

National Recreation Trail
Department of the Interior
Application for Designation

Trail Name: **Drinking Horse Mountain**

Trail Location: **Trailhead located at the Bozeman Fish Technology Center, 4 miles east of Bozeman, Montana along Bridger Canyon Road 86.**

Directions to Trail: **From Main Street in downtown Bozeman, head north on North Rouse Avenue (State Route 86), 4.1 miles to the signed Bozeman Fish Technology Center access road on the right. The trailhead parking lot is to the left (north) of the access road approximately 200 feet east of the access road junction with Bridger Canyon Road. The trail begins on the south side of the access road directly across from the parking area.**

Lat. / Long. of trailhead(s) (if available): **Parking Lot 110° 58' 48.4" W Summit 110° 58' 16.93"**
W 45° 42' 29.28" N 45° 42'
20.68" N

Length of trail open to public use: **2.2** miles

City(ies)/County(ies)/Township(s) crossed by the trail: **Gallatin County**

State(s): **Montana**

U.S. Congressional District(s): **Montana**

Trail Managing Agency or Organization: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Name of Trail Managing Agency or Organization: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Trail Manager's Name: **Robert Muth**

Title/Position: **Director of the Bozeman Fish Technology Center**

Mailing Address: **4050 Bridger Canyon Road**

City, State, Zip code: **Bozeman, Montana, 59715**

Street Address for FedEx Delivery (if different from Mailing Address):

City, State, Zip code:

Phone number: **(406)587-9265**

Fax number: **(406) 586-5942**

Email address: **Robert_Muth@fws.gov**

Website address: **bozemanfishtech.fws.gov**

Public Information Contact: **Same as above**

Name and address to appear on the letter from the Secretary of the Interior if the trail is designated: **Same as above**

Short Description of Trail: **The 2.2 mile figure-eight loop trail climbs 700 feet from Bridger Creek through diverse vegetation and terrain, to the summit of Drinking Horse Mountain. A unique covered bridge serves as a beautiful gateway for the trail and eight memorial benches and one memorial picnic table offer scenic vistas of the Gallatin Valley.**

Long Description of Trail: **The dream of building the Drinking Horse Mountain Trail began in 2001 when the White family generously donated a 40-acre parcel of land including the top of the mountain to the USFWS. The Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT), a local non-profit, partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the USFWS to create the trail. Over the course of 8 years, GVLT spearheaded efforts to design, permit, fund, and construct the trail, including a unique bridge crossing Bridger Creek below the mountain. The trail was opened to the public in September 2008 and the bridge was completed in 2009, thanks to the tremendous support and generosity of many local businesses, private donors, and volunteers from the Bozeman area who contributed over \$220,000 of cash and in-kind donations.**

Open to the public for only a little over a year, the trail is quickly becoming one of the most popular trails in the Gallatin Valley thanks to its location within a 5 minute drive of downtown Bozeman, its easy access and the high quality experience it provides in a conveniently moderate distance. From willows and cottonwoods along Bridger Creek, to rocky outcrops, evergreen forest, and wildflower decorated hillsides, the Drinking Horse Mountain Trail offers great variety in a 2.2 mile figure-eight loop. The variety of vegetation provides a great opportunity for wildlife viewing, bird watching, and the study of nature. The figure-eight trail design has a steep route for those who desire more intense aerobic exercise and an easier path for those who seek a leisurely stroll. Dogs often bring their best human friends for some exercise and are pleased to find two dog sanitation stations for their convenience and plenty of cold water to drink in Bridger Creek. Two information kiosks are located along the trail to provide etiquette information and maps to help orient new users to the trail. Eight memorial benches and one picnic table made from recycled plastic are located along the trail and offer a well deserved respite with spectacular views of the Gallatin Valley, Bridger Canyon, and surrounding mountain ranges.

Visitors enjoy Bridger Creek from the new Kevin Mundy Memorial Bridge, 0.2 miles from the trailhead. All of the design, engineering, abutments, and many of the materials for this unique covered bridge were donated by local businesses. The bridge was built on site by local craftsmen, from Montana timber that was milled in the Gallatin Valley. Most of the cash funding for the bridge was raised by Mountain Sky Guest Ranch and friends and family of Kevin Mundy, a Bozeman native who died tragically in 2005 at the age of 26. This cash funding was supplemented with many thousands of dollars of in-kind donations from local businesses. The covered bridge is designed with bench seating for visitors to enjoy Bridger Creek's sights and sounds, and to provide an outdoor classroom for the Montana Outdoor Science School (MOSS). MOSS programs promote awareness and appreciation of the natural world and serve over 8,000 children and adults every year from their headquarters at the USFWS Bozeman Fish Technology Center. The bridge and an adjacent nature trail loop are accessible for persons with disabilities, and future plans include several parking spaces near the bridge for disabled users.

