Missoula County Trails Bond Program
Level II Application

Project Title: _____Seeley Lake Trail System _____

Part A – Applicant's Checklist

Use the application checklist to verify that **all required documents** are included in this application in the order listed below. All sections must be completed to meet minimum qualifications.

☒Part A – Applicant's Checklist

☒Part B – Application Summary Form

☒Part C – Project Details (narrative response to project questions)

☒Part D – Project Budget Description

☐Part E – Acknowledgement of Open-Space land designation

- *USFS and Missoula County are working to finalize*.

☒Part F – Attachments (identify each attachment in the table of contents cover page and list attachments in the following order)

1. Evidence of commitment to long-term maintenance (official letter or resolution)
    i. SMT/USFS volunteer agreement
2. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
    i. USFS signature page
3. Evidence of community support (letters of support – maximum of 10)
    i. NICA, Sen. Beard, Nordic Club, MTBM, USFS.
4. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
    i. N/A
5. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
    i. Funding / Match Matrix
6. Photos of project area
    i. Added.
7. Site map(s), printed copy. Additional project location maps or GIS shape files will be accepted.
    i. Radius Trail Solutions 2024 Trails Plan
8. Other relevant materials
    i. NEPA Record of Decision.

Completed applications can either be mailed to Missoula County Parks and Trails, 200 West Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802 or emailed to: CountyParks@missoulacounty.us. Faxes will not be accepted.

Part B – Application Summary

Applicant Information	
Name of Applicant: Scenic Montana Trails	
Address: PO Box 174	
Primary Contact: Cathy Kahnle	Title: Board of Directors
Telephone: 406-531-4152	Email: cathy@kahnlelaw.com

Fiscal Sponsor(s) Information
(If applicable. Additional partners should be discussed in Part C5: Project Match of the application.)

Name:	
Address:	
Contact:	Title:
Telephone:	Email:
Partner Responsibilities:	

Project Information	
Project Title: Seeley Lake Trail System	
Surface Type: Natural / Dirt	Planning Region: Seeley Lake
Project/Trailhead Location (Geocode, Lat/Long, etc): 47°11'22.2"N 113°27'57.1"W	
Bond Program Request: $250,000	Bond Program Request as % of Total Project: ~16.7%
Secured Funding Total: $150,000	Total Project Amount: ~$1.5 Million
Has your organization previously received Missoula County Trails Bond funding? NO.	

Part C – Project Details (Scored out of 100 points)

Please respond to the following questions completely but as concisely as possible. If attachments apply to a question, please fully answer the question and include a reference to the attachment in Part F.

Point assignments will be used as a guide for project recommendations, and no minimum score is required for project approval.

C-1 Access and Connectivity – (25pts.)

1. ***Describe the project goal, scope, and expected results. Be specific. Discuss the primary outcomes that project will provide, the intended route, and connections.***

Goal. The goal of the Seeley Lake Trail System is to create a high-quality, year-round trail network that provides safe and accessible recreation opportunities, connects the community to public lands, and supports Seeley Lake's long-term economic resilience. The project will establish approximately 25 miles of new, natural-surface, multi-use trails on U.S. Forest Service land immediately adjacent to town, giving residents close-to-home access, offering engaging terrain for all ages and abilities, and creating a compelling new recreation destination along the Highway 83 corridor.

The trail system is designed for a broad spectrum of users, including residents seeking daily outdoor access, local students and families who can reach the trailhead from school, adaptive users, fat bikers, and visitors interested in new trail experiences in western Montana. The beginner friendly lower loop trails are designed with adaptive use in mind and can also serve as a venue for youth programming and Montana NICA events, while the upper trails provide more advanced options. In winter, selected loops will be groomed for fat biking, expanding four-season recreation opportunities at the Seeley Creek trailhead.

Scope. The project scope includes the full design and phased construction of a purpose-built, stacked-loop trail system developed by Radius Trail Solutions, a professional trail firm with over a decade of experience in western Montana. This foundation ensures the system reflects modern standards, incorporates sustainable design and construction practices and aligns with user needs.

The scope also includes construction of a new trailhead, installation of educational and wayfinding signage, and development of an ongoing stewardship and maintenance plan in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. Volunteer trail-building and stewardship events directly strengthen community engagement and connect people with their public lands.

Expected results. The expected results are broad and long-lasting. The project will establish a year-round recreation hub supporting local quality of life, strengthening youth opportunities, and contributing to a more diverse and resilient economy for Seeley Lake. It will provide safe places for people to recreate and connect with nature, high-quality experiences for residents and visitors, and a new identity for the community rooted in public land access and sustainable outdoor recreation.

By delivering a professionally designed, community-focused trail network, the Seeley Lake Trail System will become a transformative asset for Seeley Lake and the broader Seeley/Swan region.

2. ***Describe the intended or anticipated group of users for this trail project. Provide an estimate of the number of trail users per year along with an explanation for how this figure was calculated. Data from other similar facilities and use-cases can be referenced to estimate use projections.***

Intended users. The Seeley Lake Trail System is designed for a broad range of nonmotorized users, including mountain bikers, hikers, runners, birders, adaptive users, fat bikers, and families seeking accessible outdoor recreation close to town. The network offers experiences for all ages and abilities; from beginner-friendly to advanced and expert. The project also targets under-served user groups like adaptive cyclists, fat bikers and young athletes participating in the Montana Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) events.

Design considerations have been made to create loops specifically for adaptive riders, including wider tread widths, moderate grades, and gentle turning radii to accommodate three-wheeled adaptive bikes and other mobility devices. These features allow riders with mobility challenges to participate fully and independently in the trail system. During winter, these wider trails and loops can be groomed to accommodate fat-bike use, providing new winter recreation opportunities.

Estimated number of trail users. Estimated annual visitation is projected at approximately *8,000-10,000 uses per year*, once the system is fully constructed and promoted. This is a conservative planning estimate informed by studies of comparable western Montana trail systems like the Whitefish Trail, where Headwaters Economics documented *tens of thousands of annual uses* on a 42-mile nonmotorized trail network adjacent to a gateway town.

The visitation estimate represents total nonmotorized uses, including repeat daily use by residents and single-day activity by visitors. As Seeley Lake strengthens its recreation identity

and begins to promote the system more broadly, annual use is expected to increase by approximately 5 to 10 percent per year during the first several years of operation.

The network fills one of the last remaining gaps in western Montana's purpose-built trail network. As a result, the project is expected to attract regional riders from Missoula, Helena, and the Flathead who currently travel significant distances for comparable trail experiences. Organized events like Montana NICA race weekends can contribute significant spikes in visitation, with NICA events drawing up to 1,000+ participants and spectators. In aggregate, you begin to see the potential this system has to support and accommodate large numbers of diverse users.

3. ***Describe how the project improves the overall Level of Service for Trails, as identified in the 2012 Parks and Trails Master Plan (p 52) for each of the following objectives as applicable:***
    - ***a. Connectivity within communities***
    - ***b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands***
    - ***c. Connectivity with other communities***
    - ***d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network***
    - ***e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources***

The Seeley Lake Trail System directly advances the Level of Service objectives outlined in the 2012 Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan.

a. Connectivity within communities

The trail system connects Seeley Lake's neighborhoods, schools, downtown businesses, and accommodations to a new centrally located recreation amenity. The primary trailhead off Morrell Creek Road is located less than a mile from the elementary, middle, and high school campus.

The vast majority of multi-use trails in Seeley are located farther away from town, often requiring a long drive to access. This project allows residents to reach public lands directly from home without driving, supports active transportation, and encourages frequent and daily use by a broad demographic of users and interests.

b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands

The entire trail system is located on permanently accessible public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Lolo National Forest, Seeley Lake Ranger District. The project improves and expands access to public lands, converting what has historically been a winter-focused area into a year-round recreation destination. The two trailheads accessing the site, one of which is a

new addition on the west side, serve as managed gateways informing the public of rules and regulations and inspiring users to recreate responsibly on National Forest lands.

c. Connectivity with other communities

The project supports Missoula County's goal of connecting rural communities through shared recreation infrastructure. Positioned along the Glacier Country tourism corridor linking Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, Seeley Lake serves as a natural midpoint for travelers seeking a range of outdoor experiences.

By adding a new high-quality trail system within this regional network, the project strengthens Seeley Lake's role as a gateway community rich in outdoor opportunities. The trail system adds to the existing recreation amenities along the Highway 83 and Highway 200 corridors, and the neighboring communities of Condon, Ovando, Lincoln, and Clearwater Junction will directly benefit from increased visitation, helping drive additional traffic, spending, and trips throughout the region.

d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network

The Seeley Lake Trail System complements the existing Seeley Creek Nordic Ski Trails, which currently only serves winter users, by adding new winter fat biking trails. By integrating summer-use trails and shared trailhead infrastructure, the project converts the site into a true four-season recreation hub. The site design allows for future connectivity to the proposed regional routes identified in the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Possible future connections include, north toward the Clearwater River Trail corridor, and southwest toward Camp Paxson, as well as to Placid Lake State Park and former timber lands recently acquired The Nature Conservancy that connect to Potomac and Missoula via Blanchard & Gold Creeks.

e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources

The trail system improves access to the natural landscapes that define the Seeley Lake region; larch forests, alpine ridgelines, and views of the valley's iconic chain of lakes. It connects to existing amenities at the Seeley Creek Trailhead and lies within easy reach of nearby camping, lodging and community services.

The project transforms a seasonal, underutilized area into a managed network that helps residents and visitors experience and enjoy the area's rich natural and cultural resources. The project will improve local residents' quality of life and advance the connectivity goals outlined in Missoula County's trail and recreation planning framework.

4. ***Describe any historic, cultural, and scenic resources found in the project area. How will this project enhance these resources?***

Historic resources. Historically, the project area supported the region's timber economy and features access road relics originating from early logging operations and fire-suppression. The closure of Pyramid Lumber in 2024 marked the end of nearly a century of logging activity that once anchored the community. By repurposing portions of this historic working landscape into a modern recreation area, the project honors Seeley Lake's past while also looking forward to a sustainable economic framework rooted in public land access and outdoor recreation.

Cultural resources. Culturally, the area has longstanding ties to neighboring Tribal nations, particularly the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, whose ancestral territories include the Seeley-Swan Valley. The new trail system's interpretive sign opportunities provide space to acknowledge Indigenous stewardship of these lands and to incorporate educational elements that highlight traditional ecological knowledge and historic travel routes.

Scenic resources. The landscape's scenic character is central to the project's appeal. The trails traverse mature larch forests and touch burned areas from the 2017 Rice Ridge Fire, offering expansive views of the Swan Range, Mission Mountains and Seeley Lake below. Trail alignments were intentionally designed to frame these views while minimizing environmental impact.

C-2 Project Readiness – (15 pts.)

1. ***Discuss the ownership and legal access to the proposed project site. Detail any third-party rights, easements, or other encumbrances that exist. Provide supporting documentation proving ownership, legal access or permission. Provide a site map in Part F.***

Site ownership. The Seeley Lake Trail System is located entirely on public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, within the Seeley Lake Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest. No private land acquisition or easements are required for project implementation. Scenic Montana Trails, the project sponsor, has worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service to secure full authorization for construction, operation, and long-term maintenance under the agency's existing authority.

Environmental. All environmental compliance and permitting have been completed through the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which was finalized in August of 2025 as part of a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) timber and restoration project in the same area. The NEPA decision explicitly includes the trail system as an approved recreation component within a concentrated recreation area. Approval granted Scenic Montana Trails the ability to

construct and maintain the trails in partnership with the Forest Service under a sponsored volunteer agreement and coordinated stewardship plans.

Site access. Access to the site is provided via the existing Seeley Creek Trailhead on Morrell Ck Road, a public road maintained by Missoula County that intersects with Montana Highway 83. The trailhead is fully accessible to the public and already includes parking, restrooms, and a warming hut used for winter recreation. Because all trail construction will occur on lands managed by the USFS, there are no third-party ownership claims, encumbrances, or easements affecting the project area.

Documentation supporting legal ownership and access are provided in Part E.

2. ***What planning work related to design, engineering, and scoping have been completed to date? What remains?***

Planning to date. Comprehensive planning for the Seeley Lake Trail System has been conducted through a multi-year collaborative process led by Scenic Montana Trails, the U.S. Forest Service and Radius Trail Solutions. The planning phase began with public outreach and stakeholder engagement beginning in 2023, through a series of open house gatherings hosted by the Seeley Lake Community Council. Strong support and enthusiasm for the project have been demonstrated throughout public meetings, and most importantly, there is zero known opposition to this project from the community or otherwise.

In 2024, SMT hired Radius Trail Solutions to develop the Seeley Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan, *attached in Part F*. The Trail Plan was incorporated into the Forest Service's NEPA analysis for a Good Neighbor Authority timber project, which was approved in August, 2025.

With NEPA approval, the project was green lit for implementation. Over the summer of 2025, with support from Missoula County's Community Parks & Recreation Grant, Radius conducted detailed field reconnaissance, initial survey and trail alignment for approx. 7.5 miles the new trail system within Missoula County.

Remaining planning work. The remaining tasks focus on raising funds for implementation and construction of individual trail segments. This includes final trail alignments, minor field adjustments during build-out, signage design and installation, and coordination of contractors and construction teams.

3. ***Permits may be required for your project. For example, a trail located in close proximity to streams or wetland areas will require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE 404) permit. List any known permits required by your project and the status of***

obtaining those permits. Itemize anticipated costs for any known permits, government fees, and consultants in Part D (Budget Form).

