

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL®

ROUTE ASSESSMENT REPORT
MAY 2025

RAILS TO
Trails
conservancy

IDAHO



NorPac Trail | Photo by TrailLink user acewickwire

The Great American Rail-Trail travels through the northern Panhandle of Idaho along primarily developed rail-trails. The NorPac Trail and Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes are in RTC's Rail-Trail Hall of Fame for their exceptional views of the rugged Idaho landscape.

TABLE 24: GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL MILEAGE IN IDAHO

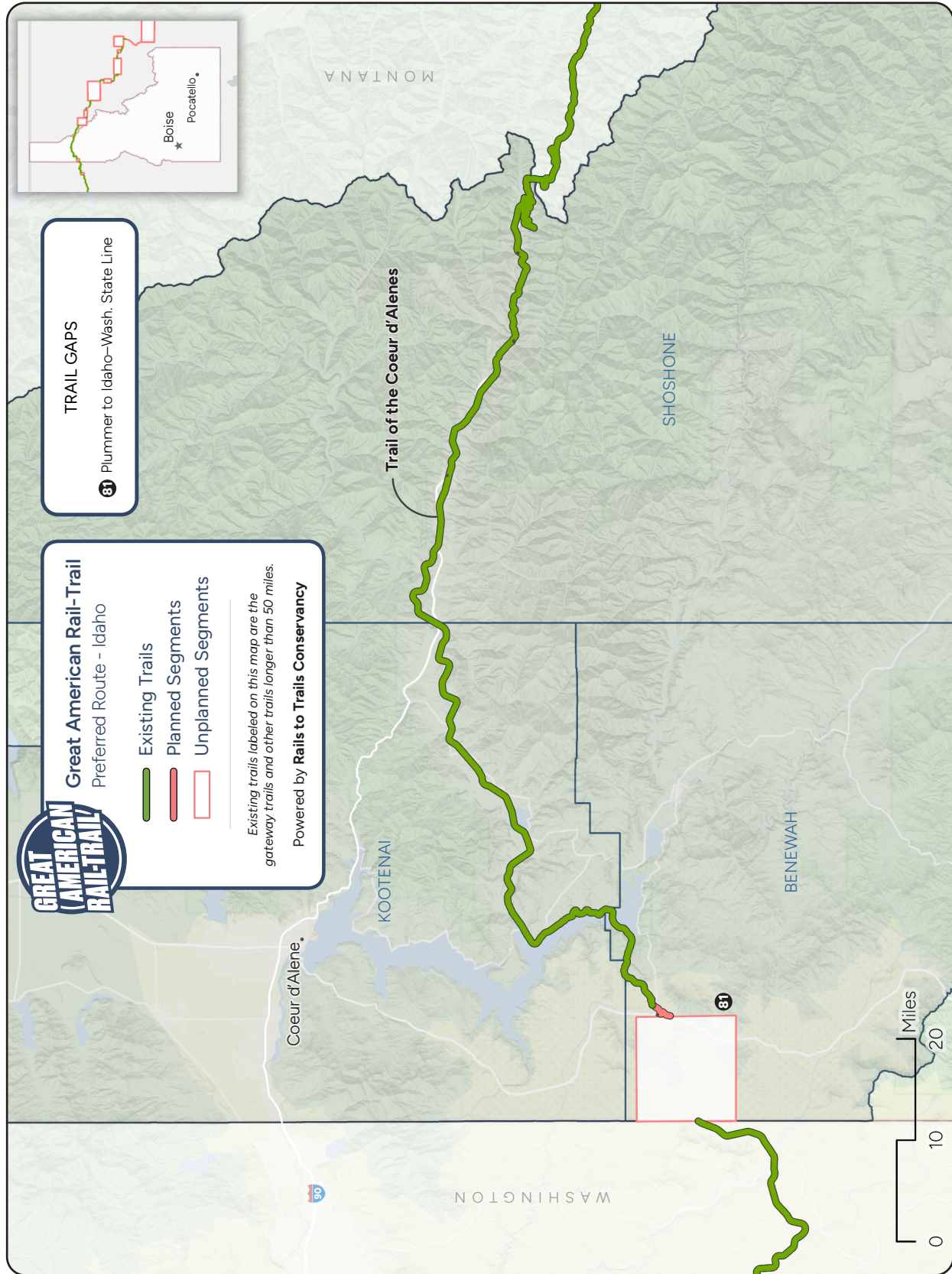
Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Idaho (% of Total State Mileage)	80.2 (88.4%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Gap Miles in Idaho (% of Total State Mileage)	10.5 (11.6%)
Total Trail Gaps in Idaho	1
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Idaho	90.7

TABLE 25: GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH IDAHO

Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name	Length in Idaho Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)
NorPac Trail	9.2
Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes	71.0
TRAIL GAP 81 – Plummer to Idaho–Wash. State Line	10.5
Total Miles	90.7
Existing Trail Miles	80.2
Trail Gap Miles	10.5

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2025

MAP 12: IDAHO



NORPAC TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Idaho (in Miles)	25.0 / 9.2
Surface Type	Concrete, dirt, gravel
Trail Manager	U.S. Forest Service (Lolo National Forest – Superior Ranger District)
Website	friendsofcdatrails.org/northern-pacific-trail
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/norpac-trail

The Idaho portion of the NorPac Trail runs 9.2 miles through the state, heading west from the Montana–Idaho state line. The separated trail ends at Beacon Light Road, about 4 miles from the eastern endpoint of the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes in Mullan. Trail users can follow the low-volume Larson Road/Friday Avenue west into Mullan, where a separated trail picks up along Earle Street and connects to the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes trailhead at 2nd and River streets.

