



Status Report: Connected Communities

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship • 09.2021



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Project Background



Project Background

The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship (SBTS) is funded to develop a Trails Master Plan (TMP) for Connected Communities through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 68 Resilient Communities Grant Program. The TMP will create a vision for recreation-focused lifestyle through community investment, shared stewardship, economic opportunity and important new local jobs, all benefiting severely disadvantaged communities in northern California's Plumas, Sierra, Lassen and Butte Counties.

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship mission is building sustainable recreation-based communities through stewardship, job creation and world-class events. Providing quality outdoor experiences through trail construction and maintenance in the Lost Sierra.



Project Background

Planning and implementation of Connected Communities Project is being carried out through a **Master Challenge Cost Share Agreement (20-PA-11052000-076)** between the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship and the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Regional Office, along with Supplemental Project Agreements with the Tahoe and Plumas National Forests.



Project Background

- The U.S. Forest Service, [National Strategy for Sustainable Trail Systems](#) identifies the need to plan, maintain and construct trails with partnerships.
 - The U.S. Forest Service, [10-Year Sustainable Trail Stewardship Challenge](#) specifically identifies the need to complete Trail Master Plans on each Forest.
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Project Goals

Project Goals



- Plan for the NEPA, construction and maintenance of a world-class motorized multiple-use trail system, connecting the northern Sierra communities of: Truckee, Loyalton, Sierraville, Sierra City, Downieville, Quincy, Graeagle, Portola, Taylorsville, Greenville, Jonesville, Chester, Westwood, Susanville and Reno NV.
 - Identify public lands near communities where non-motorized trail access would create additional benefits. Having these trail systems connected to “Main Street” is ideal, as it brings visitors into town for restaurants, accommodations and services, and allows for convenient access by residents.
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Project Goals

- The main proposed route is being referred to as “**The Lost Sierra Route**”, similar to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and the John Muir Trail (JMT). But unlike the PCT and JMT, this new trans-Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range route allows for all dirt trail travelers including hikers, mountain bikers, motorcycle riders, equestrians, trail runners, hunters, fishermen, wildlife – creating [A Trail for Everyone](#). The Lost Sierra Route will be a trail for all to use that will link mountain communities together for recreational adventure and economic sustainability, for generations.
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Project Goals



- Build strategic alignments for [Shared Stewardship](#) and create employment, trainings, certifications and internships for regional adults and youth.
 - Attract Public-Private Partnerships and investment in public lands by engaging the businesses through an Adopt a Trail Program and sponsored maintenance.
 - Identify Special Use Permitting opportunities for operating Guide Outfitter businesses, overnight hut rentals and producing Recreation Events on public lands.
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Project Timeline

Public engagement and input through surveys and in-person and virtual meetings

SBTS Mapping Team generates data layers for concept routes and infrastructure planning

Ground Truth and Map route corridors (100' wide corridor)

09.20 - 03.21

03.21 -
04.21

05.21 -
06.21

07.21

09.21 -
12.23

Concept Planning
Teams analyze survey data and mapping results for each region

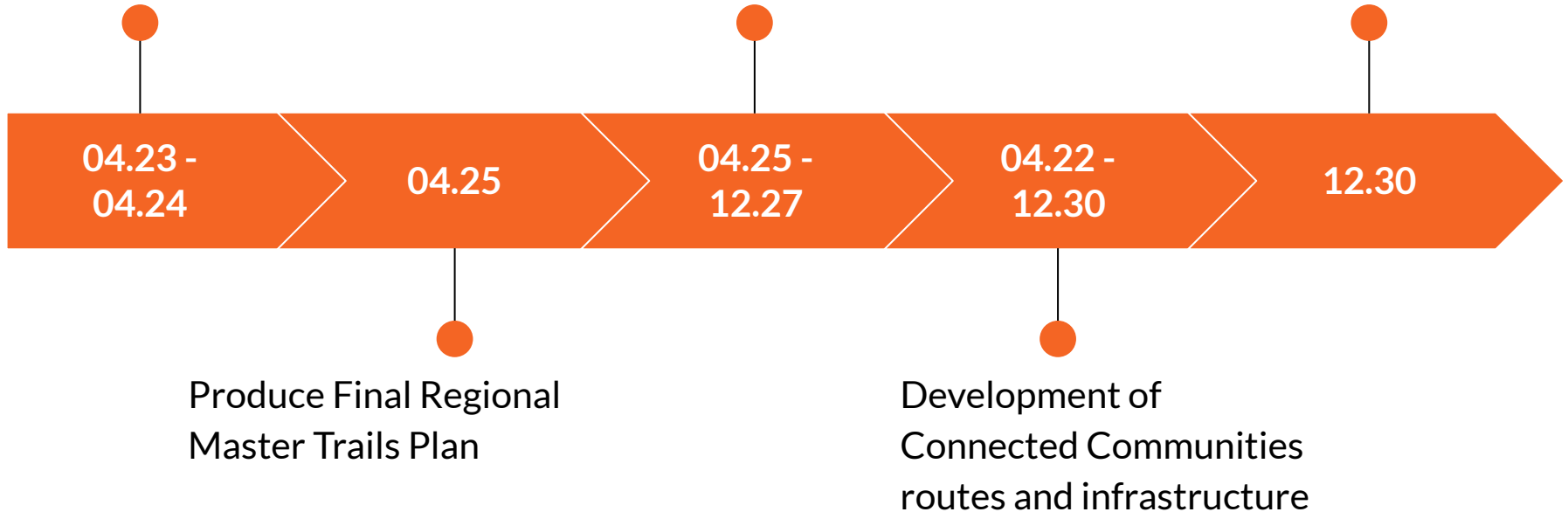
Recommend concept routes to National Forests for scoping and initial approval

