



Newsletter

December 2023

Celebrating our Trail Heroes in 2023

I'm feeling especially thankful for our unsung trail heroes who really stepped up in 2023 to help create a valley-wide trail system that matches the grandeur of our valley. Read about these great folks in our 2023 newsletter!

Valley County Pathways has had a super busy and productive year, working on the construction of the Donnelly Town to Beach Flyway, crafting a new, updated valley-wide Master Plan in partnership with Valley County Parks & Recreation, giving due thanks to the Putman Family with a bronze plaque mounted on a special rock on the Crown Point Trail, and more.

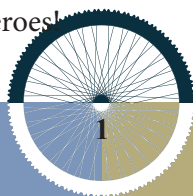
We've also been supporting the construction of a 2.5-mile Safe Route to Schools along Samson Trail Road in partnership with Valley County Parks & Recreation. Construction on that walking/biking trail will begin next spring after VC Pathways spent more than \$30,000 on a professional design-engineering plan from Breckon Design that detailed the trail design, wetlands issues and more.

Late last winter, I worked closely with Dave Bingaman of Valley County Parks & Recreation on creating a new, updated Master Plan that recommends 13 short-term projects and six long-range trail projects throughout the valley. Now that Valley County has full-time recreation staff, this will help accelerate our vision of building a valley-wide trail system.

Read more inside to learn more about our Trail Heroes!
- Steve Stuebner, VCP Board President



Trail heroes: Josh Murrey, above; and Mike Edwards grading the Donnelly Flyway Trail near Dawn Drive.



Trail hero Josh Murrey leads construction of the Donnelly Town to Beach Flyway

Josh Murrey and his partner Daniel Estrada, owners of Northwest Land Services, own the property directly to the east of the Donnelly grass airfield. They are both professional heavy-equipment operators. Their skills sure came in handy this summer!

Murrey supported Valley County Pathway's efforts to obtain approval from the City of Donnelly to build the 1.3-mile Donnelly Town to Beach Flyway. He indicated all along that he would donate his time and equipment to help build trail.

So, we got after it in the summer and fall of 2023. By late October, we had the whole trail corridor cleared and the trail tread roughed-in. Next spring, we will install trailheads on the north and south ends of the airstrip, sign the trail, and apply 900 cubic yards of roadmix to finish the trail surface.

A grand opening will be held in June 2024. We will invite the Donnelly community to join us in a celebration with the Mayor and City Council and students from Donnelly Elementary to walk or bike the new trail to the City Beach on Lake Cascade.

We want to thank Mayor Susan Dorris and the Donnelly City Council for approving the Donnelly Flyway project, and VCP board member Brett Shepherd for his leadership on the project.

We'd also like to thank our trail heroes Mike Edwards, a retired trail professional who lives in Donnelly, and Cary Hattabaugh of McCall and Boise, who each donated more than 100 hours of their time to clear and grade the trail corridor for the Donnelly Town to Beach Flyway hiking/biking trail in the summer and fall of 2023.

Josh, Daniel and their crew put in well over 200 hours of time clearing the trail and cutting in the trail tread.

We had an ENORMOUS amount of dead and dying wood stacked six to 12 feet high that had accumulated on eastern edge of the city airstrip property. We spent weeks cutting up the wood with chainsaws and clearing the trail corridor with Murrey loading trucks and dump trailers with his excavator.



Josh Murrey, operating the excavator, places dead wood into a dump trailer pulled by Steve Stuebner's pickup truck. Thanks to Tom Mihlfeith and Eric Gehrung for donating their time, p/u trucks and dump trailers for that effort, too.

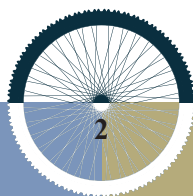


5th graders from Deirdre Abrams's Class and Carmen Tatum's Class at Donnelly Elementary pick up sticks on the trail.

Mike Edwards cut in the trail from the south end near Dawn Drive, using a skid steer donated by Dan Meeker. Thanks Dan!

By late October, we had the trail roughed-in from tip to tail. We're ready to do a final grading, put down a layer of road mix for the trail tread, water and compact it, and make it ready for public use. The trail will be 8 feet wide for two-way traffic.

We'd like to thank the following volunteers who also worked on the trail this summer: Brett Shepherd, Eric and Michelle Gehrung, Steve Byrne, Colin and Jamie Gamble, Reese and Gregg Gibboney, Joanie Fauci, Wendy Wilson, Mike Kelly, the Wurster family and many more.



Bronze plaque placed on the Crown Point Trail to honor the Putman Family for gift of land

On a bluebird mid-September day, Valley County Pathways held a trail-dedication event on the Crown Point Trail to honor the Putman Family with a bronze plaque mounted on a special rock for donating 1,500 feet of old railroad right of way property to VCP.

