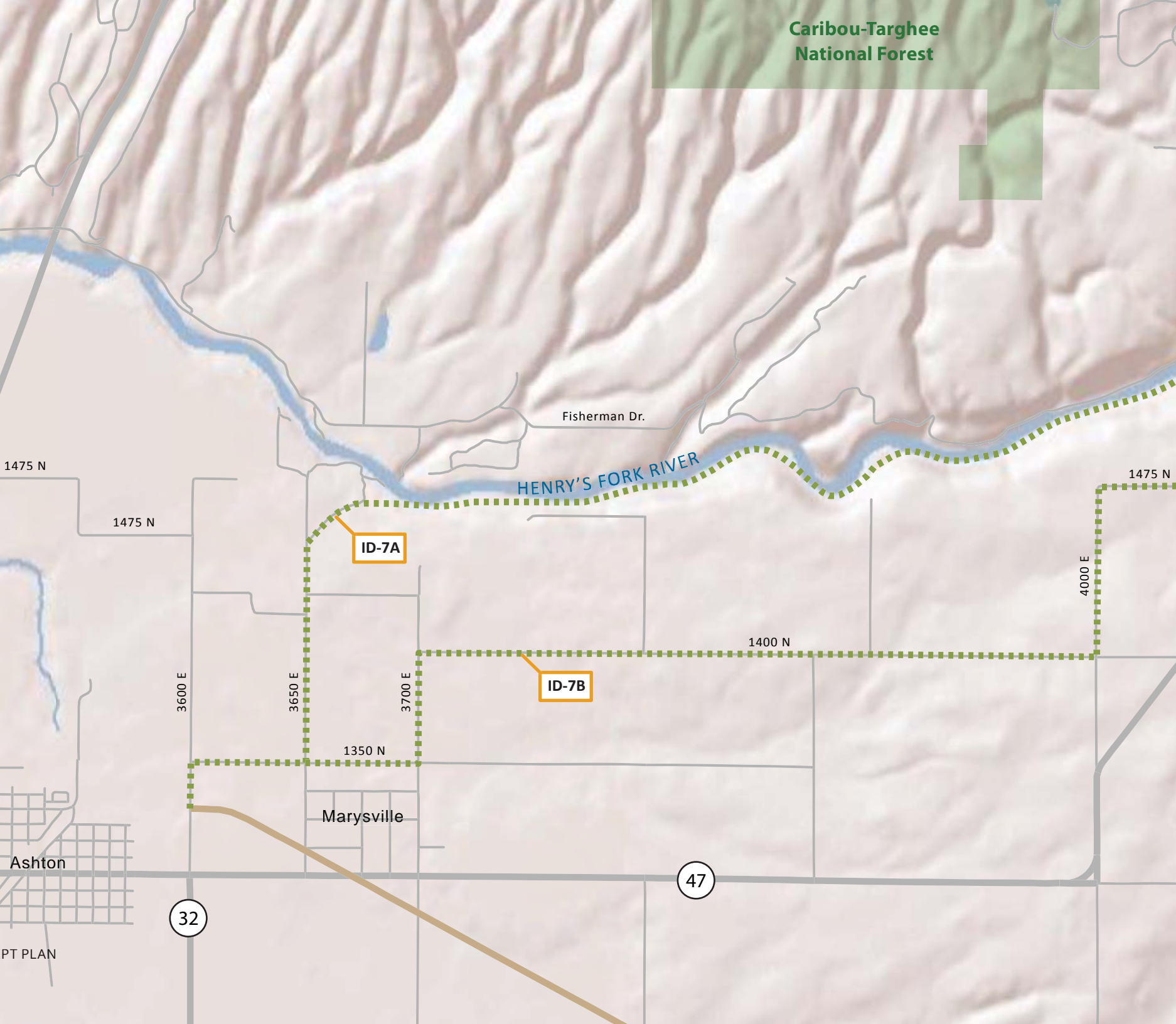
Ashton to Tetonia Rail Trail Renovations

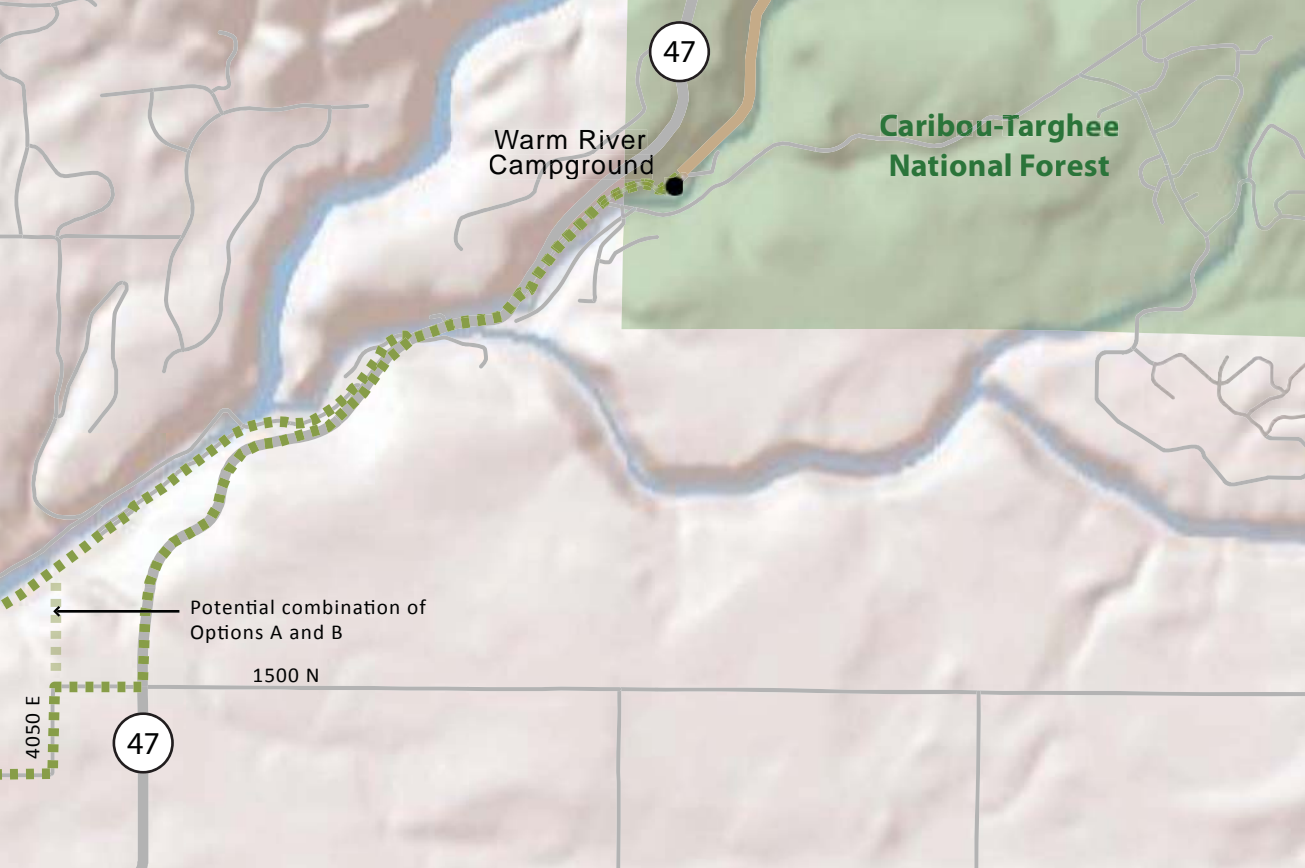
This project seeks to address the trail surfacing and width of the existing Ashton to Tetonia Rail Trail. The project should address isolated erosion and drainage issues, identify trail segments that need to be widened, and evaluate potential paving. The project should also implement Greater Yellowstone- Teton Trail branding and wayfinding signage throughout the corridor. Efforts should be made to improve trail access within many of the rural towns linked by the rail trail such as Tetonia, Felt, Lamont, Drummond and Ashton.

