



Bonner County Trails Plan



Bonner County Trails Plan

The Trust for Public Land
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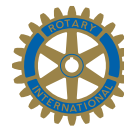
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Bonner County, the Bonner County Trail Mix Committee, Idaho Conservation League, and The Trust for Public Land would also like to acknowledge the following organizations and individuals who have contributed their invaluable time, energy, and creativity to the trails plan since 2008:

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Bonner County
Board of Commissioners
Bonner County Planning
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Bonner County Planning Staff
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Panhandle Backcountry
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Priest Lake Snowmobile & Trails Club
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Wayne Benner



Revett Lake

1 Introduction

“What makes a trail is the journey, whether it’s on dirt, through a railroad tunnel, over a boardwalk, or along a scenic waterway. Trails in all their variety connect us to our world, our history, and our heritage of wild places.”

—STUART MACDONALD,
AMERICAN TRAILS MAGAZINE (2008)

Bonner County Background

TRAILS ARE CENTRAL TO QUALITY OF LIFE IN BONNER COUNTY and provide crucial access to the county’s lakes and rivers, public lands, and towns. A recent study by Headwaters Economics indicates that 75 percent of surveyed residents used local trails last year. Trails can link our landscapes and connect our communities, and the Trails Plan is an important tool in developing and documenting the community’s vision for trails.

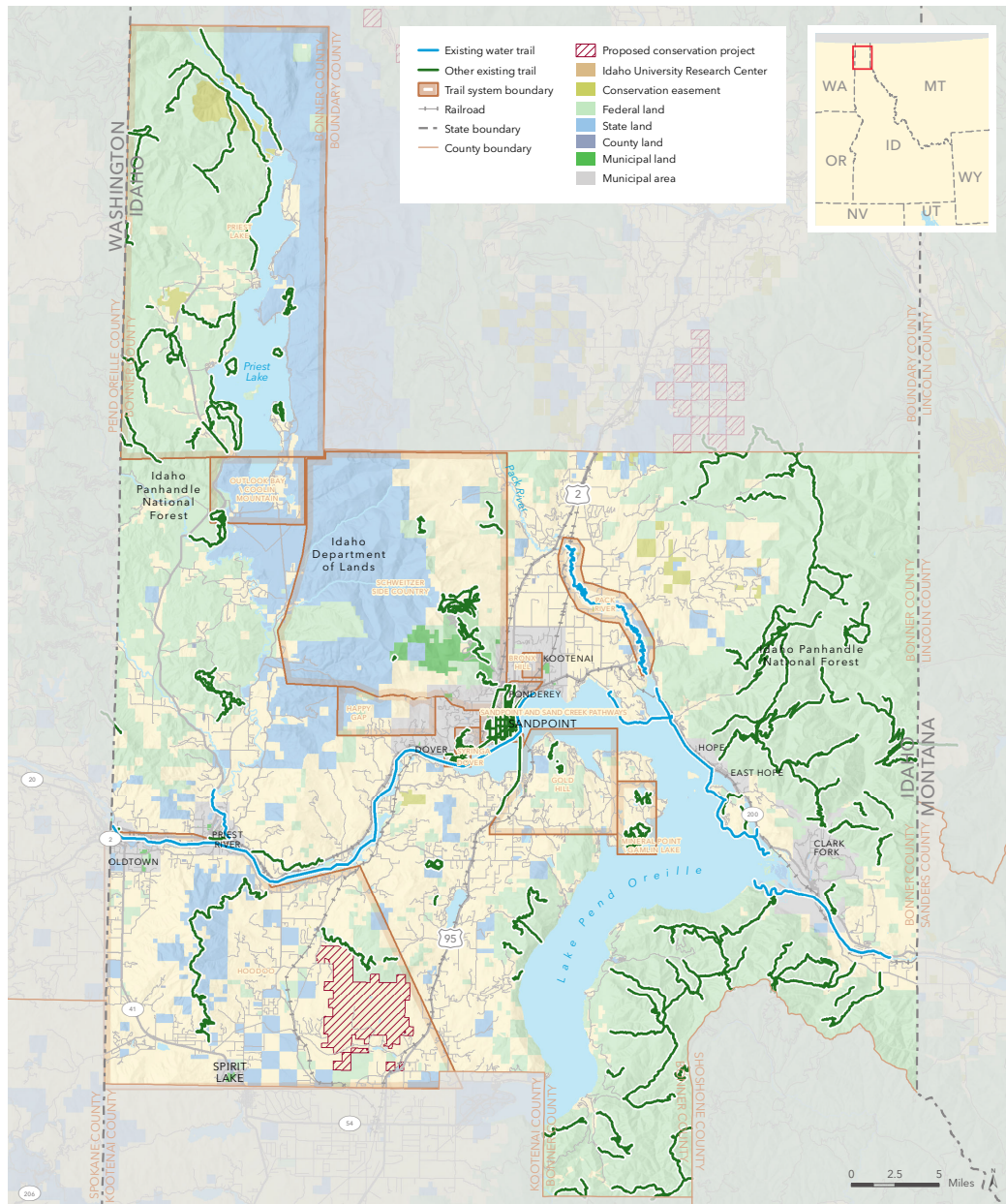
Stretching across Idaho’s panhandle, Bonner County is known for its towering mountains, trout-filled streams, and stunning lakes. The county is surrounded by mountains – the Selkirk Mountains, Bitterroot Mountains, and Cabinet Mountains. In the midst of these 7,000-foot peaks lie rivers, lakes, and streams, including the Clark Fork River, Pend Oreille River, Priest River, Priest Lake, and Lake Pend Oreille. Bonner County covers 1,920 square miles. Of this, 9 percent is water. Lake Pend Oreille is 43 miles long and over 1,150 feet

deep and has 111 miles of shoreline. Sixty percent of Bonner County is publicly owned. Most of this publicly owned land is part of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and the Priest Lake State Forest.

Bonner County’s 1.1 million acres of private and public lands provide a wide variety of trails and pathways, from city sidewalks to mountaintop hiking and snowmobile and horseback trails that bridge winter, spring, summer, and fall. Bonner County has about 660 miles of existing biking, hiking, walking, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails. **Existing Bonner County Trails are shown in Figure 1a** ➊. **Existing snowmobile trails are shown in Figure 1b** ➊. While the existing trails attract visitors and improve the lives of locals, this Trails Plan highlights opportunities to expand the use of trails for recreation, health and fitness, commuting, and connecting to the outdoors. The Trails Plan provides an inventory of existing trails and looks to the future for expansion and improvement of the county trails system.

Bonner County Trails Plan

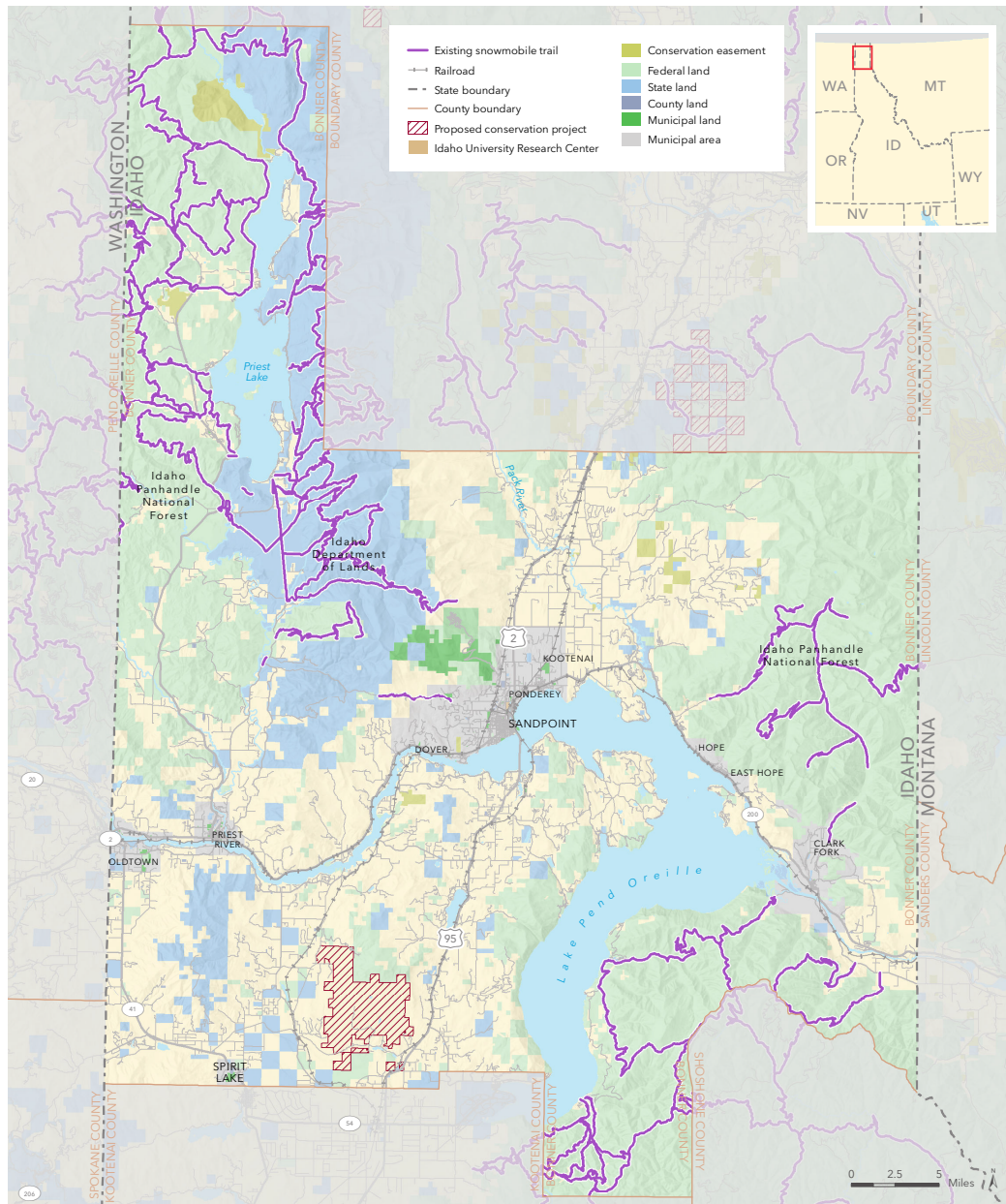
In 2008, the Bonner County Commission met with local trail advocates to discuss the development of a trails plan. The county’s recently drafted land use code offered new opportunities. Soon Bonner County formed a Trails Advisory Group and designated six trail neighborhood “subareas.” The Trails Advisory Group represented a wide cross section of trails/pathway users and agencies, including day hikers, snowmobilers, horseback riders,