The gift of land by Eleanor Putman in 2006 extended the Crown Point Trail by one-quarter mile on the north end. VCP Board President Steve Stuebner, who inked the land donation with Mrs. Putman back in the day, emceed the event. See our event video [here](#).

“This is long-overdue recognition to the Putman Family for being true pioneers in supporting the vision of Valley County Pathways to build a valley-wide trail system that matches the



Cate Putman Lavey encouraged other landowners to join the cause in assisting VCP in its quest to build a valley-wide trail system from Cascade to McCall and New Meadows.

The Putman Family was the first landowner to provide a gift of land to expand walking, running, and biking trails along the old railroad line in Long Valley. Their legacy will live on in perpetuity for all to enjoy.”

The bronze plaque has been mounted on a special rock – a large piece of crystal quartz rock that came from Crystal Mountain near Burgdorf Hot Springs. The rock has special meaning to the Putman Family.

Cascade resident Dave Putman worked with Valley County Pathways board members Tom Reinhardt and Charlie Pegan to move the 700-pound rock from Boise to Putman’s home in Cascade, where he mounted the bronze plaque. And then the rock had to be moved to the Crown Point Trail.

“Thanks to Marty Hill and Dixie Cook for storing the rock until it could be moved to Cascade, and to Larry Walters for the use of his rotor drill to mount the plaque,” Putman said.

The late Mrs. Eleanor Putman, speaking at the original trail-dedication event in 2006, said her family wanted the trail to be open for the general public to enjoy in perpetuity. “It’s a really nice gentle and flat trail that just about anyone can enjoy,” she said. “Our family has had many great times up here. But now we’re selling the family cabin, and we wanted to make sure that the RR ROW portion of our property be preserved as a public trail.”

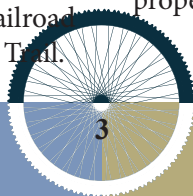


grandeur of our valley,” Stuebner said.

“The Putman family’s gift of land in 2006 was the first of its kind since Valley County Pathways formed in 2004. We hope the Putman family’s donation will encourage other landowners to consider this approach.”

Since that time, three other property owners have donated portions of the old railroad right of way or other private property to VCP for the development of public trails.

The message on the bronze plaque reads as follows:
“Valley County Pathways gives heartfelt thanks to the Earl and Eleanor Putman Family for an enduring gift of railroad right-of-way land in 2006 to extend the Crown Point Trail.



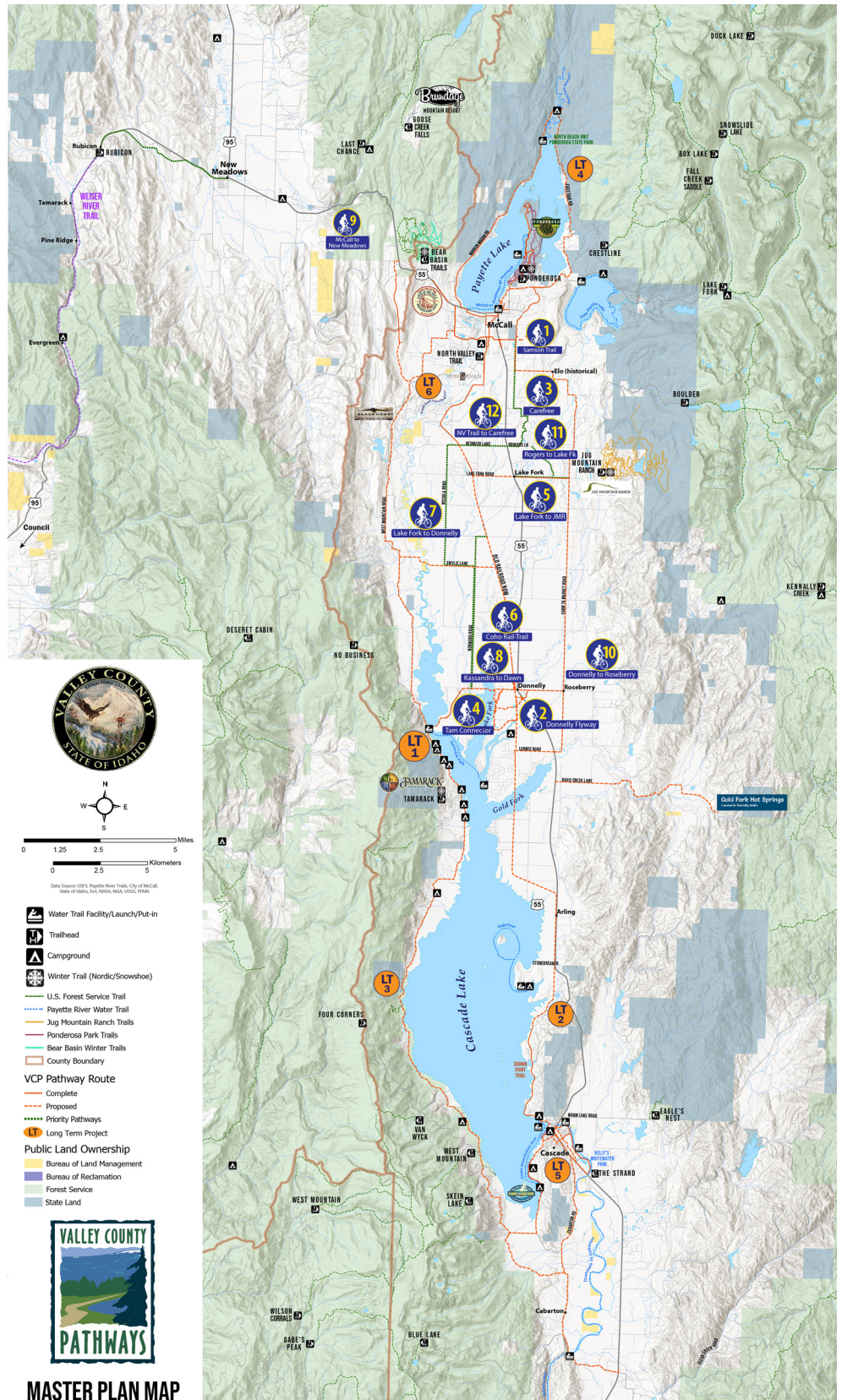
VCP updates Master Plan to sync priority projects with Valley County Parks & Recreation

