

FRIENDS OF PATHWAYS Annual Report 2022

Our Vision

Jackson Hole will be a place where trails and pathways are central to our vibrant and healthy community. These networks will be interconnected, convenient, enjoyable and the most desirable means of travel. Residents and visitors will have the choice to access the natural world, places of business and healthy recreation options without the need for a car. Friends of Pathways will be a positive force toward achieving this vision.

We connect people.

Our pathways, sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes are Jackson's social network, enabling face-to-face interactions and providing the medium for a healthy and active community. Whether it's a safe route to school, a daily commute or a wild ride on Teton Pass, FOP works to encourage everyone to get outside and enjoy Jackson Hole.

We are people empowered.

Thanks to the support of thousands of people, FOP is one of Jackson's most accomplished advocacy organizations. For 29 years, we have been the community conduit for a new paradigm for transportation and recreation in Teton County realized through over 70 miles of multi-use separated pathways, 152 miles of world-class dirt trails, millions of dollars in capital investment, and a powerful voice for car-less travel.

We believe driving is the alternative.

In Teton County many people prefer to walk, bike, or ski rather than drive. FOP is working to have "every neighborhood connected" by a pathway or trail, so that people can move around our unique home in healthy ways that respect our environment.

nother year in the books and by Athe numbers it was a busy one for Friends of Pathways:

\$15,000,000 dollars approved for alternative transportation projects through the Specific Purpose Excise Tax.

1,000,000 counts recorded on the pathways.

700,000 counts notched on the trails.

600 middle schoolers received bike safety programming.

500 bike bells installed.

400 hours of FOP tent-time spent

at 20 different locations. **300** trees cleared from the trails. **200** bike lights installed.

150 people participated in Bike to Work Day.

10 additional miles of single-track trail built.

12 miles of winter trails groomed.

5 additional miles of pathway constructed and protected bike lanes installed.

2 new neighborhoods connected to the pathway network.

It's an impressive list of achievements, and underscores the reality that it takes a lot of time, labor, and money to keep backyard trails and local pathways safe, accessible, and functioning for a diverse user group. With more people using these networks there is a growing need for increased public education about safety, etiquette, and best practices for using the pathways and trails without negatively impacting others. Look for additional bike safety training for middle school students and better coordination of bike safety messaging for visitors in 2023. Stay tuned, as well, for new regulations and infrastructure changes on the pathways to help with speed control and safety concerns. Pathways and trails play a central

role in our community. More than just travel corridors, they provide a social network for bringing people together and are the medium for a healthy and active populace. There was a time, not that long ago, when the concept of pathways in Jackson was hard to imagine or support. The



same can be said for our world-class trail system on the Bridger-Teton. What we all take for granted and enjoy today is the by-product of the foresight, generosity and hard work of people that dreamed big for trails and pathways in Jackson Hole almost three decades ago. We owe a lot to these pathway pioneers and trail visionaries, whose stories are highlighted in the following pages.

As always, I am so appreciative to all of you who have supported Friends of Pathways this past year. Whether you cruised through the Teton Food Tour, joined us at Bike To Work Day, stopped by the outreach tent. made a charitable donation. or wrote a support letter for safer streets for walking and biking, you are the reason we go to work and it's an honor to have your confidence.

Looking forward to our paths crossing in 2023.

Catherice Dowson

KATHERINE DOWSON Executive Director

Trails Report

10 miles of new singletrack

riends of Pathways maintains 152 miles of frontcountry trails in Jackson Hole. These trails are located close to neighborhoods and provide access to some of the most cherished places in our valley -Cache Creek, Game Creek, the greater Snow King area, Munger Mountain, and Teton Pass.

We are working to improve access to the pathways and trails through our Every Neighborhood Connected initiative. With this in mind, over the past several years we have focused on creating more neighborhood access trails that are easy for everyone to use. Recently, we created the Game Creek Access Trail, South 89 Singletrack, Melody Limits Singletrack, A&W Trail, Old Wilson to Stilson Horse Trail, Big Munger re-routes, and Old Pass Road Loops. These projects have added 10 miles to our local trail system.

