

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Helps Open 20 New Trail Miles in Idaho

http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/wherewework/westernalaskahawaii/news/wereg_news_milwaukeeeroad.html#

The Milwaukee Road Corridor has the potential to become the longest rail-trail in the entire country, and this November, it will be 20 miles closer to that dream. On the former rail corridor that once ran from the heart of Chicago to the Washington coastline, 20 new miles of trail have been opened in the Northern Idaho panhandle. The area has become a national destination for cycling and rail-trail enthusiasts, and the additional mileage will compliment the state's already celebrated rail-trails, connecting to the 15-mile Route of the Hiawatha (which was also built on the Milwaukee Road Corridor) and the 72-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes.

The new trail segment on the Milwaukee Road Corridor is largely owed to Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's (RTC) partnership with **Friends of the Coeur d'Alene Trails** (FCDT), an advocacy group based in Wallace, Idaho. RTC has helped bring resources to the effort, and FCDT has provided local guidance and many hours of labor to post signs officially opening the trail for use. Nine of the 20 new miles connect the Route of the Hiawatha with the town of Avery. The newly opened trail will provide new economic development opportunities in Avery catering to touring cyclists.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is aiming to build on the region's success, and is partnering with other groups to open additional miles of trail along the Milwaukee Road corridor. Partners include the Coeur D'Alene Tribe and advocates along both the Washington and Montana borders. As momentum and awareness continue to grow for this project, we look forward to sharing future successes of trail development in the inland Northwest.

The Milwaukee Road railroad line once ran from Chicago and traced a path through Idaho to reach Puget Sound, Wash. Tens of thousands of lives were deeply influenced by the corridor—travelers sought the beauty of the northwest canvas, people made a living off the railroad and its business, and families settled in the towns along its path. Today, the Milwaukee Road Corridor holds immense potential to become a long-distance multi-use trail linking several Pacific Northwest states. Already built on the corridor is the statewide, 113-mile John Wayne Pioneer Trail in Washington, and the nine-mile Kim Williams Nature Trail in Montana.