

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL®

ROUTE ASSESSMENT REPORT  
MAY 2025

RAILS TO  
**Trails**  
conservancy



# MONTANA



Milwaukee Trail | Photo courtesy Missoula in Motion

The Great American Rail-Trail route through Montana will connect many of the communities known for their outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state. Trails are popular assets in such Montana communities as Livingston, Bozeman, Three Forks, Butte and Missoula, which are all along the route of the cross-country trail. The Great American Rail-Trail will travel through many iconic Montana landscapes and enter Idaho through the beautiful Lolo National Forest.

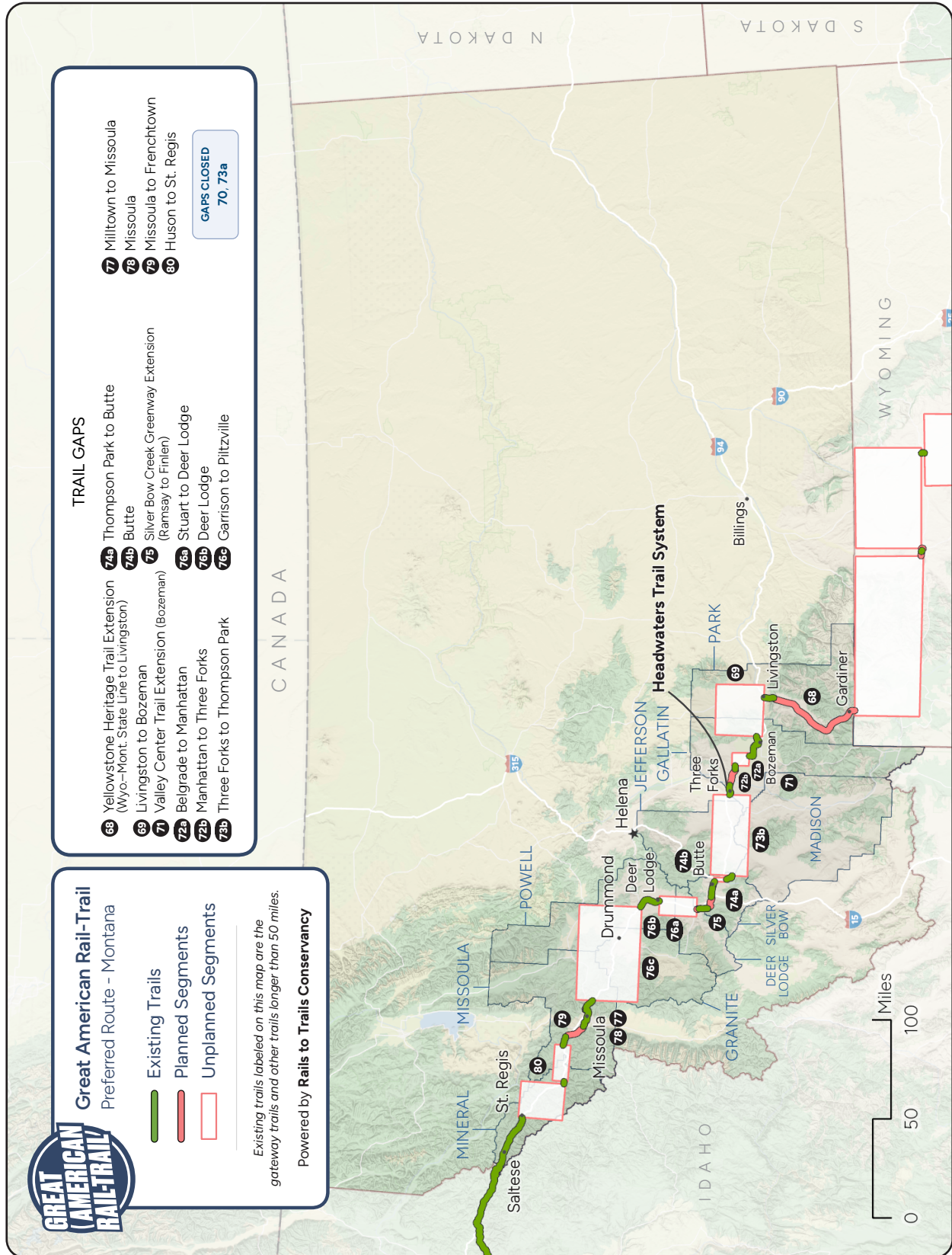
**TABLE 22: GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL MILEAGE IN MONTANA**

Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Mont. (% of Total State Mileage)	113.0 (25.9%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Gap Miles in Mont. (% of Total State Mileage)	323.3 (74.1%)
Total Trail Gaps in Mont.	12
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Mont.	436.3



# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2025

## MAP 11: MONTANA



**TABLE 23: GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH MONTANA**

<b>Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name</b>	<b>Length in Mont. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)</b>
TRAIL GAP 68 – Yellowstone Heritage Trail Extension (Wyo.–Mont. State Line to Livingston)	52.5
Highway 89 South Pedestrian Trail	4.3
Livingston Depot Center Trail	0.8
TRAIL GAP 69 – Livingston to Bozeman	26.2
Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail/Path to the “M” and Drinking Horse	2.3
Story Mill Spur	1.0
Front Street Connector (formerly Trail Gap 70)	0.3
Oak Street Trail	1.5
North 19th Avenue Trail	1.3
Valley Center Trail (North 19th Avenue to Catamount Street)	0.3
TRAIL GAP 71 – Valley Center Trail Extension (Bozeman)	1.4
Valley Center Trail (East Valley Center Spur to State Route 85/Jackrabbit Lane)	4.6
Jackrabbit Lane Shared-Use Path	2.0
TRAIL GAP 72a – Belgrade to Manhattan	15.5
Manhattan to the Gallatin River Trail	1.8
TRAIL GAP 72b – Manhattan to Three Forks	9.2
Headwaters Trail System	5.7
TRAIL GAP 73a – Headwaters Trail System Extension COMPLETED	-
TRAIL GAP 73b – Three Forks to Thompson Park	56.8
Milwaukee Road Rail-Trail (Thompson Park)	4.1
TRAIL GAP 74a – Thompson Park to Butte	9.4

<b>Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name</b>	<b>Length in Mont. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)</b>
Ulrich-Schotte Nature Trail (Blacktail Creek Trail)	1.7
TRAIL GAP 74b – Butte	2.0
Silver Bow Creek Greenway (Butte to Ramsay)	5.7
TRAIL GAP 75 – Silver Bow Creek Greenway Extension (Ramsay to Finlen)	7.6
Silver Bow Creek Greenway (Finlen to Stuart)	4.5
TRAIL GAP 76a – Stuart to Deer Lodge	21.9
Arrow Stone Park Trail	0.9
TRAIL GAP 76b – Deer Lodge	0.7
Old Yellowstone Trail	10.9
TRAIL GAP 76c – Garrison to Piltzville	59.8
Piltzville Trail	3.3
Bonner Streetcar Trail	1.8
TRAIL GAP 77 – Milltown to Missoula	2.0
Canyon River Trail	0.8
Milwaukee Trail	5.9
TRAIL GAP 78 – Missoula	1.8
Mullan Road Trail	2.2
TRAIL GAP 79 – Missoula to Frenchtown	11.5
A.J. Hoyt Memorial Trail	4.7
TRAIL GAP 80a – Huson to St. Regis	13.7
Tarkio Flats Trail	1.5
TRAIL GAP 80b – Huson to St. Regis	31.3
Route of the Olympian	23.3
NorPac Trail	15.8
Total Miles	436.3
Existing Trail Miles	113.0
Trail Gap Miles	323.3

## TRAIL GAP 68 – YELLOWSTONE HERITAGE TRAIL EXTENSION (WYOMING–MONTANA STATE LINE TO LIVINGSTON)

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	Some construction expected in 2026; remaining sections TBD

From the Wyoming–Montana state line, a trail can be connected to the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park at Gardiner, Montana. Park County, Montana, has long-term goals that include completing a trail along an abandoned rail line and Old Yellowstone Trail north into Livingston to connect to the Highway 89 South Pedestrian Trail. (Please note that the road in Park County called Old Yellowstone Trail is separate from the Old Yellowstone Trail, a trail recently completed in Powell County that is discussed later in this chapter.)

Park County intends to complete the trail from Gardiner north to Livingston by either acquiring easements along the abandoned rail corridor where property owners are amenable or, where easements cannot be obtained, building trail along U.S. 89 or Old Yellowstone Trail.

In early 2020, Park County completed the Old Yellowstone Trail South Corridor Study, a planning-level review of safety, operational and geometric conditions, and environmental resources to identify needs and constraints along a portion of the corridor. The study reviewed approximately 21 miles of the old road and trail of the same name adjacent to U.S. 89 from Roosevelt Arch in Gardiner north to the landform referred to as Point of Rocks. The report includes several options for filling this gap, all of which include some type of separated trail spanning the length of the corridor.