As noted previously, all required environmental compliance and permitting for the Seeley Lake Trail System have been completed through the NEPA process administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The trail network was reviewed and approved as part of the Seeley Lake HWY83 GNA project, which addressed resource concerns including cultural, hydrology, wildlife, and vegetation. The NEPA decision authorizes construction of the full 25-mile trail system and associated facilities, and no additional federal or state permits are required prior to implementation. There are no known costs associated with additional permits or government fees. Environmental review, engineering scoping, and compliance were completed as part of the Forest Service's integrated planning effort, and no consultant or permitting expenses remain outstanding.

A copy of the NEPA record of decision is included in Part F.

4. ***What is the expected timeline for initiating and completing the project?***

The System is designed around phased implementation over a four-year period, with construction already underway. Funding availability will determine the pace and sequence of construction for trail segments. Below is an approximate schedule proposed by Radius found in the 2024 Trails Plan:

Phase 1, Spring 2025 – Fall 2026: Construction of the entire multiuse West Perimeter and East Perimeter Trails, forming the 'backbone' of the system (est. cost $162,360). Construction of the first directional downhill trail, the intermediate friendly blue-flow trail (est. cost $174,240). Construction of the multiuse Lower Loop trails accommodating fat bike grooming and adaptive cyclists will be built using trained volunteer labor to reduce costs and empower volunteer engagement. Work to date includes corridor clearing, preliminary excavation, and machine-built construction of 1.5 miles of the West Perimeter Trail.

Phase 2, Spring 2027 – Fall 2027: Construction of the beginner friendly green-level flow trail (est. cost $102,432). Construction of the Upper Stacked Loop Trails (est. cost $130,680) Additions to the multiuse Lower Loop trails as capacity and volunteers are allow. These segments will establish the core riding experience, create several new loop opportunities, establish the multi-use and multi-directional trails in the center of the system, and help allow for events and Montana NICA programming.

Phase 3, Spring 2028 – Fall 2028: Construction of the first advanced black-level directional downhill trail (est. cost $126,720). Construction of the second intermediate blue-level trail (est. cost $133,056). These segments will attract enthusiasts and avid users eager for challenging trails and engaging terrain.

Phase 4, Spring 2029 - Fall 2029: Construction of the remaining advanced black-level trails (est. cost $110,880 and $114,048 respectively). These segments cater to dedicated riders and provide opportunities for skill progression and more challenging experiences.

If full funding is achieved through the Missoula County Trails Bond and private matching sources, the complete 25-mile system could be installed and opened to the public by late 2029. Individual trail segments will be opened to the public as they are completed, ensuring incremental community benefit throughout the construction period.

5. ***What opportunities may be lost if this project is not funded at this time?***

If this project is not funded at this time, several important opportunities for the community of Seeley and more broadly Missoula County could be lost.

Without Trails Bond investment, the project would lose critical momentum and risk delayed implementation. The project has reached the pivotal stage where timely public investment can unlock significant private funding, drive project continuity, and deliver immediate and lasting benefits to the community.

Lost or delayed opportunities for economic development. The project serves as a cornerstone in Seeley Lake's ongoing economic transition following the 2024 closure of Pyramid Lumber. Delaying development would mean missing a timely opportunity to replace lost jobs and tax base with sustainable, recreation-based economic activity. Each construction season that passes without progress further diminishes volunteer energy, community enthusiasm, philanthropic interest and the credibility of the long-term vision outlined in the Seeley Lake Trails Plan.

Lost or delayed opportunities for cost and construction efficiency. From an environmental and planning standpoint, failure to fund the project now could result in the loss of favorable construction conditions and cost efficiencies. Trail corridors have already been flagged and cleared, and the Forest Service has dedicated seasonal resources to help expediate and accelerate construction.

The County would also lose a rare opportunity to leverage a high ratio of private and volunteer match toward a transformative, community-supported project that fulfills multiple goals of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

C-3 Project Design (10 pts.)

1. ***Describe the surface type, length, width, trail amenities, and lifespan of project construction materials.***

Surface type. The Seeley Lake Trail System will be constructed as a natural-surface, singletrack trail network built to modern sustainability and accessibility standards. Trail surfaces will consist primarily of compacted native soils shaped and reinforced using out-sloping, rolling grade dips, and selective armoring in areas with steeper grades or higher drainage needs. In segments where soils are sandy or loose, machine and hand-finished compaction will be used to add durability.

Length and width. The full system includes ~25-miles of trail, varying in width depending on function and intended use. Climbing trails and the Perimeter Loop will generally be constructed at a width of 24 to 36 inches to support multi-directional use. Descending trails, including flow and technical lines, will range from 24 to 48 inches depending on features, expected rider speed and intended use. The Lower Loops are designed for beginners and adaptive riders and will be wider, 48 to 52 inches, to accommodate three-wheeled adaptive cycles.

Amenities. New trail amenities include wayfinding signage, regulatory and interpretive signage, a new trailhead kiosk and parking area located at the west entrance, and expanded parking at the main Seeley Creek trailhead.

Across Morell Creek Road from the Seeley Creek trailhead, the addition of a new four-season community event center and maintenance shed is being planned to house summer trail and winter snow grooming tools. This amenity will be available to the public and groups to use as a community center and support future events. Trail Bond dollars will not be used for this project.

Lifespan of materials. Construction materials are native soils and native on-site rock and timber. With regular maintenance brushing corridors, clearing drainage and periodic tread repair, these trails will remain safe, fun and accessible indefinitely.

The use of modern sustainable trail design minimizes erosion and reduces long-term maintenance costs, and the strong partnership between Scenic Montana Trails and the U.S.

Forest Service means the system will be sustained by dedicated volunteers backstopped by USFS resources throughout the lifespan.

2. ***Describe any design considerations being made to enhance accessibility for disabled or people reliant upon a mobility device to access trail facilities?***

The trail system incorporates several design considerations to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities and those who rely on mobility devices. The Lower Loop alignments were intentionally routed through mellow terrain with consistent low grades, wider tread widths, and gentle turns to accommodate three-wheeled adaptive mountain bikes and mobility devices commonly used on natural-surface trails. These trails feature smoother surfaces, minimal out-sloping and open sightlines to create safe and comfortable experiences for a wide range of abilities and speeds.

Trail widths in these areas will be between the recommended 48 – 52 inches when feasible, allowing for passing and maneuvering. Grade reversals, drainage, and corners are designed with wider radius' to ensure compatibility with larger wheelbases and lower ground clearance typical of adaptive equipment.

The main access for users with mobility challenges begins at the Seeley Creek Trailhead, which provides flat, accessible parking, restrooms, and year-round access from Auggie-Morrell Road. Wayfinding signage at trailheads and along the Lower Loops will clearly indicate intended use and inform users of distance, difficulty, expectations, and recommended routes for adaptive users.

These considerations follow best practices used by adaptive recreation programs around the country and align with Missoula County's objective to create inclusive recreation opportunities on public lands.

3. ***Discuss any major site modifications or structures included in the design such as excavation, relocation of utilities, bridges, retaining walls, etc. and why they are needed.***

<u>Excavation</u>

The Seeley Lake Trail System has been designed in accordance with International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and U.S. Forest Service sustainable trail standards. Most construction will involve excavation using mini-excavators and hand crews, shaping natural-surface tread while installing drainage features to achieve the rolling contours necessary for

long-term durability. This level of excavation is typical for singletrack trail construction and does not require utilities work, right-of-way disturbance, or large-scale earthmoving.

Natural surface trail construction involves light excavation of organic material down to mineral soil and reshaping of the mineral soil to create a stable surface. Excavation depth ranges from a few inches to a few feet depending on the slope of the hillside and the features (switchbacks, berms, drains, etc) being built. Modern trails are designed to have drainage features (swales, rolling grades, grade reversals, drain dips, etc) throughout to prevent major erosion by directing water off trail surfaces. Trail excavation is performed with small equipment, typically mini-excavators in the 1-2 ton range, sometimes including small tracked dump carriers on mini skid steers around 36" width, and additionally with hand tool labor.

Relocation of Utilities
Trail construction is unlikely to require relocation of utilities.

Bridges
In general, significant effort has been put into the trail design process to avoid wet areas and creek crossings. Where topography and trail network topology require crossing wet areas, small, low structures such as puncheons or turnpikes, or other methods of reinforcing soil such as rock armoring may be required. Structure type and design will be selected in collaboration with Seeley Lake Ranger District to meet USFS specifications based on specific site criteria, designed use, and maintenance requirements/capabilities.

Retaining Walls
Short retaining walls of stone or timber are occasionally used in trail construction in areas of particularly steep terrain and/or unstable soils. Retaining walls are also more commonly used in construction by hand compared to machine/mini-excavator construction. The terrain traversed in this planned network is unlikely to require retaining walls, especially considering most trails will be built with mini-excavators. If any retaining walls are required, they will be built to USFS specifications.

4. ***Describe how the project will be implemented once all funding has been attained. Explain your process for choosing vendors, materials, systems, etc. Attach any detailed maps, photos, or renderings illustrating the project design and vision.***

Implementation plan. Once necessary funding is in place, the Seeley Lake Trail System will move forward using the four-year phased implementation outlined in the Trails Plan. The project is designed to be implemented on a rolling basis, with each phase beginning as soon as its funding target is met. This approach keeps construction moving, prevents long gaps between phases,

and allows completed trails to open to the public while the remaining segments continue to be aligned and constructed.

Implementation began in fall 2025 with initial alignments flagged by Radius, corridors cleared and volunteers and the USFS and trained volunteer excavation completing the first 1.5 miles of the West Perimeter Trail. Construction will resume as soon as the ground thaws in spring 2026, starting with completing the West Perimeter and Upper Perimeter Loop, the primary climbing trails, then advancing to the descending trails, trailhead improvements and finally, signage.

Contractor selection. Contractors will be chosen through a competitive selection process that evaluates qualifications, cost, experience with bike-optimized trail construction, and familiarity with project partners and design standards. Scenic Montana Trails will solicit proposals from regional trail builders and will consult with the Forest Service during selection to ensure that all work aligns with federal labor requirements and regulations.

Materials and methods selection. Materials and construction methods will follow design standards developed by IMBA and the Forest Service. This includes the use of native mineral soils, hand-finished tread work, rolling contour construction, selective rock armoring, and drainage features that meet sustainability best practices. Signage, kiosks, and trail markers will also be installed to agency specifications and will be compatible with both summer use and winter grooming.

5. ***Will this project address safety issues? If yes, how so?***

Yes, the project directly addresses existing and potential safety issues by formalizing access and reducing unmanaged use in the area. Currently, the project area contains informal user-created routes from illegal firewood. These routes can cause erosion, impact wildlife and are not maintained for safety. By replacing these user-created routes with a professionally designed and purpose-built trail network, the project eliminates unsafe and damaging informal paths.

The new system also improves safety by organizing users into designated beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails. This reduces the likelihood of conflict between users with different abilities and directs users to trails compatible with their abilities and desired experience. Example: descending trails will have predictable features, safe exit points, and adequate sight distances for their intended speeds. The wider, smoother lower loops offer safer options for beginners, young riders, adaptive users, and families who need predictable terrain.

Trailhead improvements also improve safety by providing clear access points with parking, signage, and information on difficulty, seasonal restrictions, and etiquette. The project also

supports winter use safety by segregating the new fat bike trails within the existing Nordic network, reducing winter-use conflicts and creating clear winter operating zones.

Finally, the area's close proximity to town reduces the need for residents and visitors to drive long distances, improving traffic safety for everyone.

6. ***Describe surrounding natural resources at the site, including predominant vegetation and wildlife species, habitat areas, water and other natural resources. Discuss impacts to these resources as a result of this project and describe how they will be protected. (Data from the Missoula County Practical Landscape Assessment for Conservation and Enhancement (PLACE) Resource Atlas can serve as a potential resource for attaining this information.)***

Predominant vegetation types. The project area is located on public land north of Seeley Lake within a landscape designated by the Forest Service as a "concentrated recreational use zone" as defined by the draft Lolo Forest Plan. This region of the Lolo National Forest is characterized by mixed conifer stands dominated by Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and western larch, with patches of regenerating forest resulting from past beetle kill and scars left after the historic Rice Ridge wildfire and ongoing fuels-reduction work. These vegetation types are typical of mid-elevation forests in the Seeley-Swan Valley and provide habitat structure for a wide range of wildlife species.

Wildlife. Wildlife present in the area includes grizzly and black bear, elk, white-tailed deer, mountain lion, Canada lynx, and other species common to the region. The NEPA review for the GNA project evaluated potential effects to these species and determined that recreation impacts would be limited and manageable through careful trail design and seasonal considerations. The mountain bike trail system was incorporated into the GNA decision specifically to provide managed recreation opportunities in an area already popular for concentrated winter recreation use. Fuels-reduction activities will enhance the site, increase sightlines and reduce the likelihood of wildlife encounters within trail corridors.

Water resources. There are limited water resources within the project area. The Forest Service identified one ephemeral stream and a small marshy area. All trail alignments have been routed to avoid these features, and no trail construction will occur within or immediately adjacent to wetlands or perennial waterways. This routing avoids the need for additional permits.

Resource impacts. Environmental impacts from the trail system will be minimal due to the project's location and its sustainable design. Trails are laid out to follow rolling-contour construction principles and to avoid sensitive habitat areas, steep slopes and erosion-prone

soils. Construction methods using small machines and hand crews will further minimize and reduce impacts on the environment.