Project Timeline

Trails Feasibility
Studies (Includes
community plans and
recreation zones)

NEPA/CEQA
documentation and
surveys

Development complete
for Connected
Communities routes
and infrastructure



Project Phases and Costs

Connected Communities



Connected Communities = \$40,271,560

(does not include Trailhead Infrastructure development)

Project accomplished in 4 phases:

- Resurrection (Phase 0) - \$TBD
 - *Rebuild of Trails and Infrastructure destroyed in Dixie Fire*
 - Planning (Phase 1) - \$465,000
 - NEPA/CEQA (Phase 2) - \$3,706,560
 - Development (Phase 3) - \$36,100,000
 - Maintenance (Phase 4) - \$1,425,600
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Building Connected Communities and The Lost Sierra Route

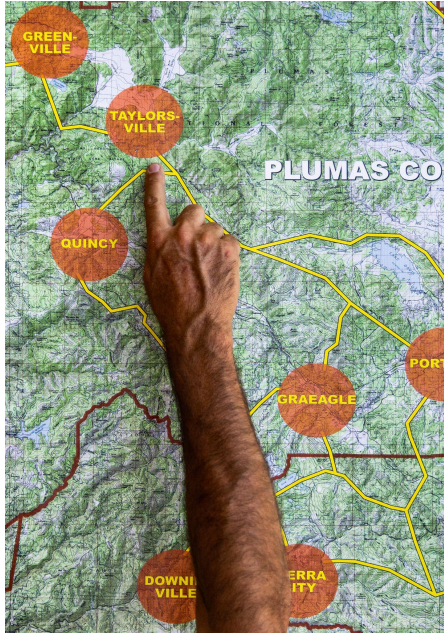
Cost **\$40.3m**

Funding

- State/ Federal grants \$19.7m
- 51% In-kind match \$20.5m
 - \$9.5m SBTS in-kind match
 - \$11m Philanthropy

Communications

Communications



- The Trails Master Plan (TMP) is being developed through community outreach planning and collaboration with residents, land managers and local government officials.
 - The TMP will provide land managers with quality and accurate public input in order to make informed decisions and prioritize projects based on the needs and desires of the community.
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Communications

- A Connected Communities project specific webpage, <https://sierratrails.org/connected-communities>, is built and available to the public. Page contains information about Connected Communities, lists ways for the public to participate in the project, links to contacts for inquiries and features a brief history about each of the towns that will be connected through the project.
 - Emails and phone calls were made directly to land managers, local organizations and residents about the project, and to schedule in-person and virtual meetings with their constituents.
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Communications

- SBTS developed a schedule for social media posts and paid advertisements (Facebook and Instagram) that showcased each region's unique character, solicited community input and announced locations for survey packet pick-up/drop-off. These social media posts had a link to our [Connected Communities](#) webpage and online survey with downloadable maps. Connected Communities partners shared this link with their social media followers and encouraged the public to participate in the survey process.
 - Facebook Reach = 65,285 / Instagram Impressions = 88,264
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Communications

- SBTS produced an informative film, [A Trail for Everyone](#), to help spread the word of the project and to engage a wider range of interest from the public. The film and film trailers were hosted on our SierraTrails.org website and on Youtube. Connected Communities partners, including Santa Cruz Bicycles, Patagonia, Sierra Nevada Brewing and Outside Magazine shared the film across their media channels and several online media outlets hosted the film on their site.
 - To date, the film has reached an estimated 1.4 million people around the world and counting.
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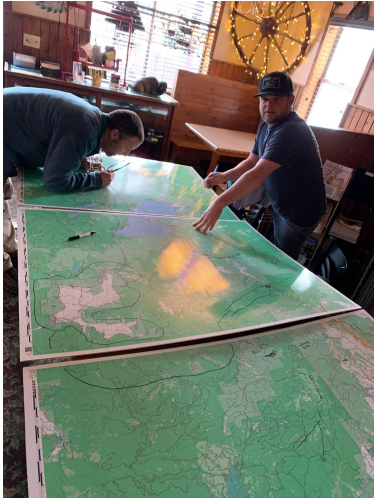
Public Engagement

