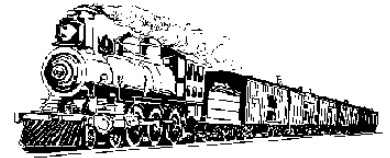




# HISTORICAL TRAIL

RAILS TO TRAILS OF NORTHWEST MONTANA



### 2009 Rails to Trails Donators

In 2009 we received \$14,204 in donations throughout the year. This was more than 2008 and we thank all of our supporters very much. Unfortunately we are not able to easily retrieve a list of the donors for the first 1/2 of the year because of a computer crash which stored our old files. Also, about the middle of 2009 we converted the gifting program into new software and we can only access about 1/2 of the 2009 donors. So in light of this predicament we temporarily suspend listing the donors for 2009 and hopefully we'll be back to displaying a list in 2010. Please go to page 3 for more detailed information on our finances. Thank you all very much!

### Trail Closure Alert

Because of Highway 93 By-Pass construction the beginning trail section of the Meridian Rails to Trails is now closed. The closure is expected to last for about a year. There are closure signs at the Meridian entrance that tell how to find the new temporary trail head. The new trail access is just west of the Bypass route and construction area and accessible off of Highway 2. Look for the orange trail signs on the highway. The new site has parking area and path to the trail for biking and walking west towards Kila..



## Completion of Paved Trail from Meridian Road to Kila/Smith Lake

By Dick Siderius, President

With the completion of the 10.4 mile paving trail between Kalispell and Kila in 2009 I invite you to read this history of the endeavors of many volunteers and donations along the years. Thank you all who help out with your donations, contributions for our fundraisers, and contributed time and equipment in the past and into the future!

In 1975 the Land & Water Conservation Fund helped purchase from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) an isolated 1 mile section of land west of Kalispell. In 1988 seeds were planted by a committee from a local bicycle club to convert the abandoned rail bed from Kalispell to Marion

to a Rails-to-Trails trail. In 1989 Rails to Trails incorporates and establishes non-profit status. After 2 years of discussions with BNSF an easement through their rail bed west of Meridian Rd connected the isolated 1 mile trail. In 1990 the first monthly meetings begin and the first annual newsletter is produced and mailed out. In 1992 the 1 mile trail section was graveled and opened. In 1998 the 1 ¼ mile Somers Trail Segment was built and paved. In 1998 the first Harvest Dance and Pie Auction Fundraiser was held at Smith Valley Grange Hall and in 2000 the first 5K fundraiser race was held and called the Kila Cruise. 2000 also saw the

Highway 93 reconstruction project between Somers and Kalispell that included 4 miles of paved bike path from Highway 82 north to Ashley Creek. 2001 saw the Meridian Segment Grand Opening; the placement of 14 culverts from Smith Valley School to Kila; and a gifting Catalog developed for donations. 2003 saw the Whalebone Rd to Smith Valley section completed. Also paved at this time was the isolated 1 mile section east of Dern Road. First Kalispell area trail map was published in 2004. In 2004 about 2 miles of the 3 mile Smith Valley to Kila section had sod removed and was graded; and land was donated for the trail by Audrey Kaiser and First Federal Savings and Loan. This led to the 2005 construction of 2.5 miles of trail between Dern Road to Whalebone Drive to connect the Smith Valley section with the Meridian Section. 2 more miles of the Smith Valley to Kila section was graveled. Finally in 2005, the Great Northern 5K fundraiser was started in 2005 and replaced the Kila Cruise. Successful grant writing and preparation for 2 bridges and the remaining Kila section occurred in 2006 and 2007 and in 2008 about 2 miles of the Kila segment was paved; 2 fiberglass bridges were erected over Ashley Creek along Highway 2. And finally, 2009 saw the last segment of the Kalispell to Kila trail paved.



