

THE PATH FINDER

SPRING 2021



President's Message

Look for Summer Trail Fun

(a bicycle parade?)

We Are in This Together

Check Out These Bike Shop & Bike Trail Websites

- railstotrailsofnwmt.com
- wheatonscycle.com
- glacieryclery.com
- gncycleski.com
- foystoblacktailtrails.org
- gatewaytoglacier.com

Please notify us if you do not want to receive this newsletter. We do not like waste either. railstotrailsofnwmt@gmail.com

Happy Spring Fellow Trail Blazers!

When we look back at the year 2020 years from now, we'll remember stressful times and uncertainty. But, we'll also look fondly on memories made with our family and friends and the strength and support we drew from them. Hopefully you made some great memories on the Great Northern Historical Trail.

Our Volunteers have been working with our partners to find local solutions to the ongoing maintenance needs, trail beautification and trail expansion. This summer we'll see lots of investments in our community's trails.

The City of Kalispell is extending the trail system with the Parkline Trail! The Parkline will connect with the Great Northern Trail at Meridian Road and retrace the railroad tracks through downtown, above Woodland Park and extend across US 2 on the overpass. More information can be found at: <http://www.kalispellcoreandrail.com/>. Construction is to begin this Summer 2021.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is now currently reconstructing the 93 Alternate intersection at Foys Lake Road. Their

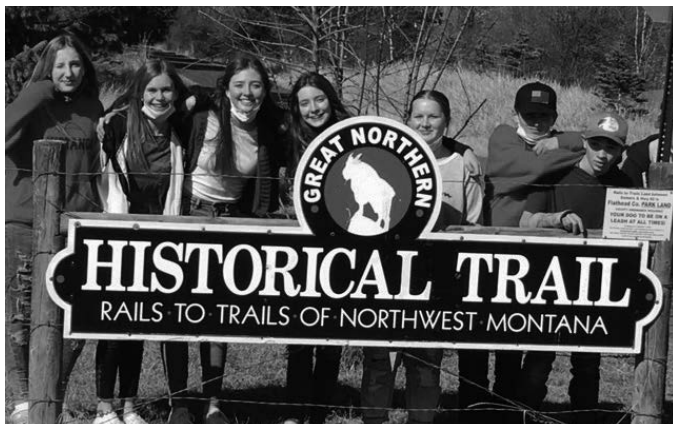
local contracting team of LHC and KLJ has planned the project to minimize delays and keep everyone safe. More info can be found at: <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/kalispellbypass/>.

Another MDT project that will impact the Great Northern Trail is the reconstruction of the intersection of US 2 West with Dern Road and Springcreek Road. Schellinger Construction is expected to begin in late May and work through November 2021. We will attempt to notify trail users; please be patient.

Through our partnership with Kalico Art Center we have been working with MDT and the City of Kalispell to beautify the pedestrian tunnels in town. Kip Smith has taken this idea and run with it! Thanks to Kip's hard work, the community has generously supported this project. Kalico held workshops and published a Call for Proposals. There were a surprising 62 artists that had great mural ideas. The results of the call for proposals will be announced soon.

Thank you all for your continued support; We'll see you on the Trail!

-Mark Crowley



If you have any questions, concerns or great ideas please email us at railstotrailsofnwmt@gmail.com

ALONG THE TRAIL

(82 - Somers) By Bob Klein

With so many activities slowed down during the past year as a result of Covid 19, one might think the same for trail use. Just the opposite has occurred. There has been a steady flow of users even through the winter (only had to plow twice). While walking and working on the trail, I try to greet users with a "Hello" and a smile, which often leads to a short conversation. My first question is usually "Where are you from?" Most are from the general area - Somers, Lakeside, Kalispell and Bigfork. This winter I had the pleasure of meeting folks from Perth, Australia, and Russia. It is always a pleasant sight seeing students from Somers Middle School utilizing the trail for a break time activity, Nature Observation and Phys. Ed. classes.

Besides general trail clean-up, other volunteer activities consisted of installing a new bench by the Somers Ice House, removal of three large downed trees, victims of a fall wind storm, and removal of large boulders fallen from the cliff faces. We also installed a two foot by ten foot "Rails to Trails of NW Montana" sign at the School Addition Road crossing and placed more memorial bricks and tiles on the Somers wall.

Being a volunteer trail worker is most rewarding when seeing so many people who are enjoying the trail. At the same time, acquiring better fitness and health while enjoying nature's gifts and beautiful views of the Swan Range.

Expressions of appreciation are often made for the trail care and maintenance our group performs, to which I reply "Our reward is seeing and knowing users are enjoying the Great Northern Historical Trail."

TUNNEL VISION TO BRIGHTEN TRAILS THIS SUMMER

Tunnel Vision 2021, a collaborative project of Rails to Trails of NW Montana and KALICO Art Center, will be adding professionally painted murals to the tunnel entrances along Kalispell's pedestrian trail beginning in July 2021. Artists have been selected for the tunnels at Kidsports/FVCC and near Glacier High School. The Lone Pine tunnel, south of the Foys Lake roundabout, will be painted in 2022.

