Scenic Montana Trails

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MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH SCENIC TRAILS

November 2025

Rice Ridge Becoming Adrenaline Ridge

"This is going to be awesome – Booyah!" – Unknown

Inside this edition:

- Big, Big, Big NEWS – Bike Trail System Started.
- Snow Grooming Ready – Just add Snow.
- Scenic Montana Trails Headquarter Update.
- Donations being accepted.
- OHV Rides – Last Ride of the Season
- Other news…

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Date	Place	Time
November 13, 2025	Seeley Lake Senior Center	5:30pm

Join us for a Potluck. Updates on Snow and bike activities. Board members will be available for questions and answers.

Scenic Montana Trails Reports

Grooming Report

With the government shutdown, plans for our new buildings have been suspended, but still remain approved. The plan for winter storage for the Garnet grooming machine will be the same as last year. The shelter will be moved back to Garnet road parking lot. We have been told that by spring, the new building should be ready to build.

In June, the lease on the Seeley groomer Shed will end and will not be

renewed. Our plan is to move the inventory from the Seeley shed to the Heliport facility. The machines and equipment will be stored at another site until the new SMT Headquarters is built at the Eastside Parking Trailhead site.

The new improved bed is on the new groomer. We had Pitman Machining add some fuel storage to the fuel tank. We have a couple of small items to complete on the groomers, but we are ready to go; all we need is for the snow to fall.

Last summer, we contracted 12 miles of brush cutting, and a hand crew cut the trail out from Mt Henry to Marshal Creek crossing.

A concrete vault toilet at the Elsina Safety Shed is a still a priority, but again the shutdown has this stalled. A WiBooster will be installed at the Safety Shed soon. This improvement should provide a stronger cell phone signal at and near this location.

Let's have a good and safe winter!

Bike Report

Scenic Montana Trails (SMT) has begun construction of an elite, professionally designed bike trail system in Seeley Lake Montana.

"The idea was conceived 10-12 years ago as part of a community trail development drive. This trail board surveyed the community and drafted a final report outlining the most desired trails. Despite full community engagement, the bike trail plan struggled to gain traction," said Cathy Kahnle, an SMT Board member.

Fortunately, community members never gave up. Two years ago, in collaboration with the US Forest Service' Seeley Lake District Office, SMT hired Radius Trails help create a 27+ mile trail system designed for beginner, intermediate and expert riders, including accommodations for adaptive mountain bikes. The 1,200-foot vertical drop has views from the top of "Rice Ridge." The downhill trails will terminate at the Seeley Creek Nordic ski trails.

Bike Trail 1

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Connector trails continue from there to the existing Seeley Creek trailhead. The ski trails add another 12 miles of double track available for bikes in the summer. The design includes approximately 9 miles of wider climbing and flow trails that can be groomed for “fat tire” bikes in the winter.

The NEPA environmental review hurtle was cleared in August. Since then, volunteers, with help from the US Forest Service, have cut and cleared the brush on nearly 6 miles of the system. SMT purchased a mini excavator to start digging the trail. Volunteers have cut more than 1½ miles of beginner/fat tire trail in two months. It is anticipated that 2.5 miles of trail will be finished by the time the snow flies. The downhill single-track green, blue and black flow/tech trails will be professionally built. Further, SMT hired DJ&A, a national professional services and engineering firm with experience in assisting communities develop outdoor recreation-based economies. DJ&A is providing project management, strategic fundraising and grant writing for this project, and has already contacted and applied for several grants to help construct these trails.

Rough Cutting 1

The plan for 2026 includes: finishing the remaining 3.5 miles of the upper loop, where the downhill trails originate; completing the lower loop and building one of the blue and/or green down-hill trail(s).

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Smoothed Trail 1

The Seeley Lake community is stepping up. Volunteers are on the trails daily, clearing and excavating. Donations have been coming in with over $80,000 raised to date. This bike trail system is a fantastic project for our community, and adds great options for bikers from Missoula, and throughout the Glacier Country region. Help us make this project a reality. Volunteer! Donate! And JOIN US on ScenicMontanaTrails.org.

NEW SMT Headquarters to be built at Eastside Trailhead

The new groomer shed is still on track to be built at the Eastside Trailhead on Cottonwood Lakes Road. The building will be home to SMT's trail grooming equipment and provide a meeting venue for SMT events. The building will be 60' x 100' with planned expansion to 100' x 100'.

SMT president Curt Freide spoke to a group about the project. "Our vision is for this location to be used by the entire community of Seeley Lake. It is intended as an Event Venue for all occasions as well as our headquarters. When Mountain Bike organizations or Ski Clubs wish to hold an event, it can serve as the gathering place for event check-in, information and post-event activities. The building will create another venue for community get-togethers."

Ground breaking may begin as early as this fall, but likely spring due to shut down.

For updates on the progress of this project, monitor the SMT Website, Facebook page and/or this publication.

