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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
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## 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 Tetonia
- Fremont County
- City of Tetonia
- 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
STAKEHOLDER MEETING UPDATE
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

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 Tetonia 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.

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.

- Upcoming corridor plan for WY-22 may help further pathway efforts in conjunction with recreational access including backcountry skiing and trailheads.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Harmful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### West Yellowstone to Ashton SWOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Energy, expertise, diversity, and collaborative nature of the partners</td>
<td>• Maintenance funding is lacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity of complimentary activities</td>
<td>• Cultural differences on value of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ROW / Corridor is secured</td>
<td>• Lack of wayfinding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existing calendar of events with potential synergy</td>
<td>• Lack of marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seasonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Certain sections of existing pathways don't provide a high-quality experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to raise awareness of the project (currently low)</td>
<td>• User conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for new events</td>
<td>• Private property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for increased community development opportunities such as guiding or shuttles</td>
<td>• Wildlife impacts and conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to improve branding, marketing, and online presence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teton Valley SWOT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enthusiasm in pathway recreation</td>
<td>• Maintenance funding is lacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expanding pathway system</td>
<td>• Cultural differences on value of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GYT serves as a major connection</td>
<td>• Lack of wayfinding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GYT as a potential hub for river, mountain biking, USFS access, and Grand Targhee</td>
<td>• Lack of marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local economy is amenity / tourism-focused</td>
<td>• Seasonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong coalitions / partnerships</td>
<td>• Certain sections of existing pathways don’t provide a high-quality experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good relationships with funders</td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong congressional support</td>
<td>• Media interest in GYT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GYT codified in local plans</td>
<td>• Growing bicycle community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media interest in GYT</td>
<td>• Bikepacking / gravel biking growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing bicycle community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bikepacking / gravel biking growing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to develop new access through policy</td>
<td>• Not in my backyard (NIMBY) attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New development partnerships</td>
<td>• Changing political agendas and opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to promote local businesses</td>
<td>• Complacency / burn out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to integrate history / art</td>
<td>• Undeveloped land along corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to serve commuting / transportation purposes</td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to promote local agriculture</td>
<td>• Seasonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• E-bike integration</td>
<td>• Certain sections of existing pathways don’t provide a high-quality experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to develop branding, wayfinding, and marketing collateral</td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Snow machine use</td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attract new businesses</td>
<td>• Safety issues at crossings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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