ID-7

PROPOSED PROJECT

Caribou-Targhee
National Forest



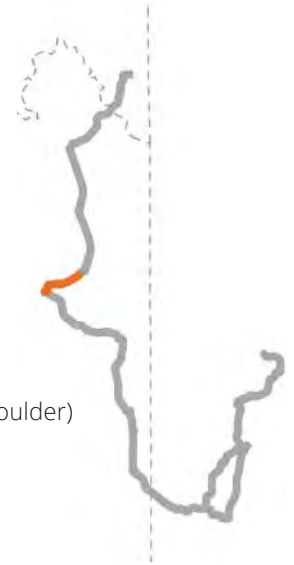


PROJECT STATUS:
Undefined /Unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:
8.0 Miles (Option A)
8.7 Miles (Option B)

PLANNING LEVEL COST:
Option A- \$5.6 Million
Option B-\$900,000 (improved shoulder)

STAKEHOLDERS:
City of Ashton
Fremont County
Private property owners
Ashton Ranger District,CTNF Ashton Cycling Committee
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



Ashton to Warm River Campground

Three trail alignment options exist for routing the trail users between Ashton and Warm River Campground. A feasibility study should be conducted to evaluate potential costs and impacts of each option.

RAIL TRAIL ALIGNMENT (OPTION A)

From the end of the Ashton to Tetonia Rail Trail, the route would follow low volume county roads before connecting to the historic railroad grade on the south side of the Henry's Fork. From there, the route follows the historic railroad grade for approximately five miles before reaching the Warm River Campground. Property acquisition and/or easement agreements would be required to implement this alignment. Improvements to the county road portions would include Greater Yellowstone Trail branding, shared roadway signage and wayfinding signage.

COUNTY ROADS / SR 47 ALIGNMENT (OPTION B)

From the end of Ashton to Tetonia Rail Trail, the route would follow low volume county roads before joining the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway (SR 47) for approximately 1.5 miles before turning off to the Warm River Campground. Shoulder widening or sidepath construction along SR 47 would be needed to provide a safer bicycle environment. Improvements to the county road portions would include Greater Yellowstone Trail branding, smoother surface sealing methods, shared roadway signage and wayfinding signage.

ID-8

PROPOSED PROJECT

Existing non-motorized trail at Warm River Campground





PROJECT STATUS:

Existing / Renovation and reconstruction

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

3.0 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$475,000 (Unpaved)

STAKEHOLDERS:

Ashton Ranger District, CTNF
Idaho State Parks
Fremont County
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance
Ashton Cycling Committee



Warm River Campground to Bear Gulch Trailhead

This project seeks to renovate the existing non-motorized portion of the railroad grade north from Warm River campground to the Bear Gulch Trailhead. The project should address isolated erosion and drainage issues, identify trail segments that require widening and evaluate trail paving. NEPA will likely be required for any significant disturbance to the trail. Greater Yellowstone Trail branding and wayfinding signage should be developed and implemented along the route.

ID-9

PROPOSED PROJECT

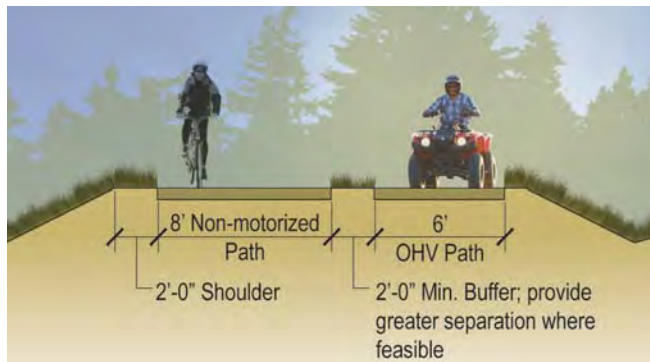
Railroad Grade / ATV Trail 001 through CTNF



Bear Gulch Trailhead to Montana State Line

This project seeks to improve the railroad grade from the Bear Gulch Trailhead to the Montana state line. A number of strategies could be utilized (illustrated left) to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and OHV users. The project should evaluate potential application of dual routes, identify shared trail segments in need of improvements and determine any necessary bridge improvements. Both Options A and B recommend upgrades to improve the durability of the existing trail while preserving the trail surface as unpaved. NEPA will likely be required to implement whichever final solutions are pursued. In addition Greater Yellowstone Trail branding and wayfinding signage should also be implemented through the corridor.