Long-term natural resource protection is supported through consistent annual maintenance. Maintaining drainage, clearing corridors, and repairing are proactive measures to improve conditions and support forest health.

7. ***Is this project part of a larger conservation easement acquisition project? If so, describe the conservation values and public benefits/value of the land, easement or water resource.***

No, this project is not part of a larger conservation easement or acquisition effort. The Seeley Lake Trail System is located entirely on federally owned public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service within the Lolo National Forest. Because the land is already in public ownership and managed for multiple-use recreation, habitat conservation, and forest stewardship, no easement acquisition is required to secure public access or protect natural resources.

C-4 Project Support (20-pts.)

1. ***Summarize your organization's history of involvement with this project*.**

Scenic Montana Trails has been involved with the Seeley Lake Trail System since the project's early concept phase, though the origins trace back to work initiated by the Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) in 2016. At that time, CRC conducted community outreach, completed a survey, and produced an initial report exploring the feasibility of new trails near Seeley Lake. Several individuals who are now part of Scenic Montana Trails participated in and helped manage that early effort. After the feasibility report was completed, the project went dormant until Scenic Montana Trails revived it in 2022.

Since then, Scenic Montana Trails has served as the lead organization. SMT began collaborating with the Seeley Lake Ranger District beginning in 2023 to advance a purpose-built, multi-use trail system that would complement existing recreation at the Seeley Creek Trailhead. SMT has guided the project through planning, design, fundraising, and the initial phases of implementation.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Scenic Montana Trails organized community meetings, gathered public input, coordinated volunteer trail days, and secured early seed funding to support professional design work. The organization hired Radius Trail Solutions to complete the Seeley

Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan, which established the 25-mile stacked-loop network, identified trail building phases, and provided cost estimates and construction strategies.

Scenic Montana Trails coordinated with the Forest Service during the NEPA environmental review, ensuring that trail alignments, design features, and resource considerations aligned with agency standards. The organization has continued to expand partnerships with local businesses, regional nonprofits, youth organizations, and various user groups.

In 2025, SMT initiated the first phase of construction using volunteer crews and early funding contributions, demonstrating capacity, commitment, and a high level of readiness. The group remains the primary steward, fundraiser, and community liaison for the project and will continue to lead implementation in collaboration with the Forest Service and local partners.

2. ***Discuss any efforts to obtain public input, disseminate public information, develop partnerships, and garner community support specifically related to this project. For regional trails, the process needs to include notification and/or involvement of residents from adjacent communities.***

Public input and information dissemination. Public outreach and community engagement have been central to the Seeley Lake Trail System from the earliest stages. Beginning in 2016, Seeley Lake community members, the Seeley Lake Ranger District and Clearwater Resource Council initiated a series of public outreach efforts to introduce the project concept, gather feedback, and engage locals to shape the design. This included presentations at multiple Seeley Lake Community Council meetings, open-house style discussions with residents, and updates delivered through community newsletters, local businesses, and social media. These meetings consistently generated strong support for the project and provided input that influenced trail alignment decisions, user priorities, adaptive trail features, and overall design.

Public information has also been shared through project flyers, direct communication with adjacent landowners, and coordination with the Seeley Lake Nordic Club, Montana Interscholastic Cycling Association teams, youth organizations, and local outdoor recreation groups. These groups provided feedback on desired experiences, winter use compatibility, and safety considerations. Scenic Montana Trails used this input to refine the Trails Plan and communicate updates to the broader community.

Partnerships. Partnership development has been a major focus of the project. Scenic Montana Trails has established strong collaborative relationships with the U.S. Forest Service, Missoula County, Seeley Lake Elementary School and High School, the Chamber of Commerce, local

businesses, and regional recreation nonprofits. The organization is actively cultivating outdoor industry partners such as Shimano, onX, IMBA and others. Support from the Seeley Lake Nordic Club ensures the trail system *complements* rather than conflicts with the existing Nordic ski trail network.

Support in and from adjacent communities. SMT has shared project information with residents and organizations across the Blackfoot Valley communities, specifically Ovando and Condon, to raise awareness and align the project with broader recreation and tourism efforts in the Clearwater and Swan Valleys. Communication with these communities has emphasized the potential for shared economic benefits, complementary recreation opportunities, and disbursing users to reduce strain on existing popular trail destinations.

3. ***Is this project identified in any planning documents, from site specific plans at the smallest scale to regional or statewide plans at the largest scale? If so, name each plan and discuss how your project aligns with any related elements.***

Yes, the project is complimentary of several planning documents at the local, regional, and federal levels that emphasize improved recreation access, sustainable trail development, and community-connected outdoor infrastructure. The Seeley Lake Trail System directly advances these goals.

Site level. At the site level, the project is grounded in the Seeley Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan completed by Radius Trail Solutions in 2024. The Trails Plan was developed with community input and serves as the guiding document for project construction and stewardship and will be incorporated into the Forest Service recreation program.

County level. At the county level, the project supports the 2012 Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan by improving access to public lands, increasing community connectivity, and expanding nonmotorized recreation opportunities for rural county residents. The plan highlights the need for trail systems near communities that link to surrounding natural areas and provide year-round use. The Seeley Lake Trail System directly fulfills these objectives.

Regional level. Regionally, the project aligns with the Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2020–2024), which identifies expanding trail access, improving equitable recreation opportunities, supporting youth outdoor programs, and strengthening community resilience through recreation as statewide priorities. The project meets these goals by creating beginner-friendly and adaptive-accessible loops, supporting youth groups such as

NICA, and contributing to Seeley Lake's economic diversification following the Pyramid Lumber mill closure.

Federal level. At the federal level, the project is authorized through the U.S. Forest Service's NEPA decision for the HWY83 GNA project, finalized in August 2025. That decision evaluated the full trail system, approved all proposed alignments, and identified the required environmental mitigation measures. The project area is also identified in the draft Lolo Forest Plan as within a concentrated recreation use zone.

The project also complements regional tourism and recreation priorities identified by Glacier Country Tourism and the Clearwater Resource Council, which emphasize strengthening outdoor recreation infrastructure in rural communities along the Glacier-to-Yellowstone corridor..

4. ***Briefly discuss support from entities and user groups that are supporting the project in ways other than cash or in-kind contributions. A maximum of ten support letters should be attached in Part F and clearly labeled on the section cover page. All letters should be dated within the last two years.***

Several entities and user groups are actively supporting the Seeley Lake Trail System through advocacy, community engagement, technical expertise, and organizational capacity, even when not providing direct cash or in-kind contributions. Their involvement encapsulates the "can do" spirit of rural communities and strengthens the project's visibility.

Forest Service. The Forest Service has consistently supported the project through planning, collaboration, guiding it through the NEPA process, and with ongoing coordination throughout implementation. The Forest Service has provided significant in-kind labor and funding to support this project, deploying seasonal trail and fire crews when available. The Forest Service will integrate the trail system into its recreation program, supporting the project's long-term success.

Schools. Local schools, including Seeley Lake Elementary and Seeley-Swan High School, have expressed strong support due to the value the trail system provides for youth outdoor programs, physical education opportunities, and access to public lands.

Montana Interscholastic Cycling Association. The Montana Interscholastic Cycling Association strongly supports the project as a potential future venue for youth races, events, and volunteer stewardship days. Although not contributing direct funding, their endorsement strengthens the project's importance for statewide youth recreation and provides long-term programming potential.

Business community. The Seeley Lake Community Council, Chamber of Commerce, and several local business owners have also endorsed the project through formal statements, meeting participation, and public advocacy. Their support reflects the community's recognition of the project's economic and social benefits.

Nonprofit community. Additionally, regional nonprofits Clearwater Resource Council and Montana Trail Coalition have expressed support for the project within broader conservation and recreation goals. These groups provide credibility and reinforce how the project fits within larger recreation community.

5. ***Discuss any objections or opposition to this project. Include any letters, petitions, news articles, or other documents evidencing opposition. What has been done to address concerns and how has the opposition responded?***

To date, the Seeley Lake Trail System has not encountered organized opposition, and no petitions, news articles, or formal objection letters have been submitted to Scenic Montana Trails, the Forest Service, or Missoula County. Public involvement efforts held through the Seeley Lake Community Council, open houses, and Forest Service outreach consistently reflected strong support for the project, with comments focused on design preferences, trail difficulty balance, and youth accessibility rather than fundamental objections to the project itself.

C-5 Project Match (20 pts.)

1. ***Describe any partnerships providing cash or in-kind contributions. Attach all partner support letters in Part F and clearly label on the section cover page. All support letters committing a match must indicate that the match will remain available through the project timeline.***

Several partners are providing cash and in-kind contributions that significantly strengthen the project's match and demonstrate broad community investment in the Trail System.

Cash contributions. Significant cash contributions by outdoor industry partners including Shimano, onX, Recreation Trails Program, National Forest Foundation and other private foundations are pending, totaling ~$375,000. Community members, the SMT Board and small businesses have raised and contributed over ~$100,000, establishing early match needed to pursue large grants.

In-kind contributions. In-kind contributions come from multiple sources. Scenic Montana Trails has organized and provided substantial volunteer labor for initial corridor clearing and trained volunteers have already built 1.5 miles of new trail, dedicating over 300+ hours of volunteer labor in the process. These volunteer efforts reduce costs and build community ownership of the project.

The Forest Service has and will continue to contribute technical oversight, environmental oversight, funding though cost sharing agreements, access to some equipment, staff coordination hours, and seasonal labor forces.

Additional in-kind support comes from local organizations such as the Seeley Lake Nordic Club and the Seeley Lake Community Foundation, which can assist with outreach, community engagement, and integration into existing programs. These partnerships reflect a well-established match structure that includes both financial commitments and ongoing labor and technical support.

All letters of support are included in Part F.

2. ***What percentage of the project cost has been secured versus how much remains? What are your plans for raising additional funds? Attach documentation for all match funding secured to date in Part F. What is your contingency plan in case pending funding requests are not granted? If this project is part of a larger multi-phased project, all of the match shown in this application must be dedicated to this phase.***

Approximately ten percent (10%) of the total project cost has been secured to date through a combination of cash contributions, Board fundraising, and in-kind support. Funding in place equates to about $150,000 from local donors and Scenic Montana Trails' Board of Directors. These funds have allowed SMT to hire DJ&A to manage the project and pursue larger more transformative funding sources, like the Trails Bond.

The remaining ninety percent (90%) of project costs will be raised through a combination of Missoula County Trails Bond (Phase 1), state Recreation Trails Program (RTP) and National Forest Foundation (NFF) requests (Phase 2), and additional foundations and industry contributions (Phase 3,4)

Because this application is dedicated to Phase 1 of a larger multi-year project, all match resources identified here are committed specifically to Phase 1. The phased approach ensures that Trails Bond funds will directly leverage secured and anticipated match dollars to complete and operationalize a portion of the system, even when future phases require separate funding.

If any pending funding requests are not granted, the project's phased design provides a clear contingency path. The trail system can be built in scalable segments that match available resources without compromising quality or long-term viability.

A funding stack and match strategy spreadsheet is included in Part F.

C-6 Maintenance (10 pts.)

1. ***Describe the long-term maintenance plan for the trail facility. Estimate the annual costs to maintain the facility, how those numbers were calculated, how you intend to fund maintenance, and who will be responsible for maintenance.***

Maintenance plan. Long-term maintenance for the Seeley Lake Trail System will be led by the U.S. Forest Service in coordination with Scenic Montana Trails volunteers via a sponsored volunteer agreement. This shared stewardship model was implemented for early construction and will continue after the full system is built out. Annual maintenance activities include brushing, tread repair, drainage clearing, erosion control and repairing/replacing signage as needed.

Maintenance costs and funding. Annual maintenance costs are estimated at approximately $5,000 per year. This estimate is calculated on a per-mile cost range for natural-surface singletrack, based on costs observed in similar Montana trail systems such as Marshall Mountain and the Whitefish Trail. These numbers consider Seeley Lake's climate, soils, expected use levels, and sustainable design standards incorporated into the trail system. The estimate assumes a combination of annual volunteers for routine maintenance and the occasional tune-up from professional contractors for heavier tasks, as needed in future years.

Maintenance will come in the form of in-kind volunteer labor from Scenic Montana Trails trained volunteers, with support from USFS seasonal crews when available. The Forest Service, in adopting the system into their recreation program, will support regular and ongoing maintenance with staff time, volunteer coordination, funding, and integration of maintenance needs into its seasonal trail crew schedules.

Annual maintenance costs will be funded through ongoing SMT fundraising, local business partnerships and donations, small grants, adopt-a-trail sponsorships, and volunteer capacity.

Maintenance responsibility. Scenic Montana Trails will serve as the lead for coordinating volunteer maintenance activities, overseeing volunteer events, managing maintenance funds, and coordinating all stewardship plans with the Forest Service. SMT has extensive trail

maintenance experience, including nearly 50 years of maintaining and grooming hundreds of miles of winter trails.

The volunteer agreement between SMT and the USFS is attached highlights the formal partnership and plan for ongoing maintenance.

Part D – Project Budget

1. ***Provide an estimated general line item project budget (accounting table or similar format) and, a brief explanation of each line item. The budget shall track the project from design development through construction to maintenance.***

Below is a general line-item budget that tracks project cost from design through construction and into long-term maintenance. Dollar values reflect typical Montana trail construction costs, Radius Trail Solutions' planning estimates, and Forest Service construction standards.

Estimated Project Budget - *All amounts are estimates for planning purposes*

1. Design & Planning – $15,000 (completed)
Covers completion of the Seeley Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan, initial trail alignments. Includes Radius Trail Solutions time flagging preliminary corridors.

