

Project FAQ's



How will the trail be built?

After professional design, SCLT will use small trail crews over the course of several years to construct the trails. Crews will primarily use hand tools and other specifically designed equipment.

Will heavy machinery (i.e. bull dozers, bobcats, excavators et al) be used for trail construction?

No. With a trail width between 18- 36 inches, heavy machinery is unnecessary and damaging.

Will trees be clear-cut to construct the trails?

No. SCLT will work with a professional trail designer to minimize the number of trees (if any) that would be thinned to allow for the best overall design of the trail.

How will erosion be addressed, specifically for trail sections through the burn area?

SCLT is relying on professional trail designers (<https://www.imba.com/trail-solutions>) to ensure that the trails are built to minimize long-term maintenance, directly addressing erosion as part of this approach. The most recent version has significantly less trail traveling through the burn area.

Who will provide construction oversight and project management?

SCLT will work with either a professional trail contractor or an engineering firm to oversee trail construction per the IMBA trail design (IMBA most recently designed trails for WY State Parks).

Who will be responsible for maintaining the trail once it is constructed?

SCLT will take on primary trail maintenance and for the trail. As an organization, SCLT is focused on long-term sustainability and will create a trail maintenance fund to cover anticipated maintenance costs into the future. We will also engage our volunteers, as well as user groups (equestrian, biking, hiking) to assist with maintenance on a regular and as-needed basis.

Will the trail be visible from private land in the area and/or public roads leading to Red Grade?

We will seek to reduce and limit visibility of the physical trail from homes and cabins in the area during our design process. It is our goal that residents, especially in the vicinity of State and BLM lands, will not physically see the trail from their properties.

How will trail access be controlled and motorized use prevented on the trail?

Trailheads will include fencing in the vicinity, with limited entry gate and walk-through locations, which will restrict any motorized vehicle wider than 24 inches. For motorized vehicles under 24 inches in width, SCLT will work to design features that discourage and limit the potential for motorized use.

Will trail users be able to access public trail from private roads?

No. The trail will be roughly ¼ mile from the nearest private road, and not visible from that road. SCLT will work with landowners to create aesthetic signage regarding private subdivision roads.

What is planned for the existing or new parking areas/trailheads?

SCLT anticipates enhancing existing parking areas to improve safety, visibility, drainage, and efficiency of parking. The single proposed new parking area located on Poverty Flats (USFS) will be designed to USFS standards.

How will law enforcement address potential issues associated with trail use and parking areas?

SCLT understands that there are current issues with existing parking areas. We are committed to working with law enforcement and vicinity landowners to put together a multi-pronged strategy to address these issues going forward. Concerning trail use, SCLT's volunteer Trail Stewards will alert SCLT to maintenance, trash, and similar issues as they currently do for the Soldier Ridge Trail. SCLT anticipates including surveillance technologies when possible for trailhead parking areas.

What will be done to discourage trespassing on adjacent lands?

While not very frequent, we have heard that trespassing on adjacent lands has and does occur, usually in relation to hunting. SCLT has already revised trail locations to further buffer private land from the trail to discourage trespassing. Trails will have clear signage to indicate the public/private lands asking users to respect these boundaries by staying on the trail. Ultimately, hunting on public lands in this area will continue, and with that, infrequent trespassing, which would occur regardless of this project.

Why not just use Red Grade road for non-motorized recreation?

Red Grade road is a highly traveled motorized route used primarily to access the Bighorn National Forest. While early morning and certain seasons may provide for an enjoyable non-motorized experience, spring, summer, and fall typically include steady traffic, dust, and noise, which discourages the majority of hikers, bikers, and equestrians from using the road due to safety concerns.

Why not just drive a bit further and access hiking trails on USFS?

While there are many gravel roads nearby in the Bighorn National Forest, none come close to what we are proposing with this project in terms of ease of access, looping options, uses, and terrain.

Why is this limited to non-motorized users? What's the problem with motorized uses?

SCLT's mission is split between conservation, recreation, and historic preservation. Our Board believes that limited, non-motorized recreation has the least impact on the land, making it the most conducive to conservation. SCLT has no issue with motorized uses and affirms the value of motorized recreation to our local economy and communities. This project in no way curtails legal motorized use in the project vicinity. We hope that the project results in a reduction of the number of non-motorized users on motorized trails and roads in the area, reducing potential conflicts and adding to overall safety of both non-motorized and motorized recreationists.

Will the new trails limit hunting on public land in the vicinity?

SCLT will likely complete a proposal to the Game and Fish and Wyoming State Lands Department that would restrict hunting to archery only for the State land in this area. All other public lands would be unaffected. Trail signage would alert trail users to use caution during hunting season, as hunting will take place in the area.

How does SCLT address our mission themes of conservation vs. recreation with this project?

SCLT believes that the best way to engage future generations to value landscape scale conservation is to get them outside to experience the beauty of our area. The following quote by Baba Dioum captures this perfectly - "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." We realize that the Red Grade Trails system will come with an impact to these public lands. However, the limited impact of a single-track, natural surface trail that utilizes many existing footpaths and parking areas is well worth the connection that will be made between people and this landscape.

For general information about SCLT, please visit our website at www.sheridanclt.org