2009 Smith Valley to Kila Paving



Yes, Virginia by the end of 2010 there will be a paved trail from Somers thru Kalispell and on to Kila. MDOT is now designing the trail as part of the Highway 93 Bypass. The Bypass trail will connect to the existing trail south of Kalispell at Ashley Creek and will connect with the established trail to

**Highway 93 Bypass Trail Update**

Kila near the Recycling Center along Highway 2 west. The trail in the design process will cross Ashley Creek with a bicycle/pedestrian bridge and follow the abandoned railroad bed and then will go along the western property line of the Siderius farm and then connect to the Bypass trail at

a second bridge. This trail was made possible thru a land swap by the Siderius family and MDOT. We believe MDOT will be responsible for trail maintenance along the Bypass. We're estimating close to 21 miles of paved trail from Somers to Smith Lake Road will be available for use by 2011.

**Family Friendly 6th Annual Great Northern 5K Saturday - May 8, 2010**

The Sixth Annual Great Northern 5K Fun Run and Walk (GN5K) fundraiser for the Rails to Trails of NW Montana has raised close to \$12,000 in contributions over the years and has helped with construction costs for the very trails you recreate or travel on in the Flathead Valley. Help continue to build more trails by participating in this year's GN5K on May 8, 2010!!!

In 2009, the 1-Mile Kids Sprint addition was quite the success. We're happy to say that the Kids Sprint event will return in 2010.

Due to Highway 93 bypass construction, our race will start at the temporary Meridian trail head located near the intersection of Highway 2 and Appleway Drive. The Kids Sprint be-

gins at 9:30 a.m., with the GN5K starting shortly following the sprint at 10:00 a.m.

Pre-registration for all ages is \$12 with a t-shirt and \$35 for a family of two adults and two or more children. Day-of registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and is \$15 with a t-shirt and \$45 for a family. Kids Sprint registration is \$8.00, includes a youth t-shirt and is open only to ages 12 and under. Note—only pre-registration is accepted for the Kids Sprint - no day-of registration for this portion. Awards are given for top 3 overall males and females with lots of raffle prizes going to almost every runner.

Registration forms are available at [www.gn5k.com](http://www.gn5k.com). For more info, call 471-1949

or e-mail [greatnorthern5k@gmail.com](mailto:greatnorthern5k@gmail.com).



2009 GN5K Participants



2009 GN5K Participants

**2009 Great Northern 1 mile and 5K Results**

There were 218 registrants. 1-Mile Kids Sprint - Boys, coming in 1<sup>st</sup> place with a time of 6:45 was Chet Billi, 2<sup>nd</sup> place went to Walt Hollensteiner, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place went to Daniel Horton. 1-Mile Kids Sprint - Girls, 1<sup>st</sup> place went to Makenna Kauffman with a time of 8:44, 2<sup>nd</sup> place went to Sarah Wilson and 3<sup>rd</sup> place went to Jordan Keeney. 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Women's 5K went to Linda Vevera with a time of 23:13. She was followed by Jennifer Schon in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Gretchen Brown in 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Men's

5K winner was Zach Perrin with a time of 17:17. Patrick Schon was 2<sup>nd</sup> and Trevor Stolte was 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thanks to all who volunteered and participated! After expenses the race brought in about \$3600. Major sponsors for the 2009 race were Sunrises Lions, Sliters, Glacier Bank, The Summit, Lower Valley Veterinary Clinic, Medical Arts Pharmacy, Glacier Cyclery, Grizzly Glacier Road Running Club, Hammer Nutrition and Fun Beverage.

**Our Hero and Volunteer of the Year!**



Flathead Valley Community College heavy equipment operator students, under the direction of instructors Robert Allen and Bob Arabito, contributed a total of 1,549.50 hours for the Ashley Creek to Kila Project. The donated hours equal a value of \$31,506.97, a tremendous savings for the Rails to Trails Project, deeming the college and their students Rails to Trails Group Volunteer of the Year.

According to Rails to Trails President Dick Siderius, the students did a great job.

"This contribution really helped our effort from Smith Valley Schools to Kila," said. "We are happy and proud because the trail is finally almost complete thanks to the students' hard work."

From April through July 2009, the students worked vigorously on the project that begins on Meridian Road and continues beyond Kila School. Their efforts involved taking the old railroad bed between Kalispell down to grade, filling in the existing holes, grading, compact-

ing and sloping it and prepping it for pavement. The project also involved using recycled pavement and building ramps leading up to and coming down from the bridges, creating a smooth transition eliminating areas that contained drop offs.