Existing Trails

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT

➤ **FIGURE 1A** Special thanks to the following data providers: Bonner County, City of Sandpoint, ESRI, NCED, NHD, SMA. Copyright © The Trust for Public Land. The Trust for Public Land and The Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of The Trust for Public Land. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only. www.tpl.org



Existing Snowmobile Trails

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT

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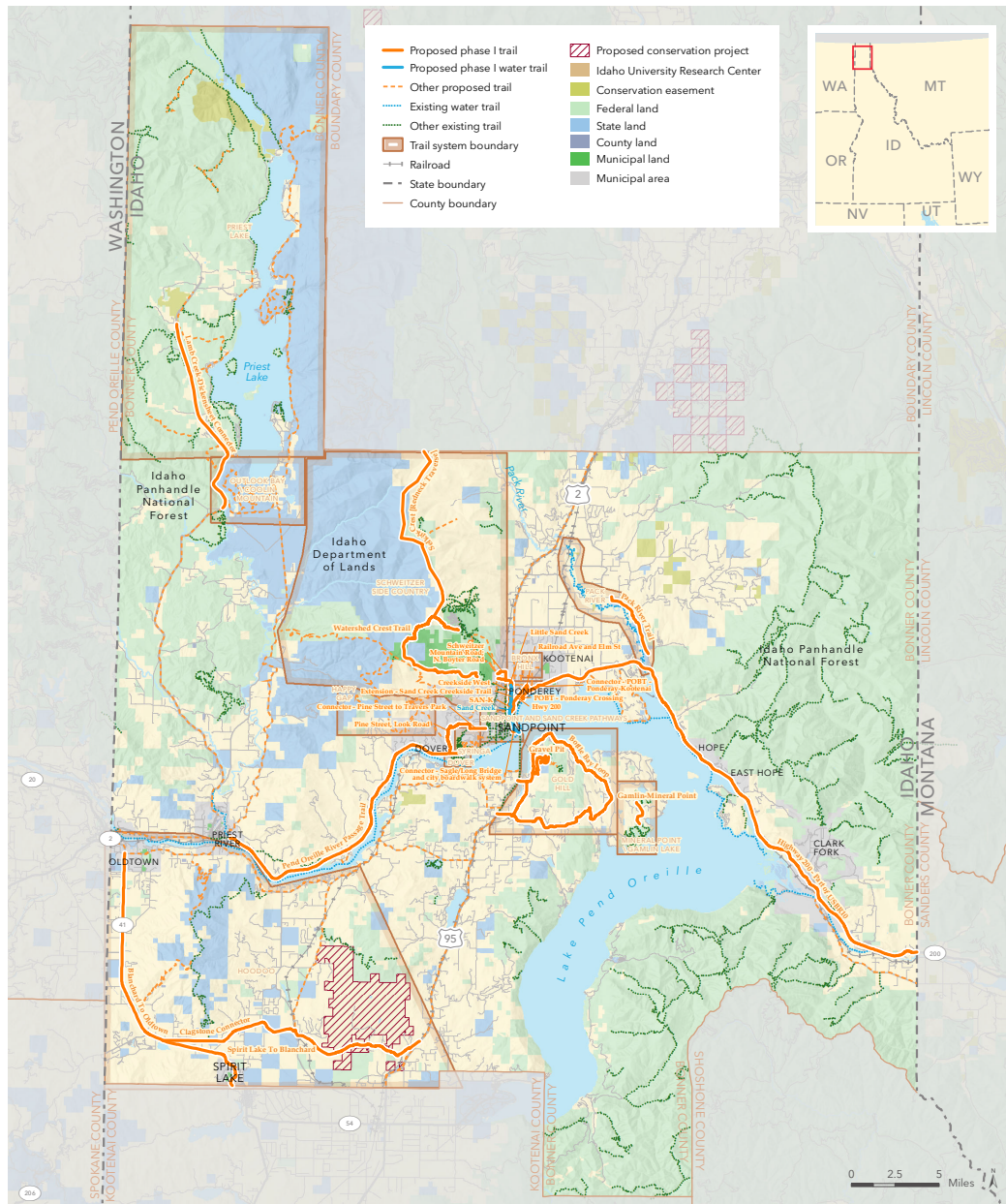
cross-country skiers, mountain bikers, cyclists, ATV riders, and local, state, and federal agencies. Some early narratives developed by the Trails Advisory Group have been incorporated into this report. Of the neighborhood groups, the Priest Lake Working Group made the most progress, and many trails were mapped and incorporated into this project. Other details about neighborhood plans are included in online Appendix 8.

In 2014, the Bonner County Trail Mix Committee was created. The Trail Mix Committee is made up of representatives from local trail and recreation groups and the county, local cities, and state and federal agencies. In the fall of 2014, the Trail Mix Committee began working with Idaho Conservation League and The Trust for Public Land to build on the county's earlier trail planning work. Using grant funding (from the LOR Foundation) and financial support from local groups, the project partners completed this trails plan, which prioritizes potential new trails based on extensive community input. While this final report lays out a set of Phase 1 priority trails for development, this plan should be considered a living document, and the Trail Mix Committee and other local groups should revisit priority-setting and implementation goals frequently as development patterns, community priorities, and funding opportunities change over time.

This plan combines community input with state-of-the-art mapping software (GIS) and computer modeling. It identifies the

highest-priority areas for connecting and expanding in-town and backcountry trail systems. The plan is considered conceptual because it covers a very large geographic area (1,920 square miles) and, therefore, does not include the level of detail of a trail alignment study. **The county's 660 miles of existing trails are shown in Figure 1a** . This Trails Plan proposes to increase this number by almost 75 percent by adding nearly 490 miles of trails (110 trails and trail segments). This is a long-term vision. Approximately one-quarter of these proposed trails, representing over 160 miles, are being highlighted as Phase 1 priorities for the next 10 years. **Proposed trails are shown in Figure 2** . **Phase 1 trails are shown in Figure 3** .

Based on input from the community survey and from the Trail Mix Committee, the Bonner County Trails Plan focuses primarily on nonmotorized trails and on-road bike lanes. Motorized user groups organized more than three decades ago in Idaho to create self-funding mechanisms that have built and maintained many miles of all-season motorized trails. In the future, based on community interest, additional effort could be devoted to designating and developing new snowmobile and ATV trails for motorized users. **Existing snowmobile trails are shown in Figure 1b in Section 1** of this report.



Proposed Trails (Phase I)

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT

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Trail Benefits

MANY FACTORS MOTIVATE COMMUNITIES TO PLAN AND DEVELOP TRAILS. Trails can make a community more attractive to tourists, prospective employers, and potential future residents. A well-planned trail system creates a more livable community and can be a tool to preserve green space and provide access to public places and waterways. Trails can also encourage residents to be healthier and more active. Trails can provide the following benefits:

1. Trails support the local economy through tourism and civic improvement
2. Trails strengthen the historic and cultural fabric of local communities
3. Trails increase property values
4. Trails can provide opportunities for physical activity for a wide range of people, including those with disabilities, children, youth, and seniors
5. Trails support active lifestyles to improve health and reduce stress
6. Trails help people access open space, and help showcase culturally and ecologically significant areas
7. Trails can be designed to protect sensitive habitat and cultural resources from disturbance
8. Trails help build a strong sense of community
9. Trails increase the opportunities for walking, bicycling, and active transportation and commuting
10. Trails provide meaningful opportunities to connect to the outdoors

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Communities in Bonner County have long been celebrated by national media as the nation's most beautiful small towns and the best places to ski, live, or retire. By attracting tourists and providing recreational opportunities for residents, trails can create jobs and spawn new businesses. Trail-seeking tourists buy supplies, rent equipment, dine, and stay over in trailhead communities. Property values can be enhanced with new, accessible trail amenities. Destination trails attract visitors whose spending has ripple effects throughout the local areas surrounding the trails. Trails that attract visitors for overnight stays are particularly beneficial, as are trails that are directly linked to towns by spur trails or shuttles.