TRAIL OF THE COEUR D’ALENES

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Idaho (in Miles)	71.0 / 71.0
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Coeur d’Alene Tribe, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Old Mission State Park
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendsofcdatrails.org/trail-of-the-coeur-dalenes • parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/trail-coeur-d-alenes
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/trail-of-the-coeur-dalenes

The Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes, inducted into RTC’s Rail-Trail Hall of Fame in 2010 (with the Route of the Hiawatha, also in Idaho), covers 71 miles of paved rail-trail through Idaho’s scenic mountains and valleys. The area has a rich mining, railroading and Native American history, and the Coeur d’Alene tribe was instrumental in the development of the trail. The trail originates in Mullan at 2nd and River streets and terminates in the west at the city of Plummer in a public park with interpretive signage on tribal history.

TRAIL GAP 81 – PLUMMER TO IDAHO–WASHINGTON STATE LINE

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

Local officials in the city of Plummer have identified a potential corridor through Plummer to continue the trail westward into Benewah County, Idaho. The trail will then need to continue through Benewah County to connect into the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail at the Idaho–Washington border in Spokane County, Washington. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (the Milwaukee Road) corridor travels between Plummer and Spokane County, and local farmers and property owners have had preliminary discussions on how to make this connection possible. The state of Idaho and local officials should continue to work with landowners through the Lovell Valley to find an opportunity to complete the 10.5-mile connection between the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes and the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail.

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abandoned rail corridor – When a railroad company ceases operations on a line or terminates the line itself. Abandonment is official when the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has issued an order authorizing abandonment of the line and the railroad has notified the STB that it has consummated the abandonment authorization.

Active rail corridor – Any rail corridor that has not been formally abandoned through the process identified by the Surface Transportation Board.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – The federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability.

Arterial road – A major thoroughfare, particularly one used to provide a large traffic capacity for traveling longer distances.

Ballast – The trackbed upon which railroad ties are laid, often composed of crushed stone.

Bike lane – A portion of the roadway that has been designated by striping, signage and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

Bike route – On-street routes that are signed for bicycle travel but do not provide any physical or visual separation from automobile traffic.

Bollard – A short post used to divert traffic from an area or road.

Contiguous – Sharing a common border; touching.

Culvert – A tunnel carrying a stream or open drain under a road, railroad or trail.

Decking – The surface of a bridge.

Federal Railroad Administration – An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that handles matters related to the railroad industry.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – A system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage and present spatial or geographic data.

Greenway – A strip of undeveloped land, set aside for recreational use or environmental protection.

Interim on-road connector – An on-road segment that is to be used temporarily while a trail is being planned or built.

Multiuse trails – Trails that are designed to accommodate more than one type of use (walking, bicycling, horseback riding, etc.).

Non-motorized trails – Trails that do not allow travel using vehicles with motors.

Off-road trails – Trails that are outside of a roadbed for motorized vehicles.

Protected bike lane (cycle track) – A bikeway that is at street level and uses a variety of methods for physical protection from passing traffic. Protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) can allow bicycle movement in one or both directions on one side of a road.

Railbanked/railbanking – Condition allowing a railroad to “bank” a corridor for future rail use. During the interim, alternative trail use is a viable option.

Railbed – The roadbed of a railroad track.

Rail corridor – The tracks and railroad right-of-way (generally 50 to 100 feet wide, though it varies widely by geography).

Rail-trail – The conversion of a disused railway track into a multiuse trail. The characteristics of abandoned railways—flat, long, frequently running through historical areas—are appealing for various developments.

Rail-with-trail – A trail located adjacent to an active rail line.

Rail yard – A complex series of railroad tracks for storing, sorting, loading and unloading railroad cars.

Recreational Trails Program – A competitive grant program managed by state trail administrators; therefore, only projects that meet certain criteria may be funded. Its funds are drawn from the larger Transportation Alternatives Program.

Right-of-way – The land on which a railroad line, road or utility is built.

Roadway – The strip of land over which a road passes.

Shared land marking (sharrow) – Road marking used to indicate a shared land environment for bicycles and automobiles.

Shared-use path – A form of infrastructure that supports multiple recreation and transportation opportunities (a common synonym for “trail”).

Shoulder (road) – A strip of land adjacent to the traffic lane of a road, often used as an emergency stopping lane.

Surface Transportation Board (STB) – The federal agency that oversees changes made by railroad companies. Formerly the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Towpath – A road or trail on the bank of a river, canal or other inland waterway.

Trailbed – The roadbed of a trail.

Trail gap – Section of trail that still needs to be built to connect the existing trails.

Transportation Alternatives Program – A program administered by the Federal Highway Administration to authorize funding for programs and projects defined as “transportation alternatives,” including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The Transportation Alternatives Program is the largest federal source for trail funding.

Waterway – A river, canal or other route for travel by water.



At Rails to Trails Conservancy, we are building a nation connected by trails. We reimagine public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors.