

Shafer Butte Trail System Concept Plan



A collaborative planning effort between
Southwestern Idaho Mtn Bike Assoc. Boise National Forest Ridge To Rivers Partnership
Technical Assistance from NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance

Summer 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This document was developed by the Shafer Butte Trail System core planning team, consisting of representatives from Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA), Boise National Forest – Mountain Home Ranger District (USFS), and the Ridge to Rivers Partnership (Ridge to Rivers). In addition, technical assistance and planning guidance was provided by the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service (NPS).

Contained below is the summary of the recommendations stemming from the discussions of the core planning team. It is organized around topics or issues that the core planning team addressed over the course of a year's worth of inventorying and planning meetings.

Project Location

The proposed Shafer Butte Trail System is located approximately 15 miles north (up Bogus Basin Road) of downtown Boise, Idaho. Bogus Basin Ski Resort is the most obvious landmark in the vicinity. While some of the project area is located on the ski resort, the majority of proposed trails can be found on the Boise National Forest lands that surround it.

Allowable Uses

The Shafer Butte Trail System will be open to all non-motorized trail users. Specifically, this includes hikers, trail runners, equestrians and mountain bikers. The primary user for the trails will be mountain bikers. This means that trails will be constructed and maintained from a mountain biker perspective. In accordance with USFS management plans, the trails will not be open to motorized users unless they are currently designated as such. Trails will be signed to reflect this. The Mores Mountain trails will remain hiker only trails to provide users with this type of opportunity.

Free-Ride Park

An area has been set aside for free-riding, a style of mountain biking that “celebrates the spirit of technical riding and downhill.” (IMBA; *The Ups & Downs of Freeriding*; Spring 2004) Free-riding trails incorporate rocks, logs, log built bridges, etc. into the trail experience.

The trail planning team decided that this type of riding has potential within the Shafer Butte Trail System. After consulting with the USFS, Bogus Basin Resort and local free-ride enthusiasts, it was decided that the best location for free-riding would be on Bogus Basin owned land. There will be no free-riding courses or trails outside of this designated area. The trail planning team has decided not to plan or lay-out specific trails. It will be up to free-riders themselves to construct these trails. Bogus Basin Resort is excited about the development of free riding trails on their lands and that because this opportunity is entirely on private land, the trails can be constructed almost immediately. It should be noted that any free-riding trails, courses or obstacles must be approved by Bogus Basin Resort prior to construction.

Winter Recreation

Most of the proposed trail system will be below the elevations needed to sustain a regular snowpack. Because of this, the trail planning team decided that it would not make sense to develop the trail system for winter recreation. However, non-motorized winter recreation users will be allowed to use the trails if snow permits. But, there will be no winter recreation signing for users except where Bogus Basin has already developed ski trails.

Private Property

The trail planning team designed the proposed trail system to be entirely on publicly owned lands except for those owned by Bogus Basin Resort. All trails found to be on privately owned lands are slated to be closed or rerouted back onto public lands unless the individual land owners would like to allow trail recreation on their lands through an agreement or easement.

The Trail System & Bogus Basin Ski Resort

The Shafer Butte Trail System has been designed with Bogus Basin Ski Resort in mind. The planning team worked closely with ski area management to develop the proposal. Bogus Basin's lower parking lot will serve as the main trailhead for the trail system. Bogus Basin's Nordic Lodge, complete with flush toilets and kitchen, could be used to serve the trail system if use increases or during special events such as races or festivals. Bogus Basin also has the ability to operate their ski lifts for bike transport for special events or if use dictates on a regular basis. As stated above, Bogus Basin Ski Resort has agreed to allow free-riding on their lands as long as all trails are approved by the ski resort. Bogus Basin will be the only area in the trail system open to free-riding.