For example, in Wyoming, Teton County's trail system attracts tens of thousands annually. Significant tourism dollars are generated by the trails' attractions. An investment of \$1.7 million has been made in the county's trail system in the past decade. Nearly \$18 million flowed into the community in 2010 alone as a direct result of the Teton County trail system – an enormous economic return on the initial investment. Similarly, in North Carolina's Outer Banks, the cost of public investments in trails has been far outstripped by the economic contributions of visitors to the local economy. Recreation-focused visitors who later become residents and business owners can also play a big role in growing local economies. Well-designed trail systems can also increase property values. Studies in



Existing gateway along the POBT created by the “Cairn of Thanks” and an overhanging log

San Antonio and Austin, Texas; southwestern Ohio; New Castle County, Delaware; Methow Valley, Washington; and Indianapolis, Indiana, have found increases in property values of 6 percent to 20 percent as a result of nearby trails.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Trails can play a big role in improving community health by providing attractive and convenient opportunities for physical fitness – including safer recreational and commuting routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Studies have shown that increases in physical activity related to trails are most significant in rural places with narrow road shoulders and limited park resources – and among people at the greatest risk of low physical fitness, including low-income families and senior citizens. A study in West Virginia showed 60 percent of trail users reporting more regular exercise since beginning to use trails. In the United Kingdom, numerous studies have shown significant increases in self-esteem and mental well-being after participants exercised outdoors.

Increasing fitness from trail use can lead to savings in health care costs. Although the exact trail-related savings can be difficult to calculate, researchers have found that health care savings far outweigh the costs of developing trails. Using data from the National Medical Expenditure Survey, one Nebraska study determined that for every \$1 spent on trails, there was almost \$3 in savings in direct medical costs. Once people began using local trails, they found their overall physical activity increased. Easy access and connectivity to neighborhoods, parks, or commercial areas play an important part in encouraging people to use trails. A Massachusetts study found that among 363 adults studied, the likelihood of using a suburban rail-trail decreased by 42 percent for every 0.25-mile increase in distance from home to the trail. A similar Minneapolis study also found sharp declines in trail use among bicyclists who had to travel 1.5 miles or farther to access the trail.

2 Purpose

“Everything I like to do I can do right from my driveway. I’m five minutes from sailing, 30 minutes from skiing. It’s an awesome place to live. This area draws people who have a kindred spirit.”

—KIM WOODRUFF, SANDPOINT PARKS DIRECTOR

THE PURPOSE OF THE TRAILS PLAN IS TO (1) Inventory Bonner County’s existing trails network; (2) Identify missing links to and within the current trail system; (3) Determine community priorities for new trails; (4) Focus attention on the need to preserve and maintain the county’s existing trails/pathway systems; and (5) Develop strategies for implementing the plan.

The plan is not a means to acquire land through eminent domain. However, the plan can help identify priorities and suggest trail routes and extensions as developers or planners lay out new roads and neighborhoods. It is also not meant to be set in stone. **The plan should be considered always “under construction” as new funding sources and trail priorities arise.** Finally, it is not meant to be an atlas of all Bonner County trails. Trail locations and desired routes are general. The document will be used as a guide to help evaluate and develop trails and serve as a jumping-off point for more in-depth studies or plans.

The plan is also intended to be a reference guide for the construction and placement of

trails to be developed as part of subdivisions, planned unit developments, multifamily housing, and public and commercial projects in Bonner County. The design standards of Bonner County’s Land Use Regulations (Title 12) require developers of certain subdivisions and land uses to plan and construct trails consistent with the alignment and design of the adopted trails plan. The county-level plan is also intended to coordinate city plans with the county and the cities’ plans with each other.

The following vision, mission, and objectives for the Trails Plan were developed through input from the Trail Mix Committee and the earlier Trails Advisory Group.

Vision Statement

We envision a Bonner County where an expanded and diverse trail network connects all residents and visitors to our county’s urban centers and rural areas, recreational opportunities, and beautiful natural landscapes – from waterways to wilderness – and where these trails are cherished and cared for by users and local communities.

Mission

The mission of the trails plan is to ensure avenues are open for present and future access to this area’s plentiful recreational opportunities and bountiful natural resources.

Northern panhandle residents and visitors love North Idaho’s beautiful lakes, mountains, valleys, and rocky ridges. As Bonner County grows and changes, it will find both challenges and opportunities for public trail access and

connectivity. The Bonner County Trails Plan is a guide for connecting our communities and recreation areas by incorporating existing plans of the county, cities, private developments, recreation districts, federal and state lands, and other community partnerships, and developing a platform for a permanent, interconnected system of trails and pathways.

Objectives

The Bonner County Trails Plan has the following objectives:

- Create a community-based plan that provides direction to local trail efforts and facilitates cooperation among governmental jurisdictions, private property owners, and stakeholder groups to develop a countywide system of pathways and trails.
- Develop and improve trails and pathways to better connect our communities between the urban centers and the rural areas and to better link our landscapes from waterways to wilderness.
- Develop a countywide strategy to use trails to expand public access to waterways, public lands, public rights-of-way for education, recreation, health, transportation, hunting, gathering, and fishing.
- Build support for long-term maintenance of public trails and pathways and develop a system for funding trail stewardship. Promote community involvement in the development and maintenance of the trails system.
- Promote improvements to existing trails and development of new trails that increase safety and sustainability.
 - Identify and develop safe routes and corridors between schools, parks, recreation sites, homes, workplaces, and other important places in our communities.
 - Educate the community about shared use and safety on trails and pathways.
- Promote awareness of current and potential trails through publicly available maps and other outreach materials.
- Benefit local economies and promote economic sustainability through increasing recreation opportunities that draw visitors and attract and retain job providers outside of tourism-based industries.
- Expand trail networks in order to support active lifestyles and provide opportunities for physical activity for a wide range of people, including seniors, youth, and those with disabilities.
- Maintain and enhance exceptional local quality of life by increasing opportunities to use trails for recreation, health and fitness, commuting, and connecting to the outdoors.

3 Public input

The Bonner County Trails Plan is intended to be a subpart of Transportation and Recreation components of the county's comprehensive plan. Public hearings before the Bonner County Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners are required as part of the formal process to update the comprehensive plan.

2009 Countywide Survey

In 2008–2009, the Trails Advisory Group developed a countywide survey to assess community perspectives on trails. Approximately 200 people responded to the countywide survey. These results are not necessarily considered representative of the county as a whole.

KEY FINDINGS

- There was very strong support for an expanded and better-connected trail/pathway system.
- Respondents felt that enjoyment of the natural environment and recreation and fitness were the dominant reasons for using existing trails.
- The most frequently used trails were in Sandpoint and North of Sandpoint followed by Sagle/South of Sandpoint; Dover; and Priest Lake.
- Top destinations were connections between Sandpoint, Kootenai, Ponderay, and Dover, followed by improved routes to Schweitzer and destinations north of Sandpoint.

2014 Countywide Community Survey

More than 560 people participated in a community survey (online and handwritten) in the fall of 2014, and many additional people were reached through speak-outs (interactive tabling) at local events in October and November of 2014 (Sandpoint Farmers' Market, Oktoberfest, Toast the Trail, Sandpoint Film Festival, Angels Over Sandpoint, Pend Oreille Pedalers, and Nordic Club events, ski swaps, Hope Memorial and Trails Passage, and Panhandle Bank).

KEY FINDINGS

- The vast majority of respondents (85 percent) strongly supported the development of an expanded and better connected trail/pathway system in Bonner County. Only 2 percent did not support this position.
- Nearly all respondents are current trail users, though their frequency of trail use varies significantly.
- People are most eager for more opportunities for cycling/biking on paved trails; snow-shoeing/cross-country skiing trails; and commuting (to/from school) trails. In general, respondents were not sure if there is also a need for more horseback riding trails or ATV/off-road trails.
- The most important reasons for expanding the trail system were (1) Providing reasonably safe places to walk and cycle within communities; and (2) Improving the quality of life of Bonner County residents and visitors.

- Respondents felt that the following destinations were the most important to connect to the overall trail system: Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail; Lake Pend Oreille; Schweitzer Mountain Resort; Baldy Mountain; Mickinick Trail; and Sandpoint City Beach, Gold Hill, and Syringa Trails.

2015 Bonner County Fair Open House

After the preliminary maps of proposed trails were created through the collaboration of the Trail Mix Committee, the technical advisory team, and The Trust for Public Land, an open house was held from August 11 to August 15 at the Bonner County Fair to gather public input. County Fair participants marked a large wall map of proposed trails with flags indicating the areas where they were most interested in seeing new trails and trail connections. Themes that emerged from feedback at the County Fair included the need for separated off-road biking paths and walking paths; additional signage for access points; better/more accessible maps and information on existing trails and trail systems; and increased connectivity of existing trails.

2015 Headwaters Economics Survey

Headwaters Economics and RRC Associates conducted this survey in partnership with the cities of Sandpoint and Ponderay, Bonner County, and the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce. There were 485 participants in the Headwaters survey (388 responded

to a mail survey and 97 participated in an open online version). See online Appendix 5 (Headwaters Economics Bonner Trails Survey) for additional results from the Headwaters Economics study.

KEY FINDINGS

Data from this survey show that trails are an essential part of daily life in Bonner County:

- Three out of four surveyed residents used trails in the last year.
- On average, residents use trails nearly every day in the summer and every other day in the winter.
- Trail use is high in towns and rural areas, regardless of duration of residence in the county, income, or age. Residents age 45–54 are most likely to use the trails, with 88 percent reporting use in the past year.
- More than three-quarters of residents support the development of an expanded and better-connected trail system in the county.
- Nearly nine in ten residents believe that protecting the rural character of areas outside cities is extremely important for Bonner County.
- More than half of residents identified proximity to trails and safe places to walk as important factors influencing their decision on where to live.

