



CITY OF ASHLAND

# SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

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PROPOSED BY

ROGUE VALLEY MOUNTAIN  
BIKE ASSOCIATION

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this document is to address the existing trail issues on city property located in the Ashland Watershed. The exponential growth of mountain biking in Ashland has exposed flaws in the trail network that must be addressed. Additionally, the temporary closure of the Shakespeare Festival has hurt tourism numbers in an economy dependent on attracting visitors. Some of these alignments can and will directly increase tourism through events and general ridership. (New trails bring in tourists to ride).

## METHOD

Seven factors are described in detail throughout the proposal:

- User Experience
- Trail Sustainability
- Neighborhood Connectivity
- Lack of Beginner Trails
- User Safety
- Environmental Impact
- Tourism

# A FRESH VIEW OF THE WATERSHED

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In 2018, RVMBA had a turnover in the board of directors. Part of the transition to a new board included an analysis of the current trail system.

A few issues quickly became apparent:

**1. Lack of beginner trails.** This is arguably the biggest missing link in our trail system. Without providing a means to teach youth and beginners how to mountain bike, we are relying on tourists to use our trails, and not providing a training ground for our own local citizens and children. We believe to strengthen our stewardship of the trails, we need to create future stewards. Without a way to create new mountain bikers in our own trail system, this becomes difficult.

**2. Unsafe multi-use.** Another issue was short areas of trail that remain multi use, yet provide an unsafe trail experience for users due to speed, sightlines, and/or direction of traffic. These issues can be easily mitigated with a re route. This would create a safer trail system for all, and avoid any potential conflict between growing numbers of hikers and bikers.

**3. Neighborhood connectivity.** Lack of neighborhood connectivity leads to choke points, extra traffic, and extra wear on trails. When most trails start and end in the same location, residents are forced to drive to the trailheads. From a carbon footprint perspective, this isn't good. From a road maintenance perspective, this isn't good. From a user experience perspective, this isn't good. People want to be able to ride from their homes to access the watershed. By creating connections to allow them to do so, we are improving the trail system for local residents, as well as taking pressure off our centralized trails and roadways. This in turn creates a better experience for those coming to ride Ashland trails from out of the area. It also reduces our trail work liability because there is less wear and tear on the trails.

**4. User experience.** Currently, we have one bike-legal route from the trail hub of white rabbit parking lot to the south side of town. White rabbit is a multi-use trail, with several punchy uphill sections, and steep, sandy, rutted fire road at the bottom. On paper this looks as it serves the purpose of bringing riders to and from the South side of town. However, the reality is quite different. Very few people climb this route because it is simply too steep for most riders. As a result, riders either drive to town, and climb up the Loop Road, or ride up Tolman Creek road to toothpick and across to Lamb Saddle before riding down BTI or Jabberwocky (adding pressure to those trails). Even fewer mountain bikers descend White Rabbit because in its current state, it's simply not a worthwhile downhill ride.

Creating a viable, positive user experience both climbing and descending on the South side of town on city property is of utmost importance.

**5. Trail sustainability.** Arguably the most important issue after user safety, trail sustainability is better understood when we examine our local soil types. Our decomposed granite is both a blessing and a curse. It allows quick draining, which means our trails are never plagued with the mud and water drainage issues of other trail systems. However, the quick drying nature in the summer months leads to a tremendous amount of trail work to repair the trails in the winter. With the extreme growth of users (an online GPS recording service called Strava has recorded 22,500 trips down Jabberwocky since early 2018, with a 5x multiplier on riders not using Strava to recorded users.) we have experienced extreme trail degradation each year. By adding additional options in and out of the watershed, we can take pressure off of these choke-point trails, and focus more on making those trails sustainable by spreading out riders and lowering usage.

**Ashland is unique** in that there are so many different land managers in a small area intersected by trails. If you ride Lizard to BTI, you are going through USFS, four different private landowner easements, and City of Ashland land. To complicate matters further, some of the land is managed by Ashland Parks and Recreation, such as Siskiyou Mountain Park. On top of this, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy holds the conservation easement in Siskiyou Mt. Park.

Each proposal listed in this document addresses at least one of these concerns. Implementation of this trails proposal (creating a trails “plan”) would serve to supplement what AWTA started by embarking on a plan and proposal process to bring us the trails we enjoy today. This document is meant to address the changing environment of Ashland Trails, while building off of the successes of AWTA. This document is meant to supplement, not replace, any and all work completed by AWTA to this point.

**Background:** The Ashland Watershed Trail System is considered the crown jewel of mountain biking in Southern Oregon. Thanks to the hard work of advocates, including AWTA, we have a trail system enjoyed by hikers, runners, dog walkers, and mountain bikers. Without the tireless efforts of volunteer planners, laborers, builders, and stewards, this trail system would not exist. Nearly all of

the Ashland Watershed trail proposals have been completed as of November 2020.

The results have proven that the planning and implementation was well worth the effort. Separating user groups (mostly) has led to very few complaints and positive user interactions. Partnering with private and public landowners has allowed creation of trails leading all the way to Mt. Ashland. Trails like Lizard and Jabberwocky have created a large market for mountain bike tourism, which funnels hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly into the local economy. Essentially, Ashland already has the bones of a strong trail system.

Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association is the caretaker for city mountain bike trails. Including trails on USFS and BLM land, RVMBA contributes roughly 1700 hours of yearly trail work, free of charge, to the Ashland watershed. RVMBA is a member of IMBA, the International Mountain Bike Association, and operates as a non-profit under the umbrella of IMBA. RVMBA has an annual budget of around \$15,000 that mostly goes towards trail work days, tool maintenance, events, and occasionally new projects. The mission of RVMBA is to build and maintain a world-class system of mountain bike trails that support and enhance the physical, mental, and economic health of Rogue Valley communities.



A trails usage study has deployed usage counters into the watershed to compile data into who is using our trails, and how many people really are mountain biking here. Preliminary data shows that from October 21st 2020 to December 31st, 2020, 8,800 trips were captured on Waterline trail below BTI/Jabberwocky. We look forward to reviewing the study from SOU, slated for release in the Fall of 2021.

**6. Environmental impact.** Any trail addition needs to make our trail system sustainable for years to come. This idea also goes beyond the trails—if we can create a trail system that’s accessible throughout Ashland, we can significantly cut carbon emissions from cars traveling to trailheads. Traffic in the watershed is increasing. Finding a parking lot spot during the weekend at White Rabbit can be a chore. Similarly, the quarry parking area is full of cars from sunrise to sundown.

By creating a network of connective neighborhood trails, we can significantly reduce these car trips, lessening carbon emissions, impact on roads and wildlife, and creating a culture of healthy folks who ride bikes from home to their local trails.

**7. Tourism.** This document is not meant to be a marketing pitch. All tourism related information is available in RVMBA’s Trail Map to Recovery document. However, the tourist value should be noted and considered when looking at these projects holistically. The City of Ashland has identified tourism diversification, particularly in the form of outdoor recreation, as a goal moving forward. Tourism in the mountain bike context can mean events, races, or the casual mountain bike tourist who vacations to locations with attractive trail systems. While all of these are standalone issues identified by the board, it’s important to understand that they are all interconnected in creating a healthy trail system. This proposal attempts to address and solve these issues through key alignments, reroutes, new trails, and sustainable building practices to progress our trail system as our user base grows and evolves.

**Each proposal is outlined in the subsequent pages.** Along with a description, a map of the proposed alignment is included. Additionally, the issue(s) the trail alignment addresses are spelled out in detail. All proposals are on city land only. Proposals involving private property easements are included and that detail is noted. Currently RVMBA has no USFS proposals that would affect city lands.



White Rabbit parking lot on a chilly winter day. Imagine what Spring will bring.

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# TRAIL PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED BUILD DATES

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## Fall 2021

Waterline Pedestrian Bike Separation  
Siskiyou Mountain Park Low Angle Loop Trails  
Lithia Park Low Angle Climb and Descending Trails

## Spring 2022

Lower Wonder Bailout Trails  
Alice in Wonderland Climb Trail/Ped-Bike Separation  
Pioneer Promenade

## Fall 2022

South Ashland Connecting Climb and DH trails

## Spring 2023

Imperatrice Property

## Future Considerations

Hoffman Property  
Acid Castles/Hitt Road

\*These dates are rough suggestions and open to discussion and reprioritization as resources dictate

# Waterline Pedestrian/Bike Separation

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**Location:** Waterline trail, between BTI/Jabberwocky exit and intersection with quarry road.

**Primary issues addressed:** User Safety

**Secondary:** Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact

**Current status:** Currently, the only exit out of BTI and Jabberwocky, the two most popular trails in the watershed, is down Waterline trail back to the main fire road leading out of the Quarry parking area. The trail travels roughly 200 yards of flat terrain bench cut into the hillside roughly 12 feet wide. The trail then descends down a steep, eroding fire road at a 15-20% gradient for roughly 50 yards before flattening out in a narrow straight away. At the beginning of the straightaway is the entrance to Bandersnatch, a popular hiking trail. This is followed by a blind left turn in gravel to the main fire road leading out of the watershed. Due to its proximity to the parking area as well as the two most popular trails in the watershed terminating into Waterline, it is the heaviest used mountain bike trail in the watershed. It also sees heavy hiker use as it is the access point for Bandersnatch and Snark trails. It is currently permitted for uphill mountain bike travel, but is seldom used for this purpose.

**Assessment:** Waterline trail is too steep, and has poor sightlines following the steepest sections. This has created unsafe riding and hiking conditions and is a hotspot for trail conflict.

**Proposed change:** RVMBA would like to work with AWTA to develop a secondary trail for either bikes or hikers, removing the risk of conflict or collision by following suit with the other trails in the watershed to make them single use. The new trail would run parallel just West of the existing trail, between Waterline (above) and the reservoir upper parking area/Reeder access road (below). AWTA has proposed this change in the past but it has been stymied by the inability to find an engineer to assess soil stability in the area. This is the highest priority alignment on city property for RVMBA due to the high probability of conflict, including potential accidents resulting in physical harm. Because of this, RVMBA is strongly advocating for the city to assist in the process of hiring a soils engineer to take this project on.

**Process:** Develop proposal in coordination with AWTA.

- Walk and flag trail area with city officials and AWTA/RVMBA representatives
- Ensure proper soil stability through third party soils geologist
- Receive approval from city officials
- Build trail using IMBA Trail Standards and Forest Service Trail Handbook.

