



TrailBlazer Report

BONNERS FERRY - IDAHO

TRAIL
TALK

YEAR IN
REVIEW

TRAIL
CREW

WINTER
GROOMING

9B KIOSK

9B TRAILS
IS A
NON-PROFIT
501(C) ENTITY

MEETINGS HELD

1st Thursday
of every month
Noon at Mugsy's

ALL ARE WELCOME

Trail Talk - 2020 in Review

How does one even describe the year 2020? History will likely refer to it as “The Year of the Pandemic” or “The Year of the Social Distancing,” but we will remember it as “The Year For 9B Trails.” Although it has been a troublesome year mixed with a lot of uncertainty, 9B Trails still forged ahead and was able to prevail through difficult times.

Not only did our volunteers meet the goals outlined in 2019, we surpassed them. Due to our outstanding grant writing team and generous donors, this year’s monetary awards totaled nearly \$35,000 in grants and donations. And despite Covid, our trail builders made tremendous strides in the areas of trail construction, improved trailhead facilities, and more.

SECTION 16 - PHASE 2 & 3 COMPLETE!

As soon as the snow melted, our excited trail builders went straight to work to improve and enhance the trails at **Section 16**.

Until this year, all of the preliminary trail work at Section 16 was done by hand. However, thanks to our newly acquired mini-excavator, the machine greatly increased our ability to break ground and add miles to the trail system at a much faster pace.

We were also able to meet our 2020 goals in record time by connecting and completing Power Brush and Social Distancing looped trails, construct a new trailhead parking lot, install trail signage, and build an informational kiosk.



New Parking lot at Section 16



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SECTION 16 - Continued

As a result, trail usage increased substantially with many users being first-time local and out-of-town visitors. On average, over 100 trail users were observed per week. Walkers with their dogs, trail runners, families, and mountain bikers of all ages were out on the new trails. During uncertain times, it also provided a healthy outdoor alternative from the stresses brought on by the pandemic.

Bike enthusiast Julie Holly states, “Now that my kids are on mountain bikes, we devour Section 16 like candy as a family! The trails offer the technical training necessary to tackle the extended trails our high country offers. Since it’s in-town and a comfortable trail for all ages and abilities, my kids first experienced night riding at Section 16. It REALLY is a trail for everybody!”

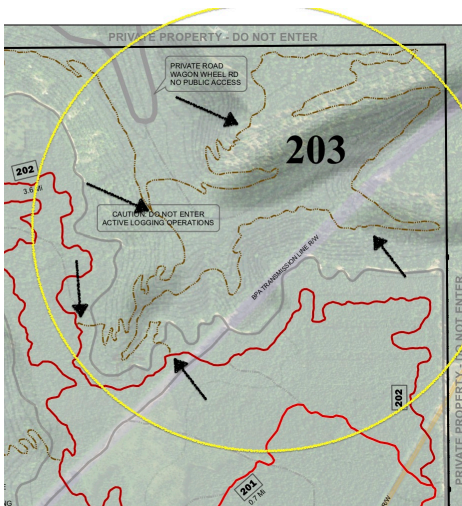


The Holly Family out enjoying the new trails at Section 16

Another new and exciting opportunity being offered at Section 16 will be winter grooming. This will be the first trail in Boundary County’s history to offer groomed trails for use by fat tire bikers and cross-country skiers!

Kaniksu Bike Coalition President Brian Anderson states, “The winters in North Idaho can be long, and access to outdoor activities is vital. These trails are easy to access and the gradual terrain of this area makes this a great area for winter use. North Idaho does not have a lot of areas with year-round access and conducive terrain for year-round bike riding like Section 16 will now be offering.”

SO WHAT’S NEXT? - ON TO PHASE 4!



With 6.1 miles built out of the 11 miles slated, the focus for 2021 will not only be to maintain the existing beginner trails but also to enhance an equestrian use trail and begin new construction on Trail 203 - North Ridge.

The North Ridge Trail will add 3.4 more miles to the existing connected trail system. Located in steeper terrain, it will give the intermediate/advanced riders added mileage with fun downhill and climbing sections to maneuver. It will also provide views of the Kootenai Valley in a regenerating forest.