RTC and Park County partnered on a similar study for the remaining length of the corridor from Point of Rocks north to the current terminus of the Highway 89 South Pedestrian Trail, just south of Livingston. The study resulted in a proposed route that can be developed in stages, starting with a 3-mile section currently under development in Emigrant in partnership with the Trust for Public Land.

## HIGHWAY 89 SOUTH PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	4.3 / 4.3
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	City of Livingston, Park County
Website	<a href="https://livingstonmontana.org/community/page/livingston-area-trails">livingstonmontana.org/community/page/livingston-area-trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/highway-89-south-pedestrian-trail">traillink.com/trail/highway-89-south-pedestrian-trail</a>

The Highway 89 South Pedestrian Trail begins at the northern terminus of Old Yellowstone Trail North Road and continues about 4 miles into Livingston to connect to the Livingston Depot Center Trail. The trail is a combination of rail-trail, rail-with-trail and trail built into the shoulder of U.S. 89 where space is constrained. The trail follows the initial Northern Pacific Railway corridor between Gardiner and Livingston that served agricultural communities in Paradise Valley and brought tourists south into Yellowstone National Park.

## LIVINGSTON DEPOT CENTER TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	3.0 / 0.8
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	City of Livingston
Website	<a href="https://livingstondot.org">livingstondot.org</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/livingston-depot-center-trail">traillink.com/trail/livingston-depot-center-trail</a>

The Livingston Depot Center Trail will host a 0.8-mile section of the Great American Rail-Trail from the connection of the Highway 89 South Pedestrian Trail to Highway 10 West/I-90 in Livingston. The trail continues east toward Livingston Depot Center, a former train station that now houses a railroad museum open in the summer.

## TRAIL GAP 69 – LIVINGSTON TO BOZEMAN

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

Heading 26 miles west from Livingston, a trail could be constructed toward the city of Bozeman following an active rail corridor or various low-volume rural roads. The valley that contains the active rail line and I-90 is narrow in many spots and likely requires a detour to enter Bozeman. An option to head north toward the small community of Wilsall along an abandoned rail corridor and then southwest toward Bozeman is also being discussed.

## BOZEMAN TO BRIDGER MOUNTAINS TRAIL/PATH TO THE “M” AND DRINKING HORSE

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	2.3 / 2.3
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Managers	City of Bozeman, Gallatin Valley Land Trust
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/bozeman-to-bridger-mountains-trail">traillink.com/trail/ bozeman-to-bridger- mountains-trail</a>

The Bozeman to Bridger Mountains Trail (also known as the Path to the “M” and Drinking Horse) was completed in the fall of 2019, making an important connection for pedestrians and cyclists between the city of Bozeman and the Bridger Mountains. In the east, the trail begins near the College M Trailhead and Picnic Area off of state Route 86/ Bridger Canyon Road. Just 0.3 mile southwest of the picnic area is the Drinking Horse Mountain Trailhead. The “M” Trail and Drinking Horse Mountain Trail are two of the easier and more popular out-and-back hiking trails in the Bridger Mountain foothills.

## STORY MILL SPUR

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.7 / 1.0
Surface Type	Dirt, gravel
Trail Manager	City of Bozeman
Website	<a href="https://gvlt.org/trails">gvlt.org/trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/story-mill-spur">traillink.com/trail/story- mill-spur</a>

The preferred route of the Great American Rail-Trail enters Bozeman on state Route 86/Bridger Drive, which intersects the Story Mill Spur trail on Story Mill Road. The Story Mill Spur is named for Nelson Story, who, in the 1880s, built a flour mill near the East Gallatin River. As mayor of Bozeman, Story was instrumental in convincing the first railroad through Montana to route through Bozeman. The short rail line was the Gallatin Valley's largest and most used industrial rail spur until the flour mill's decline in the 1960s. The trail is 1.7 miles long and begins to the north at the decaying Story Mill flour mill.

## FRONT STREET CONNECTOR (FORMERLY TRAIL GAP 70)

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	0.3 / 0.3
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Bozeman
Website	<a href="https://gvlt.org/trails">gvlt.org/trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/front-street-connector-(bozeman)">traillink.com/trail/ front-street-connector- (bozeman)</a>

In late 2021, the Gallatin Valley Land Trust and the city of Bozeman completed a 0.3-mile connection along Front Street between L Street and state Route 86/North Rouse Avenue. The Front Street Connector briefly runs between an active railroad line and a lumber yard and forms an important connection between the Story Mill Spur and the Oak Street Trail.