2. Project Management and Administration – $35,000
Covers DJ&A contract for project management, construction administration, grant writing, reporting, and administrative support.

3. Mobilization and Site Preparation – $50,000
Includes equipment purchase/rental, volunteer training, corridor clearing, hazard tree removal in post-fire areas, equipment staging and establishing access routes for mini-excavators.

4. Trail Construction (Machine and Hand-Built) – $1,292,016
Represents the largest project component. Includes est. price for all 25-miles of individual trail segments assuming contracted professional construction. Estimated by Radius Trails Solutions in the Trails Plan.

5. Drainage and Trail Features – $15,000
Includes materials for armoring, rockwork, retaining walls, bridges, or other trail features.

6. Trailhead Improvements and Signage – $20,000
Includes trailhead kiosk, wayfinding and interpretive signage, parking enhancements and minor accessibility upgrades at the Seeley Creek Trailhead.

7. Volunteer Labor and In-Kind Support – $34,000 (estimated value based on federal $34/hr)
Captures the estimated value of organized volunteer events for brushing, corridor clearing, hand finishing, and basic maintenance during construction. *This is included for match documentation, does not represent a cash expenditure.*

8. Contingency (10 percent) – $120,000
Standard contingency covering inflation, market fluctuations, contractor availability, materials adjustments, minor alignment changes, weather-related delays.

9. Long-Term Maintenance Fund – $10,000
Sets aside a small amount for anticipated ongoing maintenance needs.

Total Estimated Project Cost: $1,542,016

---

2. ***Provide similar information for your project's long-term maintenance plan. Attach supporting evidence for long-term maintenance funding in Part F.***

Below is a maintenance budget and narrative that reflects the shared stewardship model in place between Scenic Montana Trails and the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated Long-Term Maintenance Budget (Annual)

1. Routine Tread and Drainage Maintenance – $1,000
Includes clearing drains, removing downed trees, repairing minor erosion, and maintaining tread.

3. Signage and Trailhead Upkeep – $1,000
Covers replacement of damaged or weathered signs, updates to information, kiosk upkeep, and trailhead maintenance.

4. Machine Touch-Ups and Professional Repairs – ~$2,000
Represents periodic maintenance using a machine or contractor crew to refresh features, stabilize areas, and correct drainage issues that exceed hand-crew capacity. This work is typically required every 2 to 3 years on an as-needed basis.

5. Volunteer Program Coordination – $1,000
Supports tools, food, fuel, safety gear, and administration of Scenic Montana Trails' volunteer trail days.

Total Estimated Long-Term Annual Maintenance Cost: $5,000

Part E – Land Owner Acknowledgement (original signed and attached)

Part F – Attachments
Use this as the table of contents cover page for the required application attachments. Attachments in this section are supporting documentation to the questions answered in Part F. To receive the full amount of points available for each question, sufficient supporting documentation must be attached. **List all attachments in order, by name/title and by page number.**

1. Letter of support from the sponsoring organization – including commitment to complete the project and certification that the project will be open to the public or serve a public purpose upon completion
2. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
3. Evidence of community support (letters of support)
4. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
5. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
6. Evidence of commitment to short and long-term maintenance (official letter/resolution or equivalent)
7. Exhibits (renderings, photos, site maps, etc.)
8. GIS shapefile, if applicable
9. Other (clearly title: acquisition documentation, if applicable, or other supporting documents)

Acknowledge the minimum qualification components listed below. All components are required to meet minimum qualifications:

- ☒ All items listed in Part A - Application Checklist are included in the application.
- ☒ All questions are answered in Part C; all documents are attached for Part F.
- ☒ All budget forms are attached.
- ☒ Property Owner has reviewed the application and approves of the project.
- ☒ Funding match is provided.

Applicant certifies that all items are included in the application and that all information submitted is true to the best of their knowledge.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

Property Owner Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

Part E – Acknowledgment of Open-Space Land Designation

Facilities built with Parks and Trails Bond funds must be designated as open-space land in accordance with Montana Code Annotated, Section 76-6-104. This requirement is to ensure that public money is spent in accordance with the law and in a manner that provides public open-space. Under the law, "open-space land means any land which is provided or preserved for: (a) park or recreational purposes; (b) conservation of land or other natural resources…"

Sign in presence of notary public

Land Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** 12-15-25

Print Name: Kevin Doherty

Additional Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____

Notary Signature: _____

[Notaries must complete the following, if not part of stamp.]

(Notarial Seal)

Printed Name: Brian Hutchinson

Notary Public for the State of: Montana

Residing at: Condon, Montana

My Commission expires: 10/07, 2028

BRIAN HUTCHINSON
NOTARY PUBLIC for the
State of Montana
Residing at Condon, Montana
My Commission Expires
October 7, 2028

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** 12-16-2025

Print Name: Cathy Kahnle

Part F – Attachments

Use this as the table of contents cover page for the required application attachments. Attachments in this section are supporting documentation to the questions answered in Part F. To receive the full amount of points available for each question, sufficient supporting documentation must be attached. **List all attachments in order, by name/title and by page number.**

1. Letter of support from the sponsoring organization – including commitment to complete the project and certification that the project will be open to the public or serve a public purpose upon completion
2. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
3. Evidence of community support (letters of support)
4. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
5. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
6. Evidence of commitment to short and long-term maintenance (official letter/resolution or equivalent)
7. Exhibits (renderings, photos, site maps, etc.)
8. GIS shapefile, if applicable
9. Other (clearly title: acquisition documentation, if applicable, or other supporting documents)

Acknowledge the minimum qualification components listed below. All components are required to meet minimum qualifications:

- ☐ All items listed in Part A - Application Checklist are included in the application.
- ☐ All questions are answered in Part C; all documents are attached for Part F.
- ☐ All budget forms are attached.
- ☐ Property Owner has reviewed the application and approves of the project.
- ☐ Funding match is provided.

Applicant certifies that all items are included in the application and that all information submitted is true to the best of their knowledge.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** 12-16-25

Property Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** 12-15-25

Funding Source	Type	Typical Funding Amount	Match Requirement & Conditions	Eligible Uses	Application Strategy	Timeline Planning	Application Link	Priority / Ranking (1 = High, 3 = Low)
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Federal	Up to $100,000 per project	20% match; may include cash, volunteer labor @ federal rate, equipment, in-kind services	New trails, maintenance, trailheads, equipment	Coordinate early with FWP staff; emphasize adaptive trails & economic impact	Prepare materials Fall 2025; submit by Jan 15, 2026 Opens Nov. 25, deadline Jan 15th '26	Montana FWP RTP	1
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Federal	$100k–$1M for major segments	Typically 20% non-federal match; can include planning/design documentation	Bicycle/pedestrian trail segments, signage, ROW	Bundle key trail connectors with RTP; coordinate through MDT's TA program	- Submit with state TAP in summer 2025	FHWA TAP	2
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Federal/state	$50k–$500k for local projects; up to $1M+ for statewide	Typically 50% non-federal match	Outdoor recreation facilities, trailheads, land acqusition, ADA accessibility	Highlight trailheads, access for underserved users	Opens June 1, 2025, Deadline July 31st, 2025	Montana FWP LWCF	2
Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)	Federal	$100k–$1M per project	No official match required, but projects with partner support rank higher	Trail restoration, infrastructure improvements, trailhead improvements, wayfinding, maintenance backlogs	Rural resiliance, community transition, accessible public lands	Deadlines vary by angecy	NPS GAOA	2
Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)	Federal	$200k–$750k typical for MT projects	20% non-federal match required	planning, NEPA, trail construction, access to federal public lands	FHWA letter of support, MDT letter of suport	Application period closed for FY25	FHWA FLAP	2
Montana Trail Stewardship Grant (MTSGP)	State	Up to $75k (avg $40k)	10%, can include in-kind labor and materials	Trail construction, maintenance, signage	Focus on shovel ready lower loops and NICA venue trail	Fall 2025, Deadline Jan 31st, 2026	Montana FWP TSP	1
Missoula County Trails Bond	Local	$25k–$150k based on match	Program seeks a match amount of $5 for every $1 of program funding. This is based on several complementary transportation funding programs such	Any cost related to construction and associated fees for design, engineering and materials. All trail types	There are five main criteria: Access & Connectivity (25 pts.), Community Support (20 pts.), Project Readiness (15 pts.), Design	Rolling deadline	Missoula County Trails Bond	1
PeopleForBikes Grant	Private	Up to $10k	None required, match strengthens proposal	Bicycle infrastructure and access, cycling promotion, health and wellness	Leveral IMBA contacts, leverage tourism (TBID / Glacier Country)	Letter of interest due Sep. 2025	PeopleForBikes Grants	2
IMBA Legacy Trails or Trail Accelerator	Private/Nonprofit	$50k–$250k; total $698k funded to date	No formal match; partnerships encouraged	Mountain bike specific trail projects	Apply with technical trail designer; highlight flow lines	Spring deadline is April 30, fall deadline unnanounced	IMBA Trail Accellerator	1
National Forest Foundation - Matching Awards Program	Private/Public	$Up to 10k: mini grants-$75k	1:1 nonfederal cash match	Projects funded under MAP must involve the public through in-person engagement and provides benefits to the National Forest System	Secure federal funds, leverage NFF 1:1 match	27-Jun-25	NFF Grants	2
Patagonia Corporate / Local Grant	Private/Corporate	$5k–$20k for local ecology + trail connections	No match; invitation-only; one award per year	Community stewardship, inclusion, access and participation	Frame project as ecological + outdoor hub	Apply Fall 2025 via Patagonia invite	Patagonia Corporate Grant	3
Wyss Foundation Grants	Private	$100k–$1M+	No match, but local support strengthens pitch	Conservation & recreation systems	Highlight sustainable recreation and local benefit	Letter of interest Fall 2025; full proposals winter	Wyss Foundation	3
Crowdfunding (GoFundMe, Chuffed)	Private	$5k–$50k	None required	No restrictions	"Fund a Foot" campaign tied to NICA / schools	Launch Spring 26	Go Fund Me	2
Seeley Lake Community Foundation	Private	$2k–$25k	None required	Supports local community	Trail work day in combination to Bob Marshall festival	Summer 2026	SLFC Grants	2
Corporate Sponsorships (more below)	Private	$5k–$50k per sponsor	No formal match; partnerships encouraged	Amenities, signage, trailhead infrastructure, shade shelter, benches, etc	Tiered sponsorship package	Summer 2026		2
Walton/Kinder Foundation	Private	$50k–$500k depending on program	No match required, partnerships encouraged	Trail connectivity, community equity and vitality	Leverage IMBA	By invitation	Walton Family Foundation	3
Public-Private Partnerships (P3)	Mixed	$50k–$250k+ depending on structure	Can include match	Trailhead infrastructure, signage, shade shelter, benches, etc	Glacier Country and TBID / Tourism offices	Summer 2026		2
Volunteer / In-Kind Contributions	In-Kind	$20k–$100k+ value	No match required	Labor, materials donations, in-kind donations	Leverage contacts and relationships	Summer 2026		2
Walmart	Corporate Community Grant	$250–$5,000	No match required	Community programs, local needs, recreation access	Use for small infrastructure items, signs, tools, wayfinding	Mar 10–Apr 15; May 1–Jul 15; Aug 1–Oct 15; Nov 3–Dec 31	https://walmart.org	3
AllTrails	Outdoor Stewardship Grant	$2,000–$10,000	No match required; must be nonprofit	Trail restoration, maintenance, resiliency, amenities, invasive removal	Apply for a discrete "last mile" task or a maintenance mini-project	Closed for 2025; check summer 2026	https://alltrails.com/stewardship	2
Fox Factory	Corporate Trail Funding	$5,000–$20,000	No formal match	Trail construction, maintenance	Strong fit; emphasize community benefit and USFS partnership	Rolling	giving@ridefox.com	1
Athletic Brewing	Corporate Stewardship Grant	$5,000–$50,000	None	Trail construction	Strong; tie to economic transition and community recreation	Deadline September 4, 2025	twoforthetrails@athleticbrewing.com	1
PayDirt	Corporate Cycling Grant	Not listed	Must be recommended by a PayDirt Partner	Trail construction, access, community	Identify a PayDirt partner to sponsor SMT application	Opens late July 2025	https://www.paydirt.earth/contact	2
International Mountain Bicycling Association	Planning / Technical Support	$10,000–$30,000 (in-kind technical services)	1:1 cash match; planning, not construction	Trail planning, master	Only relevant for future phases; not useful for current construction	Spring round March 1–April 30, 2025	https://www.imba.com	3
American Trails	National Trails Grant	$2,000–$10,000	No match required; cannot use for USFS land	Maintenance, training	Only for non–USFS projects; not relevant for Seeley	Applications open Oct 2025; due Dec 2025	trailfund@americantrails.org	3
Warwood Tool	In-Kind Donation	$5,000 (tools)	None	Volunteer programs	Good fit for tools needed for maintenance corps	Opens May 9; due June 6, 2025	info@warwoodtool.com	2
PeopleForBikes	Bike Infrastructure	$5,000–$10,000	None; must be invited	Bike infrastructure	Pursue only if a paved connector is developed	Invitation-only in 2025	PeopleForBikes website	3
Arc'teryx	Equity-Focused Outdoor Access Grant	Up to $5,000	None	Inclusive outdoor access, community	Good if adaptive access story is emphasized	April 2025	Arc'teryx website	3
Trek	Land Protection and Trails	Not specified	Not specified	Trail system development and	Competitive; requires strong narrative and long-term protection	Rolling	Trek Foundation website	2
Kohl's	Corporate Community Funding	Up to $25,000	Nonprofit annual budget must be $250,000 or more	Community needs, youth support	Only viable if SMT budget is large enough	December 1, 2024 deadline	kohlsgiving@kohls.com	3
Clif Family Foundation	Community/Health Grant	$5,000–$10,000	None	Access, equity, physical activity	Competitive; frame adaptive access and youth benefits	March 1 and August 1	Clif Family Foundation website	2
Kubota	Community Capital Support	$50,000 (cash plus equipment voucher)	None	Community-impact	Strong but competitive; emphasize economic transition	April 3–May 9, 2025	Kubota website	2
New Belgium Brewing	Cycling Accessibility	$500–$5,000	None	Projects increasing bike accessibility and	Good for adaptive access and youth projects	Next round opens 2026	New Belgium contact page	3
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation	Accessibility and Disability Access Grant	$5,000–$24,999 (Tier 1); up to $40,000 (Tier 3)	None	Accessible trails, equipment	Strong if adaptive features are emphasized	Second 2025 round opens Aug 27; proposals due Oct 7	QOL@Reeve.org	2