Conclusions from Headwaters Economics Survey

- **BROAD SUPPORT:** More than three-quarters of residents support the development of an

expanded and better-connected trail system in the county. Nearly nine in ten residents believe that protecting the rural character of areas outside cities is extremely important for Bonner County.

- **TRAILS LACK IDENTITY:** Although the county's trails are popular, they do not have a strong identity separate from their role in providing access to other amenities.
- **TRAILS CLOSER TO HOMES:** Residents want trails closer to where they live, suggesting demand for more trails in and around residential areas. More than half of respondents identified proximity to trails and safe places to take walks as important factors in their decision about where they live.
- **EASIER TRAILS:** There is a need for easier trails to encourage new trail users and increase use among existing trail users, including the elderly and those with disabilities. Eighteen percent of nonusers cited a physical disability as the primary reason they did not use the trails more.
- **BETTER INFORMATION:** There is a desire for more broadly shared information about trails. Among nonusers, 21 percent did not use trails because they are unsure where they are. One-third of all respondents cited improved trailheads with parking, restrooms, and maps as the factor most likely to increase how much they use the trails.
- **FUNDING CHALLENGE:** While residents want trail improvements, they generally do not want to pay for the improvements themselves. Nearly nine out of ten respondents support or strongly support funding improvements to trails via state or federal

grants or private fundraising. Nearly half of respondents support or strongly support user fees, and roughly one in four supports the use of sales or property tax.

- **THE FUTURE:** While current residents as a whole value area trails, survey results show that younger residents, newer residents, and business owners value them the most. This finding may be significant for Bonner County communities as they consider how to attract a younger population and entrepreneurs who will contribute to the long-term vitality of the region.

See online Appendix 4 (Public Input) for additional survey details, including the results of the 2009 Priest Lake Neighborhood Survey.



Fiona MacDonald sits on her bicycle at the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail in Bonner County Idaho.

4 Proposed trails

The Trail Mix Committee and Bonner County emphasize the need to respect the rights of private property owners as central to any trail planning effort. Many of the trails proposed in this plan represent general trail corridors and not specific trail alignments. Specific alignments will always be negotiated with the appropriate landowners – including public agencies.

AS NOTED PREVIOUSLY, Bonner County has approximately 660 miles of existing biking, hiking, walking, and ATV trails. Existing trails are shown on Figure 1a in Section 1. This Trails Plan proposes to increase this number by almost 75 percent by adding nearly 490 miles of trails (110 trails and trail segments). This is an ambitious long-term vision. All of the proposed trails are shown on Figure 2. Approximately 25 percent of these proposed trails, representing over 160 miles, are being highlighted as priorities for the next 10 years. These 10-year priority trails represent Phase 1 of the Trails Plan. The countywide Phase 1 trails are shown in Figure 3.

Trail System Areas

Trail system areas are regions of the county where related trails are grouped together for the purposes of trail planning, development, and marketing. The current trail system areas included in the Trails Plan are listed below. Maps of the trail system areas are included in online Appendix 1. Just after each trail system area map is a table showing the trails included in that system and the metrics (discussed below) that went into determining whether that trail would be included in the list of

Phase 1 priority trails. An example of the trail system area maps and tables is shown in Figure 4.

- **BRONX HILL:** Includes the north end of Ponderay and encompasses the city’s “Field of Dreams” area and Bronx Hill, which is owned by the state Department of Lands. This trail system area is in central Bonner County just north of Sand Creek Pathways.
- **GOLD HILL:** Gold Hill is on the south shore of Lake Pend Oreille in Sagle. These trails are on surrounding land managed by the Idaho Department of Lands, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.
- **HAPPY FORK GAP:** This trail system area includes the valley around Carr Mountain, south of Baldy Mountain and north of Pend Oreille River. Forest roads and potential trails would connect three different neighborhoods in Schweitzer Side Country. Happy Fork Gap is west of Sandpoint, north of Pend Oreille River, and south of Schweitzer Side Country.
- **HOODOO:** This trail system area includes roads and trails in southwest Bonner County, west of Highway 95 and mostly south of the Pend Oreille River, from Priest River to Spirit Lake.
- **MINERAL POINT/GAMLIN:** In the easternmost portion of the Garfield Bay peninsula in central Bonner County. The proposed Gamlin-Mineral Point trail would link existing popular trails on lands managed by the National Forest and BLM.

¹ Of 488.7 miles of proposed trails, 148.2 miles would be on public lands and the rest would be on private land.

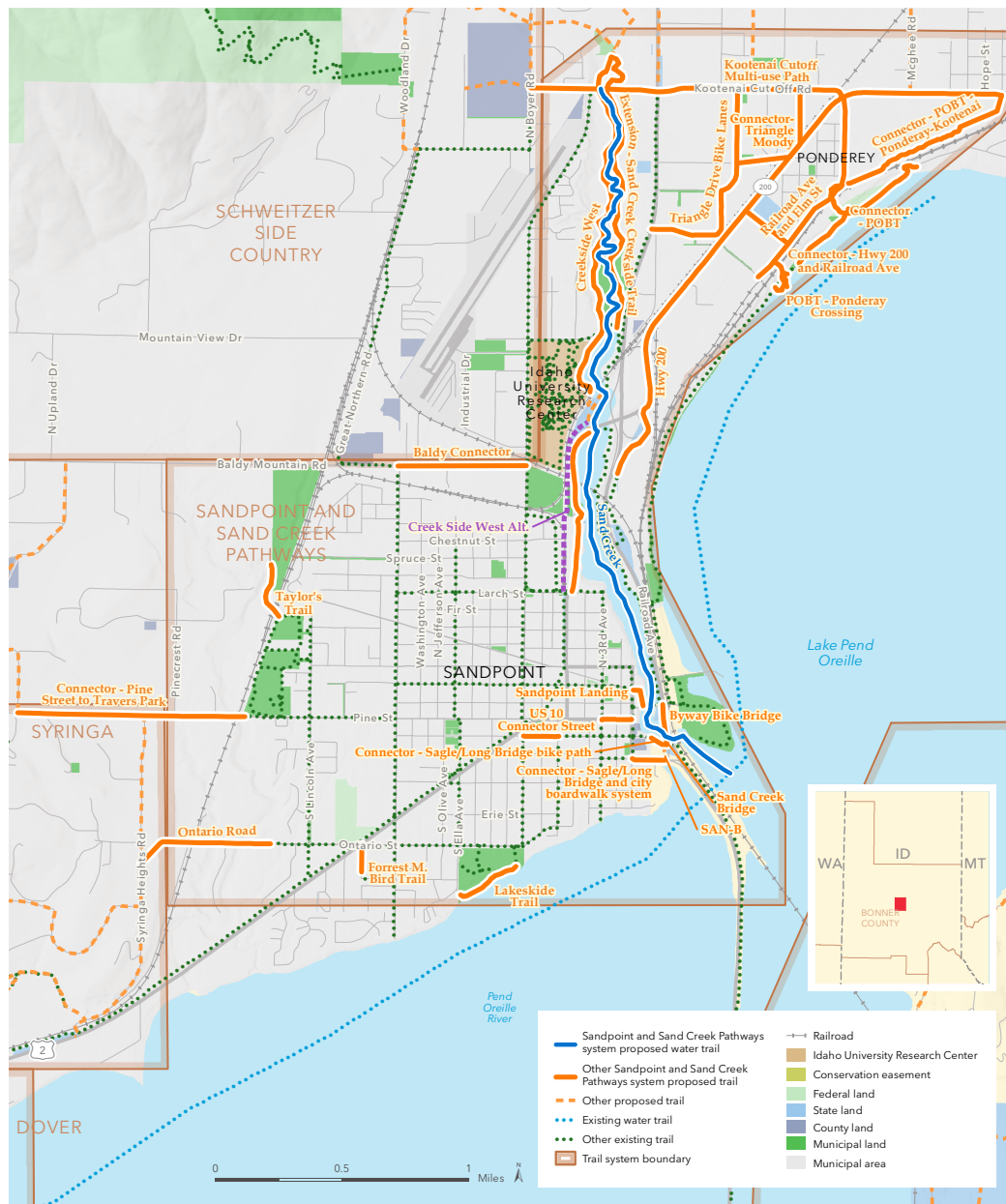
- **OUTLOOK BAY/COOLIN MOUNTAIN:** On the southern end of Priest Lake in western Bonner County, stretching from Coolin to Highway 57.
- **PACK RIVER:** Along the lower Pack River in central/eastern Bonner County; much of the proposed Pack River Trail passes through the Pend Oreille Wildlife Management Area.
- **PRIEST LAKE:** This trail system area includes northwest Bonner County surrounding all but the southern tip of Priest Lake.
- **SANDPOINT AND SAND CREEK PATHWAYS:** In the county’s geographic and population center, includes the communities of Sandpoint and Ponderay and portions of Dover and Kootenai.
- **SCHWEITZER SIDE COUNTRY:** West-central Bonner County, including Baldy Mountain, Schweitzer Mountain ski area, and the Selkirk Recreation District, includes portions of the municipal areas surrounding the cities of Sandpoint and Ponderay, Priest River U.S. Forest Service Experimental Forest, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, and state land.
- **SYRINGA:** This system area covers the municipal area between Dover and Sandpoint; proposed trails connect to trails on protected land (protected by conservation easement) in the Sherwood Forest.
- **COUNTYWIDE (NOT IN A SPECIFIED TRAIL SYSTEM):** There are also several trails throughout the county that are not included in a trail system area.