NorPac Trail | Photo by TrailLink user railtrailingblog

## OAK STREET TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.5 / 1.5
Surface Type	Concrete
Trail Manager	City of Bozeman
Website	<a href="https://gvlt.org/trails">gvlt.org/trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/oak-street-trail-">traillink.com/trail/oak-street-trail-</a>

In Bozeman, the Oak Street Trail follows Oak Street 1.5 miles west from state Route 86/North Rouse Avenue to North 19th Avenue. The trail begins on the south side of Oak Street at state Route 86/North Rouse Avenue and crosses to the north side of the street at North 7th Avenue.

## NORTH 19TH AVENUE TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.3 / 1.3
Surface Type	Concrete
Trail Manager	City of Bozeman
Website	<a href="https://gvlt.org/trails">gvlt.org/trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/north-19th-avenue-trail-">traillink.com/trail/north-19th-avenue-trail-</a>

The North 19th Avenue Trail connects to the Oak Street Trail at West Oak Street and continues north along North 19th Avenue for 1.3 miles. There is a small, 250-foot gap in the trail along North 19th Avenue between Baxter Lane and Rawhide Ridge Road. The trail switches from the east to the west side of North 19th Avenue at Cattail Street.

**VALLEY CENTER TRAIL**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	4.9 / 4.9
Surface Type	Concrete
Trail Manager	City of Bozeman
Website	<a href="http://gvlt.org/trails">gvlt.org/trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://traillink.com/trail/valley-center-trail-">traillink.com/trail/valley-center-trail-</a>

The North 19th Avenue Trail ends at East Valley Center Road, where a trail begins about 500 feet to the northwest along the northeast side of the road. The Valley Center Trail is open in two segments that are separated by Trail Gap 71, described below.

**TRAIL GAP 71 – VALLEY CENTER TRAIL EXTENSION (BOZEMAN)**

Planning Status	Fully planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

There is a roughly 1.4-mile gap in the Valley Center Trail along East Valley Center Road in Bozeman between Catamount Street and East Valley Center Spur. The city of Bozeman is committed to completing this trail gap in pieces as the area continues to develop.

**JACKRABBIT LANE SHARED-USE PATH**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	5.7 / 2.0
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	City of Belgrade
Website	<a href="http://belgrademt.gov/441/Belgrade-Urban-Jackrabbit-Lane---Madison">belgrademt.gov/441/Belgrade-Urban-Jackrabbit-Lane---Madison</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://traillink.com/trail/jackrabbit-lane-shared-use-path-">traillink.com/trail/jackrabbit-lane-shared-use-path-</a>

There is a 5.7-mile-long section of trail along state Route 85/Jackrabbit Lane connecting Four Corners north to the area just south of Belgrade. The Jackrabbit Lane Shared-Use Path will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 2 miles, heading north onto state Route 85/Jackrabbit Lane from East Valley Center Road. The trail was completed from the community of Cowan north to Frank Road in the summer of 2018. A future extension could take the trail all the way into Belgrade.

**TRAIL GAP 72A – BELGRADE TO MANHATTAN**

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

From Belgrade, loose plans exist to follow Dry Creek Road/ West Dry Creek Road about 15 miles through town to connect to the Manhattan to the Gallatin River Trail. Further exploration is needed to confirm if that is a viable trail route to fill Trail Gap 72a.



## MANHATTAN TO THE GALLATIN RIVER TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.8 / 1.8
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Town of Manhattan
Website	<a href="https://townofmanhattan.com">townofmanhattan.com</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/manhattan-to-the-gallatin-river-trail-">traillink.com/trail/manhattan-to-the-gallatin-river-trail-</a>

A straight shot along West Dry Creek Road, the Manhattan to the Gallatin River Trail provides separated access from the center of Manhattan east to the recreation opportunities along the Gallatin River.

## TRAIL GAP 72B – MANHATTAN TO THREE FORKS

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

In 2024, Gallatin County received a USDOT Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program award for a feasibility study to complete Trail Gap 72b between Manhattan and Three Forks. The study is currently underway, and should confirm a viable trail route.

## HEADWATERS TRAIL SYSTEM

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	11.8 / 5.7
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Three Forks
Website	<a href="https://threeforks.municipalimpact.com/headwaters-trail">threeforks.municipalimpact.com/headwaters-trail</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/headwaters-trail-system">traillink.com/trail/headwaters-trail-system</a>

The Headwaters Trail System is a paved network of trails, portions of which run along the former corridor of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (also known as the Milwaukee Road) and through the city of Three Forks to Missouri Headwaters State Park, where the Missouri River originates at the confluence of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin rivers.