Dual OHV / Non-Motorized Rail Grade- Option A



Develop the historic railroad grade into dual facilities with separate trails dedicated for OHV and non-motorized users where site conditions allow. Separation between OHV and non-motorized could be greater where conditions permit.



Shared OHV / Non-Motorized Rail Grade- Option B

Repair and improve the existing railroad grade trail to support a trail corridor shared by motorized and non-motorized users. Ensure adequate trail width and shoulders to accommodate all users.

PROJECT STATUS:

Existing gravel trail / Renovation or Reconstruction

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

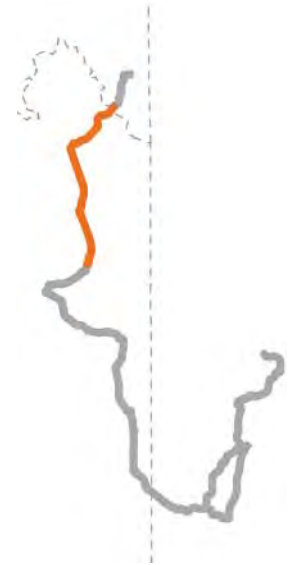
35.2 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$4,100,000 - \$10,000,000

STAKEHOLDERS:

Ashton Ranger District, CTNF
City of Island Park
Fremont County
OHV Interests
Harriman State Park
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance



MT-1

PROPOSED PROJECT



Historic West Yellowstone branch railroad grade near Reas Pass

PROJECT STATUS:

Undefined / Unfunded

CORRIDOR LENGTH:

8.3 Miles

PLANNING LEVEL COST:

\$3 Million (Unpaved)

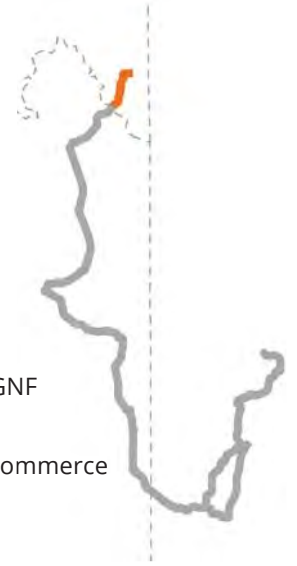
STAKEHOLDERS:

Hebgen Lake Ranger District, CGNF

City of West Yellowstone

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce

Bike Walk Montana



State Line to West Yellowstone

Utilize the existing railroad grade to develop a non-motorized trail from the Idaho/Montana state line to West Yellowstone. This portion of the historic railgrade has been abandoned and passes through the Hebgen Lake Ranger District on the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. The current Hebgen Lake Travel Plan prohibits motorized access along the railroad grade and allows non-motorized access. The railroad grade could provide connections to popular trail systems including the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Rendezvous Ski Trails. The Development of the corridor would require the construction of five bridges with spans ranging from 20'-70'. NEPA permitting would need to be conducted. Environmental concerns along the route include Grizzly Bear habitat and West Slope Cutthroat Trout. Trail paving should be evaluated during the planning process. Future maintenance needs must also be solved. Winter trail uses could easily be integrated with the nearby Rendezvous Ski Trails.

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“The Greater Yellowstone Trail will reconnect our small towns in a way reminiscent of the bygone railroad era. If we cooperate as one region in promoting the trail experience, we all stand to benefit from its tourism potential as well.”

-Tom Cluff, Fremont County Planning and Building Administrator



Maintenance Challenges

Although the Greater Yellowstone Trail corridor presents an amazing opportunity to develop a world-class long range trail, a number of challenges exist to realizing this vision. Throughout the Planning Team's public outreach process, the most commonly raised issue was long term maintenance of the proposed trail. Currently, segments of the trail are being maintained by a mix of non-profit trail groups (Friends of Pathways, TVTAP), city/county maintenance crews (Jackson, Victor, Driggs) or public

agencies (Grand Teton National Park, USFS, Idaho State Parks). In particular, public land managers have been increasingly challenged to provide sustained maintenance levels on their existing facilities with shrinking maintenance budgets. The following pages describe general estimated maintenance costs and practices as well as potential funding mechanisms to support the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

Trail Surfacing



Trail conditions vary considerably along the railroad grade through CTNF. Some portions have held up relatively well while others have experienced rutting and drainage problems.

Existing portions of the Greater Yellowstone Trail vary in surfacing, width and condition. Trails within the Wyoming portion of the study area are all asphalt paving with a typical width of 10 feet. The Rail to trail from Victor to Driggs is paved, but narrower at approximately eight feet in width. This trail, although seal coated in 2014, has suffered significant edge erosion and root damage over its lifespan and will eventually require reconstruction. It is logical to conclude that new, or reconstructed trail segments south of Driggs will all be a minimum of 10 feet in width and asphalt paved in keeping with a consistent level of accommodation.

Portions of the rail bed from Tetonian to West Yellowstone are all currently natural surfacing. Paving has been discussed in the past for the section of trail from Tetonian to Ashton, however funding has never been designated. With regard to the Ashton to West Yellowstone route, 35.2 of the 46.6 total miles is shared with Off-Highway Vehicles. Paving is typically undesirable to motorized OHV users as it can place additional wear and tear on the machines themselves.

Paved and unpaved trail surfaces offer advantages and disadvantages for various objectives, however it should be noted that there are many nationally known rail to trail and other linear trails that are unpaved and are still

accessible and popular with residence and visitors. Paving is not a prerequisite for success.

Based on a variety of factors and project stakeholder input there does not seem to currently be a desire to pave the trail from Ashton to West Yellowstone. South of Ashton, paving the Ashton to Tetonian portion and new gap closure segments all the way into Grand Teton National Park appears to be reasonable and desirable by those concerned.

Trail Surfacing Comparison



Advantages

- Lower construction and maintenance cost
- Pervious / more environmentally-friendly than asphalt
- Natural feel, may encourage more leisurely speeds
- Preferred by OHV's
- Simple maintenance (grading, weed control, etc...)