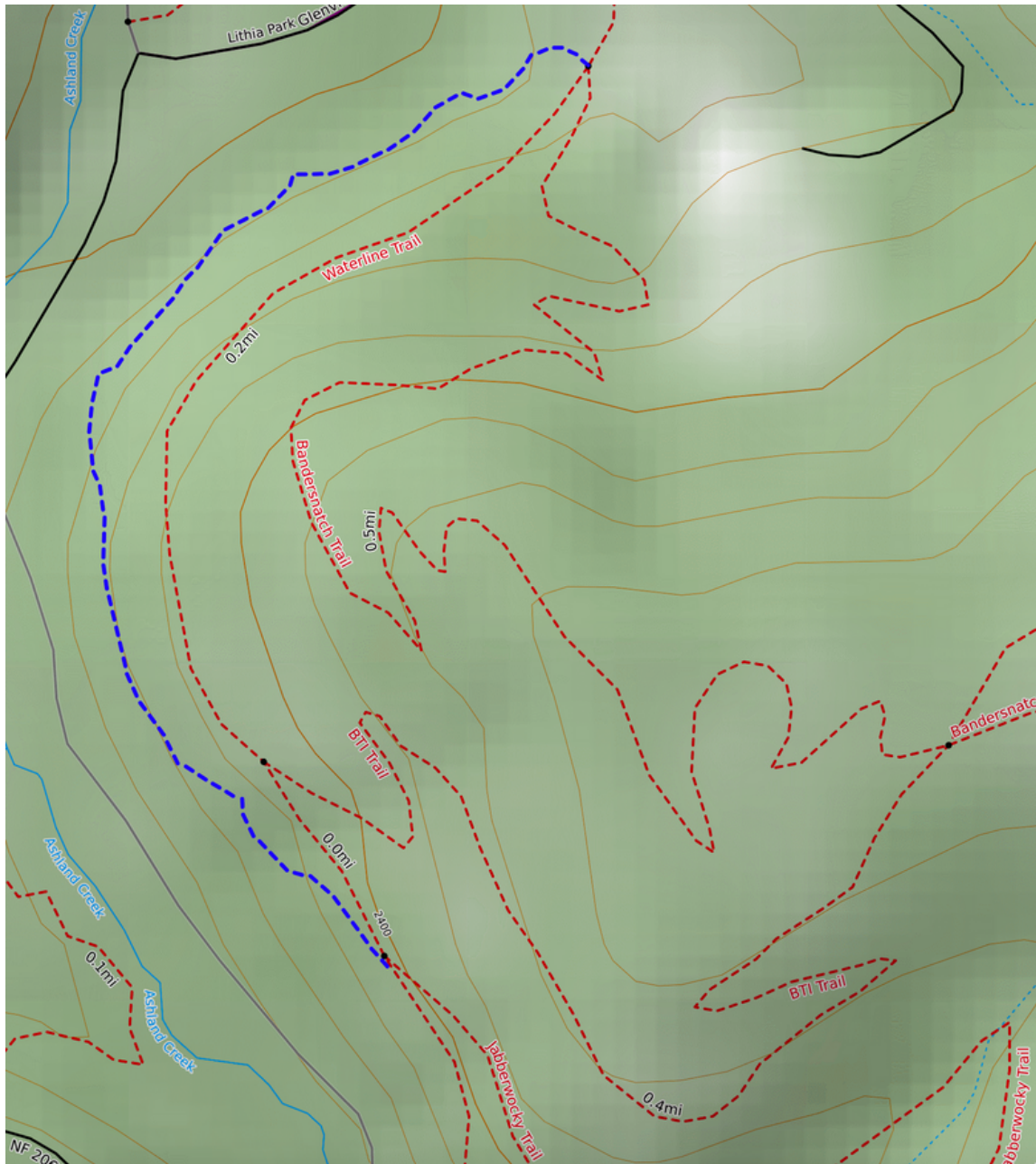
Estimated build time: 2 weeks

Estimated build cost: \$0

Estimated soils engineering cost: Between \$7,000-\$10,000

## Final Outcome and Benefits:

- Two separate routes of travel ensuring safe access to Bandersnatch for hikers, and Snark for hikers/bikers, and safe downhill bike access from BTI/Jabberwocky to Quarry parking area.
- Eliminates one of the last major conflict points on city land Utilizes volunteer labor and AWTA/RVMBAs partnership to foster community building, stewardship training, and trail building.
- Reduces use on the most heavily used trail in Ashland.





# South Ashland Connecting Climb and DH Trails

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**Location:** Siskiyou Mtn Park land, terminating above Park Street and Oredson Todd Woods

**Primary issues addressed:** Neighborhood Connectivity, User Experience, Tourism

**Secondary:** Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact

**Current status:** The land held within the Siskiyou Mt. Park area is owned by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, and managed by the City of Ashland. There is currently a hodge-podge of trails running through this area, which begins at the White Rabbit Parking Lot and extends East into the Oredson Todd area. The current bike-legal route leaves the White Rabbit Parking Lot and climbs uphill, then heads downhill to the East, with several named short-cut trails bisecting here and there. This includes Queen of Hearts trail and Mad Hatter (both hike only), and later on, Looking Glass and Cheshire Cat. Mike Uthoff trail, a hiker only connection, parallels White Rabbit uphill and to the South of White Rabbit. At approximately ¼ mile from the White Rabbit Parking lot, a steep descent followed by immediate steep ascent is encountered. The ascent reaches gradients of 15-18% at times, and only the fittest riders can make it through without dismounting. At the top, the trail begins to descend the eastern slope through manzanita and grassy oak woodland.

After a few switchbacks the trail exits onto an old fire road, reaching gradients of 22-25%, much steeper than IMBA trail standard guidelines. This area is composed of loose gravel over hardpack, with several swails serving as water drainage areas. This trail ends on a main, flat fire road running north to Park Street, or South into the Oredson Todd area. Oredson Todd offers one legal bike route, dropping down a series of stairs to the creek, then up and out the east side of the creek onto a multi-use trail exiting in the Green Meadows neighborhood.

**Assessment:** While bike legal, White Rabbit and Siskiyou Mountain Park see very little bike traffic due to the fact that the trails aren't conducive to either climbing or descending via bike. Descending is the easier of the two, while a climb from Park Street UP White Rabbit is virtually unheard-of. Siskiyou Mountain Park does not offer viable mountain bike options, either uphill or down.

**Proposed change:** RVMBA is advocating for multiple changes in this area. The first would be to add a climb trail open to hikers and uphill bikes only, from the fire road extending off Park street to the viewpoint near Looking Glass/White Rabbit Intersection. The trail would then meet up with White Rabbit, and use the existing one mile to complete the climb to White Rabbit Parking Lot. Alternatively, the trail could extend North (downhill) of the Looking glass area, and tie in AFTER the descent heading westbound, climbing the existing switchbacks to finish at White Rabbit.

Second, a downhill bike only trail designation would be given to White Rabbit from Looking Glass to the Park Street fire road. This trail would rebuild current unsustainable sections of White Rabbit, adding grade reversals and fire road rehab where possible and conducive to slope/geology. The goal would be to create a trail focusing on user experience, to entice riders using the local shuttle service on the South Side of town to ride that trail instead of BTI or Jabberwocky. Additionally, it would create an option for South Ashland neighborhood riders to climb from home and descend a trail on par with the downhill experience of BTI/Jabberwocky, thus serving that population AND reducing traffic, both via bike and via car, in the quarry area of Lithia Park. One alternate downhill idea would be to utilize the existing social trail, nicknamed "Fenceline" as the new downhill trail. This would not be ideal, as there isn't a good route to the top of

Fenceline, and any crossing over to Fenceline from the climb trail would have to cross Mike Uthoff. While this isn't a deal breaker, RVMBA believes using an already existing trail in White Rabbit is less impactful and makes more sense. It should be noted that there are many ways to achieve both a climb trail and a descend trail in the area. Options should be discussed to determine the best way forward that works for all groups involved.

**Red tape:** RVMBA expects some of pushback from AWTA and the hiking/running community on designating White Rabbit as DH bike only. However, when looking at our proposal, RVMBA has taken traffic flow and trail equity into consideration. Here are the facts: The current system is not being best utilized for the main user groups in question. RVMBA would assist in construction of a NEW hike/uphill bike only trail in the style of Wonder Trail. Hikers would gain a NEW trail of approximately the same mileage as White Rabbit, still allowing for a loop experience by linking with Mike Uthoff, which is currently hike only and which we are not advocating for any change of use. AWTA would be asked to design and construct the hike/bike trail, given their track record and successes like Wonder. Mountain bikers would receive a much needed, crucial third descent option to the South end of the town, designed and built by RVMBA. Currently most bike tourists are utilizing Ashland Mountain Adventures for shuttling. Many do multiple laps, and end up pedaling miles through town to return to the shuttle area. A different option would remove much of the daily traffic from the Lithia Park area. Dispersing users in the watershed should be a goal for land managers, and this proposal would serve to do that in a big way.

**Process:** Utilize data from SOU usage study to show that there is a lack of use with the current alignment.

Engage Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, Ashland Parks Commission, and City of Ashland to pitch the proposal and formulate a plan.

Engage outdoor trail use communities with plan/proposal and collect feedback to develop a solution that works for all.

Submit formalized plan based on feedback and SOLC/CoA requirements to SOLC, APRC, and City of Ashland

Receive approval

Flag bike uphill/multi-use climb trail

Build bike uphill multi-use climb trail to USFS and IMBA trail standards

Re-design DH bike only trail in current White Rabbit footprint (RVMBA internal)

Update trail to IMBA trail building standards from redesign, and re-designate use as DH Mountain bike only

#### **Estimated build time:**

Climb trail: 2-3 months. Built in early winter to allow for proper moisture.

White Rabbit updates: 2-3 months

New DH trail: 4-6 months

Estimated build cost: Low end: \$5,000 High end: \$15,000.

#### **Final Outcome and Benefits:**

A new multi-use access point from South Ashland, climbing to the heavily used area of White Rabbit will:

- ⚙ Reduce traffic and vehicle use,
- ⚙ Reduce excess bike traffic on toothpick trail
- ⚙ Keep bikes away from Mike Uthoff trail
- ⚙ Offer a fitness challenge that is difficult, yet enjoyable and rideable with practice.

A re-designated DH mountain bike only trail would:

- ⚙ Give riders a viable and preferred alternative to BTI and Jabberwocky, two highly impacted trails seeing large numbers of use leading to increased trail degradation.
- ⚙ Serve South Ashland residents as a route back to their neighborhoods
- ⚙ Give tourists quick access to Ashland Mountain Adventures as well as motels/hotels frequented by mountain bikers on the south end of town.

An increase in mountain bike traffic on the South side of town means an increase in patronage to some of the restaurants/shops in the area. “Spreading the wealth” from the downtown core to other areas of the city only serves to bolster more businesses and create new opportunities outside of the traditional sectors. A collaborative design and build process with AWTA would ensure that all user groups are represented and that there is a plan that works for everyone. This also fosters community and stewardship by sharing resources, ideas, and work time with multiple land stewards.

