



Greater Yellowstone Trail

CONCEPT PLAN | 2021 UPDATE



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STAKEHOLDER UPDATE MEETING



Warm River and historic West Yellowstone Branch Railroad tunnel

ACRONYMS

BTNF- Bridger-Teton National Forest

CDT- Continental Divide Trail

CTNF- Caribou-Targhee National Forest

CGNF- Custer-Gallatin National Forest

FLAP- Federal Lands Access Program

HUD- US Department of Housing & Urban
Development

IDPR- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

ITD- Idaho Transportation Department

NEPA- National Environmental Policy Act

NPS- National Park 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
Freeheel and Wheel
Bike Walk Montana

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2019 Stakeholder Update Meeting

The Original Greater Yellowstone Trail Concept Plan was finalized in the Spring of 2015. Since completion of the plan numerous jurisdictions, agencies, advocates, and other partners along the proposed corridor have continued to pursue the vision of developing a 180-mile, world-class trail through three states and two national parks.

In the Fall of 2019, the City of Driggs was awarded a USDA grant to fund facilitation of a meeting to bring together the diverse stakeholder group that had committed to pursuing the vision of the Greater Yellowstone Trail. The meeting was held at the Town of Driggs City Hall and included representation from the following organizations:

- BDT Partners (Tributary Development)
- City of Driggs
- Friends of Pathways
- Harriman State Park
- Henrys Fork Foundation- Ashton Chapter
- Office of US Senator James Risch
- Office of US Senator Mike Crapo
- Teton County, ID
- Teton County, WY
- Teton Regional Economic Coalition
- Teton Valley News
- Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
- US Forest Service- Hebgen Lake Ranger District
- US Forest Service- Jackson Ranger District
- US Forest Service- Ashton / Island Park Ranger District
- US Forest Service- Teton Basin Ranger District
- US Department of Agriculture
- West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
- Wyoming Pathways
- Yellowstone Historic Center

Stakeholder Updates



Cyclists crossing the Gros Ventre Bridge near Jackson

One of the major objectives of the October 2019 stakeholder meeting was to bring together the diverse stakeholders along the Greater Yellowstone Trail corridor to share updates regarding ongoing efforts, past successes, current challenges, and desired outcomes. Updates from the various stakeholders have been provided below.

Hebgen Lake Ranger District

- Completed NEPA in 2018 to establish a trail along the old railroad grade from West Yellowstone to Reas Pass
- Currently seeking funding and beginning brushing/grubbing activities along the railroad grade in advance of construction

West Yellowstone Chamber

- Partnering with the Rocky Mountain Regional Development Group to develop historic tourism opportunities in conjunction with the Greater Yellowstone Trail which could include incorporating the historic Union Pacific Depot building
- West Yellowstone stakeholders convened in November 2019 to coordinate planning for the West Yellowstone to Reas Pass trail

Harriman State Park

- Seeking to support local development and historic reuse near the rail trail
- Seeking to minimize trailhead and user impacts on local agriculture on the Ashton to Tetonias Rail Trail

Ashton/Island Park Ranger District

- Experiencing numerous challenges in managing OHV use near and along the historic railroad grade
- Difficult to keep OHV users on designated trails
- Dust is a major issue during peak times
- Difficulties in communicating with vacation rental users
- Currently lacking a comprehensive vision for managing recreational use in the area

City of Ashton

- Would like to develop improved connections from the rail trail to Main Street and to Warm River

Teton Valley Trails & Pathways

- Have investigated acquisition or easements along the segments of the historic railroad grade that

cross private property though there is currently little interest from property owners

- On-road alternatives to connect to Tetonia are being pursued; existing county roads offer an on-road gravel option currently and there is potential to add a side path in the future
 - The Tributary development has embraced the GYT concept and plans to promote the trail, support future pathways development, and construct a flagship park along the corridor
 - Other connections are being developed or planned that will connect to the corridor including the Teton Creek Greenway and a connection via Bates Road that will link to trails at Horseshoe Canyon
- Upcoming corridor plan for WY-22 may help further pathway efforts in conjunction with recreational access including backcountry skiing and trailheads