Disadvantages:

- Not as accessible to all users
- Non-motorized users may cover less distance
- Prone to rutting and erosion if not designed correctly
- May require more frequent maintenance in some cases



Advantages:

- Accessible to all users
- Allows trail users to cover more distance
- Brings a sense of civilization to more remote areas
- Less frequent maintenance needed
- Could be plowed to extend the trail season
- Asphalt helps melt snowcover in the shoulder season and could result in less coverage of the trail

Disadvantages:

- Higher construction and longer term maintenance costs
- More complex maintenance (seal coating, crack filling, etc...)

Maintenance



Seal coating trail maintenance

Maintenance and management of existing and proposed sections of the Greater Yellowstone Trail are a significant concern that is common to many of the project stakeholders; including agency staff, advocates and land managers. In fact, the importance of a well-funded and robust maintenance program for the future has been recognized as a key element that needs to be sufficiently addressed to obtain critical support from several of the land managers. Further complicating the issue is that the Greater Yellowstone Trail passes through numerous jurisdictions that either are currently maintaining trail or could be required to should extensions be built.

Table 7.1 illustrates current maintenance responsibilities along the proposed Greater Yellowstone Trail:

TABLE 7.1 EXISTING MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Jurisdiction	Maintenance Responsibility
Grand Teton National Park	All sections of pathway within park boundary
Teton County WY & Town of Jackson	Pathways, cycle tracks and sidewalks within County and Town Limits. Partnered with Friends of Pathways (501c(3) non-profit)
Teton County ID & City of Victor & City of Driggs	Victor-Driggs Pathways within city limits and county. Partnered with Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP) a 501c(3) non-profit
Ashton to Tetonia Rail to Trail	Idaho State Parks
Warm River Campground to Rea's Pass	Caribou-Targhee National Forest

Routine Maintenance

Necessary maintenance activities vary significantly between jurisdictions and by the type of trail surfacing. Maintenance activities can generally be categorized into one of two types, 'routine maintenance' which is done annually or more frequently, and 'major' or 'capital maintenance' which involves more intensive activity at a less than annual frequency. A robust routine maintenance program may include any of the activities described in Table 7.2. However, it should be noted that every segment of the trail will have different needs and levels of expenditure. It is estimated that for routine maintenance approximately \$1,000 to \$1,500 should be budgeted annually per mile of trail.

TABLE 7.2: ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE	FUNCTION	FREQUENCY	ANNUAL COST (ESTIMATE)
Sweeping of trails	Keep paved surfaces debris free	Spring, after snow pack melt, and as needed	\$140.00 / mile
Litter and trash removal	Keep trail clean and consistent quality of experience for users	Annually, or as needed	\$70.00 / mile
Mowing trail shoulders	Increases the effective width of the trail corridor and helps protect encroachment	Twice a year, in late spring and mid to late-summer	\$100.00 /mile
Tree/brush trimming	Eliminate encroachments into trail corridor and open up sight lines	Annually, or less frequently as needed	\$100.00 /mile
Weed abatement	Manage existence and/or spread of noxious weeds if present	Annually (if needed) could also be less frequently	\$70.00 / mile
Safety Inspections	Inspect trail tread, slope stability, and bridge or other structures	Annually	\$20.00 /mile
Snow removal	Generally limited to urban sections of the trail where year-round bike access is desired	As needed (assume 20 events)	\$80.00 /mile
Snow grooming (for skiing, snowmobiling and fat-biking)	For sections of the trail where specific skiing or snowmobiling is permitted and encouraged	Weekly or as needed during winter (20 times/year)	\$80.00 /mile
Bathroom/trailhead maintenance	Clean and pump bathrooms at trailheads	Weekly or as needed during high season(30 times/year)	\$280.00 each
Sign and other amenity inspection/replacement	Identify and replace damaged infrastructure	Annually	\$50.00 each
Crack sealing and repair	Seal cracks in asphalt to reduce long term-damage	Annually	\$180.00 / mile



Seal coating trail maintenance

Capital Maintenance

Major or capital maintenance activities typically involve more intensive maintenance repairs such as pavement seal coating, pavement overlays, pavement reconstruction or other structural rehabilitations. Any paved trail surface will deteriorate over time with asphalt surfaces dropping in quality rapidly after 10 years. Preservation efforts such as seal coating extend the life of asphalt efficiently and at a lower cost than waiting for the surface to fail requiring expensive reconstruction. Trails within the Jackson Hole Community Pathways system have been subject to a robust maintenance program with seal coats being applied on trails every five years. This has resulted in a smooth and high quality experience for users. Maintenance activities vary considerably around the country and different approaches and pavement preservation intervals could be considered for various parts of the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

Natural surface trails also require significant upkeep to maintain a high standard, particularly where they are shared with OHVs. Minor grading should be done at least every two years to eliminate low spots, ponding, erosion problems and to correct other surface problems. Every six years new aggregate should be added to maintain the

trail surface and quality. It is possible that the trail may eventually require reconstruction however the horizon is hard to predict.

Financial planning for trail/maintenance can be challenging to budget for. Typically trails require greater capital maintenance activities with age and ultimately require full reconstruction at some point. Some jurisdictions focus on eventual reconstruction and treat this as a maintenance item to be budgeted for, whereas some treat this as a separate capital project to be considered in the future. This is noted here to explain the dramatic range in average annual maintenance cost estimates.

For example, a mile of paved trail may require \$950 per year to be budgeted if the seal coats are on a 10 year cycle. Jackson Hole Community Pathways seal coats their trails every five years and budgets \$7,000 per mile. Looking farther in to the future, if an overlay at year 30 is anticipated up front this amount could jump to \$3,000/mile on the 10 year cycle or nearly \$4,300 on the 5 year cycle. Finally, adding in the full cost for a future reconstruction at year 50 raises this to \$9,800 or \$11,100/mile annually even though the majority of this expenditure would not be required until much later in the lifecycle (year 30 and later).