Field Verification

See online Appendix 6 (Field Verification) for entire field verification report.

From June through September of 2015, trail plan volunteers helped field-verify, or “groundtruth,” 110 proposed trails segments. Trails were evaluated in segments designated by the GIS team from The Trust for Public Land in consultation with the Trail Mix Committee. Each segment was given a code (Segment ID) representing the region of the county where it is located (e.g., “SAN” for Sandpoint and “NW” for northwest) and a letter to distinguish it from the other segments in that region.

The purpose of groundtruthing was to identify “hot spots” (either positive or negative) along each proposed trail segment corridor. Field verification volunteers filled out forms on which they were asked to describe their segment and provide its name (if applicable); note their groundtruthing approach (by foot, bicycle, car, water, or desktop analysis); check expected trail uses (pedestrian, mountain bike, road bike, horse, ATV, snowmobile, cross-county skiing); note whether the segment would share a road with cars and trucks; describe any special opportunities or notable impediments; and determine (on a scale of 1 to 5) an overall score and scores for viability and user experience. Because the trails plan is conceptual and not an alignment study, field verification was intended to provide a broad overview of each trail segment. Table 2 shows the highest-rated segments.



Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT - PROPOSED TRAIL SYSTEMS

➡ **FIGURE 4** Special thanks to the following data providers: Bonner County, City of Sandpoint, ESRI, NCED, NHD, SMA. Copyright © The Trust for Public Land. The Trust for Public Land and The Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of The Trust for Public Land. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only.

TABLE 2. HIGHEST RATED SEGMENTS (ALL RATED "5")	
Segment	Segment Name/Description
CEN-G	Watershed Crest Trail
CEN-J	Pack River Trail
CEN-Q	Part of Happy Fork Gap Trail System
CEN-R	Williamson Carr Connector
CEN-V	Upper Baldy Trail Connector
NW-D	Lookout Mountain Trail
NW-E	Lookout Mountain Trail
NW-F	Lookout Mountain Trail (alternate trailhead)
PON-E	North Creekside Trail
PON-H	Little Sand Creek
PON-M	Bronx Hill Loop
POR-A	Pend Oreille River Passage Trail
SAG-B	Bottle Bay Loop (bike lane), Gold Hill System
SAG-F	Gravel Pit, Gold Hill System
SAN-K	Sandpoint Pathways System
SAN-L	Creekside West, Sandpoint Pathways System
SAN-V	Syringa Meadows
SW-C	Spirit Lake to Blanchard
SW-D	Granite-Sagle or Careywood-Cocolalla

Trail Prioritization Criteria

Phase 1 priority trails were identified through the expertise of the Trail Mix Committee and through analysis of current use, proximity to parks and schools, accessibility, feasibility, and user experience (e.g., trails with exceptional views receive higher scores). Trail ranking took into account available GIS and census data; input from the larger community (through the community survey, speak-outs, and the trail open house at the Bonner County Fair); and detailed information from field verification of proposed trails by members of the Trail Mix Committee. Metrics representing all these factors were developed by The Trust for Public Land's GIS and planning teams with input from the Trail Mix Committee. The list below includes some additional detail on the factors used in prioritizing trails:

- **CURRENT USE:** Strava data were used to determine current pedestrian and biking use. Strava data show crowd-sourced usage statistics collected primarily by cyclists, hikers, and runners using the Strava smart phone app. The Strava data provided valuable insight on frequency of use for existing and proposed trails.
- **VIABILITY:** Field verification scores (determined by Trail Mix Committee members during groundtruthing).
- **FEASIBILITY:** Field verification scores (note: fewer are better for each of these sub-factors); number of streams that the segment crosses; number of private properties crossed; length of sensitive habitat; and average slope.

Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways Trail System

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT - PROPOSED TRAILS

Trail Name	Segment ID	Statistics and Field Verification						
		Length (miles)	Proximity Destinations in Proximity	# of Private Parcels Crossed	Schools in Proximity	# of Stream Crossings	% on Public Lands	% in Sensitive Area
Baldy Connector	SAN-C	0.51	0	1	0	0	0%	0%
Byway Bike Bridge	SAN-F	0.13	1	0	0	0	100%	60%
Connector - Hwy 200 and Railroad Ave	PON-I	0.21	0	8	1	0	30%	0%
Connector - Pine Street to Travers Park	SAN-A	0.90	1	5	2	2	0%	18%
Connector - POBT	PON-Q	0.17	0	1	0	0	23%	4%
Connector - POBT - Ponderay-Kootenai	PON-R	0.74	0	8	1	0	0%	25%
Connector - Ponder Whiskey Spur	PON-J	0.68	0	6	0	0	47%	91%
Connector - Sagle/Long Bridge and city boardwalk system	SAN-G	0.13	1	1	0	0	0%	0%
Connector - Sagle/Long Bridge bike path	SAN-H	0.07	1	3	0	0	5%	100%
Connector - Triangle-Moody	PON-U	0.49	0	8	1	0	2%	0%
Creekside West	PON-O	1.50	1	23	0	2	34%	100%
Creekside West	SAN-L	0.67	0	2	1	0	7%	60%
Extension - Sand Creek Creekside Trail	PON-A	1.24	1	18	0	1	16%	99%
Forrest M. Bird Trail	SAN-R	0.11	0	1	3	0	0%	0%
Hwy 200	PON-B	1.83	1	12	1	0	6%	0%
Kootenai Cutoff Multi-use Path	PON-W	1.88	1	7	1	1	4%	10%
Lakeside Trail	SAN-S	0.26	0	0	1	0	100%	99%
Ontario Road	SAN-P	0.55	0	4	0	0	0%	26%
POBT - Ponderay Crossing	PON-P	0.22	0	3	0	0	0%	69%
Railroad Ave and Elm St	PON-C	0.84	0	6	0	0	0%	0%
Sand Creek	WAT-A	3.37	3	41	0	1	25%	99%
Sand Creek Bridge	SAN-U	0.03	1	0	0	0	100%	100%
Sandpoint Landing	SAN-I	0.09	2	9	0	0	44%	68%
Taylor's Trail	SAN-J	0.23	0	4	0	1	26%	73%
Triangle Drive Bike Lanes	PON-T	0.88	1	4	1	0	83%	12%
US 10 Connector Street	SAN-D	0.12	1	1	0	0	0%	0%
US 10 Connector Street	SAN-E	0.14	0	1	0	0	0%	0%
	SAN-B	0.06	1	2	0	0	0%	25%
	SAN-K	0.24	0	2	0	0	81%	100%

➔ FIGURE 4A

						Uses								
Special Opportunities	Impediments	Viability Score	User Experience Score	Overall Score	Recommended	Walk/Hike	Mountain Bike	Road Bike	Horse	ATV	Snowmobile	Nordic	Other	Road shared with cars
Yes	Yes	3	3	3	Yes			Y						Yes
Yes	No	4	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y					Y	No
Yes	Yes	2	4	2	No	Y	Y	Y						Yes
Yes	Yes	5	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y						No
Yes	Yes	2	4	3	Yes	Y	Y							
No	Yes	4	3	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y						Yes
Yes	Yes	3	5	4	Yes	Y	Y						Y	
Yes	Yes	3	3	3	Yes	Y	Y	Y						No
Yes	Yes	4	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Yes
Yes	No	3	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	
Yes	Yes	3	5	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y						No
Yes	Yes	3	2	5	Yes			Y						Yes
Yes	Yes	3	5	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y					Y	No
No	No	5	4	3	Yes	Y	Y							Yes
Yes	Yes	4	2	3	Yes	Y	Y	Y					Y	No
No	No	5	2	4	Yes	Y	Y						Y	Yes
Yes	Yes	2	1	2	Yes	Y	Y							No
No	No	4	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y						Yes
Yes	Yes	3	4	4	Yes	Y	Y							Yes
Yes	Yes	4	3	3	Yes	Y	Y							Yes
Yes	Yes	5	3	4	Yes									No
Yes	Yes	2	5	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y					No
Yes	Yes	4	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y					Y	Yes
Yes	Yes	5	4	4	Yes	Y	Y	Y						No
No	No	5	2	2	Yes		Y	Y		Y			Y	Yes
No	Yes	2	1	1	No	Y							Y	No
No	No	1	1	1	No	Y								No
Yes	No	3	3	3	Yes	Y	Y	Y						Yes
Yes	Yes	3	2	5	Yes			Y						Yes

Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways Trail System

BONNER COUNTY TRAIL PROJECT - PROPOSED TRAILS

Trail Name	Segment ID	Accessibility Score					Feasibility Score		
		Kids	Seniors	Total Population	Low Income	Overall Accessibility Score	Sensitive Areas	Private Lands	Slope
Baldy Connector	SAN-C	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Byway Bike Bridge	SAN-F	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	2
Connector - Hwy 200 and Railroad Ave	PON-I	2	2	2	3	2	4	2	4
Connector - Pine Street to Travers Park	SAN-A	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	3
Connector - POBT	PON-Q	2	1	2	2	2	3	4	3
Connector - POBT - Ponderay-Kootenai	PON-R	4	3	4	4	4	2	2	4
Connector - Ponder Whiskey Spur	PON-J	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Connector - Sagle/Long Bridge and city boardwalk system	SAN-G	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4
Connector - Sagle/Long Bridge bike path	SAN-H	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
Connector - Triangle-Moody	PON-U	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	4
Creekside West	PON-O	4	4	4	4	4	0	1	2
Creekside West	SAN-L	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	2
Extension - Sand Creek Creekside Trail	PON-A	4	4	4	4	4	0	1	3
Forrest M. Bird Trail	SAN-R	1	2	1	2	2	4	4	4
Hwy 200	PON-B	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4
Kootenai Cutoff Multi-use Path	PON-W	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	4
Lakeside Trail	SAN-S	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	3
Ontario Road	SAN-P	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2
POBT - Ponderay Crossing	PON-P	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
Railroad Ave and Elm St	PON-C	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4
Sand Creek	WAT-A	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	3
Sand Creek Bridge	SAN-U	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3
Sandpoint Landing	SAN-I	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2
Taylor's Trail	SAN-J	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
Triangle Drive Bike Lanes	PON-T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
US 10 Connector Street	SAN-D	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
US 10 Connector Street	SAN-E	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	4
	SAN-B	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3
	SAN-K	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	2

➔ FIGURE 4B

		Current Usage Score				Public Preference					Overall Trail Ratings			
Stream Crossings	Overall Feasibility Score	Bike Usage	Pedestrian Usage	Bike and Pedestrian Usage	Overall Current Usage Score	Priority Destination Score	School Proximity Score	Park Proximity Score	Library Proximity Score	Overall Public Preference Score	Overall Metric Score	Overall # of Top 5 Trail Votes	Overall Trail Ranking Score	Phase Trail (Yes/No)
4	4	4	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
4	3	4	3	3	3	2	0	3	0	1	2	0	2	No
4	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
3	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	0	2	3	2	5	Yes
4	4	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
4	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	4	Yes
4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	No
4	4	4	2	3	3	2	0	2	0	1	2	1	3	Yes
4	3	4	4	4	4	2	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	No
4	4	4	1	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
3	2	4	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	Yes
4	3	4	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
4	2	4	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	5	7	Yes
4	4	4	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	1	2	0	2	No
4	3	4	3	4	4	2	2	0	0	1	3	2	5	Yes
4	3	4	3	4	4	2	2	0	0	1	3	0	3	Yes
4	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	2	No
4	3	4	4	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	No
4	2	4	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	Yes
4	4	4	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	Yes
4	2	4	4	4	4	4	0	4	0	2	3	1	4	Yes
4	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	No
4	3	4	1	2	2	3	0	3	0	2	2	0	2	No
4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	2	No
4	4	4	1	3	3	2	2	0	0	1	3	0	3	Yes
4	4	4	3	4	4	2	0	4	0	2	3	0	3	Yes
4	4	4	3	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	No
4	4	4	1	2	2	2	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	No
4	3	4	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	Yes

- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Trail segments that are closest to where people live (considered demographic categories: children, seniors, low income, and all residents).
- **PUBLIC PREFERENCE:** County Fair input; 2014 community survey (results related to destination popularity and trail system area popularity); proximity to parks and schools; and additional input based on Trail Mix Committee member interest in developing particular trails.

GIS modeling using these metrics identified 26 trails as Phase 1 priorities. The Watershed

Crest Trail (see more in Section 5, Case Studies) had the highest weighted score of any proposed trail. The cutoff for Phase 1 trails was based on a natural break in the weighted scores shown in Table 3; it was not based on attempting to include an exact number of trails in Phase 1. The Trail Mix Committee approved the Phase 1 trail list by unanimous vote at its January 2016 meeting. Table 4 shows the groups who volunteered to “champion” particular priority trails by overseeing efforts to fund, market, and develop them (see Section 6, Implementation, for more details).



AMY WILSON MORRIS

View of Lake Pend Oreille from the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail

**TABLE 3. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN PHASE I TRAILS
(JANUARY 2016)**

Trail Name	ID	Champions	Miles	Weighted Score
Watershed Crest Trail	CEN-G	Schweitzer Side Country	11.1	10
Extension–Sand Creek Creekside Trail	PON-A	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	1.2	7
Pend Oreille River Passage Trail	POR-A	Not part of a specific trail system	18.6	7
Little Sand Creek	PON-H	Schweitzer Side Country	0.5	7
Pine Street to Travers Park	SAN-A	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.9	5
Highway 2 to Highway 200– Part of USBR10	CEN-K	Not part of a specific trail system	30.9	5
Highway 200 (Sand Creek Pathways)	PON-B	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	1.8	5
Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail– Ponderay Crossing	PON-P	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.2	5
Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail– Ponderay-Kootenai	PON-R	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.7	4
Spirit Lake to Blanchard	SW-B	Hoodoo Mountain	14.6	4
Creekside West	PON-O	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	1.5	4
Sand Creek	WAT-A	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	3.4	4
Bottle Bay Loop	SAG-B	Gold Hill	21.1	3
Clagstone Connector	SW-F	Hoodoo Mountain	16.5	3
Pine Street, Loop Road	CEN-O	Not part of a specific trail system	3.1	3
Schweitzer Mountain Road; N. Boyer Road	PON-V	Schweitzer Side Country	1.0	3

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**TABLE 3. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN PHASE I TRAILS
(JANUARY 2016)**

Trail Name	ID	Champions	Miles	Weighted Score
Gamlin-Mineral Point Trails	SAG-D	Mineral Point/Gamlin Lake	1.6	3
Gravel Pit	SAG-F	Gold Hill	3.5	3
Blanchard to Oldtown	SW-C	Hoodoo Mountain	2.9	3
Railroad Avenue and Elm Street	PON-C	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.8	3
Sagle/Long Bridge and city boardwalk system	SAN-G	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.1	3
Selkirk Crest (Redneck Traverse)	CEN-E	Schweitzer Side Country	11.4	3
Little Sand Creek	PON-G	Not part of a specific trail system	0.4	3
Unnamed	SAN-K	Sandpoint and Sand Creek Pathways	0.2	3
Lamb Creek–Dickensheet Connector	NW-P	West Priest Lake	11.7	3

**TABLE 4. BONNER COUNTY PHASE I TRAILS AND TRAIL CHAMPIONS
(JANUARY 2016)**

Trail Name	ID	Champions
Pine Street to Travers Park	SAN-A	Bonner County
Bottle Bay Loop	SAG-B	Bonner County
Clagstone Connector	SW-F	Bonner County
Pine Street, Loop Road	CEN-O	Bonner County
Schweitzer Mountain Road; N. Boyer Road	PON-V	Bonner County
Highway 2 to Highway 200—Part of USBR10	CEN-K	Bonner County Area Transportation Team (BCATT)—in progress
Highway 200 (Sand Creek Pathways)	PON-B	BCATT—in progress
Extension—Sand Creek Creekside Trail	PON-A	City of Ponderay
Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail—Ponderay Crossing	PON-P	Friends of Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail
Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail—Ponderay-Kootenai	PON-R	Friends of Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail
Pack River Trail	CEN-J	Kaniksu Land Trust, Bonner County, Idaho Trails Association
Gamlin-Mineral Point Trails.	SAG-D	Pend Oreille Pedalers
Gravel Pit	SAG-F	Pend Oreille Pedalers
Watershed Crest Trail	CEN-G	Pend Oreille Pedalers, City of Sandpoint—in progress
Pend Oreille River Passage Trail	POR-A	Priest Community Forest Connection—in progress
Spirit Lake to Blanchard	SW-B	Spirit Lake Chamber—in progress
Blanchard to Oldtown	SW-C	Spirit Lake Chamber

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**TABLE 4. BONNER COUNTY PHASE I TRAILS AND TRAIL CHAMPIONS
(JANUARY 2016)**

Trail Name	ID	Champions
Little Sand Creek	PON-H	
Creekside West	PON-O	
Sand Creek	WAT-A	
Railroad Avenue and Elm Street	PON-C	
Sagle/Long Bridge and city boardwalk system	SAN-G	
Selkirk Crest (Redneck Traverse)	CEN-E	
Little Sand Creek	PON-G	
Unnamed	SAN-K	
Unnamed	NW-P	

5 Case studies

THE CASE STUDIES BELOW include the stories of trails and trail programs under way in Bonner County.

Kaniksu Land Trust ParkRx Program

“The prescription parks and trails program here in Sandpoint has had an enormous impact on myself as a provider and many of my diabetic patients. They have embraced this opportunity to get out in nature with zest and enthusiasm and have benefited in countless ways. They are losing weight . . . have less pain and less depression, and generally feel empowered to do better and live longer. They are more engaged with one another and with the world of nature. They are my inspiration. This powerful program has become an integral part of my practice. It has been a stunning success and a tribute to all those involved.”

—JOYCE BLAIR WILSON, FNP/ CDE, DIABETES
CONSULTATION SERVICES, SANDPOINT, IDAHO

ParkRx programs encourage health care professionals to give patients who need to increase physical activity prescriptions for walking on local trails and other outdoor exercise. The goal is to get these patients to incorporate regular exercise into their

routines to increase their physical and mental well-being. The Kaniksu Land Trust began working to develop a local ParkRx program in 2015 that uses land protection and trails to increase community health. Program staff began by examining Bonner County’s Community Health Assessment and interviewing doctors and other medical professionals about local community members who would benefit from exercising more outdoors. Trails were ranked by level of difficulty so that the prescriptions could be given according to ability. Local doctors were then given maps of accessible local trails and asked to give out prescriptions for their use.