Funding / Match Source	Source Type	Federal Origin?	Counts as Non Federal Match?	Eligible as Match For	Not Eligible / Key Restrictions	Documentation to Keep	Strategy	Match Allocation
Missoula County Trails Bond	Local (voter-approved)	No	Yes	NFF MAP; RTP; TAP; LWCF; FLAP; MTSGP; most private grants	Cannot be used as match if the other funder prohibits public funds (rare). Must spend within Missoula County.	Invoices, proof of payment, reimbursement requests, scope tie-out	Use as primary match pool for federal/non-federal match needs; do not count the same expense as match twice across awards.	
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Federal	Yes	No	Generally not eligible as match for non-federal match requirements	Federal funds cannot be counted as match for NFF MAP or other federal match requirements.	Grant agreement, reimbursement docs, invoices	Treat as direct project funding; pair with non-federal sources for required 20% match.	
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Federal	Yes	No	Generally not eligible as match for non-federal match requirements	Federal funds cannot be counted as non-federal match for other federal programs or NFF MAP.	Grant agreement, invoices, procurement records	Treat as direct project funding; match must come from non-federal sources.	
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Federal/State pass-through	(treat as federal)	Typically no	Usually not eligible as non-federal match for other federal awards	Treat as federal origin unless program guidance explicitly says otherwise.	Grant agreement, invoices, compliance docs	Use with its own match plan; avoid relying on LWCF as match for other federal grants.	
Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)	Federal	Yes	No	Generally not eligible as non-federal match	Federal funds cannot be counted as match for NFF MAP or other federal match requirements.	Grant agreement, invoices	Treat as direct funding only; pair with County/private/volunteer match.	
Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)	Federal	Yes	No	Generally not eligible as non-federal match	Federal funds; match typically not required but partner support may strengthen ranking.	Grant agreement, invoices	Use as a standalone funding source; leverage private/community support as 'partner contribution' rather than match.	
Montana Trail Stewardship Grant (MTSGP)	State	No	Yes	RTP; TAP; FLAP; NFF MAP; County Trails Bond; other state/private grants	Must meet its own 10% match rules; confirm whether other state grants can be used as match (usually yes).	Invoices, volunteer logs, donation letters, receipts	Good flexible non-federal match source; allocate to fill gaps where volunteer match is constrained.	
National Forest Foundation – Matching Awards Program (MAP)	Federal pass-through via NFF	(treat as federal)	No	Generally not eligible as non-federal match for other federal programs	MAP dollars cannot be used to satisfy non-federal match requirements elsewhere; MAP match must be non-federal.	Grant agreement, invoices, match documentation	Use MAP as a 'match consumer': plan 1:1 non-federal match using County/private/volunteer sources.	
Shimano Trail Born	Private corporate	No	Yes	NFF MAP; RTP; TAP; LWCF; FLAP; MTSGP; County Trails Bond	Confirm any branding/recognition requirements; avoid counting the same dollars as match twice.	Award letter, deposit record, invoices tied to Shimano scope	Best used as flexible non-federal match for federal programs; can also stand alone to fund contractor invoices.	
onX Adventure Forever	Private corporate	No	Yes	NFF MAP; RTP; TAP; LWCF; FLAP; MTSGP; County Trails Bond	Confirm award period and eligible cost categories; avoid double-counting.	Award letter, deposit record, invoices	Use strategically as match for programs requiring non-federal match; can also fund discrete segments.	
High Stakes Foundation	Private foundation (unrestricted)	No	Yes	All federal + state programs; County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	None beyond standard allowability and documentation.	Grant letter, deposit record, invoices	High-flex match source. Reserve for match-heavy grants (NFF MAP 1:1, LWCF 50%, etc.).	
PeopleForBikes Grant	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often targeted to bike infrastructure; may be invite-only.	Award letter, invoices, deliverables	Treat as non-federal match; align scope to bike access elements (trailhead, signage, connectors).	
Patagonia Corporate / Local Grant	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often invitation-only; may prefer discrete stewardship/community items.	Award letter, invoices, deliverables	Good for community stewardship elements and 'last-mile' funding.	
Wyss Foundation	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often requires strong conservation framing and partner alignment.	Grant agreement, invoices, deliverables	If awarded, treat as major match pool for federal programs.	
Crowdfunding / Community	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Must document net proceeds after platform fees; ensure donor intent aligns with grant scope.	Donation platform reports, deposits, receipts	Good flexible match; can be earmarked to cover match gaps late in the cycle.	
Seeley Lake Community Foundation	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Local/community focus; may prefer discrete deliverables.	Grant letter, invoices	Use for local match narrative and small but high-visibility items.	
Corporate Sponsorships	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Confirm whether sponsorship is restricted to signage/amenities; document fair market value.	Sponsorship agreement, invoices, receipts	Strong for match because it is clearly non-federal; bundle into trailhead/signage scope.	
Walton/Kinder Foundation	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often strategic/invited; may require equity/connectivity framing.	Grant agreement, invoices	If awarded, can cover match-heavy capital segments or trailhead/connectivity work.	
Volunteer labor (2025: 300 hrs @ $34.79/hr)	In-Kind (non-federal)	No	Yes	RTP; MTSGP; NFF MAP; County Trails Bond (as match documentation)	Some programs limit in-kind % or require it be reasonable/necessary; cannot double-count the same hours.	Volunteer sign-in sheets, task logs, hours, rate basis	Allocate hours to one award at a time; keep a 'match ledger' to prevent double counting.	
Volunteer labor (2026 plan: 750 hrs @ $34.79/hr)	In-Kind (non-federal)	No	Yes	RTP; MTSGP; NFF MAP; County Trails Bond (as match documentation)	Same as above; ensure hours fall within the grant performance period.	Volunteer sign-in sheets, task logs, hours, rate basis	Best used to satisfy NFF MAP 1:1 and RTP 20% where allowed; reserve cash match for programs requiring cash-only match.	
Warwood Tool Company (tool package)	In-Kind donation	No	Yes (limited)	State/private programs; sometimes federal if tools are allowable and valued correctly	Some grants require cash match; donated goods may not satisfy cash-only match.	Donation letter, itemized list, fair-market valuation	Use to strengthen stewardship capacity narrative; may count as match where in-kind goods are allowed.	
Walmart Spark Good Local Grants	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Small amounts; usually best for discrete purchases.	Award letter, receipts	Use for small items that are hard to fund elsewhere (signs, tools, supplies).	
AllTrails Stewardship Fund	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often prefers discrete maintenance/stewardship projects.	Award letter, receipts, deliverables	Use for maintenance-focused deliverables; can free up other cash for match-heavy capital.	
Fox Factory Trail Trust	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Confirm recognition requirements; avoid double counting.	Award letter, invoices	Good match source and/or direct contractor funding.	
Athletic Brewing Two for the Trails	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Confirm award period; align to trail build deliverables.	Award letter, invoices	Strong storytelling fit; use as match or standalone trail-construction dollars.	
PayDirt Community Funding	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Requires recommendation by PayDirt Partner; may be limited to cycling outcomes.	Award letter, invoices	Use as flexible match once secured; target discrete trail segment.	
Arc'teryx Community Grant	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Small amounts; alignment to equity/inclusion may be expected.	Award letter, receipts	Use for adaptive-access or inclusion-related items and programming.	
Trek Foundation	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Program specifics vary; confirm match/eligibility rules.	Grant agreement, invoices	If awarded, treat as major non-federal match pool.	
Kohl's Goods for Good	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Eligibility depends on SMT annual budget threshold.	Award letter, receipts	Use for youth/community program components where eligible.	
Clif Family Foundation	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Competitive; may prefer operating/program support; confirm restrictions.	Grant agreement, invoices	Use for access/equity framing; can serve as match pool.	
Kubota Hometown Proud	Private corporate (cash + equipment voucher)	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Equipment voucher portion may require special valuation rules; cash portion straightforward.	Award letter, valuation for voucher, receipts	Use voucher for equipment needs; cash portion can be match for non-federal match requirements.	
New Belgium Brewing	Private corporate	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Small amounts; equity/access lens preferred.	Award letter, receipts	Good for small adaptive/youth-focused items.	

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation (Quality of Life)	Private	No	Yes	Federal and state programs (as allowable); County Trails Bond; NFF MAP	Often focused on direct impact for disability communities; keep scope aligned.	Grant agreement, invoices, outcomes reporting	Best used for adaptive-access elements; can simultaneously serve as match pool if costs are allowable and not double-counted.

Seeley Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan

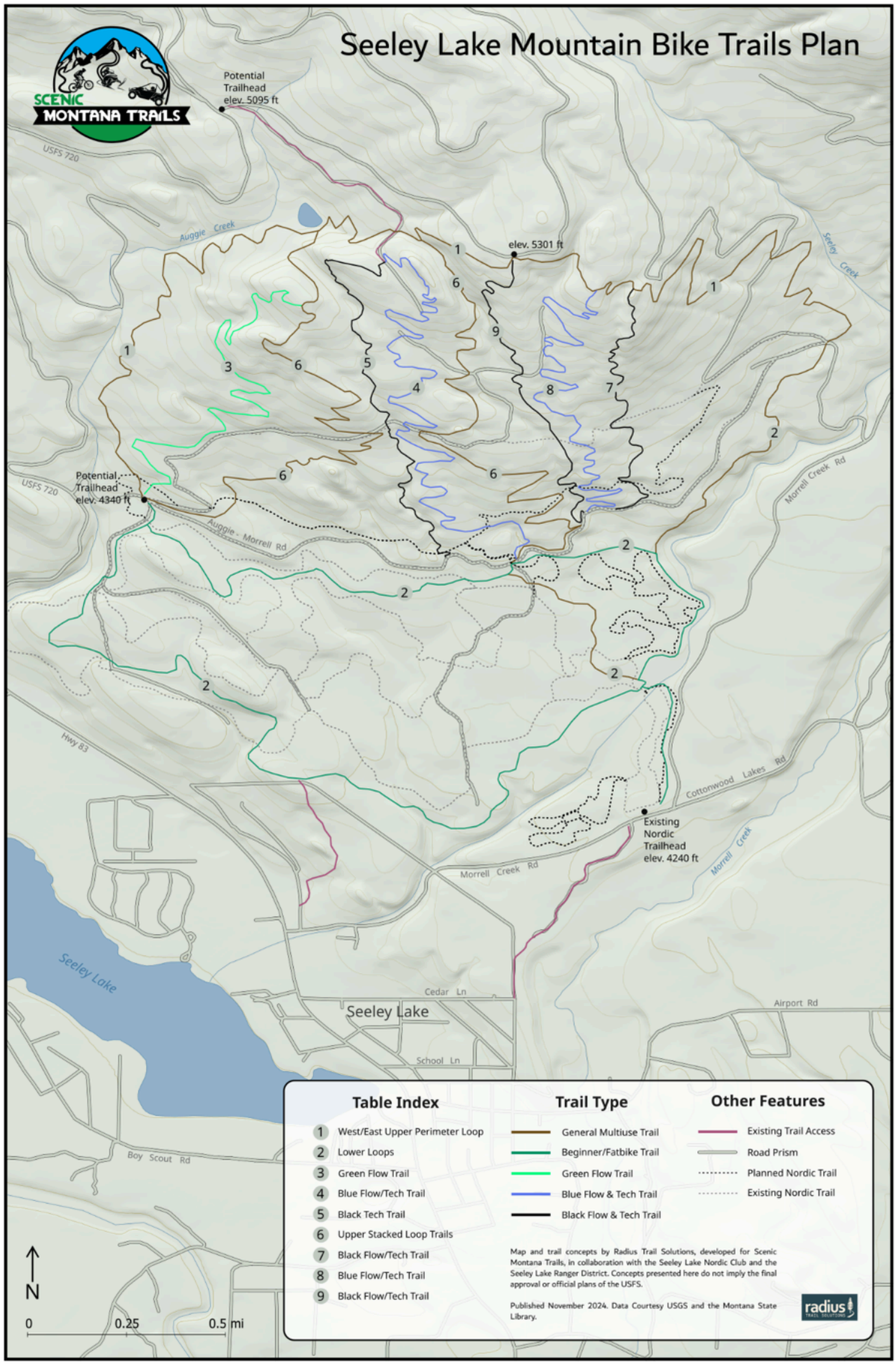
Scenic Montana Trails
Seeley Lake, Montana
2024