# Alice in Wonderland Climb Trail/Ped-Bike Separation

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**Location:** Alice in Wonderland climb trail reroute, below BTI entrance. Ped/Bike separation from BTI entrance to White Rabbit Parking Lot

**Primary issues addressed:** User safety, Trail sustainability, Beginner Trail Opportunity, Environmental Impact

**Secondary:** Connectivity, User experience

**Current status:** Alice in Wonderland (AIW) trail is the main access for both hikers and bikers between White Rabbit Parking Lot and the lower city owned trails that see heavy traffic. AIW descends at a low angle from the parking area along a ridge for its entirety, with three steeper vertical drops of roughly 100 yards long each. Bandersnatch trail crosses AIW in two locations, and BTI splits off to the West from AIW about 300 yards above its terminus. Continuing down AIW past BTI, the trail becomes steep, rutted and eroded before intersecting JubJub, then finally ending at a Bandersnatch trail where bikes are permitted to use the approximately 30 yard descent to the Loop Road. The trail is currently open bi-directionally to all users. There are a few blind sections, mainly towards the upper, first steep section. The trail is wide enough to accommodate a vehicle in many sections, and does connect to a driveway off of the Ashland Loop Road.

**Assessment:** AIW is a heavily trafficked trail, mostly in the downhill direction between White Rabbit Parking Lot and BTI. Beyond BTI, the trail is designated as bike only, and sees little use and is eroding the hillside. The trail is connected to the loop road from the bottom of AIW. AIW is wide in spots, but other spots offer unsafe conditions for a multi-use trail. The ridge that AIW runs down is wide enough to accommodate additional trails. Easements and travel through private property creates red tape issues for projects to move forward in the area. Currently AIW runs through three separate private parcels.

**Proposed Change:** AIW represents an opportunity to fill several needs. There are two components to this proposal. Reroute the portion of trail from BTI to the Loop road. This section sees grades of 25% for roughly .1 miles. This section is essentially a large cut in the hillside, and a drain sending water down towards the loop road and private property. RVMBA would want to decommission and restore this old trail to nature, while building a new, sustainable, climbable section not to exceed (insert IMBA climb trail standards). The new trail would travel in the same direction as the current trail, but offer climb switchbacks to offer a climb route from either the loop road side, or JubJub.

The new trail, due to the switchbacks, would add approximately (insert added mileage of route). The trail would be open to multi directional bikes only, keeping its current designation. Since Bandersnatch is in very near proximity, there is no need to make this a multi-use trail. The reroute would keep the current alignment of using the approximate 30 yards of Bandersnatch to allow bikes to access the loop road. (Fig. 1)

Add an uphill climb/hiker only trail to parallel the current Alice in Wonderland trail from White Rabbit Parking Lot to the entrance of BTI. The second component of this proposal would create a parallel route using ample space on the ridge to permanently separate hikers and bikers on Alice in Wonderland. This would also continue the climb up from the aforementioned reroute all the way to White Rabbit Parking Lot. This would fulfill several needs including creating an

option for smaller loops serving beginner and youth riders, creating safer conditions by separating hikers and downhill bikes, and continuing a climb trail removing a number of bikes from the Ashland loop road.

**Red Tape:** Much of Alice in Wonderland trail is split amongst three property owners (in addition to City of Ashland land.) This project would be contingent on receiving permission from all three property owners to move forward to completion. However, not securing permission on all three should not be a reason not to move forward. There is still potential to reroute much of the current trail, and if, for example only two property owners give permission, RVMBA would be able to work within that framework to vastly improve the current situation.

**Process:** Define property lines along trail clearly before any mapping or flagging begins.

Engage city of Ashland, property owners, and AWTA and walk trails, specifically the portion needing reroute. between BTI and Ashland Loop Road.

Submit formal proposal using city trail approval process.

Once permission received, trail will be flagged and walked for final approval by COA and any property owners involved. From this point, project will take on two separate goals:

1 - Reroute BTI to Loop road section.

2 - Build new uphill bike only/hike only trail along ridge

Construct #1 and decommission old trail simultaneously, to USFS and IMBA trail standards

Construct #2 to USFS and IMBA trail standards and launch education campaign to let users know of changes due to high traffic nature of the area

#### **Estimated build time:**

1) BTI to Loop road reroute + decommission - 2 weeks

2) Uphill climb trail - 1 month

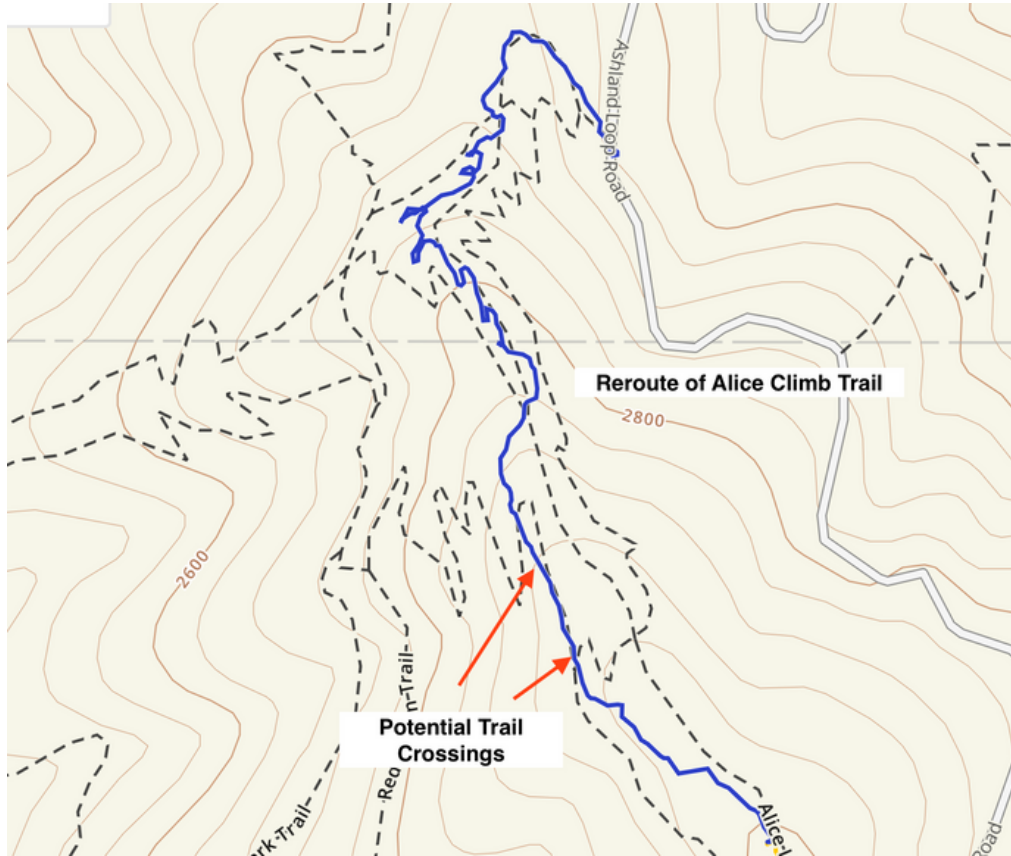
Estimated cost: #1 \$500-1000 for a professional trail builder with trail decommissioning experience to walk and help guide the decommissioning and rebuilding.

#2 To be completed with all volunteer labor

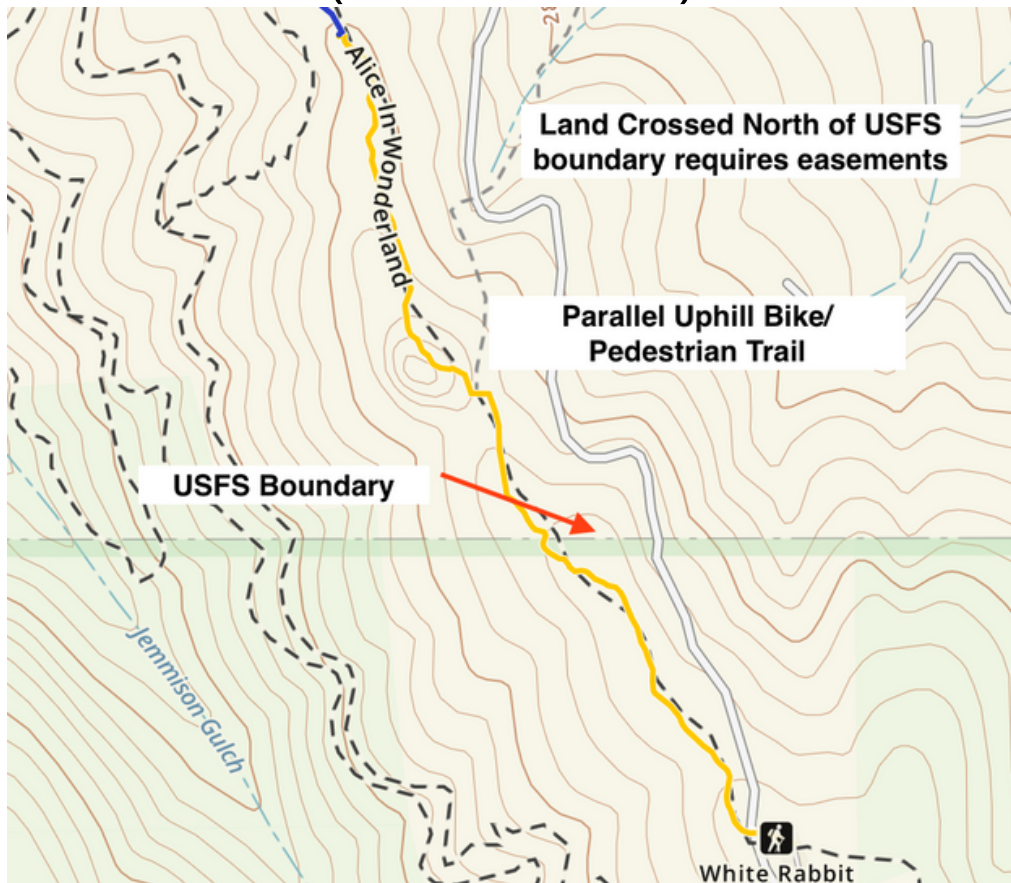
#### **Final Outcome and Benefits:**

- ⚙️ A useable climb trail utilizing existing legal bike trail from the Loop Road to BTI entrance, followed by a new climb/hike trail from BTI to the White Rabbit parking lot.
- ⚙️ Separates hikers/uphill bikes from downhill bike traffic in a highly impacted area.
- ⚙️ Creates the opportunity for beginner, low angle loops for kids and beginner riders. Low angle opportunities are few and far between in the watershed, yet this ridgeline is a great location.
- ⚙️ Fills the need for an uphill, singletrack climb trail, separating bikes and cars from the narrow, windy loop road.
- ⚙️ Allows riders to access via either BTI/Snark, OR the beginning of the loop road.
- ⚙️ Creates a positive environmental impact by decommissioning an erosive, seldom-used trail
- ⚙️ A collaborative design and build process with AWTA would ensure that all user groups are represented and that there is a plan that works for everyone. This also fosters community and stewardship by sharing resources, ideas, and work time with multiple land stewards.