In 2022, FOP invested in new trail counters to gather usage data, which is vital to help land managers make informed decisions. Over 700,000 trail users accessed the frontcountry trail



system. We continue to prioritize neighborhood access points so people can get outside and enjoy nature without having to drive to a trailhead. FOP installed 30 bike racks at key trailheads and pathway destinations to

encourage cycling and to help reduce parking issues.

Friends of Pathways works tirelessly to make sure the 152 miles of trails we maintain are in excellent condition. In 2022 we cleared 300 trees; waged an



ongoing war with musk thistle in Game Creek; and hired a Montana Conservation Corps crew to work on the Teton Pass trails to fix turnpikes, build bridges, do rock work, dig drainage, clear trees, brush cut for line of sight, and remove invasive weeds.

Each Winter, Friends of Pathways grooms 12 miles of singletrack in Cache Creek for hikers, bikers, runners, and skiers - the only free winter singletrack in Jackson Hole. This past December over \$13,000 was raised to support our winter





grooming efforts.

Easy access to well-maintained trails is something we know our community values, and it's why Friends of Pathways works to ensure our trails and trailheads are clean, maintained, and accessible to all.

Pathways Report 2 new connections

riends of Pathways is working to connect every neighborhood in Jackson Hole to a pathway or trail so no matter where you live in Teton County, no matter your age, no matter your ability, you can be mobile and access the outdoors without needing a car.

Two new pathway projects were completed in 2022 that now connect new neighborhoods to the 70-mile pathway network. The Willow Street Safe Routes Project connects East Jackson to the pathway network with bollard protected bike lanes, and provides a safe route through town for all. Additionally, in October of 2022, 5.3 miles of paved pathway were completed along South Highway 89, connecting Hoback Junction to the pathway network.

While Teton County enjoys 70 miles of protected bike paths, it has taken years of advocacy work to establish a safe bike route through the Town of Jackson. Friends of Pathways would like to thank our Town Council for its unanimous support of this very important project. We would also like to thank the neighbors along the route and many





other supporters who advocated for the route - it would not have happened without your voices.

This past year Willow Street transformed from a congested corridor to a vibrant thoroughfare where families, kids, and commuters felt comfortable cycling through the neighborhood in which they live - about 500 bike trips per day on average. While the route is still in its infancy - separated only by bollards - we dream of a day where a curb-separated pathway flows through town and connects in a seamless way to the pathway north of town.

As of October 2022, those who live in Hoback Junction and in the dispersed neighborhoods between Hoback and Jackson can choose to ride their bike to town, and continue all the way into Grand Teton National Park - separated from cars. This is a wonderful recreational ride in its own right, but most importantly connects hundreds of new homes to the pathway network.

In 2022, we counted 1,024,074 trips taken on the pathways, which means over a million trips taken outside of a car. It also means more people than ever are on the pathways and as a



community, we must work to keep the pathways safe and inviting for all users.

In June, Friends of Pathways partnered with Jackson Hole Middle School, Jackson Police, and Teton County Sheriff's Department on in-school e-bike safety programming for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. We produced a bike safety video targeted at tweens on e-bikes, which - if you can believe it - they seemed to enjoy. And in September, we worked with Hoback Sports to provide quick tunes for the 180 bikes parked out front on Bike to School Day. We also installed bike lights and bike bells on all bikes that needed them.

Coming in 2023, we have a partnership with the Town of Jackson to support more in-school bike training at Jackson Hole Middle School. Additionally, new regulations are being drafted for town pathway speed limits. Also, speed control infrastructure - like chicane gates - will be installed on congested areas of town pathways to slow speeds in areas like Garaman park. These improvements in infrastructure, education, and enforcement are aimed at making our increasingly popular multi-use pathways safe and inviting for all people.