Prepared for: **Scenic Montana Trails**
cathy@kahnlelaw.com

Prepared by: **Radius Trail Solutions**
brian@radiustrails.com

In cooperation with: **Seeley Lake Ranger District - Lolo National Forest**
Seeley Lake Nordic Club

Table of Contents


Seeley Lake Mountain Bike Trails Plan
SCENIC MONTANA TRAILS
Potential Trailhead elev. 5095 ft
elev. 5301 ft
Potential Trailhead elev. 4340 ft
Existing Nordic Trailhead elev. 4240 ft
Auggie Creek
Auggie - Morrell Rd
Morrell Creek Rd
Cottonwood Lakes Rd
Seeley Creek
Morrell Creek
Seeley Lake
Cedar Ln
School Ln
Airport Rd
Boy Scout Rd
Hwy 83
USFS 720
Table Index
1 West/East Upper Perimeter Loop
2 Lower Loops
3 Green Flow Trail
4 Blue Flow/Tech Trail
5 Black Tech Trail
6 Upper Stacked Loop Trails
7 Black Flow/Tech Trail
8 Blue Flow/Tech Trail
9 Black Flow/Tech Trail
Trail Type
General Multiuse Trail
Beginner/Fatbike Trail
Green Flow Trail
Blue Flow & Tech Trail
Black Flow & Tech Trail
Other Features
Existing Trail Access
Road Prism
Planned Nordic Trail
Existing Nordic Trail
Map and trail concepts by Radius Trail Solutions, developed for Scenic Montana Trails, in collaboration with the Seeley Lake Nordic Club and the Seeley Lake Ranger District. Concepts presented here do not imply the final approval or official plans of the USFS.
Published November 2024. Data Courtesy USGS and the Montana State Library.
radius
N
0
0.25
0.5 mi

Overview

Scenic Montana Trails is a multi-use trail association working to develop mountain bike opportunities and mountain bike tourism in the Seeley Lake area. Scenic Montana Trails retained Radius Trail Solutions to create this mountain bike-focused trails plan in the vicinity of the existing nordic ski trails near Seeley Lake, MT.

Due to the natural terrain available, the town's proximity to the populous cities of Missoula and Helena, and Seeley's position along major travel routes to Glacier National Park and other major Montana attractions, the Seeley Lake community is well positioned to benefit economically from implementation of this trails plan. Local community members will also enjoy the mental and physical health benefits of engaging in outdoor, skills-based recreation that mountain biking on purpose-built trails can provide.

Radius Trail Solutions is a Missoula, MT-based company specializing in the planning, design, and construction of mountain bike and multi-use trails. Founder Brian Williams has built over 40 miles of trails in western Montana, and played a large role in planning regionally-known trail networks at Mt. Dean Stone and Marshall Mountain.

Goals

- Create a trail system with appeal to a diverse set of users, from beginner to expert, and including fat bikes and hikers
- Identify the best terrain for each type of trail experience
- Concentrate the system into a cohesive and easily accessed area
- Ensure the summer trail system and winter fat bike use complements the existing heavily-used nordic ski trail system
- Explore potential for a NICA high school mountain bike league race course
- Utilize and expand on established trailheads and access road networks
- Stay within the general area and scope identified as feasible for a NEPA analysis by staff at the Seeley Lake Ranger District.

Process

Preliminary office and field meetings were held with the primary stakeholders: Scenic Montana Trails, Seeley Lake Nordic, and the Seeley Lake Ranger District. In these meetings, conversations ranged from how to accommodate a wide range of users without watering down the core appeal, to how to balance winter fat bike use with existing nordic ski use, to how to reduce construction costs.

With a rough concept in hand, Radius Trail Solutions thoroughly scouted the area by foot, bike, and car to ensure routes were viable and each trail was placed to best utilize available terrain. In developing the concept, an extra emphasis was put on identifying the elements that can help trail systems capture the imagination of mountain bikers and become a regional draw for tourists. Diversity of trails, a certain percentage of hand built or otherwise technical and natural trails, expert design, and natural flow to the system: these are all addressed herein.

Over an iterative process of 5 revisions to the trail alignments, with review from primary stakeholders, this plan was generated.

Landscape

The Auggie-Morrell area near Seeley lake is blessed with variegated terrain, from flat areas to steeps, with rolling, moderate terrain in between. Mature forests with dense root networks as well as areas of bedrock outcrops give potential for challenging, technical trails beloved by advanced riders. The existing nordic trails populate an area ideal for flat and rolling beginner singletrack, which can also be used for fat bikes in the winter. The western portion of the area north of the Auggie-Morrell Cutoff Road holds low angle but steadily rising terrain conducive to an easy climbing trail and beginner-intermediate flow trail descent, which, given the gentler terrain, can also be easily made compatible with adaptive mountain bikes.

Implementation and Prioritization

Process

The cost estimates provided in this plan give a rough estimate of construction costs for similar types of trail projects in this area in recent years. Since actual costs can vary significantly, before submitting grants, Scenic Montana Trails (SMT) should reach out to potential contractors for new estimates specific to a given scope of work.

The trail descriptions below separate or combine the various trails into categories generally based on their usage or type. These categories as shown may not align with the best sequence for implementation in a given grant/fundraising cycle, so additional map-making may be necessary to show how certain trails are split or combined into a given project.

For example, the Upper Stacked Loop trails describe two west and east top-to-bottom multi-use trails 4.5 miles in length, but they could be split instead into an upper and lower half. Alternatively, just a quarter of the two trails could be added to another trail project if a smaller amount of extra

funds are available in that project/fundraising cycle. Or a very small portion of the Stacked Loops could be built to accommodate a NICA course, with the relatively small extra cost for that segment added to the contract for the Blue Flow/Tech Trail. Since the Upper Stacked Loop trails are meant to provide options and connectivity, these quarter-sized bites still make connections between major access points, so they make viable small projects or additions to other trails.

The other trails, however, especially the bike-specific downhill trails, are meant to have a cohesive character and flow along the entire trail so it's best to avoid splitting the construction into phases if possible.

Trail Character

Modern trailbuilding generally involves construction with mini-excavators, which often allow lower construction costs compared to hand labor and create a very durable tread surface, assuming a good layout (alignment). However, using equipment generally leaves a very smooth trail surface which can mean a lack of character to the trails.

This plan makes a number of recommendations to ensure that trails retain good character and create a high quality user experience:

- Consider potential for some hand-built singletrack in the Upper Stacked Loops
- Use small excavators (2.0 tons or less) with tracks that retract down to a 39" width on the East Upper Perimeter Loop and Upper Stacked Loops. Trails built at 39" settle into a traditional 18-24" singletrack width over the first few years.
- Build the sections of the Lower Loops trails that are on gentle terrain as narrow as possible, while making sure trail sections on steeper side slopes or in heavy forest do not prevent fat bike grooming
- Encourage builders to be creative while building the Blue and Black Flow/Tech trails, including crawling excavators off-trail around the technical features to leave them natural, and/or using dirt bikes to rough in certain sections of trail
- Select experienced contractors versed in bike-specific trail construction for the bike-specific trails, and in the case of volunteer constructions, contracting with professional trail builders for the design

Some details of these options are presented in the individual trail descriptions. Selecting experienced contractors and clearly conveying expectations will help ensure the trails provide a dynamic and engaging user experience.

Construction

For many of the trails it may be appropriate to develop a more accurate on-the-ground alignment before requesting bids for construction. Knowing a more exact distance and the involved terrain can

help reduce cost overruns in construction and allow builders to provide a more accurate estimate, as well as streamline the grant, bidding, construction, and project management process.

Establishing detailed trail alignment before the bid process for construction is most appropriate for the multi-use trails and potentially the Green Flow trail (due to the mathematical approach to building a trail of this type). For trails where the builder will need to exercise a large amount of creativity and design freedom and also need to ensure trail "flow", such as the Blue and Black downhill trails, having a very specific alignment set in advance could be problematic. However, some specific sections of interest could be identified in advance, particularly around natural technical features or around junctions with other trails. Additionally, it may be helpful to identify a general corridor the contractor can operate in so as to ensure a given trail doesn't get in the way of other future trails.

Volunteer Labor

Note: cost estimates in this document assume no volunteer labor.

Since SMT has volunteers with excavation experience, discussions were held around the best places to utilize volunteer labor to construct trails (with design/layout by a professional trailbuilder). Generally the wider multi-use trails on flatter terrain are good options for volunteers, as on these trails, learning opportunities or errors are less likely to have a negative impact on trail character or durability. Portions of the Lower Loops and the West Upper Perimeter Loop are the best options for volunteer construction, as detailed in the trail descriptions. It's important to keep in mind that trail projects are by nature very long and require hundreds of hours of excavation each. Construction by a less skilled operator can mean that more hand labor is required to get the trail to a finished state.

Another potential volunteer labor source that has been discussed is NICA high school mountain bike league athletes and parents. With interest in these planned Seeley trails as a potential race venue, NICA labor or other resources could be used to construct certain segments of trail. The best candidate for this would be the 0.7 mi connector from the trailhead to Auggie-Morrell Rd, which is on relatively flat terrain, can be built rather narrow and would also be utilized directly by a potential NICA race course. Given the commute distance to Seeley for most current NICA athletes and the limitations of volunteer hand labor, expectations and scope of work should be carefully limited.

Prioritization

The Table of Costs and Specifications below provides a very rough hypothetical order of trail construction. Decisions on sequencing should consider available budget, target audience, and the benefit of providing a diverse range of experiences. For example, a blue or black flow trail may have larger appeal to out-of-town riders traveling to ride, but the Upper Perimeter Loop and the Upper

Stacked Loops may have broader appeal for the local Seeley community. Alternating between multi-use and bike-downhill construction will ensure the trail network grows as a cohesive system.

For example, to focus on recreation opportunities for the local Seeley community, the entire Upper Perimeter loop could be built first, to provide a "backbone" to the trail system with broad appeal and great views. As the very next phase (or in the same year if funding allows), building the West Blue Flow & Tech trail would appeal to core mountain bike users.

Alternatively, if SMT's goal is to make a splash with dyed-in-the-wool mountain bikers from around the greater region, the decision could be made to build only the west half of the Upper Perimeter Loop in the first year as a climbing/access route, but also build the West Blue Flow & Tech trail in the same year. This would be a "flagship" trail and clearly demonstrate the mountain-bike focus of the Seeley trail system. It would, however, also be a slightly more expensive first-year option.

Potential Build Sequences Comparison

Full Upper Perimeter Loop First			Blue Flow/Tech Trail First			Green Flow Trail First		
First Year	West Upper Perimeter	$85,800	First Year	West Upper Perimeter	$85,800	First Year	West Upper Perimeter	$85,800
	East Upper Perimeter	$76,560		West Blue Flow/Tech	$174,240		Green Flow	$102,432
Second Year	West Blue Flow/Tech	$174,240	Second Year	East Upper Perimeter	$76,560	Second Year	East Upper Perimeter	$76,560
	Minimum NICA Portion of Lower Loops and Upper Stacked Loop	$88,704		Minimum NICA Portion of Lower Loops and Upper Stacked Loop	$88,704		Portion of Lower Loops to connect to Auggie-Morrel and Perimeter	$126,720
Third Year	Green Flow	$102,432	Third Year	Remaining Lower Loops	$148,896	Third Year	West Blue Flow/Tech	$174,240
	Remaining Lower Loops	$148,896						
	Total	$676,632		**Total**	$574,200		**Total**	$489,192

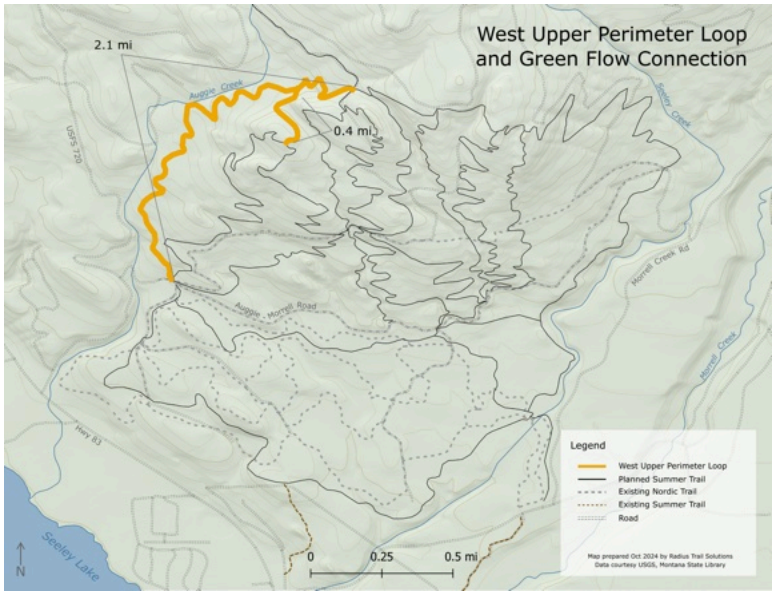
Table of Costs and Specifications

Map	Trail	Page #	Type	Mileage	Approx. $/ft	Rough Cost Estimate
#1	West Upper Perimeter Loop	6	Multiuse	2.5	$6.50	$85,800.00
#1	East Upper Perimeter Loop	8	Multiuse	2.9	$5.00	$76,560.00
#2	Lower Loops	9	Multiuse	7.5	$6.00	$237,600.00
#3	Green Flow Trail	11	Bike Downhill	2	$9.70	$102,432.00
#4	Blue Flow & Tech Trail, West	12	Bike Downhill	2.75	$12.00	$174,240.00
#5	Black Tech Trail, West	13	Bike Downhill	1.6	$15.00	$126,720.00
#6	Upper Stacked Loop Trails	15	Multiuse	4.5	$5.50	$130,680.00
#7	Black Flow & Tech Trail, East	13	Bike Downhill	1.2	$18.00	$114,048.00
#8	Blue Flow & Tech Trail, East	12	Bike Downhill	2.1	$12.00	$133,056.00
#9	Black Flow & Tech Trail, Middle	13	Bike Downhill	1.4	$15.00	$110,880.00
			Totals	**25.95**		**$1,292,016.00**