Parking Areas, Trailheads & Pull-outs

Parking Areas & Trailheads

Parking and trailheads can be one of the major expenses in developing a trail system. Keeping that in mind, the planning team sought to minimize parking construction by utilizing existing parking areas. Only one new parking area (the lower parking area off of Bogus Basin Road) is proposed for construction. Space for 20 plus cars will be constructed and a vault toilet will be installed. The main parking area and trailhead will be the existing lower parking lot for Bogus Basin Ski Resort. There is already ample space for parking and equestrian trailers here. Two vault or porta-potties will need to be installed here unless Bogus Basin Ski Resort is willing to make the Nordic Center available to trail users. An existing parking area at the Shafer Butte Campground (USFS) allows for hikers to park close to the designated hiker-only trails on Mores Mountain.

Pull-outs

There will be a few pull-outs at key locations along the trail system. Pull-outs are spots where the road has been widened enough for two to four cars to pull-out, park and not obstruct traffic. There will be no amenities except signage at pull-outs unless future use dictates.

Management & Maintenance

Management of the Trail System

The trail planning team recommends that the ultimate management responsibilities of the trail system reside with the USFS. However, day-to-day operations and coordination would be best performed by the Ridge to Rivers Partnership. Ridge to Rivers has a proven track record on managing non-motorized trail systems and has been successful organizing and overseeing trail volunteers. The planning team recommends that Ridge to Rivers coordinate and manage the following activities:

- Annual Plan Of Work – Ridge to Rivers will develop an annual or periodic maintenance plan that will detail the work to be performed on the trail system. In particular, this plan will list any new construction, reroutes, or major trail structures to be performed in the upcoming year(s). The plan will then be submitted to the USFS for approval prior to any major work projects.
- Trail Signage – Installing, repairing and replacing signs along the trail system will be the responsibility of Ridge to Rivers.
- Collection of Map Sale Funds & Reprints of Future Editions – It is recommended that Ridge to Rivers manage the selling and reprinting of the trail system maps.
- Coordinating Volunteers – All volunteer maintenance activities will be coordinated and approved by Ridge to Rivers.

Annual Maintenance

It is envisioned that volunteers will be utilized for the majority of the annual maintenance, reroutes and new construction within the proposed trail system. Ridge to Rivers will work with Southwest Idaho Mountain Bike Association (SWIMBA) and other trail user clubs to train volunteer trail crew supervisors and volunteer trail workers. Ridge to Rivers will approve all work prior to beginning the action. Volunteers will log

all hours and report them to Ridge to Rivers. In addition, the adopt-a-trail program will be utilized to ensure regular on-going maintenance of the trail system.

Implementation of Plan

Phased approach

The trail system has been designed to be developed in phases. The first phase of construction will involve installation of trail signs, decommissioning of trails slated for closure due to private property or environmental/maintenance concerns, and construction of key reroutes needed due to the above closures. The second phase will involve constructing the lower parking lot and the rest of the proposed trails. It should be noted that phase one will take a relatively short time while phase two will probably take many years to complete. Construction of trails in the second phase will be driven by the availability of volunteer labor and funds to construct the trail(s). All trail construction will be done to appropriate trail standards and will be cleared with Ridge to Rivers and the Boise National Forest prior to beginning the work.

Grants

The trail system has been planned with the intention of securing federal, state and local grant monies. It is envisioned that very little funds from the USFS, City or County will be available for the development of the trail system.

Trail User Maps

A map for the Shaffer Butte Trail System will be created at no cost to the USFS. National Park Service will contribute graphic design skills and \$1-\$2K for initial printing. Ridge to Rivers may be able to use some of their heritage trust funding generated from current Ridge to Rivers map sales towards printing. The map will be created for trail users and will show all trails and routes. In addition to the trails, land manager & trail manager contact info will be listed, tread lightly, low impact trail use, and other useful information will be shown on the map. The trail planning team recommends that the map be sold for \$4-\$7 per unit. These funds should be used to cover the costs of reprints of future maps and could be used to cover some of the maintenance/management costs. It is estimated that \$2,000-\$4,000 a year can be raised through the sale of trail maps. Ridge to Rivers will manage and oversee the production and sale of the trail system maps.