To encourage participation by local families, particularly a group of single mothers who were part of the prescription trails program, Kaniksu Land Trust partnered with local libraries to develop “StoryBook Walks” where laminated pages from children’s books are displayed along trails. Families are encouraged to take their children on a walk, reading a new page at certain intervals, thus enticing the children to exercise between pages. Stories are changed every six weeks. Children from more distant cities are now being bused to Sandpoint to participate in the StoryBook Walks.

Over 200 trail prescriptions have been issued by local doctors since 2015. One group of diabetic patients created formal group walks in order to encourage community participation. This ParkRx program in Bonner County is currently being studied by national groups as a model to implement in other communities around the country.

Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail

"The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail has been a series of impossible tasks that united the community behind a common goal—public access along a mile of lakefront. Everyone involved finds different motivations for participating in the project. For some it's the legacy that we leave for future generations. For others, it's social justice and ensuring that we all have equal access to recreation. Still others work to protect our water quality and our lake. The beauty of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail is that it means different things to different people, but everyone agrees it's a priceless asset."

—STEPHEN SNEDDEN, PRESIDENT OF FRIENDS OF THE PEND D'OREILLE BAY TRAIL

The Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail showcases the spectacular beauty of Lake Pend Oreille – and provides much-needed waterfront access to local communities. The unpaved, forested trail was used for decades by invitation only or by trespassers, until the Cities of Sandpoint and Ponderay purchased the land in four installments with the support of the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail. Following the final purchase in 2014, the trail was permanently opened to the public for nonmotorized recreational use.

Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail, with the help of the National Park Service's River and Trails program, teamed up with the American Society of Landscape Architects–Idaho/Montana Chapter and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to host a design workshop for the trail in November 2009. The design workshop, or "charrette," brought together professional landscape architects, city and county officials, state agency staff, teachers, conservationists, historians, water quality experts, architects, trail users, and students to consider the opportunities and constraints in designing the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail and led to a draft concept. The final concept plan was completed in May 2010. Subsequently, Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail worked with Harmony Design to create a master plan for the trail, which was published in December 2015.

The current trail covers 1.5 miles of stunning shoreline between Sandpoint and Ponderay. Trail advocates hope to create an underpass under the railroad in order to provide lakeshore access to Ponderay and to extend the trail along the north and south sides of the railway line into Kootenai. Once it reaches Kootenai, the trail will be 2.5 miles long and will include additional trailheads in Ponderay and Kootenai. The success of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail shows the enormous support in Greater Sandpoint for connecting communities and providing lakeshore recreational access.

Watershed Crest Trail

"The Watershed Crest Trail is an exciting project that will connect the Schweitzer Mountain Ski resort to Sandpoint. It is an epic crestline trail that will provide incredible panoramic views of the region. It also meanders through the wild sub-alpine forests that define the southern Selkirks. It will offer an amenity for mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners that is not otherwise available in the region."

—SHELBY ROGNSTAD, MAYOR OF SANDPOINT

The idea of the Watershed Crest Trail has been around for a long time. Talk of the Watershed Crest Trail began with mountain bikers who live and ride at Schweitzer. The trail would circumnavigate the city's watershed, following scenic ridgelines from Schweitzer that lead to the edge of the city. The trail would offer an epic, all-day adventure ride for mountain bikers – as well as a long-distance hiking opportunity for non-cyclists. This trail would be a destination for mountain bikers around the region and would offer a close-to-home challenge for local mountain biking enthusiasts. Few other trails in the region offer similar views or distances. Development of the Watershed Crest Trail is being led by the Pend Oreille Pedalers. They began by developing a license agreement with Sandpoint and contacting landowners along the route.

During the summer 2015 construction season, a new section of trail was built, connecting existing trails from the fire station roundabout to Uleda Ridge west of the top of the Lakeview Triple Chairlift at Schweitzer Mountain Resort. Some sections of preexisting trail were also reconstructed to better accommodate uphill traffic. Construction of the trail from Uleda Ridge to Baldy Ridge will begin in 2016 as soon as the snow melts and crews can access the trail. The plan is then to construct trail along Baldy Ridge from just east of Baldy Peak to the top of Mickinnick Trail during the 2017 construction season.



Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail in Bonner County

6 Implementation

THIS SECTION PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TRAILS PLAN, details on potential funding sources for local trails, and an outline for an action plan developed by the Trail Mix Committee. As noted previously, this Trails Plan will always be “under construction.” Over time, more work with neighborhoods, rural communities, and diverse user groups is needed.

The current action plan developed by the Trail Mix Committee is included in Section 7 (Action Plan). The Trail Mix Committee also developed a list of issues to consider when evaluating trail proposals. That list is shown in online Appendix 2 (Trail Proposal Considerations). Additional details about trail development and maintenance considerations are included in online Appendix 9.

Trail Development Constraints

At a meeting in October 2015, the Trail Mix Committee focused on identifying the major constraints for developing the Trails Plan. These constraints are described below.

- **COORDINATION:** Strong coordination is needed among trail groups and jurisdictions. The continued existence of the Trail Mix Committee (in its current form or as it evolves) and the newly created position for director of Bonner County Parks and Waterways and Recreation should help local groups and jurisdictions stay coordinated, but this will continue to be a challenge.
- **PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS:** There are a large number of narrow winding roads in the county, which can make it difficult to add bike lanes and trail connections.
- **LANDOWNERSHIP—PRIVATE LAND:** One of the major hurdles in developing trails is securing ownership or access rights for trail rights-of-way. Private landowners may have concerns about trespass, trash and vandalism, and potential legal liability for injuries to trail users. As a result, it can be complicated and expensive to secure access rights or acquire trail easements.
- **LANDOWNERSHIP—PUBLIC LAND:** On public lands, it can be difficult to coordinate with agencies to get approval for trails. Both state and federal agencies often have limited staff capacity to dedicate to planning for new trails and limited budgets for trail maintenance. The federal planning process can be quite slow and expensive; formally designated trails must go through the public review process required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Trails on state lands require a permission letter and a lease from the Idaho Department of Lands. Leases may cost from one hundred to several thousand dollars per year – though some of that cost can be offset through trail maintenance by volunteers. Guidance from the Board of the Idaho Department of Lands does not clearly address how to deal with recreation interests on state lands.
- **COST:** The costs involved in trail development include access rights/trail easement acquisition; building costs (design/engineering, grading/contouring, surfacing

(dirt, gravel, asphalt, concrete), bridges, amenities (benches, bathrooms, trailheads, parking lots, drinking fountains), and signage); and maintenance costs (repairs, trash removal). A review of recent trail studies indicates a very wide range of costs for trails – from \$1,000 to \$1.2 million per mile – depending on location and trail type and labor used. Dirt trails typically cost \$1,000 to \$50,000 per mile; gravel from \$80,000 to \$1 million per mile; and paved trails from \$150,000 to \$1.2 million per mile.

- **OTHER CHALLENGES:** Other challenges to expanding trails may include political and community resistance; competing priorities; limited capacity of trail advocates; environmental and permitting requirements; geophysical constraints (terrain, steepness, waterways); sensitive habitat; and cultural resource considerations.

Funding

Funding trails typically takes the support of the business community, elected officials, government agencies, and community leaders. It is crucial to educate trail users and the community about the benefits of an improved trails system (outlined in Section 1, Introduction).

There are a wide variety of potential funding sources for Bonner County trails, including state and federal funding, local and regional funding, and funding from nongovernmental organizations. Federal, state, and private grants can help communities with trails

planning, development, and land acquisition. These grants can also help to encourage local investments. Having an adopted comprehensive trails plan is important for communities seeking grants funds. An adopted plan demonstrates the community is sufficiently organized and capable of administering grant funds and has a vision of its future trails system. Successful grant applications also need to show interjurisdictional cooperation between organizations at all levels of government and the private sector. More detailed discussion of funding options is included in online Appendix 7 (Funding Options).

7 Action plan

THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN was developed and refined during two meetings of the Trail Mix Committee

in October 2015 and January 2016. Please see Table 5 for the Action Plan developed by project partners and the Trail Mix Committee.