Trail Descriptions

West Upper Perimeter Loop and Green Flow Connection - #1

- 2.5 miles
- Multi-use
- Serves as primary climbing route for mountain bikers
- 5-6% average running grade
- Max 15% running grade of any pitch
- Width 48-72” to accommodate adaptive bikes and/or fat bike grooming
- Rough cost estimate: $85,800



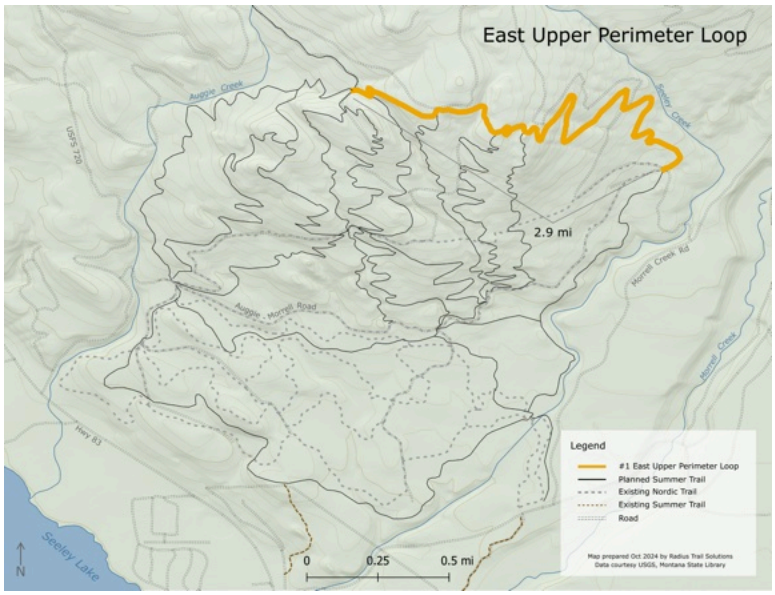
The Upper Perimeter Loop creates immediate recreational appeal, winding through dense, lush forest on the west side until stunning views of the Swan Range are revealed through the Rice Ridge burn from the eastern half of the trail.

This western half of the trail is intended to serve as the primary climbing route for the downhill bike trails, so should be machine-built at a lower grade and minimum width of 48”. The gentle terrain in the western area permits large radius climbing turns, which will ensure a forgiving experience for all users, and the tread width will allow adaptive mountain bikes (3-wheeled recumbent cycles for disabled users) to use this climbing trail and make a loop down the hill with the Green Flow Trail. If summer use increases to very high levels, the western half of the upper perimeter loop could be managed to allow bikes uphill-only (while pedestrians could use it both directions), but this is unlikely to be necessary.

This western climb to the Green Flow Trail loop, if built on the wider end of the range (60-72”) with large switchback radii, could also accommodate grooming for fat bike use, if demand for fat bike amenities increases in the future.

East Upper Perimeter Loop - #1

- 2.9 miles
- Multi-use
- Eastern half provides classic singletrack experience in view of the Swan range
- 6-8% average running grade
- Width 30”-40”
- Rough cost estimate: $76,560



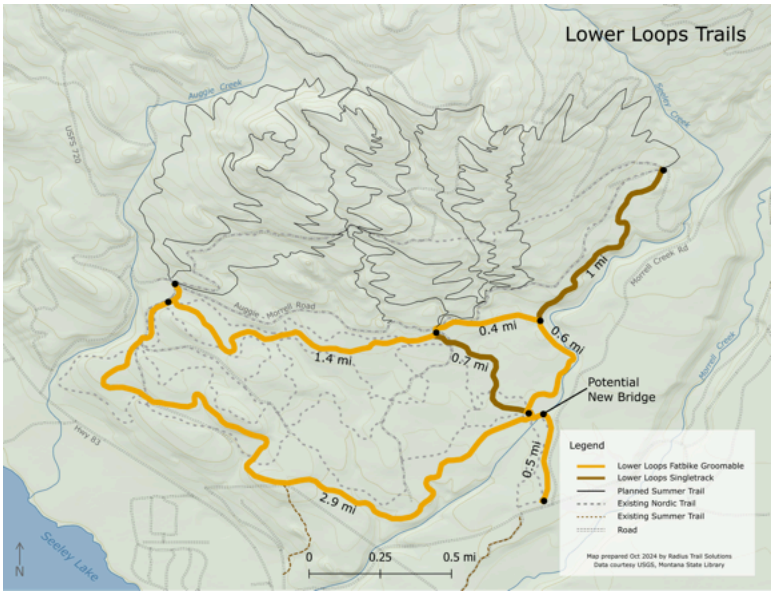
The Upper Perimeter Loop creates immediate recreational appeal, winding through dense, lush forest on the west side until stunning views of the Swan Range are revealed through the Rice Ridge burn from the eastern half of the trail.

Providing access points to many of the bike downhill trails, the eastern half of the Upper Perimeter Loop will serve as a backbone for the trail system. Combined with the Lower Loops and the west half of the Upper Perimeter, it forms a nearly 10-mile-long singletrack loop.

The eastern half of the trail should be built narrower, around 30-40”, to allow a more natural singletrack feel. Construction with a small 1.7-2 ton excavator (with tracks retracted to 39”) or hand construction by Conservation Corps labor could be appropriate.

Lower Loops - #2

- 7.5 miles in total
- Multi-use, fat bike grooming in winter
- Flat terrain offers excellent beginner opportunities
- Width: 40-72" depending on side slope, to accommodate fat bike grooming
- Rough cost estimate: $237,600



The Lower Loops will provide both options for beginners and families as well as connection from the main trailhead to the upper trails. Meandering through the meadows and forests of the nordic trail system, the Lower Loops will provide a very accessible option for spending time in nature on trails.

The bulk of the Lower Loops could be used for groomed fat bike trails if built accordingly. On flat areas with low angle cross slopes, the trails can be built as traditional singletrack and still accommodate fat bike grooming, as long as the corridor is cleared from trees and brush to a suitable width to allow grooming equipment to pass. Where the trail must cross steeper side slopes, grooming equipment requires a wider bench cut in the range of 72", in order to create a stable surface and allow for some drifting-in of the backslope. Because of the wide turning radius of typical grooming equipment (tracked ATVs, snowmobiles, tracksleds), switchbacks should be avoided. Climbing turns on gentle terrain may work.

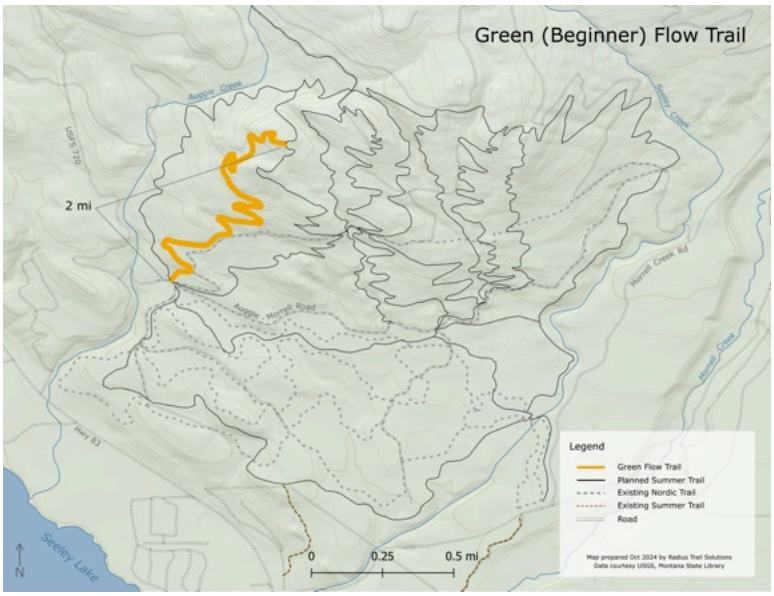
The few Lower Loops trails that are not part of the fat bike groomed loop can be built narrower as traditional singletrack (See full plan master map on pg. 4). These could include the 0.7 mi central connection and the 1 mi northeast connection. Building these trails as traditional singletrack could enhance recreational experience for summer users seeking more direct connections to the upper mountain trails north of Auggie-Morrell Road, and also provide more interest for a potential NICA high school mountain bike race course. Consider using NICA high school mountain bike league volunteer labor to hand-build the 0.7 mi section of trail that connects the Seeley Creek crossing to Auggie-Morrell Road.

Construction equipment may vary depending on terrain and desired width. For sections on flat terrain, construction with a 1.7-2.0 ton excavator with tracks retracted to 39" will retain a singletrack experience. In sections where extensive sidehilling is required, a slightly larger excavator may be appropriate in order to more efficiently establish a 72" width. Due to the gentle terrain and target

user experience levels, the use of volunteer machine operators is an option for the Lower Loops, though in that case a trailbuilding professional should be consulted to assist with design and project management. Note that a new bridge across Seeley Creek is likely necessary to separate fat bike use from nordic ski use. Associated costs and construction needs are not included in the rough cost estimate above.

Green Flow Trail - #3

- 2 miles
- Bike Downhill Only
- Introductory option to downhill riding
- 6% average running grade, 54-72" width
- Rough cost estimate: $102,400



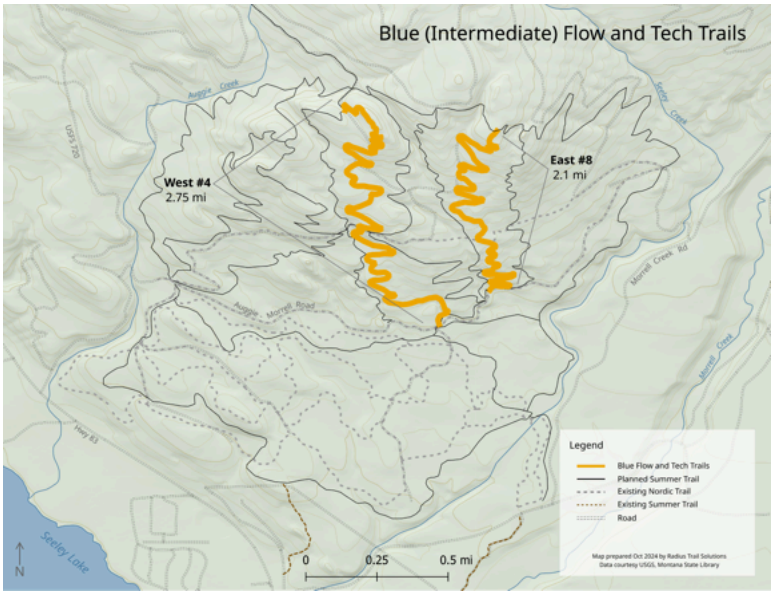
Twisting through the forest on the western side of the upper trails, the Green Flow Trail will provide an accessible yet exciting downhill option for riders of any skill level. In combination with the western portion of the Upper Perimeter Loop, it makes a manageably-sized loop, with mellow grades, large radius turns, and smooth tread throughout.

Like the western portion of the Upper Perimeter Loop, the width and gentle nature of the Green Flow Trail makes it suitable for use by riders who use adaptive equipment, as well as leaves open the possibility for fat bike grooming, if demand should warrant the effort in the future.

Flow trails can be maintenance intensive if poorly designed. The Green Flow Trail should be built by a contractor with extensive experience in bike flow trail design, who is proficient in using an engineering-based approach to controlling speed with careful grade selection and thorough use of grade reversals. Trails that require the rider to brake heavily before each turn will not hold up. Typical construction equipment would be mini excavators from 1.7-4 tons.

Blue Flow & Tech Trails - #4 & #8

- 2.75 & 2.1 miles, respectively
- Bike Downhill Only
- "Flagship" trails to draw out-of-town mountain bikers
- Average running grade 6-8%, short pitches may be much steeper, width 36-72"
- Rough cost estimate: $174,240; $133,056



The Blue Flow & Tech Trails could be considered the "bread and butter" of the trail system due to their broad appeal to core mountain bikers and potential for creativity in the build. They should be built with a mix of low-grade flow trail features like berms, rollers, and possibly gentle table-top jumps, while also incorporating technical elements of moderate to steep sections of natural roots and roots.. At 2.75 miles, the western Blue Flow & Tech Trail is quite long, which will ensure smile-filled rider experiences.