The portion of the Headwaters Trail System that will host the Great American Rail-Trail runs between Madison Road and Drouillard Fishing Access on state Route 2 (which also serves as the westernmost endpoint of the nearly 12-mile Headwaters Trail System).

## TRAIL GAP 73A – HEADWATERS TRAIL SYSTEM EXTENSION COMPLETED

The city of Three Forks completed a small gap in the Headwaters Trail System in 2021.

## TRAIL GAP 73B – THREE FORKS TO THOMPSON PARK

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

The former Milwaukee Road corridor connects Three Forks to the existing Milwaukee Road Rail-Trail in Thompson Park in the city of Butte. However, the rail corridor is now primarily in private ownership. For long stretches, the former Milwaukee Road rail corridor follows state and county highways as well as the path of an active Montana Rail Link line. The rail corridor remains visible in aerial photography for the majority of its route.

While a feasible, off-road multiuse trail option connecting Three Forks about 56 miles west to Thompson Park continues to be explored, an interim on-road connector can be made using various low-volume county roads in Gallatin, Madison, Jefferson and Silver Bow counties.

### **MILWAUKEE ROAD RAIL-TRAIL (THOMPSON PARK)**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	4.1 / 4.1
Surface Type	Grass, gravel, sand
Trail Managers	Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest – Butte Ranger District, Butte-Silver Bow Parks & Recreation
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://co.silverbow.mt.us/453/thompson-park">co.silverbow.mt.us/453/thompson-park</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://fs.usda.gov/bdnf">fs.usda.gov/bdnf</a></li> </ul>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/milwaukee-road-rail-trail-(thompson-park)">traillink.com/trail/milwaukee-road-rail-trail-(thompson-park)</a>

This section of railroad was one of the first in the country to be electrified—Thomas Edison even came out to Butte to ride the Milwaukee Road. The trail currently ends just 100 yards from the 2,300-foot-long Pipestone Pass tunnel, which is closed to the public, but trail users can walk up to its entrance. The trail runs through Thompson Park, a Congressionally Designated Area managed by the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow. In addition to enjoying the other trails that connect through Thompson Park, trail users can also connect to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a rugged trail connecting Canada to Mexico along the Western Continental Divide.

### **TRAIL GAP 74A – THOMPSON PARK TO BUTTE**

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

The Milwaukee Road Rail-Trail turns into Janney Road at the northern end of Thompson Park, and the abandoned Milwaukee Road corridor continues west toward Basin Creek. Just north of Basin Creek, the rail corridor becomes active again through the city of Butte. BNSF Railway maintains infrequent service on this corridor. Further work is needed to identify a viable corridor to fill this gap.

### **ULRICH-SCHOTTE NATURE TRAIL (BLACKTAIL CREEK TRAIL)**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	3.2 / 1.7
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City-County of Butte-Silver Bow
Website	<a href="https://co.silverbow.mt.us/454/Trails-Outdoor-Recreation">co.silverbow.mt.us/454/Trails-Outdoor-Recreation</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/ulrich-schotte-nature-trail-(blacktail-creek-trail)">traillink.com/trail/ulrich-schotte-nature-trail-(blacktail-creek-trail)</a>

The Blacktail Creek Trail was renamed the Ulrich-Schotte Nature Trail in honor of local residents who championed the restoration of the creek and other civic projects in the community. A portion of trail can host the Great American Rail-Trail as it travels through the center of Butte.



**TRAIL GAP 74B – BUTTE**

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

A connection is currently planned to complete the 2-mile gap between the Ulrich-Schotte Nature Trail and the Silver Bow Creek Greenway, which would be an important section of trail connectivity through Butte.

**SILVER BOW CREEK GREENWAY**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	10.2 / 10.2
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Silver Bow Creek Greenway Service District
Website	<a href="https://co.silverbow.mt.us/433/silver-bow-creek-greenway-trails">co.silverbow.mt.us/433/ silver-bow-creek- greenway-trails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/silver-bow-creek-greenway">traillink.com/trail/silver- bow-creek-greenway</a>

The Silver Bow Creek Greenway runs 10.2 miles through Silver Bow and Deer Lodge counties. It is currently built in two separate segments: 5.7 miles between Butte and Ramsay, a settlement west of Butte; and 4.5 miles from Durant Canyon Road near Finlen to the Highway 1 Rest Area in Stuart.