Public Engagement



- More than 70 individual meetings have been held with residents, local organizations, land managers and government agency staff to inform about the scope of the project, answer any questions or concerns, and to gather input and direction.
 - Meeting attendees have included: Congressman Doug LaMalfa, Senator Brian Dahle, USDA Regional Forester Randy Moore, Forest Supervisors Deb Bumpus, Eli Ilano and Chris Carlton, and many other good people that are helping to support the project and their communities.
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Public Input

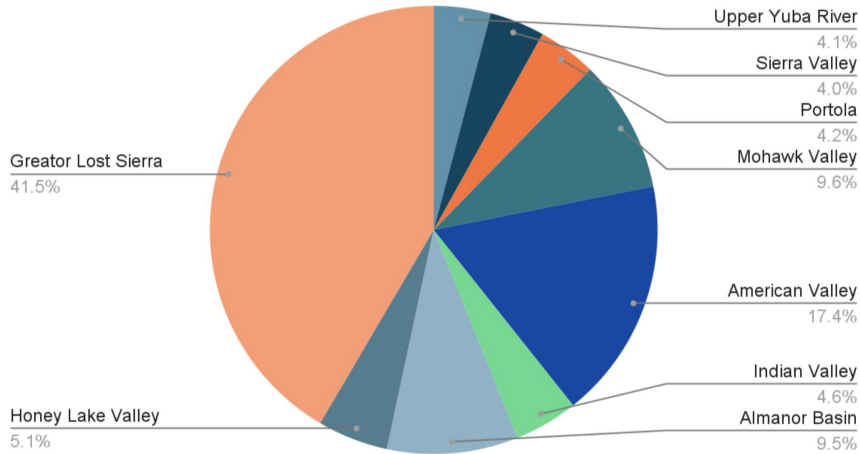


Public Input

- Online and paper surveys were made available to the public for input on the project from November 2020 to March 2021. Survey questions were developed in collaboration with partners and the surveys were available online and in print.
 - Information kiosks were placed in businesses throughout the project area to inform the public about the project.
 - Community Planning meetings were held in each of the Connected Communities subregions, large maps were used at so that participants were able to use dry-erase markers to draw concept routes and to identify points of interest and/or concern.
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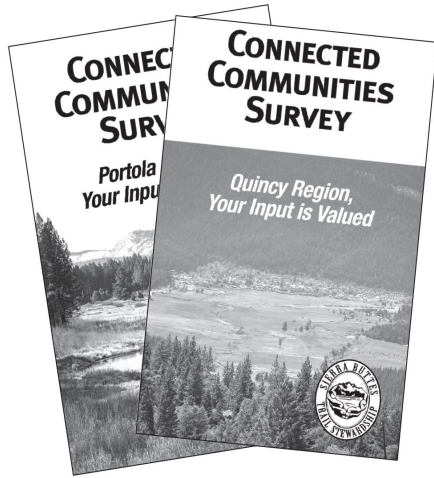
Public Input

Regional Distribution of Responses Across The Lost Sierra



1,179 survey responses were received, including 68% of which are local to the greater Lost Sierra and 32% of which are from out of the area and assumed to be previous residents or visitors. 467 responses were received from the connected communities regions.

Public Input



We surveyed 1,179 people. Here's how they responded:

- 99% feel accessible trails are important in their lives, including 80% rating trail access as **EXTREMELY** important.
 - Top 3 recreation preferences are walking/hiking, mountain biking and tent camping.
 - 73% of respondents prefer non motorized recreation.
 - 95% of respondents want more trails near their towns.
 - 96% want trails that connect to other nearby towns.
 - 2/3 are using trails more than once a week, and over 800 people wrote in their ideas for specific new trail routes.
 - 88% would volunteer to build & maintain new trails.
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Public Input

237 responses were received by retail/hospitality business owners. Here is how they responded:

- 87% believe that an in-town trail system with a Main Street trailhead would help attract customers to their business.
- 43% responded with specific trailhead location ideas that would benefit their business.
- Most business owners identified downtown parks, large parking areas, or vacant lots downtown that would bring trail users directly into towns for trail access.