Trail Visionaries and Pathway Pioneers



Our 70 miles of paved pathways and 152 miles of frontcountry trails are the product of the foresight, generosity, and hard work of people who dreamed big for pathways and trails in Jackson Hole almost three decades ago. There are countless people from our community

who have contributed to this network. In the following pages we highlight a few stand-out pathway pioneers and trail visionaries who have been advocating for quality, safe, accessible pathways and trails for years. This is by no means an exhaustive list.



Linda Merigliano

Recreation Wilderness Program Manager at the Bridger-Teton National Forest

Linda Merigliano is passionate about public lands and responsible recreation. As Recreation Wilderness Program Manager at the Bridger-Teton National Forest, she has spent her career encouraging people to help care for the outdoor spaces they enjoy.

When Merigliano first arrived at the Bridger-Teton National Forest, there wasn't much of a maintained and managed trail system near the Town of Jackson. Her first project with "frontcountry" trails was in 1996 when she worked on the redevelopment of the Cache Creek trailhead and construction of the boardwalk, so people with varied mobility could get on the banks of Cache Creek.

Linda was also instrumental in developing a cost-share agreement with Friends of Pathways for the maintenance of the local trail system.

The agreement initiated the development of a community trail plan for the entire Greater Snow King trail system and enabled hiring a part-time trails coordinator. Operating under the motto of "Sustainable trails, respect for people, respect for land," Bridger-Teton National Forest and Friends of Pathways built a true partnership that was far greater than the sum of its parts and ultimately expanded beyond Greater Snow King to encompass Teton Pass and Munger Mountain.

This partnership continues to this day.

"The stories about how much people appreciate the Greater Snow King Area, Teton Pass and Munger Mountain trail systems and how time spent outdoors in these places enriches their life mean the world to me," Merigliano

"The stories about how much people appreciate the Greater Snow King Area, Teton Pass and Munger Mountain trail systems and how time spent outdoors in these places enriches their life mean the world to me." - Linda Merigliano

said. "I take great joy in walking the trails and seeing all the places where old, poor trails are completely revegetated, and a far more sustainable trail now exists. I am even more proud of the trail builders, educators, and fundraisers who did the truly hard work to make trail plans a reality on the ground. Nothing can replace the friendships that emerged as we worked through challenges, celebrated successes, and grew together."

Tim Farris

Bridger-Teton National Forest Trails and Wilderness Specialist

In 2002 Tim Farris took a seasonal trail crew job with the Bridger-Teton National Forest on the Blackrock Ranger District in the Teton Wilderness, just to the north of Jackson Hole. "That summer I fell in love with this place and recognized that there was something truly special and unique going on here," Farris said. Then in 2006 when a permanent trail supervisor job opened, Farris jumped at the chance to lead the crew.

Since then, Farris, now a Trails and Wilderness Specialist, and his team at the BTNF have been managing and maintaining hundreds of miles of trails near Jackson Hole. Success has been possible through state grant programs and through numerous, strong, local partnerships - like with Friends of Pathways - that allow the Forest to work on all trails equally for every user group, both backcountry and frontcountry.

"I now see how trail work has a direct, positive, and healing impact on the landscape that I love so much." - Tim Farris

"People here may not know it, but our trails program is often leading the charge nationally on a variety of fronts," Farris said.

Farris was originally inspired to work on the trails so he could see every place, go down every trail, and see what was around every corner. But over time, his inspiration has grown more holistic.

"I now see how trail work has a direct, positive, and healing impact on the landscape that I love so much," Farris said. "How trail work benefits so many different people in so many different ways. How trail work helps to forge lifelong friendships with crews and members of the community. How trail work brings people together for a common cause, to try and co-exist with our environment in the least impactful way possible to preserve what we have for our future generations. These things inspire me on a daily basis."