Silver Bow Creek was heavily contaminated after decades of mining and smelting in the area. The state settled with Atlantic Richfield Company for statewide Natural Resource Damage grant funds of \$23 million, which have paid for restoration work along the creek as well as trail construction, access features and easements. Construction on the trail began in 2005 and continues today. The Greenway Service District, which oversees the trail, is a multijurisdictional service district with representatives from both Silver Bow and Deer Lodge counties. In 2022, an additional mile of trail was added to the Silver Bow Creek Greenway between Fairmont Road and the community of Hackney, and in 2023, an additional 2 miles were added to connect to the Montana Highway 1/Pintler Veterans Memorial Scenic Highway rest area.

**TRAIL GAP 75 – SILVER BOW CREEK GREENWAY EXTENSION (RAMSAY TO FINLEN)**

Planning Status	Fully planned
Funding Status	Fully funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	Construction expected in 2025 and 2026

The City and County of Butte-Silver Bow plans to complete this 7.6-mile gap in the Silver Bow Creek Greenway gradually over time. The first section of this extension heading west from Ramsay will continue to follow Silver Bow Creek until it reaches Durant Canyon. There, the trail will veer away from the creek and follow the former Milwaukee Road corridor along a bench in the canyon for the remaining miles to Segment 2 of the existing Silver Bow Creek Greenway trail starting at Fairmont Road.

The entirety of the Silver Bow Creek corridor is a Superfund site. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality is currently completing remediation work within Durant Canyon. Once the remediation is complete, trail building can commence to close this gap. Funding is in place to complete this segment of the Silver Bow Creek Greenway, and negotiations with property owners are ongoing.

The remainder of Trail Gap 75 is on track for construction in 2025 and 2026.

**TRAIL GAP 76A – STUART TO DEER LODGE**

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	Some construction expected in 2025; remaining sections TBD

In 2023, an additional 2 miles of trail were constructed heading north from the former northern end of the Silver Bow Creek Greenway in Crackerville toward the community of Opportunity at the Montana Highway 1/Pintler Veterans Memorial Scenic Highway rest area. An additional 1.5 miles are expected in 2025 to cross over state Route 1. From Opportunity, a trail could connect north roughly 21 miles toward the Arrow Stone Park Trail in Deer Lodge using various alignments along the I-90 corridor.

In early 2025, a \$6.3 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant was awarded to communities in western Montana to help plan the remaining 140+ miles of trails between Butte and St. Regis. This encompasses all of Trail Gaps 76–80, and it marks tremendous progress for the trail route through western Montana.

### ARROW STONE PARK TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	0.9 / 0.9
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Powell County
Website	<a href="https://powellcountymt.gov/parks-and-trails-board">powellcountymt.gov/parks-and-trails-board</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/arrow-stone-park-trail">traillink.com/trail/arrow-stone-park-trail</a>

Arrow Stone Park Trail travels north/south through Deer Lodge, following Cottonwood Creek and paralleling Main Street for about 1 mile.

### TRAIL GAP 76B – DEER LODGE

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

There is a small, missing trail connection between Arrow Stone Park Trail and the southern end of the Old Yellowstone Trail in Deer Lodge. Trail users can currently travel on the street grid of Deer Lodge to make this 0.7-mile connection.

### OLD YELLOWSTONE TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	10.9 / 10.9
Surface Type	Crushed stone, dirt
Trail Manager	Powell County
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/old-yellowstone-trail">traillink.com/trail/old-yellowstone-trail</a>

The Old Yellowstone Trail follows the right-of-way of the Milwaukee Road. Powell County purchased this section of corridor in 2017 using funds from Montana's Natural Resource Damage Program to build a trail from Deer Lodge north to Garrison. In 2020, the first 7.5 miles of trail heading south from Garrison were completed. In 2022, Phase 2 of the Old Yellowstone Trail was completed with an addition of 3.5 miles of trail connecting to a trailhead on Washington Street in Deer Lodge.

### TRAIL GAP 76C – GARRISON TO PILTZVILLE

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

There are no immediate plans to head west from the northern end of the Old Yellowstone Trail at Garrison, which is just about 60 miles from Piltzville. From the small community of Clinton, a trail could travel west from the northeastern side of the Clark Fork River to the eastern terminus of the Piltzville Trail.