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OTHER NEWS…

A bike trail site visit is scheduled for October 30th. The Level I application for Missoula County Trail Bond Program funding has been approved. The in-person site visit is expected to include County commissioner(s) as well as the Trail Bond Program manager. The Level 2 application will be submitted following this event.

DONATIONS are being accepted for the Mountain Bike Trail project and the SMT Headquarters building. We are developing and extensive donation campaign. In the meantime, if you wish to donate, Please contact our fundraising chairperson Curt Freide at 406-677-4036or email us at info@scenicmontanatrails.org

Trail Passes - Residents must purchase a Trail Pass to legally ride on any of Montana's 4000+ miles of groomed snowmobile trails. Passes are valid for 2 years and cost $20.00. Trail passes apply to all "mechanical equipment", including snowmobiles, motorized snow bikes, and fat-tire pedal bikes using wintertime/snow groomed trails. Trail passes are available at **Rovero's and Kurt's Polaris in Seeley Lake.**

MTVRA
MONTANA TRAIL VEHICLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION
Creating a positive future for off-highway vehicle recreation

MTVRA does excellent work for Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) users. "MTVRA's mission is to create a positive future for Montana off-highway vehicle recreation…" Please support MTVRA by joining at https://www.mtvra.com

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LAST OHV RIDE OF 2025

The final OHV ride of the season was to Quinn's Hot Springs on Sunday October 19. The ride included a stop at the Nine Mile Ranger Station, Edith Peak as well as a snow-covered section.

Nine Mile Ranger Station 1

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Snow 1

Snow 2

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Edith Peak 1

Lolo Forest Plan Update

Forest Planning Meetings
ON HOLD

Objectives

- _Reconnect with the public
- _Introduce new Forest Supervisor, Ben Johnson
- _Introduce new Plan Revision Team members: Team Lead, Stacy Allen and Partnership Coordinator, Bryce Kadrmas
- _Share role of Mountain Planning Services Group with Lolo Forest Plan Revision
- _Overview of where we are in the planning process and timeline (including fall 2025 public engagement events)

THIS IS OUR FOREST. WE NEED TO SHOW THAT WE ARE ENGAGED. The Forest Travel Plan is the guidebook on how the Forest Service will manage the Lolo National Forest for the next 15 years. The public decides what goes into the plan. Meetings have begun.

Currently the planning process has been slowed to a “HOLD” on the Federal Level.
FULL PLANNING DETAILS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT:
Lolo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision Hub

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Commentary – Uncle SMT ALWAYS needs you!

It may appear that things just happen – not without YOU!

It is clear from the preceding articles that the working volunteers of Scenic Montana Trails have accomplished much over the past 12 months to make the Seeley Lake area a premium recreational experience.

Several private/public initiatives are coming on line with more to come. The success of these projects depends on hard working people involved with the club. In the coming months, MORE incredibly spectacular recreational projects could be announced.

Scenic Montana Trails will be responsible for building, monitoring and maintaining trails and other public use areas.

For example, SMT has commissioned the design of 26+ miles of bike trails and the , aligning and flagging of the initial stage of the project. SMT will need to build and maintain these trails.

Money and volunteer hours are needed. SMT has already started on the money portion. If you wish to donate funds please contact any board member or email info@scenicmontanatrails.org If you would rather donate your time, effort and have some fun with others, raise your hand by contacting us before you think twice.

THANK YOU to the individuals who value the development and use of the land and got involved. The creation of dedicated teams to support these initiatives will be key in keeping them.

Put some skin in the game. **Thank you!**

WANTED – Membership Chairperson

WANTED – SxS Chairperson

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Other, other news…Community Block Party

On Saturday October 18, Scenic Montana Trails participated in the Community Block party held at Kurt's Polaris. SMT sponsored the famous dart board and raised several thousand dollars for our general fund. Thank you to all who supported this effort. Next dart board opportunity will be at the Annual Snowball dinner on January 31, 2026. See the Scenic Montana Trails calendar below.

Montana SNOWMOBILE Association provides great support for our Club and trail needs. They do amazing things to help our adventures on the trails happen. Please join MSA online at https://www.snowmobilemt.org or Contact Connie Walters at 406-590-0386.

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SMT Calendar

- **November 13, 2025 – Membership Potluck – 5:30pm Seeley Lake Senior Center**
- **November 20, 2025 – Board Meeting**
- **December 1, 2025 – Gates Open**
- **December 18, 2025 – Board Meeting**
- **January 15, 2026 – Board Meeting**
- **January 31, 2026 - Annual Snowball Dinner**
- **February 19, 2026 – Board Meeting**
- **March 2026 – Annual Snowmobile Fun Run**
- **March 19, 2026 – Board Meeting**
- **April 16, 2026 – Board Meeting**

Scenic Montana Trails Board of Directors

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Ride Safe, Have Fun and Be Considerate with Your Fellow Trail Riders!