In addition, Rails to Trails and KALICO are working on an expansion of the project to paint colorful artistic designs on the interior walls of all three tunnels by engaging members of the local community. "We will be looking for individual volunteers and community groups - service clubs, youth groups, students, families, aspiring artists, just anyone who would like to grab a brush or roller and create community art," said KALICO Founder and Chair Alisha Shilling. The design will be laid out by a professional artist and then community volunteers can share in the painting - think paint by number; no experience necessary!

Support from local businesses and individuals for Tunnel Vision has been outstanding. Once again, the Kalispell community has stepped forward to ensure we continue to provide an exceptional experience on our shared-use trail system.

Rails to Trails continues to seek additional funding to help defray the costs of this project. For more information or to contribute to Tunnel Vision 2021, contact Kip Smith, Project Coordinator at 406-871-6139 or kipmansmith@gmail.com.



A Tribute to Dick Siderius, Volunteer Extraordinaire!

We of R2T have been so fortunate to have Dick Siderius on our team. He has helped us organize our priorities, partner with others to get stuff done, and always laugh along the way. He is a committed community player. When his name is mentioned the usual response is, "oh I know Dick, what a great guy."

Dick and his wife Joan raised their family and still live in the house he grew up in, in Lower Valley. Dick's father George Siderius was a state legislator and a farmer. Being an only child Dick's chores on the farm were endless but there were many Siderius cousins to help. They all grew up knowing the benefits of community and hard work.

As a child Dick rode his bicycle to the Demersville School. With Rails to Trails he was glad to be helping the students of this valley gain safe ways to get to school each day. Dick has always volunteered in organizations he values. As a kid he was involved in 4H. As an adult there are quite a few groups that owe a lot to Dick's gregarious ways and his commitment to make this valley a kinder, safer, more interesting place to live. The Central School Museum, the Presbyterian Church Leadership, and the Flathead Lakers are a few volunteer boards he is still on.

Dick led our group in one of the greatest projects Rails to Trails has organized, putting together the bridges over Ashely Ck. They came in as kits on semi trucks. The entire bridge had to be assembled piece by piece, board by board, bolts and nuts fitted together. We had a team for each bridge

that worked tirelessly for a week constructing them. Often the day would brighten when Dick would show up and share Joan's delicious baked treats. One dedicated team member remembers, "that is when I noticed

the fun personality that Dick has. He showed up every day in his work clothes for assembling these



90 foot bridges. The shoes he wore were his old office work shoes from his years at Cenex. It almost seemed there were tassels on them. He is a strong man who worked extremely hard on these bridge assembly days. Somehow those shoes really made me smile." He led our motley group for years; no one knew how to follow his big footsteps.



Dick is an easy person to talk with and fun fellow to call a friend. I've seen him laugh heartily after bowling his fourth gutter ball in a row and eat a whole apple pie in one sitting. We will forever be grateful for his determination, leadership, and great sense of humor.

NEW BACKCOUNTRY COFFEE

There is a new destination or at least a great place to stop for a break on the trail west out of Kalispell. Last year an ambitious woman who grew up in Marion decided to open a coffee shop just north of the Smith Valley Fire Dept. in the old Julie's building. Bailey's café is called the Backcountry Coffee but it is not

just coffee drinks. She offers teas, sodas, local breakfast croissants and caramel rolls to fuel your ride. Specials are noted on their facebook page. Maybe we can convince her to have ice cream in the summer? Soon there will be indoor seating as well as the convenient ride up window service.



They open early and are open till 4:30, closed only on Sundays. Stop by, we like the idea of eating our way along the trail, oh and always staying hydrated.



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THE PATH FINDER NEWSLETTER

Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana
P.O. BOX 1103
Kalispell, MT 59903-1103

Rails to Trails of NW Montana
meets at 5:30 PM on the first
Monday of each month usually at the
Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Conference Room
490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell

We're on the Web!
www.railstotrailsofnwmt.com

 [great_northern_trail](https://www.facebook.com/great_northern_trail)  [@great_northern_trail](https://www.instagram.com/great_northern_trail)

YES, WE HAVE BANDANAS!



Support your trail by buying a beautiful and useful bandana, \$8. They are bright red and colorfast. Large size (21"x 21") have many uses. Available in Kalispell at Wheatons and Sportsman or call Mary Jo at 249-2497.

We now also have stickers! For a donation of any amount you can show your support of the Great Northern Historical Trail and Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana. It is easy to donate by going to our website www.railstotrailsofnwmt.com click on the 'gifting' page and donate by paypal or credit card. There are envelopes at the gift walls. Check out the fabulous names on the gift walls and thank those folks and businesses you recognize for their support. Consider a tile or a brick yourself, showing everyone your support for trails in this beautiful Flathead Valley. Please visit our Facebook and Instagram presence as well @ great_northern_trail.

BIKE RACK STATUS - June of 2019 there was a call out to the community for bicycle rack designs. KAOS, the Kalispell Downtown Association and FVCC got together and chose 3 of many designs submitted. We just heard that the first bike rack will be installed this June and the corner of Main St. and 1st St East. The others are still being fabricated by students at FVCC. Keep your ears open, there will be another call for bicycle rack designs later this year. Use them and enjoy them.