TABLE 7.3: CAPITAL UNPAVED TRAIL MAINTENANCE

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	COST / SF	COST / LF	COST / MILE
Re-grade	Year 2	\$0.05	\$0.40	\$2,112.00
Re-grade	Year 4	\$0.05	\$0.40	\$2,112.00
Resurface	Year 6	\$1.00	\$8.00	\$42,240.00
		WITH RECONSTRUCTION	WITHOUT RECONSTRUCTION	
Total Cost / 50 Years		\$924,000	\$580,800	
Avg. Cost / Years		\$18,480	\$11,853	

TABLE 7.4: CAPITAL PAVED TRAIL MAINTENANCE- 5 YEAR FREQUENCY*

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	COST / SF	COST / LF	COST / MILE
Seal coat	year 5	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 10	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 15	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 20	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 25	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Overlay	Year 30	\$2.00	\$20.00	\$105,600.00
Seal coat	year 35	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 40	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal coat	year 45	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Reconstruct	Year 50	\$6.50	\$65.00	\$343,200.00
	BEFORE OVERLAY (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE BEFORE YEAR 30)	BEFORE RECONSTRUCTION (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE BEFORE YEAR 50)	WITH RECONSTRUCTION (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE WITH FULL RECONSTRUCTION)	
Total Cost / 50 Years	\$66,000.00	\$211,200.00	\$264,000	
Avg. Cost / Years	\$2,275.00	\$4,310.00	\$11,088.00	

TABLE 7.5: CAPITAL PAVED TRAIL MAINTENANCE- 10 YEAR FREQUENCY*

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	COST / SF	COST / LF	COST / MILE
Seal Coat	Year 10	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Seal Coat	Year 20	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Overlay	Year 30	\$2.00	\$20.00	\$105,600.00
Seal Coat	Year 40	\$0.25	\$2.50	\$13,200.00
Reconstruction	Year 50	\$6.50	\$65.00	\$343,200.00
	BEFORE OVERLAY (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE BEFORE YEAR 30)	BEFORE RECONSTRUCTION (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE BEFORE YEAR 50)	WITH RECONSTRUCTION (AVG. ANNUAL COST/MILE WITH FULL RECONSTRUCTION)	
Total Cost / 50 Years	\$26,400.00	\$145,200.00	\$488,400.00	
Avg. Cost / Year	\$942.86	\$2,963.27	\$9,768.00	

*Note: Estimates depict budgeted averages, actual costs would fluctuate with lower costs in the first 30 years.



Crack-sealing trail maintenance

Maintenance Funding Strategies

Endowment or Trust Fund

One possible solution would be to establish a maintenance endowment or trust fund whereby a philanthropic or other financial source contributes a large sum that generates income to pay for trail maintenance. For a project as large as the Greater Yellowstone Trail which covers three states, this concept could be an option for a portion of the route or all of it. It is conceivable that the Grand Teton National Park and Teton County WY may not need to participate given the high existing levels of maintenance and partnerships.

Friends of Acadia National Park (FOA) created the Acadia Trails Forever endowment. With the philanthropic support of a private \$5 million donation, FOA and its partners were able to establish an endowment that generates income to maintain the more than 60-mile carriage road and trails system at Acadia.

Private Fundraising Campaigns

Private fundraising campaigns may present another option for capital maintenance projects. Although this strategy lacks the capability to provide long-term maintenance solutions, moderate funds have been raised through donation boxes and private fundraising campaigns. Recently, Friends of Teton Pass employed this

strategy to raise funds for pavement improvements to the old pass road.

Grants for Capital Maintenance

Several grant programs such as FLAP and RTP fund capital maintenance activities at the federal level. These programs are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. The drawback to this maintenance funding approach lies in the uncertainty of future grant program availability and competitiveness.

Public Land

Within National Forest Lands there are several potential mechanisms that could be employed to generate income that could be used to maintain the trail. The Greater Yellowstone Trail does not lend itself easily to collecting user fees due to the large number of jurisdictions it passes through. The problem of how to collect fees is compounded by the fact that the trail has numerous access points and it could not be controlled, similar to the 15-mile Hiawatha Rail-to-trail in the Idaho Panhandle.

USFS Fee Area

A fee area must include facilities and services that are provided to the public generally and are at a sufficient level to justify users sharing a portion of the costs. USFS representatives did not believe a trail fits these requirements.

Special Recreation Permits

Special Recreation Permits are applicable for uses on Forest Service lands and include 'specialized trail systems.' This type of permit is exempt from the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005, which specifically prohibits collecting fees for horseback riding, or walking through areas where no facilities or services are used. A management plan must first be developed to detail why the fee area is needed, how the fees will be used and what special management/specialized services are provided. In this context a Special Recreation Permit would need to be held by another entity such as a 'friends of the trail' group. It is possible that such a permit could operate in multiple forests such as the Custer-Gallatin and the Caribou-Targhee.

Idaho State Parks

Idaho State Parks could charge the current state park vehicle entry fee of \$5 for access to the Ashton to Teton Rail Trail. This would need to first be approved by the State Park Board and would also require new legislation at the state level. Given the amount of revenue this fee would generate, it may not be worth the effort, especially since this fee could only be collected over the Ashton to Teton section of the trail.

Conclusion

It is possible that sections of the trail could have suggested fees, stickers, or other types of proof of payment that could go toward providing maintenance of that section of the trail. Given the enforcement and fee collection

challenges, it is recommended that alternative means of funding be explored first. If pursued, it would be ideal for the fee to cover large portions of the trail so as not to drive usage away from a smaller portion of the trail where fees may be charged.

Maintenance Organizational Strategies

The Town of Jackson and Teton County, WY currently partner financially in trail maintenance. Victor and Driggs each maintain their respective portions of rail trail. In addition, each city makes financial contributions to Teton County (ID) who maintains the portions beyond city limits. There are a myriad of different potential organizational strategies that partner various groups, agencies or land managers together in different ways. Volunteer or non-profit groups could be entrusted with some or all of the maintenance obligations. Around the country, many communities utilize 'friends of the trail' groups to provide essential services by organizing volunteer labor, or managing financial support from a variety of sources. It is recommended that an independent effort be launched to better document expenditures, organizational strategies and the successes of trail/maintenance in the region. This analysis should then include a comprehensive outreach process to discuss the resources and willingness of each agency/land manager/community group to contribute, share resources or act as a contractor for multiple other groups. For example, Idaho State Parks has a maintenance shop at Harriman State Park and indicated willingness to explore options where they might be able to provide contracted maintenance for other sections of the trail.

