

2005 Centennial of Service Challenge Accomplishment Report

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests

Project Name: Medicine Bow Rail to Trails

Resource/Public Benefits: The Medicine Bow Rail to Trails Project consists of converting a 23 mile stretch of abandoned railroad bed to a non-motorized trail, including trailhead improvements, trail shaping and surfacing, interpretive and regulatory signage, and a variety of other related developments. A primary destination and trailhead along the route is the Lake Owen Recreation Area; improvements to this site constituted our Centennial of Service Challenge proposal, and listed below are some of the highlights of work completed this summer.

- construction of a wheelchair-accessible trail around Lake Owen, including a section of boardwalk through a wetland
- construction of a wheelchair accessible fishing pier/shelter, with accessible approach trail
- parking area improvements (widening, surfacing, facility installation)
- closure/rehabilitation of unauthorized, heavily impacted dispersed campsites
- mitigation of unwanted impacts to wetland/lakeside resources

Congressional/Media Outreach:

The Medicine Bow Rail-Trail project has, from its start, been a community-based project, with considerable support/coverage from media outlets, as well as local and state level governmental entities. In addition to “official” media releases informing the public of the project, several pieces have appeared (based on interviews with FS personnel) in the Laramie Boomerang, Wyoming Public Radio, and the Cheyenne Tribune-Eagle. On September 21, an onsite tour was given to partners, media representatives, and congressional staffers, the events of which formed the basis for additional newspaper articles.

Community and Partnership Involvement in Project:

A variety of partners have been (and continue to be) involved in this project, which has contributed both to the successful progress realized thus far, as well as enhanced and enriched relationships amongst the contributors. Key partners include the Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, City of Cheyenne, Laramie Bicycling Network, and Albany County (WY).

Traditional Resource Outputs of Project:

- .9 miles of surfaced, wheelchair-accessible trail, 6’ wide, constructed around perimeter of lake
- 325’ of helical-pier supported boardwalk, 8’ wide, constructed through wetland
- 30’ x 20’ accessible fishing pier constructed, with shelter roof
- 250’ of 8’ wide accessible pathway to pier constructed (timber borders, crusher-fines surface)
- widening and surfacing of trailhead parking area (110’ x 64’)
- installation of Double-Cascadian wheelchair-accessible toilet facility
- installation of 410’ of 3-rail split-rail perimeter fencing around trailhead
- installation of 3 picnic site facilities
- installation of 3 panel kiosk/information board
- 2+ acres of wetland protected from human disturbance
- 4 heavily impacted dispersed campsites closed/rehabilitated

People Benefits:

The Medicine Bow Rail-Trail project has been a community-based project from its inception. Following a request from the Laramie Bicycling Network, the Albany County Commission approved the funding of a feasibility study for the project. Numerous open houses and surveys were conducted both prior and subsequent to this analysis, all of which revealed a large degree of public support for the project (as did

the Forest Service’s official scoping/comment periods conducted as part of the NEPA analysis). Finally, during the actual construction phases of the project, entities such as the City of Cheyenne, WYDOT, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, and others have come together to support the effort both financially and through in-kind services.

Partner and Funding Contributions:

Total partnership funding for this project: **\$386,000** (includes construction of 23 mile trail).

- WY Dept. of Transportation (Tea 21) Rail-trail grant: \$326,000 (Cash)
- Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (Univ. of Wyoming) grant: \$5,000 (Cash)
- City of Cheyenne: \$15,000 (In-kind)
- Albany County (Feasibility Grant): \$40,000 (Cash)

● Centennial Award \$50,000 (Cash)

Total Cost for Project: 436,000

Photo Highlights



Fishing Pier/Shelter



Accessible path to pier



Surfaced Trail around lake



Outhouse facility & perimeter fencing



Boardwalk section



Congressional/Stakeholder Tour