Keith and Diane Benefiel

In 1974 Keith Benefiel packed up all of his worldly possessions - including his dog - in a two-wheel trailer and moved from Indiana to Jackson, Wyo. - on his bike.

When he arrived, he opened the local shop Teton Cyclery – which for many years was the only bike shop between Riverton and Idaho Falls. During that time Keith did a daily bicycle radio program on KMTN, wrote a cycling column for the Jackson Hole News, and met his wife, Diane.

Mountain bikes hit the Jackson Hole scene in 1982 with the much-anticipated Schwinn Sidewinder. The excitement at Teton Cyclery was palpable. The mechanics promptly took turns trying to break it including a particularly brutal ride down Philips Canyon, hurtling over root drops and smashing into rocks. There wasn't any suspension, nothing to absorb the shock. The brakes barely held. The bike and rider survived. The balloon tires were reminiscent of the bikes everyone rode as kids. The oddest detail on the Sidewinder was the kickstand.

And then came the Stumpjumper - a sturdier, more sophisticated bike and everyone quickly realized everything about being in the woods was about to change. Vehicles were taking over the highways and riding road bikes had become too dangerous, breathing in exhaust from the vehicles was a bummer. There was nothing finer than exploring the trails and gravel roads of the backcountry of Teton Pass, Mosquito Creek, North Fork Fall Creek, Cache Creek, in spite of the fact riders had to push up most hills.

"The first mountain bike guide to Jackson Hole was printed on newsprint and sold for a buck so it could be used as fire starter when you invariably got lost." - Keith Benefiel

There was a technique to the downhills that involved lowering the seat and sitting on the pannier rack to maintain control of the descent.

"Panniers were essential equipment as it was imperative to be prepared for breakdowns and injuries, sudden changes in weather and emergency bivouacs," Diane Benefiel said. "With these bikes, we were able to travel long distances into the backcountry. It was a dream come true."

In the late 1980s Keith and Diane produced a map of Jackson Hole mountain



bike rides - the first of its kind.

"The first mountain bike guide to Jackson Hole was printed on newsprint and sold for a buck so it could be used as fire starter when you invariably got lost," Keith Benefiel said.

As the new sport became more and more popular, and bikes got more sophisticated, popular routes became overrun and hikers and horseback riders became irate.

"Our USFS angel, Linda Merigliano, spent years talking to all stakeholders and came up with the plan to separate uses incompatible with each other, the first time this had been tried nationally," Keith Benefiel said.

Mountain bikers organized and adopted trails. Unsustainable outlaw trails were reclaimed. Relative peace reigned.

"I still swing the occasional Pulaski, drive screws into bridges, tote signposts, clear small deadfall with my little electric chainsaw and give lots of unsolicited feedback," Keith Benefiel said. "But as an old retired graybeard, I mostly enjoy walking, riding and skiing our outstanding system, always remembering the hundreds of folks that made it possible."

For Diane, mountain bikes and trail access have made adventure part of her daily life.

"I'm most proud of surviving all of the mountain bike adventures I had over the years," Diane Benefiel said. "Spending countless hours in the backcountry in spite of having a fulltime job and busy life was made possible because a mountain bike could cover many miles in the little time left over for fun."









TRAIL VISIONARIES

Photos by Diane Benefiel













PATHWAY PIONEERS



Tim Young Relentless advocacy

After a 7-year around-the-world bicycle expedition, Tim Young returned to Jackson Hole and saw his community had nearly no walking or biking infrastructure. So, he spoke up at public meetings on the need to plan safe routes for walking and biking. It struck a chord in the community, which led the Town and County to appoint a Pathways Task Force to explore the feasibility.

Young volunteered as the first Pathways Task Force Chairman, and co-wrote the award-winning 1991 Pathways in Jackson Hole Conceptual Plan.