"The students learned a lot," said FVCC Director, Career Technical Education Bill Roope. He noted that their experience helped land most of the students in careers as heavy equipment operators. "I don't think there is a better place to learn than on the job." Submitted by Tara Roth, FVCC.

### 2009 Harvest Dance, Pie and Silent Auction

What a fabulous evening of great music, great pies, fun dancing, and a celebration of Rails to Trails. \$1658 in funds were raised, which is wonderful! Turn-out seemed a bit smaller this year, but the spirits were just as high as years past and several people really stepped up their donations both at the pie auction and silent auction. This is a true testament to the good work R2T is doing in the community. Music was donated by the Grin and Bear It String Band.

### Volunteer Days for Free Disney Theme Park Entry

Rails to Trails Board Member Mark Crowley organized 2 volunteer days to take advantage of the Disney offer for free entry into one of their theme parks in exchange for a day of volunteering. Mark arranged for 2 days, March 13 and April 10, 2010. The first day had about 30 volunteers show up to spruce up the trail from Meridian Road to Kila. People swept the gravel off the trail, picked up trash, bagged a few weeds, and painted benches and rails. The last Disney offer day was April 10th with about 13 volunteers clearing and piling debris and cleaning up the trail.

### Smith Valley to Smith Lake Road Grant

In addition to the great work completed by the Flathead Valley Community College heavy equipment operator students, another advantage of working with them generated some additional savings. Savings were also created with the use of recycled asphalt rather than using crushed gravel. So, \$35,136 remains in our grant to complete the bridges and trail to Kila project (which includes erosion control, signing, benches, and the paving and upgrading of the old Kila green box site).

### Rails to Trails Bird Boxes

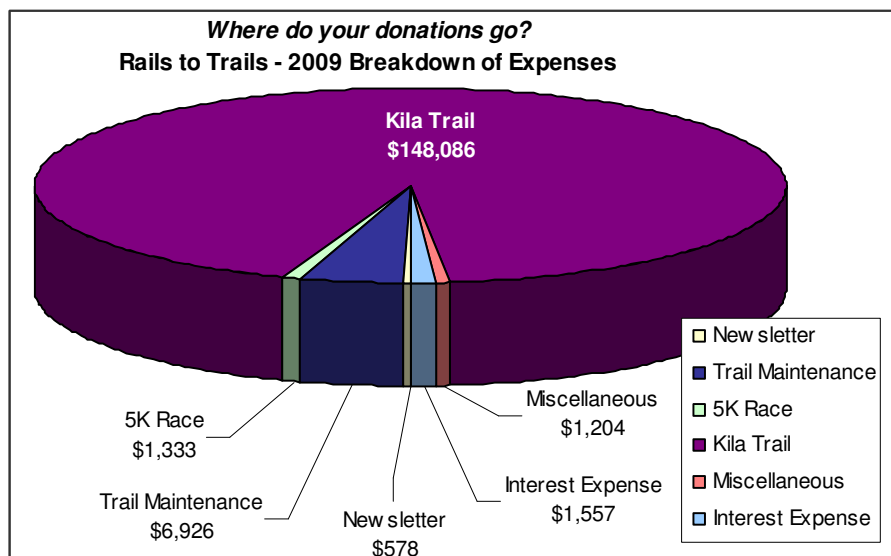
In case you're wondering about those nest boxes along the trail from Meridian to Dern Road, they do work. 2009 was not a stellar year for use as only 9 out of 21 boxes that can be opened were used by birds. 1 box had a mouse resident and a \$1 bill was found in another. In 2008 20 nest boxes were checked and nesting material was found in 17 of the boxes. Most of the birds nesting along the trail are swallows with some bluebirds. Many of the original bird boxes are beginning to crumble away, some are patched up, and new boxes are being added.

### Rails to Trails Receives Maintenance Grant for 2010

We applied for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Recreational Trails Program, Parks Division grant and received \$18,776. Specifically, Rails to Trails will be funded to seal coat, crack seal and patch 1 ¼ miles of trail between the Somers Post Office and Highway 82; and to seal coat, crack seal and patch 2 miles of trail between Meridian Road in Kalispell west towards Dern Road.

