



## Major Pole Mountain Trail Maintenance Project Coming this Summer



For Immediate Release – Please contact:

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### Wyoming Recreational Trails Program Grant Provides Momentum for Trail Maintenance, Partnerships

Wyoming Pathways, the statewide voice of people who bike and walk, and the Laramie Ranger District, are pleased to announce that they have been awarded a Wyoming Recreational Trails Program grant to fund a significant trail maintenance project on the Pole Mountain Unit, in the Medicine Bow National Forest. With the awarding of the grant, Pole Mountain trail users can look forward to maintenance of the National Forest System Trails on Pole Mountain taking place this summer.

“The Pole Mountain Trail Maintenance Project is a win for trail users and the Forest Service,” said Tim Young, Wyoming Pathways Executive Director. “The project will be a big step toward a sustainable high-quality trail system on Pole Mountain along with building great partnerships with the local communities,” he said.

The \$60,000 project includes a \$46,000 RTP grant, matched with approximately \$14,000 in private funds and volunteer labor from the community, advocacy groups and local businesses. It will provide the resources for a multi-faceted project to repair up to 9 miles of damaged system trails at Pole Mountain and make them more sustainable. “It’s going to be great to give those trails some TLC. Hopefully we can give locals a chance to get up there and see what kind of work it takes to fix some of those problems and lend a hand,” said Evan O’Toole, Laramie mountain biking and trail advocate.

“This is a good a start to addressing trail maintenance on Pole Mountain,” said Frank Romero, Laramie District Ranger. “The grant will address needs on many of our system trails and hopefully provide a starting point for long-term maintenance solutions.

“Both short and long-term solutions will need to involve the local community and partnerships, and I want to thank all those groups who have contributed to this grant effort. I want to particularly thank Wyoming Pathways, who spear-headed this grant application.”

To accomplish the bulk of the work, the Pole Mountain Trail Project will take advantage of the close proximity to the UW Wyoming Conservation Corps (WCC) in Laramie. Wyoming

Pathways plans to contract with WCC to bring four crews of eight people each for 10-day hitches.

In addition, a professional trail consultant will be engaged to provide guidance and oversight for the crews, help train volunteer trail workers, and support multiple work sessions at Pole Mountain. The training aspects of the project are especially exciting, as it will be an opportunity for both the professional and volunteer crews to improve their trail maintenance skill sets, to the long-term benefit of Wyoming trails.

The project is the culmination of years of groundwork laid by local advocates and organizations, with momentum provided by the recent “Pole Mountain Trail Charrette”, an intensive planning session where stakeholders collaborated on a vision for the future of the Pole Mountain trail system, co-sponsored by Wyoming Pathways and University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute. Subsequent U.S. Forest Service led meetings have explored the possibility of developing a framework for pooled community resources, which could facilitate future agreements and efforts such as more volunteer participation in maintaining the trails at Pole Mountain.

Long-term partnership discussions are ongoing, and in the interim, Wyoming Pathways will be taking on the responsibility of coordinating this Pole Mountain Trail project, with help and input from the USFS and other partners. Everyone involved is looking forward to a successful project that results in improved trails at Pole Mountain.

As Melanie Arnett, Laramie resident and Wyoming Pathways board member, summed it up, *“The system trails at Pole Mountain are about to shift from being in a state of decline toward a state of good repair, thanks to the grant secured by Wyoming Pathways and partners.”*

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