"It's gratifying that today the Jackson Hole pathways connect nearly all the developed areas of Teton County with safe facilities for biking and walking." - Tim Young

"I was hired as the first Pathways Director, and from 1992 to 2002 led development of the first 20-miles of Pathways in Teton County," Young said. "I also helped improve Town street designs for pedestrians, launched the first trail partnership with the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and started winter Nordic grooming."

In 1994, Young helped found nonprofit Friends of Pathways to help support the pathways and raised funding to hire the first director in 1995.

Young acted as the lead advocate at the National Parks Conservation Association, and obtained congressional funding for the first park pathway to Jenny Lake.

Tim Young served as Friends of Pathways Executive Director from 2006-2011, advocating for the Snake River Pathway Bridge and WY-22 pathway, and the North 89 Elk Refuge pathway. He also started Safe Routes to School programs and the first paid trail crew with the National Forest Service.

In 2012, Young founded Wyoming Pathways and served as Executive Director for the past decade, working statewide on biking and walking advocacy.

Young has now stepped away from the director job to stay closer to home and work on Teton area pathway and trail projects. These include the \$40 million Teton BUILD pathways and transit investments currently underway;

advocating for new Grand Teton Pathways; and completing the Greater Yellowstone Trail from Jackson over Teton Pass to West Yellowstone.

"It's gratifying that today the Jackson Hole pathways connect nearly all the developed areas of Teton County with safe facilities for biking and walking," Young said. "Today the Jackson Hole pathways system is recognized as one of the best-connected networks in the United States. So many people have helped that vision become reality over the past 30 years; I'm proud of the community resolve to build and support the pathways."



Brian Schilling Service with a smile

A 28-year resident of Jackson, Brian Schilling has served as Pathways Coordinator for Jackson Hole Community Pathways since 2006, managing all of the non-motorized transportation planning and capital projects for the Town of Jackson and Teton County. He joined the pathways program as a staff member after four years on the Pathways Task Force volunteer advisory board.

"The projects I'm most proud of working on include ... Path 22, which forms the backbone of the Teton County system - connecting the west and east sides of Jackson Hole." - Brian Schilling

In his position as Pathways Coordinator, Brian has fostered partnerships with numerous private entities and public agencies at the local, state, and federal level, and has procured over \$16 million in federal transportation funds through competitive grants.

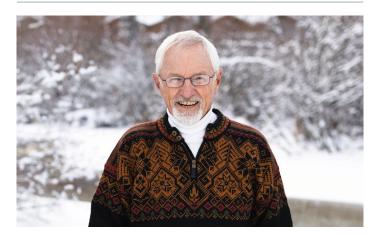
Under his leadership, the Teton County pathways system has nearly doubled in length, with 26 miles of new pathways either completed or under construction.

"The projects I'm most proud of working on include the six-mile North Pathway from the Town of Jackson to Grand Teton National Park - with an additional 15 miles in Grand Teton National Park - as well as Path 22, which forms the backbone of the Teton County system - connecting the west and east sides of Jackson Hole with a 700-foot pedestrian bridge across the Snake River," Schilling said.

Jackson has been recognized since 2008 as a Gold-level

Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists.

In addition to serving as Pathways Coordinator, Brian has coached high school cross country, track, and Nordic skiing and been active in the cycling community since moving to Jackson in 1994. He and his wife, Maggie, are parents to 14-year old Mairi and 10-year old Andy.



Pete Karns Karns Meadow pathways

While training for the 1972 Sapporo Olympic biathlon, Pete Karns would stay in shape by running in Cache Creek, Game Creek, and across the face of Snow King Mountain. But running in the Town of Jackson itself was a different story. At the time, there were few pedestrian improvements, so most of his running was in the streets among cars.

Karns envisioned a pathway that stretched from the high school on the south side of town to Dairy Queen on the north side of town. This pathway, for the most part, could follow Flat Creek, he thought. Although possible from a physical standpoint, there were a lot of obstacles - mostly private property.