**PILTZVILLE TRAIL**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	3.3 / 3.3
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Missoula County
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/piltzville-trail-">traillink.com/trail/piltzville-trail-</a>

The 3.3-mile Piltzville Trail connects Piltzville to Bonner-West Riverside at Milltown State Park. The trail parallels U.S. Highway 10 East and provides a separated trail connection for travel east of the city of Missoula.

**BONNER STREETCAR TRAIL**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.8 / 1.8
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Missoula County
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/bonner-streetcar-trail">traillink.com/trail/bonner-streetcar-trail</a>

The Bonner Streetcar Trail follows a former electric streetcar line of the Missoula Street Railway Company, which ran between Milltown and Missoula from 1910–1932. The Bonner Streetcar Trail begins just south of the Blackfoot River, loosely paralleling state Route 200 from Laguna Street to Tamarack Road.

**TRAIL GAP 77 –  
MILLTOWN TO MISSOULA**

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

Missoula County has completed significant engineering designs for a 2-mile trail alignment that would close Trail Gap 77 following state Route 200 around the bend in the Clark Fork River to County Road 533/Deer Creek Road. Plans for highway redevelopment show that the trail will need to be on the mountain side of the highway. Missoula County is raising funds to finalize designs and construct a trail along this section of road.

**CANYON RIVER TRAIL**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.9 / 0.8
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	Canyon River Golf Club
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/canyon-river-trail-">traillink.com/trail/canyon-river-trail-</a>

The Canyon River Trail travels roughly along the banks of the Clark Fork River through the Canyon River Golf Club. The trail is open to the public. There are safe crossings beneath I-90 on both ends and beneath an active Montana Rail Link line on the western end. Missoula spent \$355,000 in 2016 to complete a 1,300-foot connection between the Canyon River Trail and the eastern terminus of the Milwaukee Trail (described below) beneath I-90. The project was completed in 2018 and provides a seamless transition between the two trails.

**MILWAUKEE TRAIL**

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	5.9 / 5.9
Surface Type	Asphalt, crushed stone
Trail Manager	City of Missoula
Website	<a href="https://ci.missoula.mt.us/207/maps">ci.missoula.mt.us/207/maps</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/milwaukee-trail">traillink.com/trail/milwaukee-trail</a>

The Milwaukee Trail travels approximately 5.9 miles through Missoula along the former Milwaukee Road rail corridor. The Milwaukee Trail is the combined name of the Milwaukee Trail and the former Kim Williams Nature Trail. The trail travels from just south of the Canyon River Golf Club, following the banks of the Clark Fork River and passing the University of Montana campus, downtown Missoula and several public parks. Near downtown Missoula, the Milwaukee Trail intersects the Bitterroot Trail, which offers trail users an approximately 50-mile continuous paved path south through the Bitterroot Valley to the city of Hamilton. The Milwaukee Trail continues westward through Missoula, mostly along the historical Milwaukee Road route.

Missoula is currently constructing a separate grade crossing at a portion of North Russell Street. The reconstruction project will elevate North Russell Street and allow the trail to cross underneath, providing a safer, grade-separated crossing.

## TRAIL GAP 78 – MISSOULA

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

Missoula County's Long-Range Transportation Plan (2016) lists extending the Milwaukee Trail westward as a priority. From the western end of the Milwaukee Trail at North Grove Street, the trail is intended to continue 1.8 miles along the former Milwaukee Road corridor west toward Mullan Road. The trail will cross over the Clark Fork River and continue west to Mullan and Schmidt roads. From here, the Milwaukee Trail may continue to follow the former rail corridor or head north to connect to the existing Mullan Road Trail.

The city of Missoula and Missoula County continue to work together to acquire property and finalize plans to make this connection possible. Plans exist for a series of bridges that will span the Clark Fork River, which await funding in the next several years.

## MULLAN ROAD TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	2.7 / 2.2
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Missoula County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands Program
Website	<a href="https://gis.missoulacounty.us/caps/parksandtrails">gis.missoulacounty.us/ caps/parksandtrails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/mullan-road-trail">traillink.com/trail/ mullan-road-trail</a>

A trail was constructed on the north side of Mullan Road in 2010. The trail heads west from Flynn to Cote lanes and provides for safe, separated walking and biking along a busy two-lane county road. The Mullan Road Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for approximately 2.2 miles, traveling westward toward Frenchtown.

## TRAIL GAP 79 – MISSOULA TO FRENCHTOWN

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

The preferred option to continue the trail 11.5 miles westward from the Mullan Road Trail to Frenchtown is to link up with the Milwaukee Road corridor. That may not be possible in several places, so completing a trail in the existing right-of-way of Mullan Road may be the necessary compromise until the trail would reach the A.J. Hoyt Memorial Trail in Frenchtown. The Missoula Airport owns a 3-mile stretch of the former Milwaukee Road corridor, and has been in talks with the city of Missoula to transfer that into public ownership. This land transfer could help to complete Trail Gap 79.