# Climb trail reroute, city land



# Uphill Climb/Pedestrian addition (Private Lands)



# Lithia Park Low Angle Climb and Descending Trails

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**Location:** Upper Lithia Park, between Glenview Road and the Eastern slope of Ashland Creek.

**Primary issues addressed:** Neighborhood Connectivity, Beginner Trails, Environmental impact, Tourism

**Secondary:** User Experience

**Current status:** The outer Lithia Park trails are closed to all bikes. Within the area bordered by Glenview Road, the Swim Reservoir, Ashland Creek, and the Pioneer Street dirt access road, there is a myriad of user created trails open to hikers only. A few of these trails lead to the creek itself, and along the steep hillside. According to maps from the City of Ashland most of these user created trails have been adopted into the current trail system. Access points exist off of Glenview Road in several locations improved with stairs (and some without), and onto the Pioneer Street fire road.

**Assessment:** This area holds the key to a major connectivity and traffic flow issue stemming from bikes leaving the watershed trails of BTI and Jabberwocky, and being forced to exit down the heavily used Winburn Way and into the Plaza downtown area. The current preferred route of travel negotiates quiet park space in the upper regions, transferring into one of the most congested traffic areas in all of Ashland, the Lithia Park Playground parking area. Riders are forced to navigate through a gauntlet of cars pulling in and backing out (many of these drivers are tourists who may not know that bikes frequent the route) as well as the many walkers in the area around the Duck Pond and Bandshell. Due to riders not wanting to ride with cars in an impacted area, unsanctioned use of the current trail by bikes has become more prevalent.

The upper area near the Quarry parking lot is one of the heaviest auto traffic areas in Lithia Park. On most weekends, and even some weekdays, the parking lot fills to capacity. This means dozens of cars are driving through the park and from downtown to ride bikes in the watershed, then returning to their cars and driving out. Moving up the hillside, there are neighborhoods just above Glenview road, and Glenview road itself, that point to major ecological and environmental impact on the hillside existing. The spaghetti of user created trails create hideouts for homeless, who have been found to be living in camps in the area over the years. As the site lies in the bottom of a box canyon, user created trails leading to homeless camps creates one of the highest fire risks in Ashland, in one of the most geographically susceptible locations to fire. The current area in question is highly used and just underwent a major clearing/thinning project to reduce fire hazard, but if ignition sources (homeless camps) still exist, fires can and will start. The area hosts the best terrain on city owned land to provide beginner, low angle trails. Thanks to the recent thinning, very few if any trees would need to be removed for trail construction.

**Project History:** RVMBA created a proposal for this project and presented to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) for consideration in the 2019-2021 goals process. Exploring the potential for a trail is currently the #8 goal on the APRC goals list, but has failed to move forward in any official capacity. Both the Forest Lands Committee and the City of Ashland have not produced a clear pathway to proposal for RVMBA. Therefore, the project has been stalled until RVMBA can identify a way to get the project on the table. Because the project will take place on APR land, the APRC will be the primary decision makers for this particular project.

**Proposal:** RVMBA would like to build two trails running parallel from the Quarry at the end of Glenview Road to the Pioneer Street Fire Road just above downtown. One trail would serve as a bike only uphill trail, while the other would be a bike only downhill trail. RVMBA originally proposed a multi use, bike/hike shared uphill trail. Due to concern from APRC and City staff in mixing trail users, the proposal will be a bike only alignment for both trails. This effectively eliminates any shared use concern in the park.

To address the concern of unsanctioned trails (which are in abundance from historic foot travelers in the area), RVMBA would offer volunteer services to decommission non-essential routes of traffic in the area. RVMBA would work to use dead/down materials to block off old trails that are erosive and non connective. Redundant trails also would be eliminated, leaving a clear, workable and connective system in place both for connective travel and leisure hiking/riding. This would also eliminate potential homeless camp paths and areas by creating a main thoroughfare of traffic both on foot and by bike. RVMBA would continue to monitor and report on any illegal or unsanctioned trails that reopened after this exit.

One can look at current city trails BTI and Jabberwocky to see what they could expect in terms of short cut or illegal trails to and from the main trails. With thousands of yearly riders, there are 0 illegal cut ins or cut outs of these two trails. The uphill trail would consist of a gentle grade not exceeding 7% slope, meandering across grass/oak woodland for approximately (feet/mileage).

The trail would begin just off the Pioneer Street fire road area, and would terminate near the intersection of the Ashland Loop Road and Glenview, where the existing main hiking trail exits. The trail would be optimized for uphill bike travel, with a tread of approximately 36 inches. The trail would be built to standards found in the IMBA trail building handbook. The trail would be hand-built by volunteers, and have no crossings with the downhill trail. For reference, the trail would be built similar to Wonder, also partially in the city trail system. The downhill trail would be built using natural terrain features, swales, rolling dips and grade reversals to maintain a 4.85% slope descent average along the entirety of the trail. The trail alignment would be roughly .75 miles, and drop 185 vertical feet. (Please see Fig 1 for where this fits on the “flow trail calculator”). This trail would be built in a way using natural speed controls and trail building techniques to keep speeds at lower levels.

The primary function of this trail is connectivity to downtown, but a close second is providing beginners and youth an opportunity to ride low-angle trails to hone skills before venturing to the more difficult city and forest service trails. This idea will play throughout the creation of the downhill trail experience component of this project.

The trail would be hand built, by volunteers, saving costs and creating a true community project. The proposal will call for shared entrances and exits at both ends of the trail. The shared entrance will be approximately 50 feet long before branching into the downhill/uphill loop option. Some engineer/design work would be needed to ensure proper construction of this short section, which RVMBA would pay for. The shared exit will consist of a few switchbacks, exiting onto the Pioneer Street fire road away from the main pedestrian area. Again, a professional would be consulted to ensure proper building and stability techniques. Traffic flow in this area will be carefully coordinated to ensure hikers would never be between either trail, and can have a safe hiking/running experience similar to the current alignment. In fact, for the majority of the alignment (.03 miles to .62 miles) the bike trail would be nearly out of sight from the main hiking trail, and significantly closer to Glenview Road than the hiking trail.



The impact of bikes on the current hike trail would be nonexistent, with the main hike trail never crossing either bike trail. Crossings of current pedestrian trails would only occur in areas with appropriate grade and sightlines. Signage should be placed at the intersections to alert trail users of traffic patterns. There are four to five trail crossings that will be necessary to accommodate the climb/descend trails. Since these trails will be parallel to one another, it will eliminate the need for additional signage — each crossing will be denoted by one sign. While close in proximity to the watershed trails, the Lithia Park hillside trails still do not see the traffic as other city trails such as Bandersnatch and Red Queen.

Existing examples of trail crossings are easy to find: Jabberwocky crosses Snark, and BTI crosses Bandersnatch in two places. BTI and Bandersnatch, two of the most used trails in the watershed, have not seen any major problems regarding trail use/crossings in their existence. This can be attributed to good signage and respectful trail use. The crossings for the Lithia Trail would be at much lower speed and have much better sightlines than the Bander/BTI crossing. In fact, on a recent hike, it was determined that the shortest sightline on any of the road crossings is roughly 60 feet — more than enough time for any hiker or biker to see an opposite user in the area and slow down, especially given the low speeds and gradients. This distance is also more than double the distance between the BTI/Bandersnatch crossings, and bikes are traveling at a much higher rate of speed at these crossings.

**Red Tape:** The APRC and APR Staff have expressed some concerns in moving this proposal forward. Below are some of the concerns, accompanied by RVMBA's response to how these will be mitigated under the proposal:

Potential of bikes cutting into the official trail from Glenview. RVMBA believes with a well created trail, the likelihood of cutting into official trails from Glenview is low. APR doesn't need to look far for working examples — there are no cut-in trails to Jabberwocky or BTI, and no places where bikes are leaving either of those trails to ride or shortcut nearby trails. RVMBA doesn't believe that there is any current example of this occurring on any bike legal trails anywhere in the city property boundaries. It's proven time and time again, in practice and theory, that a well-built trail will keep riders on the trail. If the trail doesn't offer riders the connectivity or experience they are looking for, there is potential for user created pathways and trails, or the use of trails closed to that user group. This is especially the case if connectivity and safety are factors driving users to use non-bike trails for biking, as has been the case in the area in question. Looking at traffic patterns, it would not make sense for riders to cut in from Glenview. 90% of the traffic would be exiting the watershed, putting riders at the top of the trail. There would be no incentive to ride down the road and cut in, thereby missing much of the singletrack.

One additional thought is that since the climb and descend trails are so close together, there would be ways to add connectors to the downhill trail along the way. This would give novice riders an opportunity to do shorter loops, and not over commit to a long climb. As riders got older/stronger and built skills, they could complete the entire climb. Another way to remedy this concern would be to open one of the several (there are three to four) entrances along Glenview to bike traffic. This would be done at an area with the best sightlines, and least amount of grade. If it is truly a concern of APR, giving riders a legal, well-built option to cut in would be a solution.

Potential of bikes cutting through Lithia Park. The sheer effort it would take to cut into Lithia Park is an example of the juice not being worth the squeeze. For a bike to cross from proposed trails into the park, the rider would have to wade through Ashland Creek at the top area. Below the top section, a 6-foot tall chainlink fence is in place. Riders would have to scale the fence to continue through the park. Both of these scenarios are extremely unlikely to

occur. With bikes riding Winburn Way in high numbers, crossing into Lithia Park is not a problem from that direction.

There's no reason to think that riders would go to such lengths to go off trail into the park, when that opportunity already exists and is not an issue. Furthermore, bikes are looking to get from point A to point B in a way that makes sense and is fun. There's simply no incentive nor reason to believe bikes would cut through trails to get to reaches of the park already off limits to bikes.

