



Sheridan  
Community  
LAND TRUST  
Spring 2021



Spring has sprung and because of your kindness, we're

**GROWING** **SOMETHING**  
**SPECIAL IN**  
**SHERIDAN COUNTY**

# All trails lead to your next Bighorns adventure!

With winter in the books and the “Grand Greening” of our beautiful Bighorns backyard beginning, it’s officially trail building time.

This year, SCLT will bring our brand of accessible, sustainable and fun single-track trail to an area of our community that had not had any before heading up the mountain to connect people with some truly breathtaking places at Red Grade Trails.

Before he hopped on the mini ex, SCLT Trail Builder/Construction Supervisor Ronnie Wagner took some time to talk about what will be the biggest build season we’ve undertaken.

## *A Wallop of a trail*

This season’s first new trail is sure to pack a Wallop. That’s because we’re building north Sheridan’s first natural-surface trail in Malcolm Wallop Park.

“It’s a great spot for beginner access. You’ll be able to get out of your car and you’re right on single track,” Ronnie said of a trail he sees as a perfect entry for new bikers while also giving walkers and runners a fun alternative to concrete.

The trail will incorporate low grades as it winds its way for 1.3 miles through floodplain forest, open grassland, and Goose Creek while also traveling up a small hill for a scenic view of Malcolm Wallop Park and the North Gateway Conservation Easement within.

The trail will connect directly to existing Sheridan Pathways so you don’t have to travel specifically to Wallop Park to enjoy it. Ronnie said he also plans to include a few features for advanced cyclists, though, those features can be easily bypassed by any visitor.

“It’s more natural and good a break from the paved pathways,” he concluded.





Above: SCLT Trail Builder/Construction Supervisor Ronnie Wagner snapped this picture as he and Tami and Brad scouted trail routes between Poverty Flats and Bear Gulch last summer. They've laid out routes that take visitors to dramatic lookouts of the Goose Valley and prairie below within a half mile of the trailhead. Left: SCLT board member Jim Sorenson scouts new trail routes near Bear Gulch during wildflower season. We can't wait to help you explore this beautiful part of our Bighorns backyard!

### ***From Poverty Flats to Bear Gulch***

As soon as the mountain's melted, some of our most exciting work will commence with an ambitious expansion of Red Grade Trails.

By summer's end, about 10 miles of shared-use trail with two trailheads and parking areas that will connect the gorgeous terrain of Poverty Flats to Bear Gulch.

But don't let the distance fool you. Within a half mile of your vehicle, you'll find sweeping overlooks of Goose Valley below.

"They will be a super, natural experience," Ronnie relayed.

Though his description of the trails that are planned wasn't intended to evoke the ethereal, a day spent traveling through dense pine, alongside sheer sandstone walls and through hidden wildflower meadows is sure to raise the spirit of anyone who visits.

Rather, Ronnie explained how he'll be utilizing material sourced from the mountain to create trails that are easier to maintain and more fun to use. For example, he said rock armoring will

replace wooden boardwalks, which, over time, require more time and money to maintain.

How will so much work be done in so little time? Ronnie will be assisted by a group of AmeriCorps members who, through a partnership with Antelope Butte Foundation, split time between teaching and creating outdoor recreation opportunities. All the while, Gumption Trail Works will be putting their skills to work so most of the Red Grade Trails expansion can be completed within one build season.

All of this is possible only because of such tremendous community support. That support has Ronnie excited to share the gift of the outdoors with everyone who lives, works, plays and stays in Sheridan County.

"I'm stoked by all of the support in our community. Trail use has really taken off," he relayed and expressed his appreciation for so many helpful friends. "We've seen substantial growth in people wanting to help and 'phantom volunteers' taking care of downed trees and other little things. I'm thankful for all of those people because it helps keep me on the machine building trail for you."



## What will you Discover?

In 2020, SCLT created the Discovery Sessions to connect our community with nature, outdoor recreation, history and much more. ***Our goal: help people learn a new outdoor skill or something new about Sheridan County.***

More than 300 people discovered something new by joining us at one of a dozen Discovery Sessions. ***Through the first three months of 2021 alone, 285 people have discovered*** new skills through avalanche training and caving workshops, outdoor fun sledding, and the history of southeastern Sheridan County. And we had a hoot learning all about owls!