Valley County Pathways worked together with Valley County Parks & Recreation in the winter/spring of 2023 to update its Master Plan.

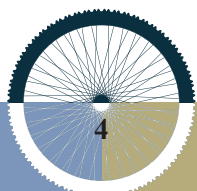
The new Master Plan envisions 13 high-priority projects and six longer-term projects to connect our communities, parks and tourism/recreation areas valley-wide.

Our highest priority projects in the short-term include:

- Extending the Samson Trail project to the Carefree subdivision and Rogers Lane.
- Detached paved trail along West Roseberry to Dawn Dr.
- Connector trail from the Pumpkin Patch to Tamarack Falls
- Lake Fork to Donnelly via Nisula, Smylie Lane and Norwood
- Pedestrian overpass or underpass from Heinrich to Rogers Lane
- Connector trail from the Pumpkin Patch to Tamarack Falls
- Detached paved trail along Eastside Drive, Payette Lake
- Donnelly to Roseberry pedestrian trail
- Tamarack Falls to Tamarack Resort pedestrian trail
- West Mountain Greenbelt
- Bear Basin to New Meadows and the Weiser R. Trail



See more at <https://www.valleycountypathways.org/trail-plans/>



Thanks to our volunteer Trail Heroes!

Wanna help out with trails? How to sign up

We need volunteers for a variety of programs! Here's how to get involved.

- We need help with **trail maintenance and construction**. The Samson Trail project and Donnelly Flyway project will need help this spring.
- We need more **photos and video** of people enjoying our trails for social media.
- We need help with **community outreach**, events and more!

Please get in touch if you'd like to help! Contact Steve Stuebner at steve.stuebner@gmail.com or Brett Shepherd at donnellypathways@gmail.com.



Donnelly 5th graders pick up sticks on the Donnelly Flyway Trail.



Wes Keller, left, and Tyler Busby install trail signs on the Heinrich Demo Trail.



Brett Shepherd, right, and other volunteers work on a water feature on the Heinrich Demo Trail.

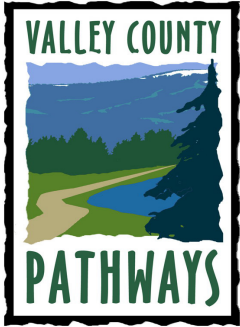


Cary Hattabaugh mans the VCP booth during an event in McCall to sell swag and spread the word about our new Master Plan.



L-R, Volunteers including Jim Pace, Mark Anderson, Steve Stuebner and Laurie Anderson finish applying road mix to the Heinrich Demo Trail.

Help the cause! Join VC Pathways!



Valley County Pathways is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization that's dedicated to developing a system of pedestrian pathways that connect our communities - Cascade, Donnelly, Lake Fork, McCall and New Meadows.

How can I help? Join Valley County Pathways!

Tax-deductible donations and membership dues help finance trail projects.

Membership levels:

- Student - \$25
- Regular - \$35
- Family - \$50
- Sustainer - \$100

Please send membership fee/donations to VC Pathways, P.O. Box 233, McCall, ID 83638, or online: valleycountypathways.org/donate/

We currently have 20+ miles of pedestrian pathways to design and build at a cost of more than \$2 million!

Questions? Please get in touch with the VCP Board of Directors!

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Becky Bjork, Treasurer: bjork.becky@gmail.com

Brett Shepherd: donnelypathways@gmail.com

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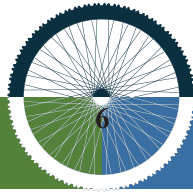
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