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“The Greater Yellowstone Trail would complete Idaho Parks and Recreation’s 20-year old vision to connect eastern Idaho communities and parks.”

*- Leo Hennessy, Idaho Non-Motorized
Trails Program Manager*

Snake River Pathway Bridge construction



Implementation and Action Steps

Implementing the vision established for the Greater Yellowstone Trail will likely require widespread coordination and commitment from the various stakeholders involved in this Concept Plan. Creative partnerships will be necessary in developing capital projects and in structuring long-term maintenance. The following pages identify a general project prioritization, funding sources and program-related action steps.

Project Implementation



*Jackson to Grand Teton National Park
pathway construction*

Realization of the Greater Yellowstone Trail vision will require aggressive, creative and opportunistic approaches to funding and implementation. The following project prioritization has been developed to provide a general guide for assessing the order in which projects should be pursued based on their importance to achieving the overall vision of the trail. However, this prioritization is not meant to stand in the way of development of lower priority projects when timely opportunities are presented that could achieve cost savings, share resources, or capitalize on other potential benefits.

Projects have generally been classified into three categories:

- **High Priority:** Projects that address a critical trail gap where alternate routes are undesirable based on circuitousness, safety or other factors. Projects that connect to primary communities, services and public lands.
- **Medium Priority:** Projects that address trail gaps where alternate routes provide an adequate connection. Projects that connect to secondary communities, destinations and public lands.
- **Low Priority:** Projects that improve the trail experience along existing portions of the corridor that are functioning moderately well.

TABLE 8.1: HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS (PROJECTS GROUPED BY STATE, NOT PRIORITY)

	Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Responsible Entity	Planning Level Cost (+20% Contingency)*
HIGH PRIORITY					
WYOMING	WY-2	Moose to Teton Village	Construct a paved trail from the existing trail in Moose to the existing trail in Teton Village in concurrence with the ongoing EIS recommendations.	Grand Teton National Park	\$4,394,000
	WY-3	Path 22-Jackson to Wilson	Construct a cycletrack and shared use path linking Jackson to the new Snake River Pathway Bridge	Teton County (WY)	\$13,300,000
	WY-6	Teton Pass Summit to Idaho State Line	Construct an asphalt shared use path along the alignment of Old Pass Road on the western side of Teton Pass	Teton County (WY)	\$5,010,000
IDAHO	ID-1	State Line to Moose Creek	Construct an asphalt shared use path from Moose Creek to the ID/WY state line following the Old Teton Pass road alignment	City of Victor	\$1,700,000
	ID-5A (option)	Huntsman Springs to Teton- Rail Trail Alignment	Construct an asphalt shared use path along the historic railroad grade between the Huntsman Springs development in Driggs and the start of the rail trail in Teton.	City of Driggs, Teton County (ID)	\$3,912,000
	ID-5B (option)	Huntsman Springs to Teton- County Road Alignment	Route trail users along low-volume county roads between the rail trail in Huntsman Springs and the rail trail in Teton. Construct improved bike-able shoulder along SR 47. Reinforce the route with signage.	City of Driggs, Teton County (ID)	\$905,000
	ID-7A (option)	Ashton to Warm River Campground	Develop a shared use path along the historic railroad grade between Ashton and Warm River Campground.	Fremont County / City of Ashton	\$5,576,000
	ID-7B (option)	Ashton to Warm River Campground	Develop an on-road bikeway connection between the rail trail in Ashton and Warm River campground via county roads and SR 47	Fremont County / City of Ashton	\$9,000
MONTANA	MT-1	State Line to West Yellowstone	Construct an unpaved shared use path along the abandoned railroad grade from the ID/ MT state line to West Yellowstone. Construct new bridges at five locations along the route where previous bridge structures have been removed.	Custer Gallatin National Forest	\$3,004,000

* Note: Planning level costs do not include property acquisition

TABLE 8.2: MEDIUM / LOW PRIORITY PROJECTS (PROJECTS GROUPED BY STATE, NOT PRIORITY)

	Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Responsible Entity	Planning Level Cost (+20% Contingency)*
MEDIUM PRIORITY					
WYOMING	WY-1	Colter Bay to Jenny Lake	Construct an asphalt shared use path from Colter Bay to Jenny Lake	Grand Teton National Park	\$12,038,000
	WY-4	Wilson Millenium Trail	Construct a shared use path from the existing Millenium trail at the base of Teton Pass to the new Snake River Pathway bridge. Construct one bridge structure.	Teton County (WY)	\$872,000
IDAHO	ID-6	Ashton to Tetonaila Rail Trail Renovations	Pave the existing rail trail and provide selective widening to provide a 10'-0" wide trail	Idaho State Parks	\$15,004,000 (paved) \$1,250,304.00 (unpaved)
	ID-8	Warm River Campground to Bear Gulch Trailhead	Smooth and widen the existing trail to 10'-0". (Assumes the trail surface will remain unpaved but will be improved)	Caribou-Targhee National Forest	\$475,000
	ID-9	Bear Gulch Trailhead to Montana State Line	Grade and smooth the existing gravel rail trail. Widen the trail or provide dual facilities where feasible to limit OHV/non-motorized conflicts. Renovate or replace six bridges to provide more width to accommodate OHVs and non-motorized users.	Caribou-Targhee National Forest	\$4,100,000 - \$10,000,000
	ID-4	Victor to Driggs Rail Trail Extension	Redevelop the railroad grade as a rail trail from the existing Victor-Driggs pathway terminus at Teton Creek to the rail trail in the Huntsman Springs development.	City of Driggs	\$662,000
LOW PRIORITY					
WYOMING	WY-5	Wilson Millennium Trail and Teton Pass Old Pass Road	Provide an asphalt overlay on aging portions of the Millenium Trail and Old Pass Road.	Bridger-Teton National Forest	\$1,083,000
IDAHO	ID-2	Moose Creek to Mountainside Village Park	Reinforce shared roadway environment with shared lane markings and signage	Teton County (ID)	\$8,000
	ID-3	Reconstruct Mountainside Village Park Sidepath	Reconstruct the failing Mountainside Village Park sidepath. Expand trail to 10'-0" width.	City of Victor	\$206,000

* Note: Planning level costs do not include property acquisition

Funding Sources

The quantity and diversity of the jurisdictions and agencies involved in this planning effort results in a variety of potential project funding sources. Widespread coordination and partnerships also likely improve grant applications in many cases. The table on the following page represents a general list of funding opportunities for individual projects composing the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

Although many individual projects qualify for various funding sources, private and local investment by cities, counties or endowments will likely need to play a large role in funding. Privately raised funds are subject to far less requirements than federal funds and therefore can usually lead to implemented projects more quickly and economically. Private and/or local funds will also be necessary to meet the cost matching requirements of most federal funding programs.