Environmental Impact. There has been some talk of environmental concern, including hillside stability from Parks staff, and wildlife diffraction from concerned citizens in arguing against the trail proposal. This is a two part response:

Hillside Stability. While RVMBA doesn't profess to be soils engineering specialists, it doesn't take a scientist to look at the area and understand that it is already highly impacted with roads, homes, foundations, traffic, vehicles, existing trails, and people — without issue. Unlike the Waterline reroute proposal, the Lower Lithia proposal travels through slopes in the 20% or less gradient region. This is also equal to an approximately 11.3 degree slope. To put this in perspective, BTI, Jabberwocky, Bandersnatch, Snark, White Rabbit, Mike Uthoff, and portions of Lower Wonder all travel through areas much steeper and vulnerable to erosion than this area. Because of the gentle nature of the slope, there would be less “benching” required to cut in a new trail. Instead, the natural terrain would be preserved in a much less invasive building practice than a trail requiring switchbacks, cribbing, and structural support. When looked at over the entirety of the trail, approximately 185 feet of elevation loss would occur over 3854 feet of distance. This equates to a 4.8% trail grade. This is best illustrated in Figure 1. As the visual shows, this puts the trail into the “sweet spot” for flow trails. The proposed hillside grade and trail grade make it hard to argue any hillside stability arguments against trails. Furthermore, the fact that so many trails already exist in this area, including fall line trails, is not consistent with the City of Ashland's level of concern on this issue.

Wildlife Diffraction: Ashland and the areas around it play host to many different species of wildlife. Many of these species thrive in an urban/suburban environment and are highly adapted to human presence. The hillside in question is sandwiched between two extremely high-use car and human activity areas. It is highly unlikely that the addition of trails in this area will negatively impact the current species assemblage that frequents the park.

User conflict due to shared use trails. Originally, RVMBA envisioned a shared use uphill trail (similar to Wonder and Snark) that would allow bikes and hikers to use the same trail in a suitable setting, and still separating downhill bikers from all uses. Due to concern from parks staff and commissioners, and out of respect for the hikers that do not want to see shared trails, RVMBA is now proposing this as a bike only alignment for uphill and downhill. This would leave a third pedestrian only trail in the area, which is already in existence and well out of the way of the trails proposed. The new trails would never cross this main route. This change in proposal essentially eliminates the user conflict argument/concern.

Trail crossings/signage in the upper Lithia Park area. RVMBA has been made aware that there is a policy for limited or no signage in upper Lithia Park, ostensibly in place to preserve a “wild” feeling with limited human impact. While well intentioned, RVMBA believes that Parks property should err towards user experience and user safety to provide the best experience for citizens and visitors alike. We greatly appreciate respecting the environment, and the experience of those in it. Wilderness areas and areas within our watershed already provide these experiences for citizens looking for them. Because this area is surrounded by roads, buildings, and people already, we would propose a change in the ordinance to allow signage at trail crossings in the upper lithia area, as well as trail designators at the start and finish

of both trails. We believe proper park management includes accommodating all users if possible and sustainable. Signage will not detract from the user experience of moving on a trail. Great signage is commonplace on city owned property adjacent to this area, and RVMBA would work with Parks staff and commissioners to make sure signage was in keeping with existing city and parks styles.

**Process:** There are two potential processes for this proposal, depending on whether the trails are hand or machine built:

Hand built: Identify unsustainable user-created trails to decommission.  
Develop exact routes for new trails, then walk the routes with APRC and staff.  
Release final proposal for decommission and building for public input. Minor adjustments can be made as needed based on community feedback.  
RVMBA volunteers to actively decommission user created trails.  
Begin hand building of trails using RVMBA volunteers and trail leaders.  
Build uphill/multi-use trail first, followed by downhill bike-only.  
Install signage at beginning and ends of both uphill and downhill trails with beginner tips, cautions, and trail descriptions

Machine Built: If the trail was to be machine built, RVMBA would engage in a fundraising drive, and work with APRC to hire a contractor to carry out the work. The process would fall under Parks protocol, followed by contractor best practices to plan and complete the project.

Estimated Build Time: 3-4 months

Estimated Project Cost:

Engineering work: \$10,000.

Machine built \$10,000.

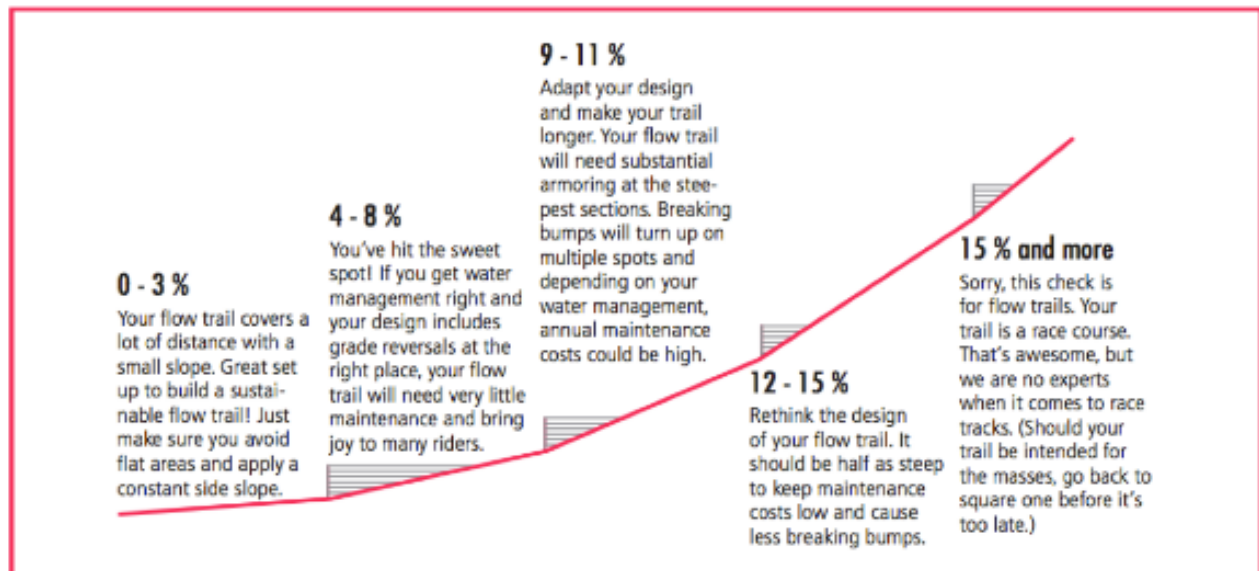
Hand Built: \$5,000

**Final Outcome and Benefits:** Completion of this proposed project would benefit the most users out of any proposed project contained in this document. Some of these benefits include:

- ⚙ Effectively removing bikes from Glenview fire road, eliminating a significant amount of downhill bike traffic from the lower Lithia Park/ Granite Street/Winburn Way area
- ⚙ Adding a much needed low-angle trail experience geared towards youth and beginners
- ⚙ Greatly reducing the carbon footprint of mountain bike users who no longer will drive to the Quarry parking area, or White Rabbit lot, but instead have a viable route to pedal from town
- ⚙ Reducing the threat of fire and fire ignitions by decommissioning unnecessary trails and reducing opportunities for homeless to camp in high fire risk areas.
- ⚙ Creating a loop option that gives access to mountain biking to a much larger demographic than can currently access trails.
- ⚙ Creating a more equitable and approachable environment for those who wish to learn but have barriers to entry.
- ⚙ Improving safety for bikers, by funneling bike traffic into areas designed to handle it (city streets and trail) rather than busy, congested parking areas where mixing of incompatible modes of transportation occurs.
- ⚙ Filling in a missing, critical connection link for mountain bikers, connecting the Ashland Watershed with downtown via off-road trails.

THE SLOPE OF YOUR FLOW TRAIL IS:

## 5. CHECK YOUR PROJECT

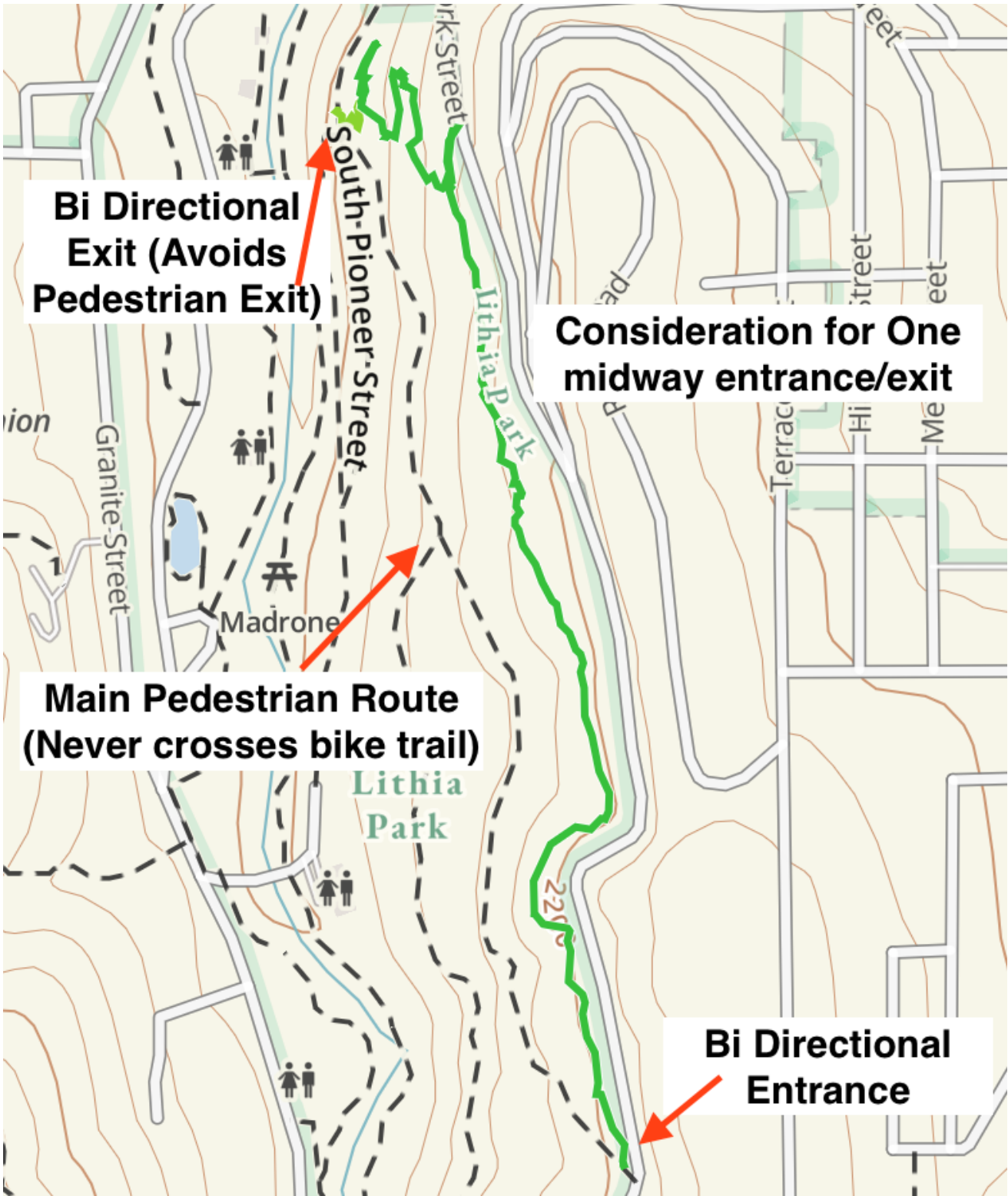


**Caterpillar: 7.5% grade**

**BTI: 10%**

**Jabberwocky: 9.5%**

**Upper Lithia: 4.8%**



**Bi Directional Exit (Avoids Pedestrian Exit)**

**Consideration for One midway entrance/exit**

**Main Pedestrian Route (Never crosses bike trail)**

**Bi Directional Entrance**

# Lower Wonder Bailout Trails

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**Location:** Lower Wonder trail, city owned section. West Side Ashland Watershed

**Primary issues addressed:** Connectivity, User Experience, Beginner Trails

**Secondary:** User Safety, Environmental Impact, Tourism

**Current status:** Lower Wonder trail is a popular route leading from the Fairy Ponds parking area and weaving up and around towards the West Side of the watershed. The trail terminates into Upper Wonder, with an option to travel approximately .1 miles to the 2060 fire road, or continue up Upper Wonder to its termination at Fell on Knee and the Lunch Rocks area. The current status is multi use, uphill bikes only. The trail is heavily frequented by hikers, and moderately frequented by bikes. Once on the trail, which lasts 2.8 miles, mountain bikes do not have the option to turn around, and must continue to Upper Wonder, then down to the fire road.

**Assessment:** The West side of the Ashland Watershed offers a vastly different experience than the East Side. Fewer users, different topography and terrain, and more “primitive” trails are all draws to the area. Traditionally this area has only been accessible to mountain bikers willing to pedal 2000 feet just to get to the base of singletrack trail options such as the top of Hitt road and Fell on Knee. When Lower Wonder was added, it created a beautiful loop or out and back option for hikers, who can turn around if their fitness doesn't allow them to finish the whole trail. Stronger hikers can continue onwards. For mountain bikers, that option doesn't exist. The traffic flow is such that the trail is exclusively built for strong intermediate/advanced climbers. Exclusive trails are OK in trail systems, but should not be located at the main access point for the entire West side of the watershed. The uphill designation works great for a shared use trail with heavy traffic. The problem lies in the fact that there is no viable way to exit out of the trail. With 3 miles and almost 1000 feet of climbing, riders are given one option to ride the trail, severely limiting the types of riders who can enjoy the trail. Only the fittest riders who have time to climb for 30-45 minutes can utilize this part of the watershed. The only option from the top of Lower Wonder is an uninspiring fire road descent using the highly pedestrian-trafficked 2060 road. Because it is a 12-18 foot wide fire road, chances for ped/bike accidents are low, but it's still a concern mixing hikers, off leash dogs (no leash laws on USFS land) and bikes traveling downhill at high rates of speed. The current route down 2060 is not appealing to many bike riders.

**Proposed Change:** RVMBA would like to explore and flag a “bailout” route on city property, exiting Lower Wonder. This gives a smaller loop option, and opens up the trail to many more riders than currently available. It also would encourage riders to obey the usage rules by presenting a larger demographic an attainable route. While reports of wrong-way riders are few, this would bring that number down even further. The bailout trail would be limited to bikes only. In keeping with current loop systems in the Watershed, a “Downhill Bikes Only” designation would make sense. There wouldn't be much of a need to utilize the trail for uphill travel, given that Lower Wonder would serve this purpose. Thus, the safest option for all would be to make it downhill only. The most logical place for an exit trail would be the West Side Quarry area (see map). At first glance, this would seemingly be an inappropriate place for a trail due to the water treatment center possibly being relocated. However, RVMBA holds the view that trails are living things, meant to evolve, and sometimes devolve, with time. By allowing a temporary trail to go in, with the understanding that it may go away,

the city of Ashland would provide a much needed connection in the interim, and it would show that the city is committed to the needs of the mountain bike community. The opportunity exists for two bailout trails, with the same exit (the main road through the locked gate just off 2060). Both trails would be located entirely on City of Ashland property, and would not cross onto USFS land. The trails would be built to standards found in the IMBA trail building handbook. Signage would be necessary at the split off of Lower Wonder and both trails. This could be paid for and installed by RVMBA to save the city from investing in trails that may not be long term solutions. RVMBA would be willing to sign a clause stating that the trail could be closed at any time (AND RVMBA would decommission if requested) in relation to work done for the new sewer treatment plant.

**Process:** Identify trail alignments through on-site hikes and map consulting.

Walk the area with land managers and AWTA representatives.

Draft a contract or agreement, stating that RVMBA is aware that trail could be closed if incompatible with new sewage treatment plant.

Receive final approval from land manager.

Build trails, starting with shorter alignment first (There is already a deer trail in place).

Estimated Build Time:

Short trail: 1 day.

Longer trail: 2 months

Estimated Project Cost: Zero cost to land manager. This would be paid for and implemented by RVMBA volunteer crews

**Final Outcomes/Benefits:** The “West Side” of the watershed is an underutilized area that is in need of shorter loop options for mountain bikers. Following the closure of Moai and Mystical, two popular trails on private land, there are few options on this side of the watershed. If this project was approved, it would:

- ⚙ Provide a great loop option for riders not strong enough to ride the full Lower Wonder trail.
- ⚙ Decrease the potential for wrong-way riders who cannot complete Lower Wonder and need to turn around.
- ⚙ Create a low angle, quick loop suitable for children to ride.
- ⚙ Establish another trail option to draw riders out of our most impacted trail areas, and allow easy access to a beautiful area of the watershed currently not accessible via bike for most of our members.

This project would be free of cost, and would include an agreement to decommission the trail(s) if it was determined to be an incompatible system with a new water treatment plant.





# Siskiyou Mountain Park Low Angle Loop Trails

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**Location:** Siskiyou Mountain Park, above the Clay Creek waterfall area, south of White Rabbit/Mike Uthoff trail heads

**Primary issues addressed:** Beginner trails, User Experience

**Secondary:** Trail Sustainability, Environmental Impact, Tourism

**Current status:** The area proposed for development is the Southeastern area of Siskiyou Mt. Park and abuts the Epstein property to the South (see map). The area is made up of sparse Douglas Fir, Ponderosa Pine, and Manzanita with a mellow gradient. There are several fireroad-width trails that are intersected by several social/deer trails that can be connected to make small loops. The area sees little traffic compared with Ordsen Todd/Park street as it's not along the main route of travel for hikers or riders.

**Assessment:** This area could play host to a wonderful beginner/cross country style loop system that could be incorporated into the trails described in the Siskiyou Mountain Park proposal previously referenced. The terrain is at a very low grade, conducive to trail building and gentle gradients for new riders. The foliage is well spaced, meaning there wouldn't be a need for removing trees, and sightlines are generous. There are two distinct areas separated by a main fire road, creating the potential for two trails — one for very small children, and one that would climb an additional 100-150 vertical feet and offer a slightly longer descent. Best of all, this area is well tucked away from the main routes of travel, so there would be no user conflict issues anticipated. The main access to the beginner loop area is a wide fire road, similar to 2060. While beginner trails are a major need in Ashland, the access to this particular area is more difficult than just parking and riding. Because of this, it can be assumed that the area would see increased traffic, but not at levels that would create traffic flow issues. The easiest access would be off Park Street, with additional access available from Oredson Todd area along the multi-use route, or White Rabbit trail descending from the White Rabbit Parking Lot area. Along with the official trails being built, RVMBA would offer to decommission any non-system trails deemed unsustainable or unnecessary by the City of Ashland and/or Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, which holds a conservation easement for the property.

**Proposal:** RVMBA would create a loop trail system incorporating several options for riders to descend back to the starting point. There would be a directional climb trail, ideally tying in with a new climb trail going all the way to White Rabbit Parking Lot. However, this tie-in would not be necessary to implement either proposal (they are not mutually exclusive.)

From the main access point at the Park Street gate, riders would travel approximately .75 miles, past the Mike Uthoff Trailhead, Clay Creek Loop, and Waterfall access. Riders would continue nearly to the property line, before a climb trail would ascend the property line. This trail would require a light bench cut and several switchbacks along the gentle gradient, before exiting onto a main fire road cutting through the property. From here, the first downhill option would take riders down 100 vertical feet over an easy 1000' distance back to the start of the climb trail/fire road intersection. This is "DH 1" on the map.

For riders passing up the first downhill option, they would continue past a fireroad intersection, then begin a 1500', 150' vertical descent back to the intersection with Clay Creek Loop. On the map, this segment is referred to as "DH 2". For those looking for a longer loop, the climb trail would connect into a climbing trail leading up the hillside until the grade steepens considerably. The trail would then loop and descend back down a third descending trail, back into DH 2.

The trails, as with all trails in our proposal, would be built to IMBA trail building standards. Total new trail construction for the loop trails would be roughly 1.5 miles of trail. For this proposal, there would be one dry creek crossing, utilizing an existing trail to cross. The creek crossing is dry and no longer carries water except for localized storm runoff. This segment was hiked in December, and no soggy conditions were encountered. No other geological abnormalities would be encountered on this slope.

[REDACTED] (Because this property is on a conservation easement with Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, all planning, building, and flagging would include representatives from SOLC. Additionally, since this area is managed as a park, Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission would be the final decision makers for this proposal.)

Hike area with City of Ashland and SOLC representatives to explore options and routes

Supplement feedback from on-site sessions to finalize proposal

Present plan and receive approval from Parks Commission. At this point, City staff will present approved plan to SOLC.