TABLE 5. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN–ACTION STEPS		
Action Plan Component	Implementing Entities	Target Time Frame
A. IDENTIFY HIGHEST-PRIORITY TRAILS		
A.1. Prioritize trail segments based on public feedback, trail metrics, and Trail Mix input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick top projects based on which trails already have champions (see “E”). Choose some “low-hanging fruit” to ensure early successes. Note: This step is complete. Phase 1 trails were confirmed at the January 2016 Trail Mix Committee meeting.	Trail Mix Committee and partners	January 2016
A.2. Make data available to partners so that the data can be used in planning and prioritization	The Trust for Public Land	TBD
B. CREATE A STRUCTURE TO MAINTAIN THE TRAIL MIX COMMITTEE AS A COORDINATING BODY FOR THE TRAILS PLAN		
B.1. Determine best long-term structure within the Trail Mix Committee to support plan implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether trail group needs a fiscal sponsor Look into creating nonprofit coalition of trail groups Formalize relationship between Bonner County, BCATT, cities, and trail group Revise Trail Mix operating procedures as appropriate 	Trail Mix Committee and Bonner County	February–May 2016
B.2. Work with county to host Trails Plan documents and maps on its website	Trail Mix Committee	May–September 2016
B.3. Ensure that information about data sources is thorough and easily available to facilitate updates	The Trust for Public Land	February 2016
B.4. Evaluate Trails Plan implementation annually. Is plan on track to be implemented in 10 years? Are member groups building an average of 10+ miles of trails per year?	Trail Mix Committee	January 2017, ongoing annually

TABLE 5. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN–ACTION STEPS

Action Plan Component	Implementing Entities	Target Time Frame
C. DEVELOP A STRONG COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH STRATEGY		
C.1. Create a committee that focuses on outreach and communication so that messaging is consistent and will encourage support for a trail system in the region.	Trail Mix Committee	January 2016 and ongoing
C.2. Build a strong communications and outreach action plan to build public support. Outline specific steps to take: who, what, when, where, how For example, plan should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key partners (Chamber of Commerce, business community, landowners) • Types of outreach (web-based marketing, trail signage, branding for Trails Plan, Trail Mix Facebook page) • Outreach to state and federal representatives • Contributions from local municipalities, Rotary Club or other civic groups, crowd funding 	Trail Mix Communications Committee	May 2016
C.3. Create maps and charts for mapping progress, and make that data easily accessible to the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on creating more general information about trails easily available, including existing trails 	Trail Mix Committee	Ongoing
C.4. Host events and fundraisers to increase public awareness of the entire trail plan and to raise funds for specific trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host fall party after trail-building season to celebrate accomplishments 	Trail Champions with support of Trail Mix Committee	First events in 2016, ongoing
D. INCORPORATE TRAILS PLAN INTO CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING DOCUMENTS		
D.1. Create a subgroup within the Trail Mix Committee to coordinate plan adoption by county and cities		
D.2. Facilitate adoption of the Trails Plan by the Bonner County Commission	Trail Mix Plan Adoption Committee, County	April and May 2016
D.3. Facilitate adoption of the Trails Plan by cities of Sandpoint, Ponderay, Kootenai, Dover, Priest River, and Oldtown	Trail Mix Plan Adoption Committee, city planning departments, mayors	April and May 2016

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TABLE 5. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN–ACTION STEPS

Action Plan Component	Implementing Entities	Target Time Frame
D.4. Develop and implement regional best-practice standards for trail and pathway development to ensure proper design of new pathways and reduce future maintenance needs and costs; work to ensure easy and safe access to trails	Bonner County, Trail Mix Committee	
D.5. Work to ensure that all jurisdictions are coordinating their trail and pathway plans, and that future highway and road projects in the region are consistent with these community plans	Bonner County, Trail Mix Committee	
E. IDENTIFY CHAMPIONS FOR EACH PRIORITY TRAIL TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION		
E.1. Identify individuals or groups who will take the lead on implementing each priority trail	Trail Mix Committee	January 2016, ongoing
E.2. Create a library of online resources for trail development	Trail Mix Committee and Trail Champions	February–March 2016, ongoing
E.3. Create a checklist/basic framework for the elements trail champions need to address in developing implementation plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base checklist on the one used by Grand County, Utah Trail Mix group 	Trail Mix Committee	March–April 2016
E.4. Champions should create a clear plan for implementation that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding sources, tools and equipment needed, workers, agency personnel who are involved • Strategy for getting landowner permission early • Budgets and timelines for each specific trail segment 	Trail Champions	2016, ongoing
F. IDENTIFY AND PURSUE TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE TRAILS PLAN		
F.1. Establish a finance committee to oversee research on funding options and coordination of funding requests (to avoid competition between multiple Bonner trails applying for the same funding sources) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be ready to take advantage of funding when it is available 	Trail Mix Committee	February 2016

TABLE 5. BONNER COUNTY TRAILS PLAN–ACTION STEPS

Action Plan Component	Implementing Entities	
F.2. Identify funding sources (e.g., grants, recreational taxing districts, developer agreements) and create clearinghouse for funding options	Trail Mix Finance Committee	May 2016, ongoing
F.3. Work with county on grant applications and raising funds • Coordinate on Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation funding applications	Trail Mix Finance Committee, Trail Champions	2016, ongoing
F.4. Work on developing a region-wide strategy to fund ongoing trail maintenance	Trail Mix Committee, Bonner County	

8 Conclusion

BONNER COUNTY'S SPECTACULAR BEAUTY AND UNIQUE RECREATIONAL RESOURCES provide tremendous quality of life for residents and visitors. The Bonner County Trails Plan is intended to help guide coordinated development of additional priority trails and trail connections throughout Bonner County – and help ensure the maintenance of existing trails.

The Trails Plan will serve as an organizing document for Bonner County, local cities, the Trail Mix Committee, and the other groups working on trail development. The Trails Plan should be factored in when road projects and development projects are being considered; this could mean setting aside adequate rights-of-way to accommodate trails when roads are being constructed or including pathways as part of a subdivision design. In the eyes of potential funders, the Trails Plan should also serve as substantial evidence of the community's interest in and capacity for trail development.

With continued help from the county's energetic outdoor enthusiasts, the Trails Plan will help maintain and enhance exceptional local quality of life by increasing opportunities to use trails for recreation, health and fitness, commuting, and connecting to the outdoors for many years to come.

9 Participants

THE TRAIL MIX COMMITTEE includes over 20 representatives from local trail and recreation groups and representatives from the county, local cities, and state and federal agencies. The committee began meeting monthly in the fall of 2014. Committee members participated in six meetings with The Trust for Public Land

between October 2014 and January 2016 during which they discussed community input, trail maps, and trail prioritization. The summaries of these six meetings are included in online Appendix 3 (Meeting Summaries). The 2014–2016 members of the Trail Mix Committee are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6. BONNER COUNTY TRAIL MIX COMMITTEE

Member Organization	Representative	Alternate
Bonner County	Cary Kelly	Steve Klatt
Sandpoint	Deb Ruehle	Shelby Rognstad
Ponderay	Erik Brubaker	Dan Carlson
Kootenai	Mike Keough	Nancy Lewis
Dover	Rowdy MacDonald	Diane Brockway
Bureau of Land Management	Jake Bachtal	Kurt Pavlat
U.S. Forest Service	Dan Gilfillan	Mary Ann Hamilton, Tom Elliott
North Idaho Bikeways	Bob Carlson	Larry Davidson
Pend Oreille Pedalers	Sandy Thomas	Larry Davidson
Friends of the POB Trail	Larry Davidson	Jan Griffiths
Sandpoint Nordic Club	Ross Longhini	Vicki Longhini
Idaho Conservation League	Susan Drumheller	Nancy Dooley
Kaniksu Land Trust	Eric Grace	Regan Plumb
Idaho Department of Lands/Sandpoint	John Gaddess	Stan Galloway, Ed Robinson
Idaho Department of Lands/Priest	Ed Wingert	
Priest Community Forest Connection	Liz Johnson-Gebhardt	

TABLE 6. BONNER COUNTY TRAIL MIX COMMITTEE

Member Organization	Representative	Alternate
Schweitzer Mountain Resort	Sean Mirus	
Idaho Transportation Department	Don Davis	
State Parks	Nate Sparks	
Spirit Lake Chamber	Marc Kroetch	Doug Freeland

Sixty-one people, including nearly all of the official Trail Mix Committee, attended at least one of the six meetings with The Trust for Public Land. Additional participants not shown in Table 6 are shown in Table 7.

A Technical Advisory Team of local experts provided strategic advice on data collection and data modeling. Members of the Technical Advisory Team were Jared Yost, Clare Marley, Bill Harp, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Erik Brubaker, Larry Davidson, Sean Mirus, and Susan Drumheller.

**TABLE 7. BONNER COUNTY TRAIL MIX COMMITTEE–
ADDITIONAL MEETING ATTENDEES**

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Aaron Magee	Spirit Lake Chamber	Jenny Van Ooyen	Idaho Conservation League
Aaron Qualls	Sandpoint	Jeremy Grimm	Sandpoint
Amy Morris	The Trust for Public Land	Katherine Jones	The Trust for Public Land
Annie Shaha	Dover	Kelley Hart	The Trust for Public Land
Bill Harp	Bonner County	Leslie Marshall	Bonner County
Bob Heuer	The Trust for Public Land	Lisa Adair	Dover
Christa Finney	LPOSD	Matt Diel	LPOSD
Clare Marley	Bonner County (former)	Melanie Kirkland	IDPR–RTP Committee
Clif Warren	North Idaho Bikeways	Mike Murray	Pend Oreille Pedalers
Daniel Webb	Bonner County	Randy Blough	Harmony Design & Engineering
Dave Krise	Spirit Lake Chamber	Randy Stoltz	
Dottie Yerkes	Backcountry Horsemen	Rebecca Holland	Bike/Ped Advisory Committee
Fred Gifford	The Trust for Public Land	Richard Shellhart	Panhandle Riders
Greta Gissel	North Idaho Centennial Trail Foundation	Robbie Gleason	Panhandle Riders
Jared Yost	Bonner County GIS	Scout Seley	Idaho Conservation League
Jennifer Zung	Harmony Design & Engineering	Tom Dabrowski	Idaho Trails Association

Notes



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PHOTOS: FRONT TOP, HARMONY DESIGN
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BEACHAM; BACK, ANDREA NAGEL

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