In 2022, Missoula County allocated \$250,000 in funding from its 2014 Parks and Trails Bond to support 30% design plans on two sections of trail that would develop 4.5 miles of trail, including 2.3 miles directly on the Great American Rail-Trail route along Mullan Road between Cote and Deschamps lanes, and an overpass over I-90 that would connect into the A.J. Hoyt Memorial Trail in Frenchtown.





Headwaters Trail System | Photo by Scott Stark

## A.J. HOYT MEMORIAL TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	5.3 / 4.7
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Missoula County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands Program
Website	<a href="https://gis.missoulacounty.us/caps/parksandtrails">gis.missoulacounty.us/caps/parksandtrails</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/aj-hoyt-memorial-trail-">traillink.com/trail/aj-hoyt-memorial-trail-</a>

A side path runs along Frenchtown Frontage Road for about 5 miles: the A.J. Hoyt Memorial Trail. This trail provides a crucial trail connection outside of Missoula. Frenchtown Frontage Road parallels I-90, traveling around Frenchtown Pond State Park and ending in the community of Huson.

## TRAIL GAP 80A – HUSON TO TARKIO

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

Several trail advocates in Mineral County recently formed the nonprofit group Mineral County MT Rails to Trails to help support the completion of the Great American Rail-Trail through Mineral County. Representatives are in discussions with the nearby Lolo National Forest and other organizations to support completing the gap between Huson and Tarkio (an unincorporated community in Mineral County).

## TARKIO FLATS TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	1.5 / 1.5
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Mineral County MT Rails to Trails, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/tarkio-flats-trail">traillink.com/trail/tarkio-flats-trail</a>

In 2024, a brief section of the Tarkio Flats Trail opened through a portion of forest owned by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Championed by Mineral County MT Rails to Trails, the trail is the first phase of a project that provides trail users a safe alternative to cycling along the nearby I-90.

## ROUTE OF THE OLYMPIAN

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	31.0 / 23.3
Surface Type	Gravel
Trail Manager	U.S. Forest Service (Lolo National Forest – Superior Ranger District)
Website	<a href="https://friendsofcdatrails.org/route-of-the-olympian">friendsofcdatrails.org/route-of-the-olympian</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/route-of-the-olympian">traillink.com/trail/route-of-the-olympian</a>

The 31-mile-long Route of the Olympian, heading west from St. Regis and following the St. Regis River for most of its length, was constructed on the former Milwaukee Road corridor through the Lolo National Forest. At its western terminus, the route directly connects to the Route of the Hiawatha to the south and the NorPac Trail to the north.

One of the first goals of Mineral County MT Rails to Trails is to rehabilitate the Saltese Trestle in the town of Saltese, Montana. In 2021, an anonymous donor gave \$25,000 to support engineering work on rehabilitation of the trestle, which the group hopes to leverage into construction funding for bridge rehabilitation.

## NORPAC TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Mont. (in Miles)	25.0 / 15.8
Surface Type	Concrete, dirt, gravel
Trail Manager	U.S. Forest Service (Lolo National Forest – Superior Ranger District)
Website	<a href="https://friendsofcdatrails.org/northern-pacific-trail">friendsofcdatrails.org/northern-pacific-trail</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/norpac-trail">traillink.com/trail/norpac-trail</a>

The 25-mile-long NorPac Trail follows the old right-of-way of the Northern Pacific Railway in western Montana and the Idaho Panhandle, crossing Lookout Pass. The trail runs from the town of Saltese past the East Portal of the Route of the Hiawatha (south of Taft), connecting to the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes in the city of Mullan, Idaho. The U.S. Forest Service owns and maintains this trail. The NorPac Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for its entirety, including the 15.8 miles of the trail in Montana. The remaining 9.2 miles of the NorPac Trail are discussed in more detail in the Idaho chapter of this report.

## TRAIL GAP 80B – TARKIO TO ST. REGIS

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

Several trail advocates in Mineral County recently formed the nonprofit group Mineral County MT Rails to Trails to help support the completion of the Great American Rail-Trail through Mineral County. Representatives are in discussions with the nearby Lolo National Forest and other organizations to support completing the gap between Tarkio and St. Regis (an unincorporated community in Mineral County).

# 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.**