Currently, our grant writers are applying for funds to help cover the expenses of trail building and needed amenities. The goal is to complete the new section of trail no later than 2022 and finish the remainder of approved trails for 2023. If you’re interested in making a difference, please consider volunteering or becoming a Friend of 9B Trails. All donations go directly toward these projects!

TRAIL TALK - Year in Review

ENCHANTED FOREST - MORE THRILLING MILES, PARKING AND KIOSK.....OH MY!

This year, 9B Trails made huge strides at **Enchanted Forest** (EF) and were able to bring 2 new miles of trail, an improved parking lot, and more amenities for public use.

The 2 additional miles not only completed the first loop option but also added more exhilarating downhill flow sections along with a spur trail. In addition, volunteers built a new wooden bridge over Dobson Creek, a bench overlooking the meadow, and a new information kiosk at the trailhead.

One of the most notable improvements can be seen at the Hoot Owl parking lot. Due to the challenging terrain, the site proved to be a difficult undertaking to provide better access while also protecting the surrounding environment. However, thanks to a grant by Innovia, donated machinery by Boundary Tractor, and a team of dedicated volunteers, the parking area was accomplished in November.

Olivia and Scooter Drake, who were instrumental in tackling the project brought in the necessary equipment along with family and friends to help with the project. Olivia states, "It's amazing how our community comes together. The new parking lot truly could not have happened without the hard work of our volunteers."

Another new addition at EF that will delight beginners and experts is the flow section found on the Cabin Trail. Created with the assistance of Mike Kirkpatrick, who specializes in flow trails, riders will now be able to experience the thrill and excitement of banked and beamed turns with rollers.

Olivia states, "Riders of all levels should NOT be afraid to try these trails. But do be prepared, you will get a workout and if needed, beginners should walk sections until they become more comfortable. I would also suggest a true mountain bike, hopefully, one with disc brakes."

Scott Bourassa, 9B's Trail Chief responsible for designing the trail system has created a very unique mountain experience for the adventurous beginner hikers and intermediate mountain bikers. Several double-track access roads are also available for horseback riders. With 5 miles out of the 20 miles now complete, the goal for 2021 is to add 2-3 more miles and post better directional signage on all of the trails. A new parking lot trailhead at Kootenai Trail/Cow Creek road is slated in the near future.



Allen Rose building the new kiosk at EF



Parking lot greatly improved



A banked turn for added challenge and fun

RIVERSIDE PARK TRAIL SYSTEM - COVID STALLS FEDERAL FUNDING



Riverside Park 2021

In January 2019, 9B Trails applied for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant through the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. RTP provides funding to develop and maintain non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related facilities.

Due to Riverside Park's ideal location in downtown Bonners Ferry, the 75K grant would not only offer a new 1.85-mile trail system for the entire community along the scenic Kootenai River, but it would also vastly improve the underutilized park with interpretative signage, benches, a new kiosk, fitness stations and more.

The highly competitive grant program annually awards more than 1.3 million dollars across the state to fund recreational trails and must not only meet strict requirements but also must be approved by an advisory committee for consideration. Those meeting the criteria are then forwarded to the Federal Highway Transportation Department for final approval.

In May, 9B Trail's grant application received high marks and was approved at the State level. However, federal approval is still pending. Tiffany Brunson, North Region Grant Specialist for Idaho State Parks she states, "We are still waiting to hear from them on most of our RTP grants" with approval likely to happen summer 2021.

Although the delay is disappointing, 9B Trails is still encouraged the long-anticipated (more than 20 years to be exact) trail system will finally become a reality for the community.

Stay Tuned.....

GRANT AWARDS FOR 2020



\$13,000.00 INNOVIA GRANT

- New Snowdog
- (2) Gravel Parking Lots
- Trail Signage
- Excavator work at Enchanted Forest



\$10,000.00 EQUINOX GRANT

- Trail work at Section 16 & Enchanted Forest



\$6,500.00 GRANT

- Interpretative Signage at Riverside Park



\$250.00 EXTREME TERRAIN GRANT

- New Trail Tools

TOTAL AWARDED

\$29,750.00

Winter Trails Coming to Bonners Ferry

by Tess Rae

When it comes to trail maintenance, success hinges on having committed volunteers equipped with the right tools and equipment.

A non-mechanized workforce generally progresses at a very slow pace with the work being strenuous, labor-intensive, and time-consuming. However, this year, 9B Trail's has added the versatile and innovative SnowDog to its trail building arsenal.



The SnowDog is a workhorse that will allow local volunteers and trail supporters to build and maintain at a faster pace. Capable of performing summertime trail maintenance work with a variety of attached implements, the SnowDog also performs wintertime work by compacting snow and setting tracks for Nordic skiing and fat-tire winter biking.



Larry Davidson Winter Riding Enthusiast

9B Trails recently was able to purchase the SnowDog due to a grant from the Innovia Foundation. Board member and grant writer Larry Davidson states, "Access to public space is essential for a vibrant community. The increased number and quality of trails built will mean more opportunities for residents and visitors alike to enjoy more of this beautiful area of the country."

With fat biking quickly becoming the newest winter pastimes, "The SnowDog will allow us to groom trails at Section 16 for winter fat-biking, cross-country skiing, and skate skiing on select roads," states Davidson. The closest groomed trails are currently located and maintained in Sandpoint, which is why 9B Trails is excited to offer this new opportunity to Boundary County.

By providing such opportunities, the new winter use of trails will not only promote wellness and quality of life across a broad spectrum of the community but will also "afford biker and cross-country skiers the ability to use the trails, while at the same time offer healthful exercise, fresh air, and fun times with family and friends."

For more information on 9B Trail's winter grooming schedule, please follow us on Facebook and "Like" our page. Grooming conditions will be provided as they become available.

9B Trail Wonder Woman - Olivia Drake

by Julie Holly



Olivia Drake at the highest point (unnamed) in the American Selkirks

Superheroes always have an alter ego that blends into the community well. Olivia Drake is no different. You can find Drake busy at work tucked away with maps and computers in a dimly lit room in the basement of the county courthouse.

What might tip you off that that's just her alter ego is her genuine nature, willingness to be present when interrupted from a task and unending willingness to help others do well.

Few can say they've been there since the beginning, but Drake before the organization became incorporated in 2018. And yet, after two years of serving as secretary, Drake now finds herself on the board of directors.

In addition to attending monthly meetings, completing paperwork, building trails, and overseeing several special projects, Drake generously and endlessly shares her homegrown expertise of our area's geography and map skills with 9B Trails.

Her highly developed skills assist 9B Trails in locating potential areas to develop and her relationships with locals helps make connections. Life is more than meetings, maps, and paperwork. Last year, despite some physical setbacks, she clocked more than 112 hours of trail building time!

Drake understands the value of getting outside, the power of connecting with our natural surroundings, and the sheer fun found in nature.



No task is too big for Olivia at Enchanted Forest

Her love of the outdoors began as a young girl. Like many associated with 9B Trails, Drake's childhood is filled with memories of hiking, fishing, and backpacking in our wilderness.

Those fond memories fuel her ambition to create local spaces for others to experience the wonder of nature. Drake's heart mirrors 9B Trail's mission to create opportunities for everyone to experience the joys the outdoors offers.

She understands that the deeper wilderness trail system isn't always a comfortable space for people to begin their outdoor ventures and being able to access trails close to town provides opportunities for many.

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Olivia out on the Trail, Perfecting her Mnt. Bike Snow Angels

What makes Drake a superhero? She is part of other organizations to better our community! While 9B Trails focus is on developing non-motorized trails, Drake is also breathing life and lending her knowledge and skills into Boundary Backcountry Access (BBA).

BBA is a local organization committed to keeping trails open and developing trails for motorized access. She is also a part of Beta Sigma Phi's local program, helping with calendar sales to raise money for local scholarships and charities.

Drake suggests volunteering with 9B Trails if you're looking to develop new skills, want to try something new, or be involved in a wonderful community project. Volunteering doesn't always mean physical trail building. In addition to the physical work of trail building and maintenance, 9B Trails needs skilled grant writers and office skills. Choose what best suits you to contribute!

Olivia Drake, we are extremely grateful for your continued dedication to making the outdoors an experience everyone can enjoy! Your hard work is very much appreciated! And....we greatly look forward to learning your superhero name!