After receiving permission from SOLC, RVMBA will complete final flagging

Construct trails to IMBA standards

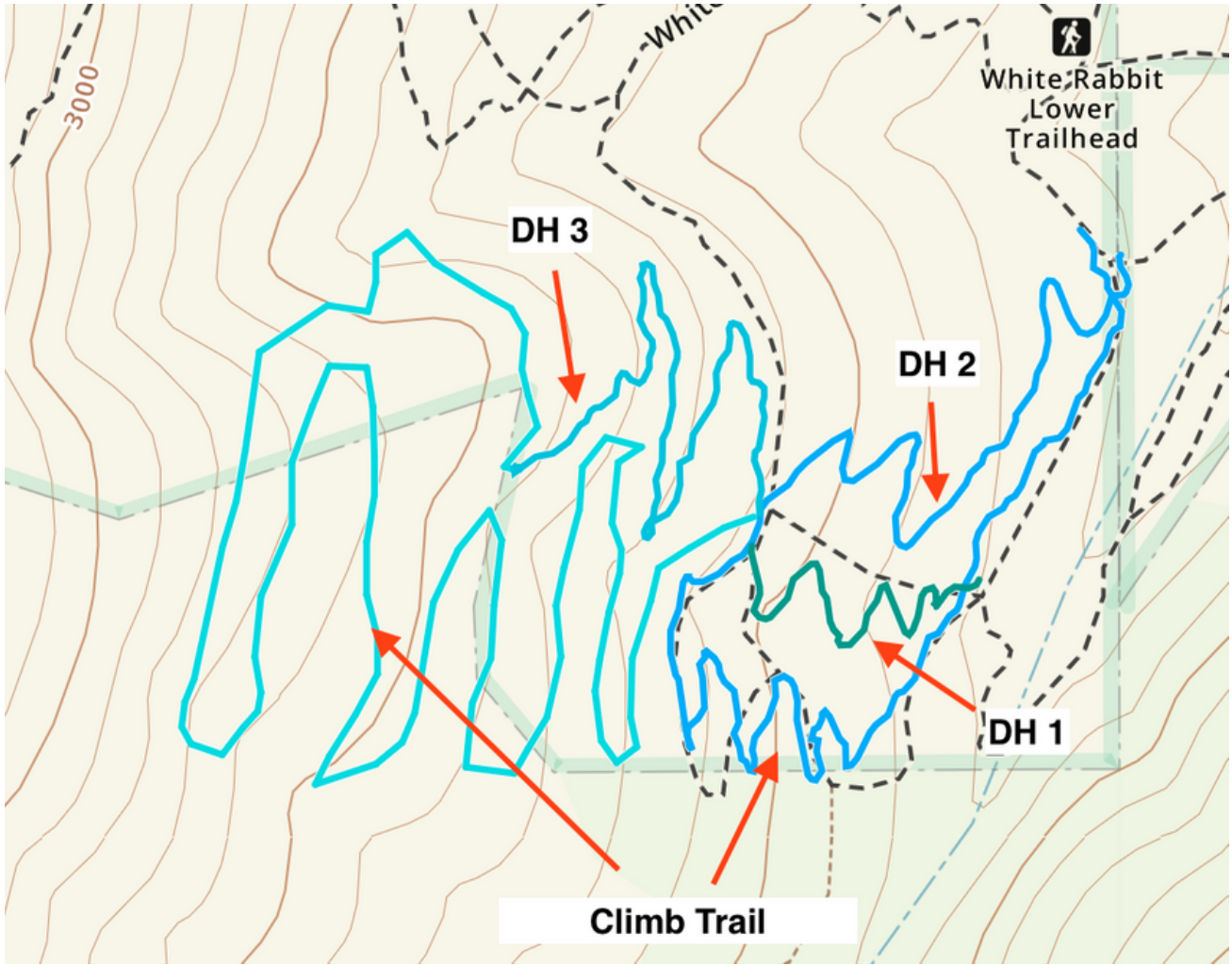
Estimated project cost: This project would be of 0 cost to the city, as RVMBA would provide volunteer labor to construct trails

Estimated time to build trails: 2-4 weeks

**Final Outcomes/Benefits:** [REDACTED] The creation of a bona fide beginner trail loop would be a win for everyone involved. The issue of not having any learning zones close to home has been spelled out extensively in this document as well as past proposals. This project would:

-  Fill the void needed to safely teach mountain biking in Ashland.
-  Pull bike traffic away from the central corridor of White Rabbit Parking Lot, BTI, and Jabberwocky.
-  Offer those on the South Side of Ashland a place to ride from home.
-  Help reduce the amount of car traffic driving to a bike ride.

In reality, it should be a goal that all Ashland residents can ride to a trail, similar to the APRC goal of having a park for every Ashland resident within ¼ mile. Finally, partnering with SOLC to create a shared vision of stewardship and conservation is paramount in creating a responsible and sustainable trail system. As a 1% for the Planet member, RVMBA is dedicated to this idea and a project to create sustainable trails



# Imperatrice Property

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**Location:** 840 acres of mostly grassland, North of Interstate 5.

**Primary issues addressed:** Regional Connectivity, User Experience, Tourism

**Secondary:** Environmental Impact

**Current status:** The Imperatrice property encompasses approximately 840 acres of grassland. There are currently several unofficial trails/roads running through the property. Currently, there is a lease agreement in place with the Land Manatee Foundation to allow cattle grazing on the lower sections (numbering around 265 acres), with a provision for additional grazing north of the TID in the amount of 224 acres. The lease was put into place in early 2020. The lease is 2 years, with an option to extend one year for 3 additional years, totaling 5 years. The TID runs midway through the property, traveling East to West along the grade. North of the TID lay areas of significant environmental importance, including Southern Oregon Buttercup and an area “of exceptional native plant presence and diversity.” The area is surrounded by private land holders, with BLM land and the Grizzly Peak trail system at the top of the ridge.

**Assessment:** The Imperatrice property offers a unique experience outside of the Ashland Watershed, giving access to the mostly privately-owned North side of I5. It offers beautiful views of Ashland, as well as access to some exceptional bird and plant habitats. With an easement or two, a new trail could potentially travel all the way from the valley floor to the Grizzly Peak trail system managed by BLM. Lower down in the grasslands and out of the protected areas, opportunities may exist for a seasonal “dual slalom” course that could play host to regional events once a year, then be allowed to return to a natural setting when not in use.

**Proposal:** With several hundred acres available, RVMBA has two proposals for this area.

**Looped Trail System:** RVMBA proposes creating a looped trail system, with entry/exit points from all three current access points. The looped trail should be built with minimal excavation and infrastructure, maintaining a primitive feel. This trail should serve the primary mission of touring the expanses of the Imperatrice property. If possible, RVMBA would like to pursue easements with nearby property owners to tie the trail into the Grizzly Peak trail system managed by the BLM. Creating regional connections is another goal of this project. This trail system should avoid any sensitive areas, and maintain distance from private property borders wherever possible.

A key requirement of the trail is that the soil would have to be amended with decomposed granite (DG) to make it usable year round. Unlike the South side of I5, the North side is clay and mud, and unsuitable for recreation in the rainy months. A great example of a trail system that has been amended and made usable year round is Prescott Park in Medford. A DG treatment would occur from the top down, and RVMBA has permission from a neighboring property owner to utilize their property as a launch point for a dump trailer and excavator to complete the project. Another suggestion for a looped trail system would be to make it multi-use. This would reduce impact on the land, and allow for collaboration on one trail system between AWTA and RVMBA.

Sightlines unimpeded by trees and shrubbery would allow for safe descending of bikes on trails shared by hikers. An additional idea for collaboration would be to create an interpretive trail system similar to the Fire Ecology Interpretive Trail along Red Queen trail. Working with groups such as the Rogue Valley Audubon Society and Southern Oregon Land Conservancy could lead to an educational experience far beyond what a normal trail ride/hike would yield.

Seasonal Dual Slalom Track: One type of mountain biking currently not represented anywhere in the Rogue Valley and even Southern Oregon is the field of Dual Slalom. Dual Slalom is a race format in which side by side tracks are built with berms, rollers, and flow in mind to create an exciting spectator event.

A Dual Slalom track could be built once per year, then allowed to return to the land each year. This is what the Sea Otter Classic does, and the builder of the Sea Otter Classic course, which is the biggest bike festival in the U.S., lives in Ashland. The area best suited for this course would be the easternmost parcel of land, directly above the Port of Entry from I5. Parking could occur right on the grass, with the two-three day event becoming an Ashland staple and a significant draw of tourists. The optimal time of year for this event would be early summer. The track would be closed in the winter months to allow for site restoration and account for muddy soils. Each Spring before the event, a paid builder would come out and rehab the trail to make it ready for racing. This would also serve to disperse riding crowds from the watershed by creating a close to town option with little investment needed.

#### Process:

Loop Trails: Review limitations and current uses that may impact trail development with City of Ashland.  
Collaborate with Lessee, SOLC, AWTA, COA, and RV Audubon Society to create a trail system plan that suits all needs.  
Flag trail, utilizing existing old trails where possible to create looped option  
Walk flagging with stakeholders and make adjustments as necessary.  
Build trails and fortify with DG using excavators where necessary and approved. Install signage.

Estimated Build Time: 3 months (A connection to Grizzly would take significantly more time)

Estimated Build Cost: \$10-\$15,000 machinery and DG treatment costs

Dual Slalom: Review limitations and current uses that may impact trail development with City of Ashland.  
Collaborate with Lessee, COA, RV Audubon, and SOLC (if conservation easement held by SOLC is in place) to make sure any concerns are addressed  
Flag layout for D.S. track  
Build track using professional builders/excavators

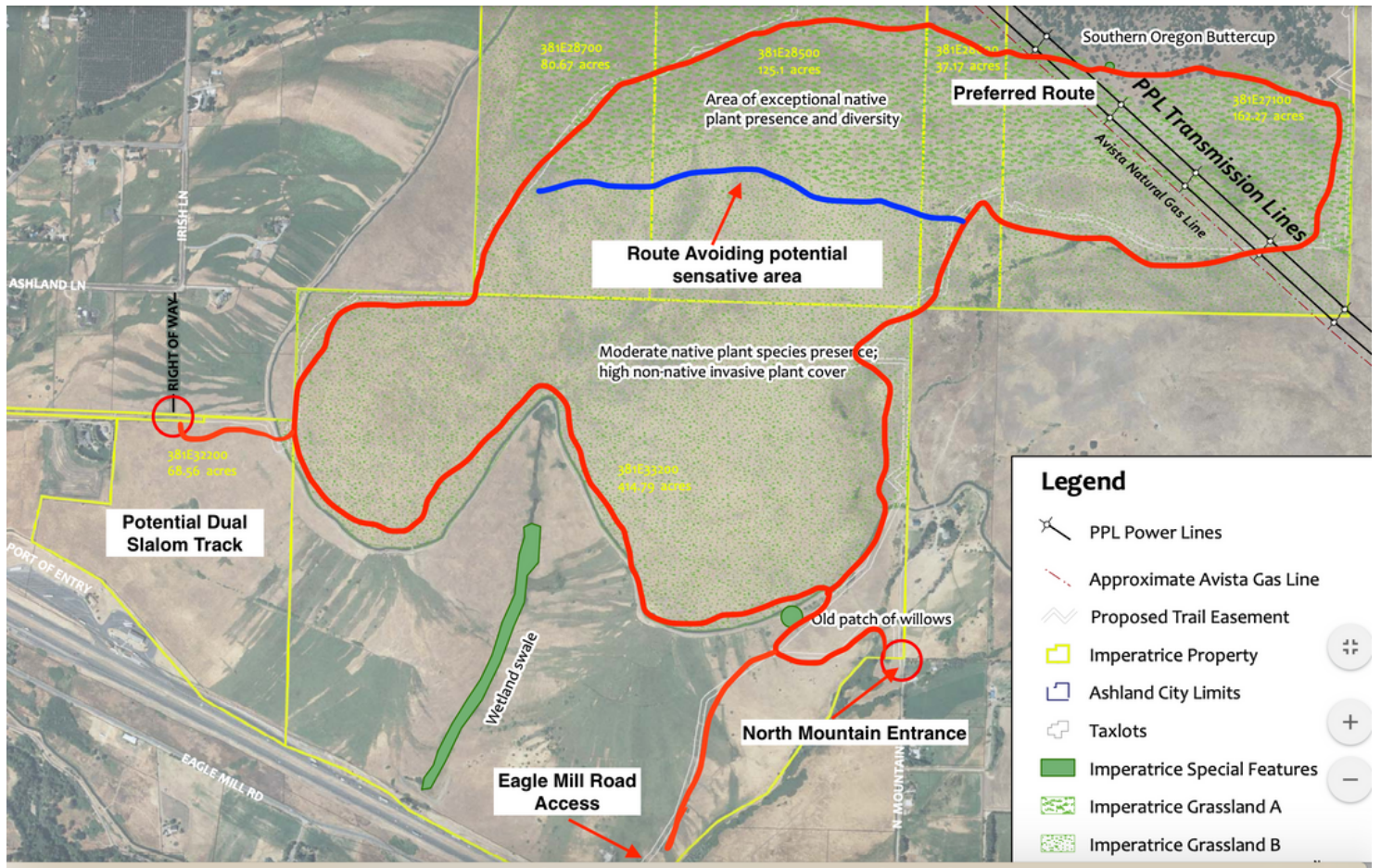
Estimated Build time: 2 weeks with professional builder