We know even more people will join us to discover

a new outdoor skill or something new about Sheridan County because we've got a whole lot of Discovery Sessions on tap for the rest of 2021. We will Hike Into History and have a Bring Your Own Horse Trailride on Soldier Ridge and Kicking Horse Trail. We'll paddle our streams, bike our trails, and even spend time with the pets from Sheridan's Dog and Cat Shelter for an adoption event on our community trails.

We're also excited to work with our friends at Science Kids for this summer's Unplug with Discovery Sessions - all free family fun!

The only question left is this: What will you discover? Find out today at [sheridanclt.org/events](http://sheridanclt.org/events).





## Watershed health: more than a drop in the bucket

Two years ago, much of Sheridan County experienced historic flooding. Last year, many streams were little more than a trickle. No one yet knows what this year will bring, but we do know that water will remain as important to life in Sheridan County as it has since the Bighorns formed and gave rise to our shortgrass prairie.

It is into this unknown and uncertain future SCLT embarks as we create a watershed health program that will help build local resiliency by working with Sheridan County residents and landowners on ways to help sustain local water for all of the people, ranches, plants and animals whose lives it nourishes.

What does that mean? Well, that depends on who you ask. It might mean a watering hub that keeps livestock and their manure away from stream banks. It might mean sprinkler system assessments for your home. It might mean willow plantings to shade and cool water for fish or beaver dam analogs to recharge shallow aquifers so there's more water stream at the height of summer when water's needed most.

Through December, Maggie DeFosse, our Watershed Health AmeriCorps, will be collecting information about every aspect of our watersheds so we can learn what opportunities may be the most effective ways to address the challenges unique to each watershed. She's also interviewing anyone who uses water who wants to talk with her because we know tools work best when they're built with the people who will use them in mind.

Put another way, Maggie's creating the toolbox that our next watershed health teammate can deploy in any corner of the county. By working together with people from all corners of Sheridan County, we can build on successes like the Tongue River Initiative so that our watersheds and the water that flows through them are resilient and sustaining no matter what the future brings.

Not overnight, but over time. That's watershed health - and it's more than a drop in the bucket.

You can help watershed health today. Email Maggie at [scltwaterintern@sheridanclt.org](mailto:scltwaterintern@sheridanclt.org) or call our office at (307) 673-4702.



Wood block pavement was strewn on Main Street after the Goose Creek flood in 1923. SCLT's Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour explores how residents of the valley have interacted with the stream through time. Photo courtesy Wyoming Room Collection, The Wyoming Room Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library.

## A 'watershed moment' for Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour

Rarely is the phrase “watershed moment” taken as anything other than metaphor. However, in September of 1923, the people of Sheridan experienced a literal watershed moment as a swollen Goose Creek breached its banks - swamping the town and forever changing the way the community interacted with its life-sustaining waterway.

Though it was this fall deluge that lifted and loosed Main Street's wood block pavement that singularly stands out in Sheridan's history, recurring floods were a fact of life for all who called the Goose Valley home.

SCLT Historical Educator Carrie Edinger has explored how the denizens of the valley adapted to the ever-changing stream in the Big Goose Creek Historical Tour.

“We can explore different perspectives on how people have interacted with an important natural

resource through time,” Carrie explained.

Last fall, Carrie debuted the Big Goose Creek Walking Tour as part of Trailfest. SCLT also partnered with Downtown Sheridan Association to include four Big Goose sites on its Historic Downtown Walking Tour available through TravelStories.

However, like the waters of the swollen Goose, there were too many fascinating stories of the valley's past to contain in those four sites alone.

So, Carrie set about creating more ways people can connect with the special stories of our community's past so they're not forgotten in the future.

That led to the Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour - an expanded version of the walking tour that will be available anytime anywhere with a connected device.



Little Goose Multimedia kindly donated videography and editing services to make the Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour a reality far sooner than it otherwise would. Above: Hesid Brandow and Kevin Knapp collect video in Whitney Commons Park for the tour site covering Mr. Edward A. Whitney.