### Literacy Volunteers of Flathead County Letter of Thanks

Literacy Volunteers of Flathead County ([lvafc@centuraytel.net](mailto:lvafc@centuraytel.net)) POB 3234, Kalispell, MT 59903, sent the following note: Thank you so much for again allowing us to use the Historic Rails to Trails on July 11<sup>th</sup> for our 4<sup>th</sup> annual LVFC 5k Fun Run and Walk. We had 72 participants and the location off of Meridian Road is perfect. We'll contact you again in 2010. Sent by Ashley Potts, board member and race director.



### Rails to Trails 2009 Finance Summary

At December 31, 2009 our accounts totaled \$25,173, which is down from \$24,792 at December 31, 2008. During the year, we received \$163,798 in grants to help fund the Kila trail extension project. Our fundraising efforts brought in \$4,929 from the 5K race and \$1,658 from our Pie and Silent Auction & Dance. Additionally, we received \$14,204 in donations throughout the year, which is an increase over the prior year. We sincerely want to thank every individual, organization, business and agency for continuing to support Rails to Trails.



**Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana**

**P. O. Box 1103**

**Kalispell, MT 59903-1103**

**Non Profit Org.**

**U.S. Postage**

**PAID**

**Permit #162**

**Kalispell, MT 59901**

**Rails to Trails of NW Montana meets  
at 5 PM on the first Monday of each  
month at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Conference Room  
490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell**

**We're on the Web!**

**[www.railstotrailsofnwmt.com/](http://www.railstotrailsofnwmt.com/)**

## **Rails to Trails and a National Epidemic, by Michael R. Spence, MD, MPH**

In the fall of every year we encounter a flu epidemic. In an average year about 35,000 Americans die from the flu or pneumonia. This past fall a worldwide epidemic called H1N1 or swine flu occurred and the death toll is still mounting into 2010. Although it is not well recognized Americans face another epidemic that is not seasonal but lasts all year and kills hundreds of thousands of people every year and affects about 40% or 2 out of every five of us. Being overweight or obese is now considered by most medical experts as being America's number one health problem. Even in Montana with our outdoor life styles and the many recreational opportunities that are available to us we are not exempt as at least one out of every four Montanans is overweight or obese. Obesity is defined on a ratio between one's height and weight called the Body Mass Index or BMI and correlates well with a risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer. BMI tables are available on the internet where one can determine their individual BMI number. Generally, those with a BMI of 26 or greater are overweight. When the BMI reaches 30 one is considered obese. There are, of course, exceptions to this.

So, where does Rails to Trails fit into this? The trails provide you with a way to address the problem of being overweight or obese. Walking, biking and jogging are activities that the trails are designed for. These are all good aerobic exercises that can help you lose weight. If one wants to lose weight, calories burned have to exceed calories taken in. It takes about 12 calories per pound per day to maintain one's weight. If you take in more than this it will be converted to fat and you will gain weight. If you take in less or burn more calories you will lose weight. There are about 1800 calories in a pound of fat. In order to lose 1 pound you have to burn that many more calories than you take in. There is no quick fix. In order to burn 100 calories, about the amount found in a slice of bread, one has to walk a mile. The average person walks between 3 and 4 miles per hour. If you jog or run a mile you still only use 100 calories but you use them faster. Biking burns about 275 calories an hour or about the same as a candy bar or less than half of a Big Mac with cheese.

At first glance, these numbers are discouraging but if one sticks to a program they can succeed. If you spend 30 to 40 minutes each day (less than 3% of a day) walking you will burn 200 extra calories or over 70,000 calories in a year. As a bonus if you do your activity at a pace that gets your heart rate up over 100 beats per minute you will also derive a heart healthy benefit. However, remember that before engaging in any exercise activity you need to check with a medical professional to be sure that your condition will tolerate it. I hope that you will take advantage of our trails and that I see you out there.

**SAVE THIS DATE: NOVEMBER 13th FOR THE 2010 HARVEST DANCE AND AUCTION**