2020 Volunteer Recognition

A big heartfelt **THANK YOU** to the volunteers who worked hard on this year's trail projects. Without you, 9B Trails would not exist and we could NOT do it without you!



VOLUNTEER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



800+ Trail Hours

13+ Work Party Days

3.0 New Miles - 4.5 Miles Improved

2 Parking Lots - 2 Kiosks - Trail Signage

1 Bridge - 1 Bench

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Allen & Jan Rose | Katie Bourassa |
| Scooter Drake | Elizabeth Bourassa |
| Ann Onstott | Emilie Bourassa |
| Benjamin Phillips | Lindsay Sutherland |
| Bob & Dianne Blanford | Riley Sutherland |
| Brett Lyndaker | Tim Bertling |
| Chad Staker | Will Beasley |
| Carl, Cris & Hazel Hunter | Scott Onstott |
| Deborah Youngwirth | Troy Drake |
| Jeff Miller | Dawn & Brady Watt |
| Gunnar Miller | Doug Nishek |
| Brecken Miller | Kevin Schnuerle |
| Julie Holly | Leon Stanley |
| Steve Holly | Todd Charlesworth |
| Will Holly | Trent Miller |
| Simone Holly | Scott Rulander |
| | M. Logr |

Board of Directors - Tess Rae - Rob Beck - Olivia Drake - Scott Bourassa - Larry Davidson

2021 Volunteer Postings

Have you always wanted to help, but not sure where to start? Well, you're in luck! We have the need for a few good men or women in the following areas:

Trail Crew:

Help build or maintain a trail. Experience not required. Just a great attitude and willingness to push a little dirt, rake, and help maintain a trail. Trail parties are typically once a week, 2-4 hours. Show up once or twice a month or every week. We'll take whatever time your willing to give!

Volunteer Coordinator:

If you're organized, this job is for you. Help us build a stronger volunteer program by tracking and equipping our volunteers for work parties. This is NOT a time-consuming job, just an eye to detail, and getting the word out.

Friends of 9B Trails:

Help us grow our supporters. We need a person who can focus on building more trail "friends" with our annual drive. With a little creativity and a solid plan, this job might be for you. More FRIENDS = More \$\$\$\$ = More outstanding TRAILS in Boundary County!

Specific Projects:

Enchanted Forest Parking Lot: Oversee construction of a new trailhead parking lot. We need someone to coordinate local contractors/volunteers. Manual labor is not necessarily required. (one-time job)

Grant Writer: Help secure more funding. If you're a person that likes a rewarding challenge, this job is for you.

Mudslide Trail Coordinator: Wanna see how a new trail system happens from the top down? If that's a yes, then this job is for you. Help bring the pieces together and champion this cause. Contact us for more info!

Trail Host/Events: We are looking for someone who might want to take new people out on the trail. 9B Trail Nights are for those wanting to meet up and hit our trails. If there is interest, we would like to offer this opportunity twice a month during the summer months. Inquire for more information.

Contact: 9btrails@9btrails.org

FRIENDS OF 9B TRAILS

Scooter Drake
Olivia Drake
Scott Bourassa
Larry Davidson
Julie Davidson
John Delaney
Sharlene Delaney
David Kjos
Elaine Kjos
Bob Blanford
Diane Blanford
Carl Hunter
Cris Hunter
Victor Rae
Tess Rae
Ryne Rae
John Rice
Benjamin Phillips
Jeffrey Dow
Sandra LaFarr
Erja Springman
Spencer Springman
Rob Beck

SPECIAL THANKS

K&G Septic
Boundary Tractor
Foust Logging
Idaho Forest Group
Hank Willis Dentistry
C.E. Kramer, Inc.
The Plaza Downtown
Boundary Abstract
Larry Davidson,
Attorney-at-Law

BECOME A FRIEND OF 9B TRAILS - DONATE



Friend of 9B Trail Benefits Include:

- Receive the latest information on 9B Trails
- Get the official 9B Trails Decal
- Have a strong voice in the location of new trails
- Be a vital participant in their construction & maintenance
- Take part in local group hike or mountain bike rides
- Lend strength and support for trail advocacy
- Become a positive influence in our community

For More Information Email:

9btrails@9btrails.org

- OR -

Donate Online Via PayPal:

www.9btrails.org

