

Safety and Quality of Life, Case Study: Lombard Trail

Great Basin Institute (Nevada)

Safety and Quality of Life National Benefit Description: Trails are an important part of our transportation infrastructure. Trails support the economy through tourism and civic improvement and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health. Cities, suburbs, and towns all benefit from trails and greenways that make our communities more attractive to residents as well as employers. Trails also help our parks and open space by reducing crime and illegal activity through regular use and high visibility of users. Modest increases in property values near trails have also been documented.

Key Terms:

- ATV and OHV Trails
- Ecosystem Protection
- Historic Preservation
- Interpretation
- Ski and Snowmobile Trails

Project Partners:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
- Idaho OHV clubs
- U.S. Forest Service

DOT Strategic Goal Alignment:

- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Safety

Best Practices:

This case study provides an excellent example of Corpsmembers providing technical trail work that leads to the economic development of the local community. Since its completion, the Lombard Trail has received significant use, spurring economic development by opening a new area for ATV and OHV trail users.

Background

Great Basin Institute (GBI) completed a project originally known as the Bayhorse Trail Connector. The project consisted of converting a network of user-created motorcycle trails and jeep roads into a designated ATV trail linking the town of Challis, ID to the Bayhorse Townsite, a mining ghost-town that has been converted into a “history park” and OHV trailhead by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation.

Starting at the Land of the Yankee Fork Interpretive Center at approximately 5,020 feet in elevation, the trail is 7.5 miles long and winds along the Blue Mountain and peaks out on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service at about 8,430 feet. The trail provides views of the Lost River Range, the Salmon River Basin, and skirts an Area of Critical Environmental Concern managed for Bighorn Sheep habitat.

This project was long desired by this central Idaho community and outdoor enthusiasts, including OHV clubs. Interpretive materials, trail layout and design, and trail construction were provided jointly by the Great Basin Institute and personnel from the Bureau of Land Management.

Project Work

The primary work of this project, originally known as the Bayhorse Trail Connector, consisted of an innovative concept of converting a network of user-created motorcycle trails and jeep roads into a designated ATV trail linking the town of Challis, ID to the Bayhorse Townsite (see Background section above for more information).

GBI provided AmeriCorps restoration crews to rehabilitate the trailhead area and staff specialists to design the interpretive panels and oversee project implementation. A significant component of the project was route restoration at one of the trailheads where years of neglect had resulted in a tangle of roads, trails, and mud-bogs. An innovative technique called “vertical mulching” was utilized to rehabilitate the extraneous routes, disguising them to allow for eventual natural regeneration of grasses and shrubs.

Partnerships and Funding

The project, which received \$102,313 in 2009 RTP funding, was truly a cooperative effort among federal, state, and nonprofit entities. Interpretive material, trail layout and design, and trail construction were provided by the Bureau of Land Management. The IDPR awarded and managed the RTP funding and also provided expertise and route maintenance once the trail was constructed.

Successes and Outcomes

Open for more than five years, the Lombard trail continues to receive significant use and provides quality trail riding opportunities to residents and visitors alike. Simultaneously, it spurs economic development through enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities and the opening of a new area for ATV riders. This new network of trails provided riders a safe connection to the town of Challis, thus reducing or eliminating the need to ride on Highway 93. The project also met the objectives of the local land management plan by “provid[ing] economic benefits to the local community, in addition to high-quality recreation opportunities.”

In 2010, the IDPR approached the BLM with a request to rename the trail after IDPR board member Ernest Lombard, a longtime advocate for the development of the Bayhorse Townsite and associated OHV trail system.

For More Information

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Award Winner

Coalition for Recreational Trails Annual Achievement Award