Although the costs associated with constructing (or reconstructing) the assortment of trail projects that constitutes a project of this size may seem daunting, funding the Greater Yellowstone Trail is an achievable endeavor. The nature of the Greater Yellowstone aligns well with several funding sources focused on large projects including The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grants (TIGER), Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Municipalities and advocates in the region have already leveraged TAP (formerly Transportation Enhancements) and FLAP funding to construct significant new sections of trail.



Trail construction along Highway 22 near Jackson, WY

TABLE 8.3: FUNDING PROGRAMS AND ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Program	Program Description	
TIGER	\$500 million in TIGER Discretionary Grants are budgeted for FY 2015 and seek to provide desirable long-term impacts on transportation facilities and systems, economic benefits, quality of life, environmental sustainability and safety. Planning grants have been eliminated for FY 2015. NEPA and ROW acquisition should be complete, or substantially complete for any project where required. Strong projects would display widespread partnerships, high need, large economic impact, and local contributions beyond the minimum match.	
Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grants	The Federal Lands Access Program provides funds for Federal lands access transportation facilities that are located on or adjacent to, or that provide access to Federal lands. Federal lands access transportation facilities are facilities for which title or maintenance is vested in other agency (State, county, etc...)	
Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) Grants	The Federal Lands Transportation Program was established to improve multi-modal access within national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facilities. Eligible facilities must be owned and maintained by the Federal government.	
Recreational Trails Program (a set aside from TAP)	The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funding to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Funds are administered by their respective states and requirements vary.	
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	TAP incorporates several pre-MAP-21 programs including Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, and Safe Routes to School, wrapping them into a single funding source.	
Surface Transportation Program	The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides states with flexible funds which may be used for a wide variety of projects on any Federal-Aid Highway System including the National Highway System, bridges on any public road, and transit facilities. STP-funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities may also be located on local and collector roads which are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System.	
Local / Private Funding Sources	Bond measures, City/County capital budgets, private contributions, proceeds from special use taxes	

	Agency	Match Required	Funding Amounts	Eligible Greater Yellowstone Trail Activities	Potential / Eligible Projects
	FHWA	~20% with exceptions	\$1,000,000 min. for rural areas	Construction of trails that are not on federal lands and meet program goals relating to transportation, economic benefits and quality of life.	ID-4, ID-5, ID-6, and ID-7 (likely packaged together into a single project)
	FHWA	20%	Normally \$500,000 min for capital projects; \$100,000 min. for planning	Transportation planning, research, engineering, preventive maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of transportation facilities that provide access to Federal lands. This includes provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians.	WY-1, WY-2, WY-5, WY-6, ID-1, ID-2, ID-7, MT-1
	FHWA	20%	Varies	Transportation planning, research, preventive maintenance, engineering, rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of Federal lands transportation facilities	ID-8, ID-9, possibly MT-1
	FHWA through State Parks	20%	Normally smaller amounts (\$5000-\$100,000)	Maintenance, restoration, construction and property acquisition related to trail construction on city, county, state or federally managed land.	WY-4, WY-5, ID-3, ID-4, ID-5, ID-7
	FHWA through state DOTs	20% in most cases	Varies	Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.	WY-4, WY-5, ID-3, ID-4, ID-5, ID-7
	FHWA through state DOTs	20%	Varies	Construction, planning and design of a variety of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	WY-4, WY-5, ID-3, ID-4, ID-5, ID-7
	City / County / Private	N/A	Varies	Maintenance poses the largest need from local funding sources given the lack of other funding options for these activities. Local funding sources will also be important in developing required matching contributions for other funding opportunities listed above.	All projects, specifically when local match is needed.

Planning and Programming Implementation



Teton Pass Trail ribbon cutting

Addressing the physical trail gaps in the existing Greater Yellowstone Trail Corridor is a critical part of implementing the larger vision. However, there are many important contributions to be made through efforts beyond the realm of trail design and engineering that will aid in the project's ultimate success. These efforts will focus on a number of different issues including:

- Conducting feasibility studies to vet key trail design decisions prior to proceeding to engineering.
- Developing a recognizable and attractive Greater Yellowstone Trail brand

- Developing a clear wayfinding system to guide trail users, especially in remote areas of the corridor.
- Publicizing and promoting the trail to local, regional and national audiences.
- Programming the trail with complimentary events to encourage tourism.
- Celebrating the existing trail infrastructure in place
- Monitoring the amount of trail use to recognize the trail's impact on the local economy and leverage further investment.
- Connect with public land manager programs and stewardship.