Trail System Sign Plan

Signage Objectives

Prior to deciding on a sign scheme, the planning team agreed on the following three objectives that the signs would need to meet. These are in order of importance:

1. Low Cost, Durable, Ease in Installation

2. Ease in User Understanding & Able to Effectively Inform Users of Important Information
3. Aesthetics

Types of Signs Needed

The following different types of signs will be needed to ensure that the public is provided adequate information when interfacing with the trail system:

- Trailhead & Parking Pull-Out Signs

Trailheads and parking pull-out areas require the most information needs on the system. In order to meet these information needs, Kiosks will be installed. Trailheads will receive 2-3 four feet by four feet kiosks and parking pull-outs will receive 1-2 four feet by four feet kiosks. Kiosks will display the following types of information to the public:

- Map of the entire trail system or a map of the local area of the trail system
- Uses allowed on the trail system
- Contact information for the trail system
- Pack it in/pack it out & Leave No Trace ethics
- Stay on trails/avoid private property

At the exact position of the start of the trail(s), a trail sign will be installed that is similar to a trail intersection sign in construction but will be one sided and will list which trail users are and aren't allowed on the particular trail. The planning team envisions needing 20 of these signs @ \$20 for \$400 in total.

The trail planning team estimates that 17 4x4' panels will need to be installed in total. Cost estimates per panel are \$100 or \$1,700 in total.

- Trail Intersection Signs

The signs will be made of 6" round pressure treated wood posts that will ensure durability, low cost and have a more natural and more permanent 'look' than Carsonite posts and be much easier to create than a routed sign. The post will also allow for a sign with up to 4 sides. The 6' post will be planed down on its sides and then have a cut piece of a Carsonite post which will then be fastened to the post. Stickers for trail number, name, and users allowed on the trail will be added directly onto the Carsonite post portion of the sign. Normal trail intersection signs will cost approximately \$25 -\$35:

- 6" pressure treated wood post = \$14
- 1/3 of a Carsonite post = \$5; Note: that an average sign will use two sides of the post and thus take 2/3 of a Carsonite post for \$10
- Screws to bolt down Carsonite overlays = \$1
- Stickers to place on Carsonite posts = \$5

The planning team estimates that 100 of these signs (including spare replacements) will be needed @ \$30 a sign or \$3,000.

Trail-Motorized Route/Road Intersection Signs

These signs will be placed whenever the trail intersects with a road or motorized route/trail. They will be constructed exactly the same as a trail intersection sign but will most likely be one-sided and cost \$20 a sign.

The trail planning teams estimates that 25 of these signs will be needed @ \$20 a piece for \$500.

• Map Locator Signs

These signs will be placed at key locations within the trail system to visually display where the reader is at the current location. Map locator signs will be ‘bird-house’ style and mounted on a 6”x6” round pressure treated post. Maps will be laminated and stapled to the ‘bird-house’. In the future, a plexiglass overlay can be fastened to the map. The estimated cost for these will be \$40.

The planning team envisions installing 10-15 of this type of sign. So, 15 signs @ \$40 equals \$600.

• Trail Closed/Private Property Signs

These will be the only signs on the system consisting entirely of carsonite posts. They will be installed on trails that are being decommissioned or listed as closed. In addition, if private property markers are needed, they will be Carsonite posts as well.

The planning team estimates that 35 of these signs will be needed @ \$20 per sign including stickers or \$700 for all of the trail closed/pvt property signs.

Total Estimated Costs for Trail Signage

The following estimates for signage for the Shafer Butte Trail System include:

- Kiosks = \$1,700
 - Trail Markers = \$400
 - Trail Intersections = \$3,000
 - Trail – Motorized Route = \$500
 - Map Locator = \$600
 - Trail Closed/Pvt Property = \$700
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Total Estimated Cost of Signs = \$6,900