Project Planning



Project Planning

For planning purposes, the project is divided up into 8- separate regions and Concept Planning Teams have been formed:

1. Indian Valley (Taylorsville, Greenville, Crescent Mills)
 2. Almanor (Chester, Westwood)
 3. Susanville (Janesville)
 4. Yuba River (Sierra City, Downieville, Goodyears Bar)
 5. Sierra Valley (Loyalton, Sierraville, Calpine, Chilcoot)
 6. Graeagle (Blairsden, Clio, Johnsville, Cromberg)
 7. Portola (Delleker, Beckwourth)
 8. American Valley (Quincy, East Quincy, Meadow Valley)
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Project Planning



Concept Planning Team members identified through:

- Survey input - indicated willingness to participate
- Contacted SBTS directly - phone or email
- Representative of local organization
- Known trail enthusiast and asked to participate
- Solicited by other community members to participate

Concept Planning Team members include:

- Community members and business owners (4-6qty)
 - Land managers (District representative)
 - County Supervisors (District representative)
 - Local organization representatives
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Project Planning

Concept Planning Teams meet virtually (Zoom and Basecamp) and in-person to:

- Analyze survey and mapping results for region
 - Establish priority areas and conceptually plan recreational access and trail opportunities.
 - Data collection, inventory and trail condition surveys.
 - Begin concept planning for:
 - Connected Communities motorized routes.
 - “Main Street” trailheads and trail infrastructure (parking, sanitation, huts).
 - Identify “Recreation Zones” near towns on public lands.
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Project Planning



Steps for Concept Planning:

Step 1 - Collect authoritative data for National Forest and Bureau of Land Management System Trails, Forest Road Motor Vehicle Use, Avoidance Areas (Heritage, Wildlife, Botany) and other project related data layers like parcel data from Counties.

Step 2 - Concept Planning Teams (CPT) meet to analyze survey data and mapping results for each region (based on local zip codes). Provides draft concepts to SBTS Mapping Team for recommendations.

Step 3 - SBTS Mapping Team generates data layers for concept routes and infrastructure planning with recommendations.

Project Planning



Step 4 - CPT adjustments/ approval of SBTS Mapping Team recommendations.

Step 5 - SBTS presents recommended concepts to the land manager for scoping (Heritage, Wildlife, Botany, Hydrology, Recreation) and initial approval of routes (100' wide corridor).

← WE ARE
HERE

Step 6 - Ground Truth and map route corridors.

Step 7 - Revisit and share Ground Truth findings (changes/challenges) with CPT and land managers.

Step 8 - Land manager approval of routes.

Step 9 - Generate Trail Feasibility Studies, for each region, to include in Trails Master Plan.

Project Planning



Step 10 - Land manager, County and City Board approval and adoption of Connected Communities Trails Master Plan (composed of 8 regional Feasibility Studies).

Step 11 - Collaboratively set priorities, define roles and responsibilities, and create timelines for completing: NEPA, restoration, development, assessments and maintenance.

Connected Communities Collaborative Project Partners

Connected Communities Collaborative

- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- US Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region 5
- Tahoe National Forest
- Lassen National Forest
- Plumas National Forest
- Plumas County Board of Supervisors
- Plumas County Dept. Public Works
- City of Portola
- Sierra County Board of Supervisors
- City of Loyalton
- Lassen County Board of Supervisors
- City of Susanville
- Butte County Board of Supervisors
- Congressional Representative Doug LaMalfa
- California State Senator Brian Dahle
- California State Assemblywoman Megan Dahle
- California Department of Parks & Recreation
- Feather River Land Trust
- Sierra County Land Trust
- Lassen Land & Trails Trust
- Truckee Donner Land Trust
- Northern California Regional Land Trust
- Friends of Plumas Wilderness
- Mountain Meadows Conservancy
- Feather River Tourism Association
- Lost Sierra Chamber of Commerce
- Lake Almanor Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lassen County Chamber of Commerce



Connected Communities is supported by these agencies, counties and towns.

Connected Communities Collaborative

- Center for Economic Development, CSU Chico
- Sierra Business Council
- Plumas Corporation
- State of Nevada, Off-Highway Vehicle Program
- Rotary- Portola, Quincy, Susanville, Indian Valley
- Sierra County Visitors Bureau
- Pacific Crest Trail Association
- Nevada County Woods Riders
- Truckee Dirt Riders
- Reno Area Dirt Riders
- Chico Velo
- Susanville Area Bicycle Association
- Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association
- Truckee Trails Foundation
- International Mountain Bicycling Association
- Santa Cruz Bicycles
- Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
- Patagonia
- Clif Bar
- Shimano
- Fox Shox
- Wilderness Trail Bikes
- Paul Components
- REI Co-op
- Klean Kanteen
- Voler
- Camp Chef
- Nakoma Resort



Connected Communities is supported by these agencies, counties and towns.



Photos provided by Ken Etzel and SBTS

MORE INFORMATION:

SierraTrails.org

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