Yellowstone Ski Festival at Rendezvous Ski Trails

TABLE 8.4: PLANNING, PROGRAMMING & BRANDING IMPLEMENTATION

Action	Action Description	Responsible Entity	Stakeholders	Estimated Cost
Publicity Campaign / Website launch	Develop a publicity campaign and website that celebrates the overall vision of the Greater Yellowstone Trail and promotes trail development efforts in all three states. As the trail develops, the website focus should shift to a tourism resource with guides, maps and local services.	Advocates	Land managers, cities, counties, chambers of commerce, visitor's bureaus	\$25,000
Project Feasibility Studies	Conduct feasibility studies on proposed projects where required (ID-5:Huntsman Springs to Tetonia and ID-7: Ashton to Warm River Campground)	Varies, see Proposed Projects	Land managers, private property owners, city/ counties	\$40,000-\$75,000 per study
Branding & Wayfinding Master Plan	Develop a trail brand and corridor-wide wayfinding Master Plan that specifies a consistent signage program to aid in corridor branding, wayfinding and interpretation.	Joint Partnership	All land managers and jurisdictions	\$75,000
Event Programming	Develop a diverse program of events (rides, races, or walks) that celebrate the trail and raise community awareness	Advocates	Varies depending on event location, logistics and scale	Varies
Adventure Cycling Route Integration	Advocate for inclusion of more of the Greater Yellowstone Trail as part of designated Adventure Cycling routes	Advocates	Land managers, cities, Chambers of Commerce	Free
Promote bicycle camps	Develop and promote bicycle camps to host touring cyclists. Educate cities along the corridor of the economic impacts of touring cyclists.	Advocates	Land managers, cities	Free
Mobile Application	Develop a mobile application that supports Greater Yellowstone Trail users with maps, directions, available services and other information to support a convenient trail experience. See Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails app (http://www.pocketranger.com/apps/wyoming)	Counties / Chamber of Commerce partnerships	Chambers of commerce, Visitor's bureaus	\$15,000
Annual User Count Program and Benefits Measuring	Develop a program for acquiring annual user count information. Consider automated trail counters, user surveys and other means to quantify the number of users visiting the trail each year. Cross-reference user counts with economic data to continually measure and promote the economic impact of the trail and lobby for continued investment.	Advocates	All land managers and jurisdictions	\$15,000 (planning) \$10,000 (trail counters) Up to \$2000 annually for implementation

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“Completion of the Greater Yellowstone Trail will provide a world-class recreation amenity serving locals and visitors alike. The economic impact of this project to our communities will be tremendous. The City of Driggs is actively working to complete the missing links within our borders, and we wholeheartedly support all efforts to complete the entire trail.”

- Hyrum Johnson, Mayor City of Driggs

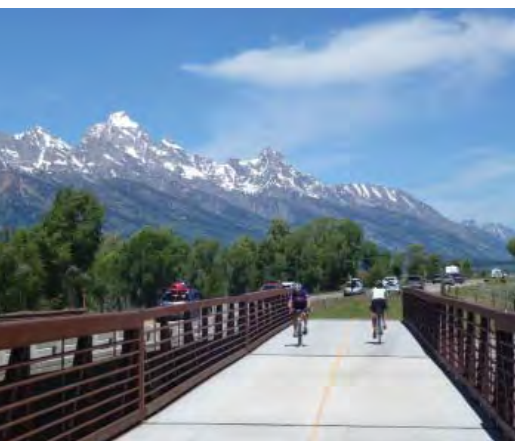


Conclusion

The Greater Yellowstone Trail presents an amazing opportunity for residents of eastern Idaho, southwestern Montana and western Wyoming. Quality of life, access to public lands, economic opportunities and access to recreation would all be significantly enhanced by the development of the project. Linking to two national parks, three national forests and one state park would establish unprecedented connectivity to public lands and recreation.

The Greater Yellowstone Trail seeks to leverage and enhance the impressive trail investments that communities throughout the corridor have already made. By linking these community assets and providing a consistently branded trail experience, the Greater Yellowstone Trail has the potential to become a major

regional, if not national attraction, capable of generating significant economic impacts for the communities it travels through. Communities such as Jackson, Driggs and Island Park already rely heavily on tourism as a major sector of their local economy. The Greater Yellowstone Trail would offer an additional tourism asset that serves visitors and local residents alike. The trail would appeal to a wide variety of recreational users including snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, fat-bikers, road cyclists, mountain bikers and hikers. Additionally, the trail's location at the nexus of several regional and national trail systems provides economic opportunities in conjunction with a steady stream of recreational visitors. The rich railroad, Native American and agricultural history of the corridor also creates opportunities to engage an entirely new demographic of visitor.



Cyclists crossing the Gros Ventre Bridge near Jackson

Despite the substantial work ahead, there are many resources in place to aid in the Greater Yellowstone Trail's implementation. First and foremost there is a dedicated network of advocates in every reach of the corridor. The three state biking and walking organizations (Wyoming Pathways, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, and Bike Walk Montana) are all committed to the project's success. Local advocates such as Friends of Pathways, TVTAP and Montana advocates such as Freeheel and Wheel and the Chamber of Commerce have also expressed support for the project. City and county agencies along the entire corridor have communicated excitement at the concept. Additionally, all of the public land managers involved are receptive to the idea of the Greater Yellowstone Trail so long as management and maintenance concerns can be addressed. This broad support is critical to implement a project on the scale of the Greater Yellowstone Trail.

To promote a safe, consistent and enjoyable trail experience, a total of sixteen individual projects have been identified as part of the concept plan. Land managers and public agencies have been supportive of the projects to date, however ultimate decision-making responsibility lies with the respective agencies. High priority projects seek to eliminate trail gaps and connect to critical destinations. Additional medium and low priority projects emphasize a consistent and comfortable trail experience throughout the corridor.

Although these projects will require significant and sustained efforts among the project's stakeholders, there's much that can be done easily and in the near

term. Over 114 miles of the proposed 182-mile Greater Yellowstone Trail system is currently accessible to the public. Promoting and branding the existing corridor as a unified trail experience would bring awareness at both local and regional levels. Events can also be programmed along the corridor to engage users and bring awareness to the concept. These activities could start taking place immediately to generate the "buzz" and public support necessary to implement the more difficult projects that will come later.

Ultimately, successful implementation of the Greater Yellowstone Trail will require significant investment and widespread coordination. Public land managers, municipalities, county governments and trail advocates will need to work together to solve the funding, maintenance and management issues involved with developing a 180-mile trail. However, this is not an insurmountable challenge. Local communities throughout the corridor have already demonstrated a willingness to support and invest in trail development. The Snake River Pathway Bridge, Moose to Jenny Lake Pathway, the Ashton to Tetonian Rail Trail and the Victor-Driggs Pathway are a testament to what agencies and municipalities in this region are capable of achieving in regards to visionary trail projects. The Greater Yellowstone Trail seeks to build upon these past successes and focus future efforts to developing a world class long distance trail that will bring widespread benefits to the entire region.