“The Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour gives our community members an opportunity to learn about the history of this area from the comfort of home,” Carrie explained.

On May 6, the Big Goose Creek Virtual Tour will debut in an SCLT Discovery Session. Afterwards, you will be able to access it on our website. You can also schedule an in-person tour for families, groups, school classes, class reunions and more.

The expanded tour expounds upon Goose’s rerouting, especially around the Lewis Street bridge, features original homes still standing on Marion Street, and details the contributions of Mr. Edward A. Whitney.

The tour is narrated by Bill Yellowtail, who helped Carrie dive deep on how Plains Indians Tribes utilized the valley and incorporates many stories of Crow heritage.

However, a spring debut would not have been possible without the kindness of Little Goose Multimedia who have spent much of the winter working with Carrie to collect and edit video that community members will enjoy for years to come.

“Without Little Goose Multimedia, it wouldn’t be ready until at least the fall,” Carrie said.

Volunteering to help with a project that makes history more accessible to community members was appealing for Little Goose Multimedia.

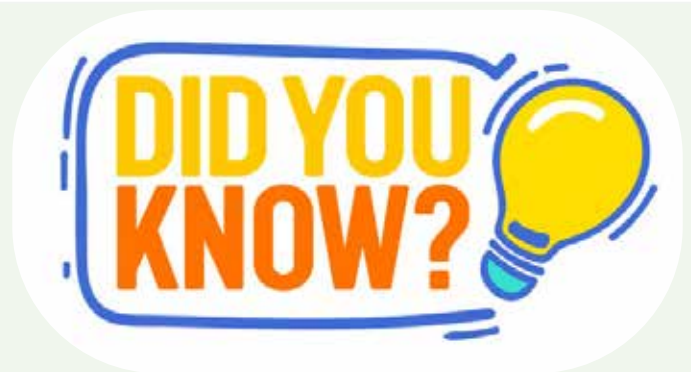
“This project is for everyone who has Sheridan living in their hearts even if they don’t live in Sheridan,” Hesid Brandow mused.

And that, too, is another watershed moment in Goose Valley.

## The age for minimum retirement account distributions has changed

That’s right! With Traditional or Roth IRAs, you must now take your first required distribution for the year in which you turn 72 (70 1/2 before Jan. 1, 2020). By donating part of your retirement account to SCLT you can easily create a legacy for what you love

about our community. Maybe that’s getting a trail to a beautiful mountain lookout? Helping grandparents and grandkids get outdoors together. Ensuring your family’s hard work on your land continues for generations to come. Or simply telling stories about the people of our past? We can help you create a legacy for what you love best. To learn how, contact Brad today: [director@sheridanclt.org](mailto:director@sheridanclt.org) / (307) 673-4702.





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*Sheridan Community Land Trust works to preserve our heritage of open spaces, healthy rivers and creeks, working ranches, wildlife habitat and vibrant history, while expanding non-motorized recreation opportunities to connect people with the places they love.*

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Saturday, June 5 @ 2:30 pm

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## You're invited to Trailfest 2021 June 4-5!

That's right! Trailfest 2021 is back and better than ever. We're thankful Bighorn Mountain Radio Network has again joined us to share so many ways you can enjoy community trails.

The fun begins Friday night in Kendrick Park with popcorn and "Ghostbusters" on the big screen. On Saturday, we'll have a blast making art, paddling, fishing and yoga. There will be a 5K and a kids raffle race, scavenger hunt, nature hikes, inflatables, live music, food and drink, not to mention the 650 folks we can cheer in The Dead Swede gravel bike races. We've also had kind friends pledge a \$2,000 Trailfest Match, so stop by and help raise \$4,000 to maintain our community trails.

Best of all - Trailfest is FREE fun for everyone!

**Can you help at an activity station?** Or setup? If so, please contact Carrie Edinger: [history@sheridanclt.org](mailto:history@sheridanclt.org) / (307)-673-4702. **See the full schedule at [sheridanclt.org](http://sheridanclt.org)**