Wyoming / Teton County, WY

- FLAP funding is in place to construct the pathway to the Trail Creek campground, with underpasses at each campground
- Additional planning and conceptual engineering is needed to develop a pathway through challenging terrain from Trail Creek Campground to the Teton Pass summit; some funding may be available from existing FLAP grants

SWOT Analysis

As part of the October 2019 stakeholder meeting, participants were divided into geographic groups and asked to aid in the development of a “SWOT” analysis. A SWOT analysis is a compilation of an organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. SWOT analyses help an organization clearly identify all of the factors involved in fulfilling their mission and are used to discover strategies that leverage strengths and overcome weaknesses and threats. This exercise helped the stakeholder group and partner organizations understand areas and issues where there was shared interest and capacity to focus on next steps.

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<i>S</i> Strengths	<i>W</i> Weaknesses
External	<i>O</i> Opportunities	<i>t</i> Threats

West Yellowstone to Ashton SWOT

Strengths

- Energy, expertise, diversity, and collaborative nature of the partners
- Diversity of complimentary activities
- ROW / Corridor is secured
- Existing calendar of events with potential synergy

Weaknesses

- Maintenance funding is lacking
- Cultural differences on value of project
- Lack of wayfinding
- Lack of marketing
- Seasonality
- Certain sections of existing pathways don't provide a high-quality experience
- Safety issues at crossings

Opportunities

- Potential to raise awareness of the project (currently low)
- Potential for new events
- Potential for increased community development opportunities such as guiding or shuttles
- Potential to improve branding, marketing, and online presence
- Bring motorized users in as a partner in order to make the corridor work better for all users (engage Fremont County and NOHVC)

Threats

- User conflict
- Private property
- Wildlife impacts and conflicts

Teton Valley SWOT

Strengths

- Enthusiasm in pathway recreation
- Expanding pathway system
- GYT serves as a major connection
- GYT as a potential hub for river, mountain biking, USFS access, and Grand Targhee
- Local economy is amenity / tourism-focused
- Strong coalitions / partnerships
- Good relationships with funders
- Strong congressional support
- GYT codified in local plans
- Media interest in GYT
- Growing bicycle community
- Bikepacking / gravel biking growing

Weaknesses

- Maintenance funding is lacking
- Cultural differences on value of project
- Lack of wayfinding
- Lack of marketing
- Seasonality
- Certain sections of existing pathways don't provide a high-quality experience
- Safety issues at crossings

Opportunities

- Potential to develop new access through policy
- New development partnerships
- Potential to promote local businesses
- Potential to integrate history / art
- Potential to serve commuting / transportation purposes
- Potential to promote local agriculture
- E-bike integration
- Potential to develop branding, wayfinding, and marketing collateral
- Snow machine use
- Attract new businesses

Threats

- Not in my backyard (NIMBY) attitudes
- Changing political agendas and opinions
- Complacency / burn out
- Undeveloped land along corridor

Wyoming SWOT

Strengths

- Local government, support and program staff
- Forest service partnerships
- NGO support
- Ability to build on partnerships
- Good funding track record
- Successfully implemented projects
- Broad public use including visitors to parks and forest
- USFS has wilderness study area boundary defined
- High volumes of users on Old Pass
- Good concept plan & support all along

Weaknesses

- Lack of branding, identity, wayfinding
- Lack of NPS/Grand Teton NP engagement / support
- Inability to contract design/ engineering of FLAP projects with local firms
- Non-profits have limited fundraising ability

Opportunities

- Technology
- Potential to encourage Yellowstone NP
- Provide better promotion / wayfinding / branding
- Continue grant success (FLAP)
- USFS relationships with WYDOT
- Upcoming planning for Teton Pass corridor (could help with winter use)
- Teton County, Teton Valley, and USFS working together
- Wyoming State Parks interest in Teton Pass partnership
- More events and rides
- Wildlife crossings with pathways

Threats

- High cost of new pathways
- NEPA not completed for Trail Creek Campground to Teton Pass section
- Need WYDOT's concurrence in ROW with USFS
- Proximity and compatibility to Wilderness Study Area
- Maintenance funding challenges
- Difficult terrain in remaining pathway corridor
- Changing local/ state government leadership
- Availability of long-term federal funding programs