

**TRAILHEAD:** New location will have less impact on neighbors

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a citizen letter-writing campaign in support of the new trailhead. Approval for the project was received in 2012 from the Forest Service, but it took four years to obtain the project funding.

After two unsuccessful attempts to obtain funding for the approved project, STA's Guttormsen and Patrick Eckford worked on the 16-page grant appropriation request, adding actual trail data to the request. The third time was the charm when Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Recreational Trails Program granted \$152,000 to be matched by \$38,661.40 from other sources for a total project cost of \$190,661.40. That OPRD money comes from Federal gas tax funds.

Jodi Bellefeuille with OPRD told the people assembled for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new trailhead last Thursday that the money was granted in part due to all the work done by so many people. Not only did the proposal have to be written, but the trail data had to be collected and a formal presentation had to be made in front of an OPRD advisory committee.

Jerold Wesley, a 15-year civil engineer with the Deschutes National Forest, served as the project engineer on the new trailhead. He used the dimensions of a Sprinter van to design the parking spaces. Besides 25 designated off-road gravel parking spaces and the installation of a CXT prefabricated toilet, the trailhead will also have an informational kiosk built by the STA, bike racks, space for user staging, and room for future expansion.

Sisters District Ranger, Ian Reid, who emceed the ribbon cutting, is himself a fan of the PRT, having discovered it three years ago upon his arrival in Sisters. He pointed out that trails in Sisters meet strategies of all four pillars of the Sisters Vision project.

Reid expressed

appreciation for the collaborative effort surrounding the trailhead.

"The Deschutes National Forest can't overstate our appreciation for our community partners, such as the City of Sisters and Sisters Trails Alliance, who have provided volunteer time and financial support," she said. "Having a shared vision for a sustainable trails network and leveraging our individual strengths is part of the 'Central Oregon way' of cooperation and collective problem solving. We would also like to thank the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Recreational Trails Program, which have substantially funded this project."

The City of Sisters provided letters of support and funding through the City Grant Program. The Sisters Trails Alliance has provided thousands of volunteer hours in planning, labor, and grant writing, as well as money. OPRD provided the grant that will cover 80 percent of the costs. The new Deschutes Trail Coalition has offered their support with a small grant. McKenzie Cascade Heavy Equipment did the actual excavation of the new parking lot. Sara Baughman

is the new Recreation Team Lead for the Sisters Ranger District, replacing Amy Radke who was on staff for the majority of the project.

Sisters Mayor Chuck Ryan was on hand, commenting he is biased because he is a trail runner. He told those assembled, "What we have here in Sisters is an outdoor gem... Businesses are appreciative of the trail system and the people it brings to town."

STA president Catherine Hayden praised the ability of government, nonprofits, and the community to come together in collaboration to build the new trailhead

"Here's to the PRT and its new welcome mat," she said.

The old trailhead on Tye will be decommissioned by the City, with all signage removed. It will remain a neighborhood access point to the trail.

STA is not resting on its laurels. Their next two projects will include a Whychus Creek foot bridge on the old Brooks-Scanlon road to take trail traffic away from a wildlife area and a new foot trail to the Peak View overlook.

The new PRT is open, just 850 feet south of the old trailhead.

**HISTORY:** Trail started as cyclists' grassroots effort

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Mountain Bike Trail. He has an old oak trail sign that has that name on it.

Rahm conceived of a new trail system that created the current ladder system with many connectors between the west and east legs of the system.

Equestrians were at first opposed to Rahm's plan because they feared they would lose the area for riding to the new trail system. The compromise they worked out created a PRT horse trail system.

The compromise was a win-win, said Guttormsen, and "was the reason that STA emerged as an organization that builds and maintains many miles of horse trails besides the ones for hikers and cyclists."

When STA had the opportunity to have an NEPA analysis (environmental impact study) done on new trail projects in 2011, STA asked the Forest Service to analyze a new location further along Elm Street (Three Creeks Lake Road), where a proper trailhead could be built. The

“...STA emerged as an organization that builds and maintains many miles of horse trails besides the ones for hikers and cyclists.”  
— Gary Guttormsen,

FS approved the spot where the new trailhead sits.

It took seven years to obtain a Recreational Trails grant to get the facility built. STA is responsible for building the facilities kiosk and signage to the connector trail that takes people out to west and east legs of the PRT.

Besides providing a variety of over 15 loop options through beautiful ponderosa pine forests and open sagebrush country, and areas of challenging rock, breathtaking mountain views are seen from the Whychus Overlook and Peak View.

The trail is well-marked and, with the available trail map, riders and hikers are able to design their own riding and hiking experience.

The Sisters Stampede mountain bike race, held every spring (except this year due to COVID-19), draws riders from near and far.

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