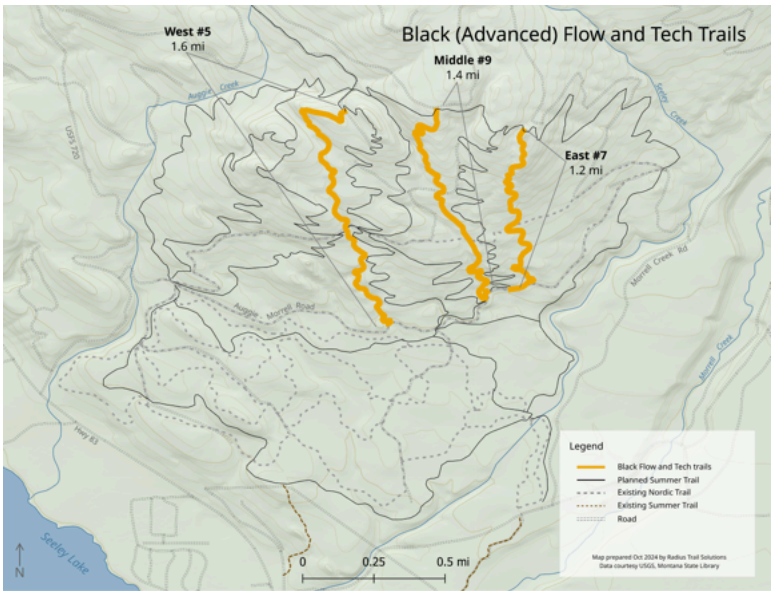
Both trails are situated on terrain that traverses diverse mature forest and rocky areas, and has gentle enough slopes to make building wide radius turns comfortable. The lower terrain of the eastern Blue Flow & Tech Trail is particularly lumpy, providing the possibility of a roller-coaster like riding experience.

These trails should be built by a professional trailbuilder with specific experience in bike downhill trails. The contract would likely elect to use a combination of machine building with a 1.7-3.5 ton excavator, hand labor, and other methods. Volunteer labor for hand finishing berms or helping to cut hand-built tech sections could lower project cost. Creative construction techniques such as allowing contractors to use dirt bikes (motorcycles) to "ride-in" the technical sections could also reduce cost.

Where more challenging features are incorporated into the Blue trails, builders should consider creating or allowing natural ride-arounds to ensure these trails have a broad appeal. This would specifically apply to the West Blue trail, which will likely be constructed earlier than other bike-specific trails and can function as part of a NICA race course in its lower stretches.

Black Flow & Tech Trails - #5, #7, & #9

- 1.6, 1.2, & 1.4 miles, respectively
- Bike Downhill Only
- Terrain to aspire to
- Average running grades likely to be 10-12%, with short to medium pitches much steeper, width likely 36-84”
- Rough cost estimate: $126,720.00; $114,048.00, $110,880.00



With rocky, rooty, steep and diverse terrain, the Auggie-Morrell area holds excellent potential to build trails that challenge and entertain expert riders. The Black Flow & Tech Trails are situated on the best ridgelines and gullies of this area.

The West Black trail starts in an area full of natural rock ledges, and descends into a deep gully with many natural hips and compressions. The Middle Black trail starts on a very steep hillside in deep forest and descends to another dynamic gully finish, leaving great possibility for natural rhythm changes, with high speed runs flowing into technical sections. The East Black trail, starting in direct view of the Swan Range, is the opposite- deep gullies up top can be worked into large but safe step-up jumps, while the middle to bottom is particularly lumpy and rocky.

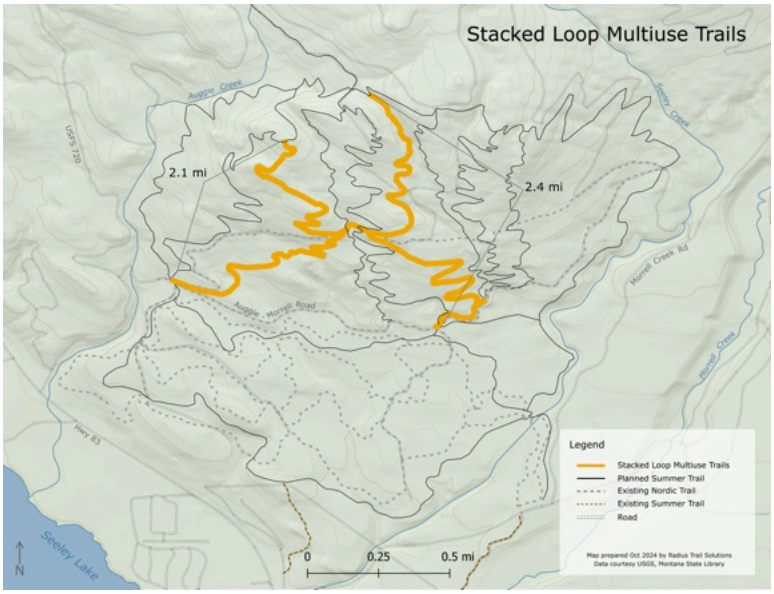
Given the limitations of EMS response in a rural area and their situation on public land, it’s recommended that these trails stick to a “Single Black Diamond” rating, generally emphasizing technical terrain over very large jumps or elevated wooden features.

These trails should be built by a professional trailbuilder with specific experience in bike downhill trails. The contract would likely elect to use a combination of machine building with a 1.7-2 ton excavator, hand labor, and other methods. Volunteer labor for hand finishing berms or helping to cut hand-built tech sections could lower project cost. Creative construction techniques such as allowing contractors to use dirt bikes (motorcycles) to “ride-in” the technical sections could also reduce cost.

Because the Black trails will require a particular vision from the trailbuilder, it may be beneficial to let contractors review all three potential alignments and submit a proposal for their preferred choice.

Upper Stacked Loop Trails - #6

- 4.5 miles
- Multi-use
- Connects in the middle, adds many loop options for runners, hikers, bikers
- Average running grade 6-8%, width 30-40”
- Rough cost estimate: $130,680



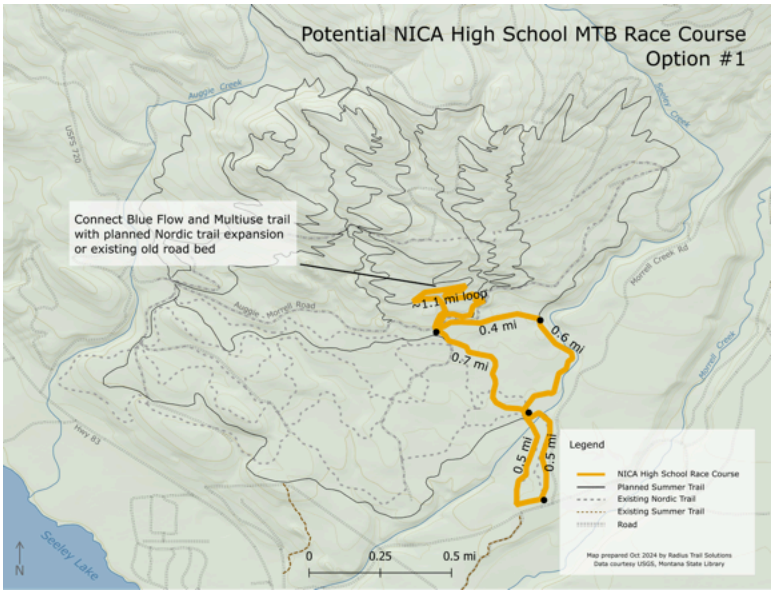
By connecting in the middle and also to the major access points, the Upper Stacked Loop trails greatly multiply the ways in which users can enjoy the trail network. Classic singletrack winding through the woods provides short-loop, long-loop, figure 8, or half-and-half options for these trails and the other trails around them.

These Upper Stacked Loop trails can essentially be broken into two separate top-to-bottom trails that meet in the middle. If one or two segments are hand-built, that would benefit the cause of developing a trail system of great character, as roots and rocks can more easily be left in the trail. The design should be modern, with grade reversals and good flow, but keeping the trails narrow will give users a feeling of being more connected to the land. For the segments that are machine built with contractors, they should be built using 1.7-2 ton mini excavators with the tracks retracted to keep trail width below 40”.

In the case of hand construction with Conservation Corps crews, hot shot crews, volunteer hand crews, or other sources of hand labor, a professional trailbuilder should be contracted to provide the flag line. Using volunteer machine operators for narrow, steeper-terrain trails like these may not be practical.

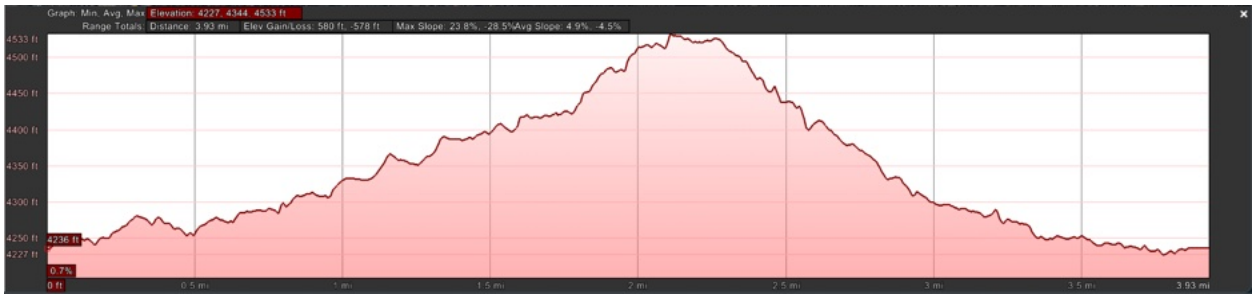
Potential NICA High School MTB Race Course Option #1

- ~4 miles
- High point is 250-300 vertical feet higher than lowest point
- Total elevation gain per lap probably 400-500 ft with rolling terrain



This rolling course leaves the trailhead on beginner singletrack, with a short descent to cross Seeley Creek, then climbs gently at ~4% average grade to Auggie-Morrell Road. Above the road, the course uses the lower segments of a multi-use trail and a blue flow/tech trail to add variety. This short quarter-mile climb would be at ~8% grade. A planned nordic trail makes a connection between the uphill and downhill segments at the appropriate elevation.

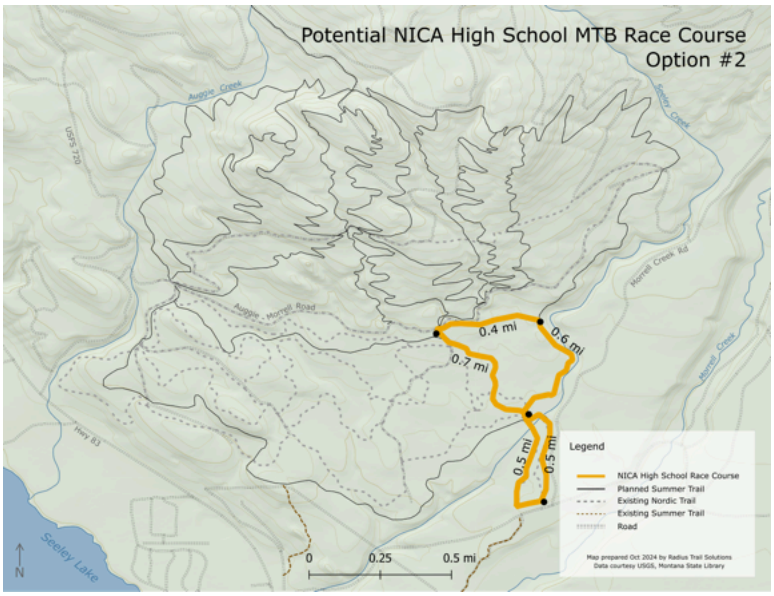
This course uses 2.5-3 miles of singletrack trail and 0.5-1 miles of road/nordic trail. Utilizing short sections of the multi-use and blue flow/tech trails adds character and challenge to the course. Portions of the Lower Loop singletracks used here will be wider to allow for fatbike grooming, while other portions will be narrow traditional singletrack.



NICA Option #1 elevation profile. Profile courtesy Google Earth Pro.

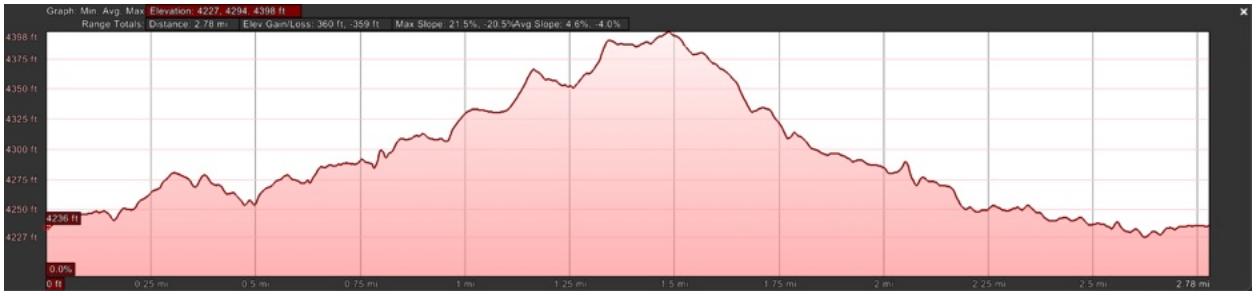
Potential NICA High School MTB Race Course Option #2

- ~2.7 miles
- High point is ~150 vertical feet higher than lowest point
- Total elevation gain per lap probably 250-300 ft with rolling terrain



This rolling course leaves the trailhead on beginner singletrack, rolling gently uphill at ~4% average grade. This shorter option does not cross Auggie-Morrell Road, instead heading directly back toward the trailhead on the rolling, slight downhill singletrack 0.7 miles in length.

Course option #2 uses ~2.2 miles of singletrack trail and 0.5-1 miles of road/nordic trail. This option is more conservative with elevation gain, but incorporates only beginner-level singletrack without much in the way of technical features.



NICA Option #2 elevation profile. Profile courtesy Google Earth Pro.