Luckily, one huge piece of the puzzle was a 40-acre parcel Pete's grandfather had homesteaded right in the middle of the Town of Jackson - Karns Meadow.

"It is one step further into promoting healthy lifestyles, safer commutes, reducing traffic and all while giving our residents an opportunity to commune with nature." - Pete Karns

Fast forward to the year 2000 and the owners of Karns Meadow - Betty Terrill, Donna Martin, Diana Brown and Pete Karns, decided that the highest and best use of the land was to protect it and make it a town park, similar to Garaman Park, complete with a ³/₄ mile pathway loop, Nordic skiing, two bridges, and six different access points.

The negotiations between the Town of Jackson, the Jackson Hole Land Trust and the Karns family resulted in a masterplan that was recently unanimously adopted by the Town Council in 2022. Soon, Karns Meadow Park will become a reality.

"The Karns Meadow pathways are an important addition

PATHWAY PIONEERS

to the overall pathway system in the Town of Jackson," Pete Karns said. "It is one step further into promoting healthy lifestyles, safer commutes, reducing traffic and all while giving our residents an opportunity to commune with nature."

A complete pathway system within the Town of Jackson is difficult to achieve. The Karns Meadow Pathway will bring us one step closer to that dream thanks to the vision and generosity of the Karns family.



Sharene Garaman Russ Garaman Park improvements

"My brother Russ Garaman had a vision," Sharene Garaman said. "It arose out of his need to leave a legacy to the valley he loved."

Russ had a terminal illness and knew he didn't have much time left. His vision was a system of bike paths throughout Teton County where cyclists and pedestrians could travel safely away from motor vehicles. He wanted it to be as welcoming as the paths throughout Washington, D.C. where he was working as a Senate page. The Rock Creek Park path was his favorite.

"Russ asked our father, Abi Garaman - former Jackson mayor twice - to help bring his vision to life. It would require that our family match an available federal grant to construct the first bike path in the valley," Garaman said.

"It's my job to honor my brother's vision and my father's willingness to contribute. I want this path and the park to be a welcoming sanctuary for everyone." - Sharene Garaman

Out of Russ's vision and Abi Garaman's generosity, the Russ Garaman Pathway was born. Sharene would walk the area often and thought that a special little park along the path would be wonderful where people could sit and relax or gather with friends. Tim Young, the Pathway Director at the time, made that happen and created a magical park.

"The Garaman Family Foundation is now helping to finance a plan to bring Russ's pathway up to current transportation standards. We also want to enhance its appearance, create even more magic if you will. It's my job to honor my brother's vision and my father's willingness to contribute," Sharene Garaman said. "I want this path and the park to be a welcoming sanctuary for everyone."

We're out there

Friends of Pathways logged over 400 hours of tent time in the summer of 2022, engaging with the community at over 20 different locations, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and working to keep peace on the pathways.

You may have seen us at May Park, the People's Market, Jackson Hole Farmers Market, the Genevieve Green Space, Snake River Brewing, Garaman Park, Snake River Bridge, Wilson School, Colter Elementary, Jackson Elementary, Jackson Hole Middle School, the Teton Food Tour, Emily's Pond, Cache Creek, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Town Square, Stilson Parking Lot, Picnic, Jackson Hole Center for the Arts, and more.

Being present in the community gives us the opportunity to hear directly from you. We look forward to our paths crossing this coming summer.

See you out there in 2023!



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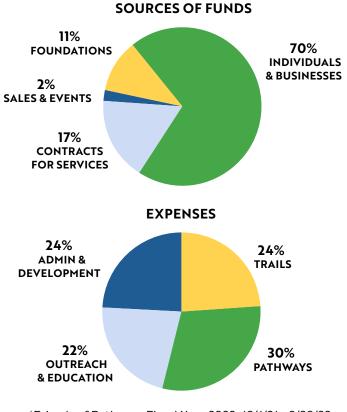
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