Estimated Build Cost: \$20,000

#### Final Outcomes/Benefits:

- ⚙ Draw Ashland tourists and residents to ride somewhere other than the highly impacted watershed trails.
- ⚙ Give both downhill and cross country adventure riders alike a fun, new experience.
- ⚙ Allow users to enjoy an extra hour of sunlight on dark winter days.
- ⚙ Create the ability to link bigger options into the vast BLM/Grizzly Peak areas, which in turn could be an important regional asset.

- ⚙️ Foster partnerships with environmental groups to bring users in an area with unique environmental assets learning opportunities. As a 1% for the planet member, these partnerships would further RVMBA's mission of stewardship and environmental awareness.
- ⚙️ A Dual Slalom track could bring a yearly event to Ashland while serving the downhill and BMX riding crowds in an area just for those disciplines.



Original mapping created by Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. RVMBA added overlay bike routes.

# Pioneer Street Mountain Bike Promenade

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**Location:** Pioneer Way: the dirt, closed road bisecting Lithia Park.

**Primary issues addressed:** Beginner trails, Environmental Impact, User Experience, Tourism

**Secondary:** User Safety

**Current status:** Pioneer Way is currently used by hikers & bikers seeking a car-free route through Lithia Park between South Pioneer St/W Fork St and Winburn Way. The road is gated on either end, to presumably allow emergency and work vehicles through when necessary.

**Assessment:** Currently, the closest thing to beginner terrain offered by the Ashland Watershed offers is Rabbit Hole trail above the Alice In Wonderland Parking lot (and this trail is suited to advanced beginners at best.) In order to access that trail, beginners (in most cases children) need to be driven up to the Alice lot, and then must climb the 2060 Loop road to reach the top of the trail. For young kids and true beginners, this climb is daunting. For parents, the thought of driving their kids & bikes up to the Alice lot and then coaxing the child up the climb is even more daunting.

The Pioneer Promenade would provide kids (and parents) and car-free, easily accessed, low-angle, flow-style trail for developing bike skills. Beyond bike skills, it would also give kids a means of developing independence and enjoying car-free entertainment. The Promenade would utilize a roughly 3-foot wide section of Pioneer way on the East side of the road. The remainder of the road would still be available for both foot traffic and emergency vehicle use, so existing users would be unaffected. Consisting of small jumps, rollers, berms and tabletops, the Pioneer Promenade would measure approximately .35mi. Due to its low angle, young cyclists would be able to easily lap the track. After consulting with a Principal builder from Alpine Bike Parks, RVMBA confirmed that Pioneer Way's low angle, 1-2% grade is ideal for keeping speeds low while teaching pumping, flow and bike control. The Pioneer Promenade would also lure downhill mountain bikers off of Winburn Way, reducing the car/bike conflicts and danger on that narrow street.

Furthermore, if and when the East Lithia trail is built, the Promenade would serve as the final icing on the cake for riders heading down from BTI and Jabberwocky. Additionally this should help address concern from Parks staff that riders would cut downhill off trail into Lithia Park. (RVMBA thinks these claims are unwarranted.) In fact, we would recommend making the terminus of the East Lithia Trail near the south, beginning of the Promenade.

**Proposal:** Based on our consultation with Alpine Bike Parks, RVMBA recommends machine building and hardscaping the flow trail. Part of the project would include dealing with the drainage and hillside cut. The final result would not only provide a recreational outlet, but would beautify Pioneer Way for all users. Alpine Bike Parks estimated that the Promenade could be built for \$4 per linear foot, or roughly \$8000. RVMBA would secure grants to cover the costs of the build.

**Process:** Walk the area with land managers  
Get bids from builders and hire contractor  
Secure grants and other funding  
Build flow trail

Estimated Build Time: 1-2 weeks. Estimated Build Cost: \$8000

**Final Outcomes/Benefits:** The Pioneer Promenade would:

- ⚙ Provide children of all abilities an easily accessed bike play area.
- ⚙ Allow parents to stroll along the youngest strider/balance bike aged kids, while the child developed bike skills.
- ⚙ Give older, pedal-bike kids, a bike play area to develop bike skills,
- ⚙ Provide kids with for car-free, parent-free access, for the development of independence
- ⚙ Reduce trips up the Ashland Loop Road to the Alice parking lot (and reduce congestion in the Alice lot itself).

In addition, the Promenade—particularly if integrated with a future East Lithia trail—would:

- ⚙ Give all riders descending from BTI and Jabberwocky a final, fun riding experience.
- ⚙ Provide a car-safe route back to town.
- ⚙ Give existing, pedestrian users an enhanced experience, as the existing drainage, fencing and other aspects would all be improved as part of the project.





# Acid Castles

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**Location:** Location: West Side Ashland Watershed

**Primary Issues Addressed:** Connectivity

**Secondary:** User Safety, Trail Sustainability, User Experience

**Current Status:** Recently, there has been a grassroots push to build an official trail from Granite Street to Acid Castles along Hitt Road. The current route most utilized by mountain bikes starts from the bottom of Hitt Road and travels below Acid Castles along city owned property. The trail exits along the TID and to the official Granite Street Exit, which is a staircase built along the exterior of large homes in the area.

**Assessment:** While RVMBA wholeheartedly supports the idea of more trails, hiking or biking, the current push to create a trail is being pitched as hiker only. RVMBA would support this designation IF a parallel bike only trail is created OR the current access utilized is preserved for bikes, including potential designation into the official trail system. Another option would be to design the new trail as open to Bikes Uphill only similar to Wonder/Lower Wonder. Any reduction or loss of access to Granite Street would be a major issue in terms of connectivity from the West Side Trails.

**Proposal:** RVMBA does not have a current proposal for a new trail in the area. RVMBA's request would be that our group be consulted regarding any changes to the current state of trails in the area, including the addition of a hike only trail. Mountain bike needs should be considered in the same light as hiker needs, and any proposal affecting mountain bikes in any way should involve input from RVMBA.

## **Outcomes/Benefits:**

- ⚙️ Preserving current trail status keeps a viable outlet for mountain bikers from Hitt Road, gaining an additional 600 feet of elevation drop from Hitt Road to Granite Street.
- ⚙️ Moving mountain bikers to the road through trail closures or re-designations would be unsafe, un-connective, and advocated apposed by RVMBA.
- ⚙️ A shared use or parallel trail project would create designated access to Acid Rocks, which RVMBA strongly supports.

# Private Landowner Opportunities

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Several properties adjacent to city and USFS lands exist that may lend significant opportunity to mountain bike trail building in the future. Some of these properties are currently for sale, while others could contain easements allowing access on key connective points throughout the watershed.

RVMBAs does not want to publicly release easement or land acquisition targets so as respect landowners who may or may not be willing to negotiate. However, RVMBAs has properties in mind and would like to engage in discussions with city officials, land owners, and land conservation organizations on various opportunities existing for revenue generation and addressing the aforementioned issues. While funds are tight in the city budget, other means such as grants could be implemented for bigger land purchases. For example, the Regional Trails Program grants exist for purchases such as this but must be completed by local, state, or federal governments (not RVMBAs.) Therefore, RVMBAs recommends the city look into hiring a grant writer or acquiring grant funds for a grant writer to tackle some of these larger ideas.

Adding to the current land owned by the city of Ashland may make staff and city leaders nervous in creating more responsibility. However, any easements or land purchases for the purpose of trail building would come along with signed maintenance agreements with RVMBAs and/or any other organization interested in helping maintain the land.

A current example of this idea can be found in Grants Pass. The city purchased roughly 450 acres of land for the purpose of creating hiking and mountain bike trails for tourists and citizens alike. While the city owns the land, the trail building, planning, maintenance etc. will be done by advocacy groups such as RVMBAs.



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# CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE CHANGES IN USE

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As mentioned above, trails are part of the environment and take on changes similar to any land feature over time. Trails change, evolve, devolve, and progress through seasonal and yearly cycles. Sometimes the changes are natural, and sometimes they are human caused.

An example of a human-caused change that has affected the land in Ashland would be the closure of two popular trails by a landowner in May 2020. The trail closures cut off a major route of traffic on the West Side of the watershed. This significantly reduced the amount of traffic riding on that side, and subsequently added to the large numbers on the East side. These types of closures have repercussions far beyond the trails themselves. Because of recent and past examples, and the ever-changing landscape of easements, property owners, city facilities, etc. it's important that there is room to change, add, and adapt this trails proposal as necessary.

To that end, RVMBA is not looking for an overall adaptation of this plan as written by Ashland. It is meant as a guide, which should take on new forms if cultural, ecological, or political conditions allow or require.

Each proposal is meant to be reviewed independently of the others to a) phase work in a manner that doesn't outreach the capacity of RVMBA and b) identify and prioritize projects as needed.

RVMBA will conduct an annual review of this trails plan each January. The plan will be reviewed and amended as necessary. Any changes will be submitted to the city of Ashland and all interested stakeholders. Using this model will allow us to account for changes we can't foresee (fire, land purchases, easements, etc) and won't get us locked in a plan that may not fit ten years from now.

This proposal is a living document that will set the standard for how trails are proposed from RVMBA long after this current board has moved on. It's our hope that the city and stakeholders accept it as such, and will join us in the collaboration and progressive thinking it will take to carry out this plan in creating an environmentally and ecologically resilient Sustainable Trails Plan for the City of Ashland.