The Drinking Horse Mountain Trail provides an alternative destination to the popular and often crowded "Foothills" and "M" trails which are administered by the U.S. Forest Service and located directly across Bridger Canyon Road. Parking at the trailhead for these trails often overflows onto the road and one of the goals of creating the Drinking Horse Mountain Trail was to spread out this heavy use.

An effort is now underway to build a paved bike/pedestrian path along Bridger Drive to provide a safe way for bicyclists and pedestrians to reach these two very popular trailheads. Our community's long term dream is to have a trail that connects Bozeman's Main Street to the Bridger Mountains to the north and the Gallatin Range to the south. Known as the "Main Street to the Mountains" trail system, Bozeman's existing network of urban trails recently exceeded 50 miles and now reaches to within just over a mile of the Drinking Horse Mountain trailhead. Designation of the Drinking Horse Mountain Trail as a National Recreational Trail will help lay the groundwork to achieve the "Main Street to the Mountains" vision.

It is also important to note that the Drinking Horse Mountain trailhead is less than a 20 minute drive from the Gallatin Field Airport, which serves Bozeman, Big Sky Southwest Montana and Yellowstone National Park. National Recreational Trail designation will help us promote this great new recreational resource to the thousands of visitors who come to our gateway community every year.

Trail Statistics

Designation

Please put an "X" next to all that apply.

- None/Unknown
- Millennium Trail
- Other National Designation (Please list.)

- State or local designations (Please list.)

Type

Please put an "X" next to all that apply.

- Greenway
- Rail-trail
- Backcountry
- Urban trail/bikeway
- Snow trail
- Water trail
- Nature or interpretive trail
- Equestrian trail
- Other (Please list)

Uses and Activities

Please mark "X" for Allowed.

Trail Uses

- Bicycling (on pavement)
- Bicycling-Mountain (off pavement)
- Boating-Motorized
- Boating-Non-motorized:
 - Canoeing
 - Kayaking
 - Rafting
 - Sailing
- Camping
- Camping-Backpacking
- Dogs-Mushing
- Dogs-On Leash
- Dogs-Off Leash

- Equestrian-Riding
- Equestrian-Pack Trips
- Equestrian-Other Stock
- Motorized Vehicles-ATV Riding
- Motorized Vehicles-Four-wheel drive
- Motorized Vehicles-Motorcycling
- Motorized Vehicles-OHV Driving
- Motorized Vehicles-Snowmobiling
- Pedestrian-Caving
- Pedestrian-Hiking/Walking/Running
- Roller/Inline Skating
- Skateboarding
- Snow-Skiing, Cross Country
- Snow-Snowshoeing
- Swimming
- Swimming-Diving/Snorkeling

Other related activities

- Hang Gliding
- Hunting (any)
- Hunting-Archery
- Hunting-Big Game
- Hunting-Bird
- Hunting-Small Game
- Ice Skating
- Land Sailing
- Rock Climbing

- Rockhounding
- Snow-Skiing, Downhill
- Snow-Snow Play, General
- Snow-Snowboarding
- Sand Sailing
- Wildlife Watch – Birds
- Wildlife Watching – Animals
- Other (Please list.)

Trail Features

Loop trail? Yes No
Lowest elevation: 4,840 feet
Highest elevation: 5,539 feet
Average width of tread or beaten path 48 inches
Minimum width of tread or beaten path 36 inches
Average grade of trail 10 %
Maximum grade of trail 30 %
Average cross-slope 5 %

Is user accessibility information available?
 Yes No
If yes, in what format:
 trailhead signage brochure web site
 other
Additional information:

Primary and Additional Surface Material

Please put an "X" next to all that apply. Place the letter "P" next to the material that is the primary surface of the trail.

Asphalt
 Boardwalk
 Bituminous Treatment
 Bricks
 Concrete
 Crushed Rock, Compacted
 Grass or Vegetation
 Gravel
 Paver Blocks
 Puncheon

Rock, Smooth
 Sand
 Snow or Ice
 Soil
 Soil, Compacted
 Soil with Stabilizer
 Water, Moving
 Water, Still
 Wood Chips
 Wood, Running Plank

Rock, Boulders

Open Dates

Open all year
 Open from _____ to _____

Times of Operation

Open 24 hours
 Open from _____ to _____

Seasonal Closures

Please indicate dates and reason for closure.

Fees

Admission Yes **No** amount \$ _____
Parking fees Yes **No** amount \$ _____
Permit required Yes **No** amount \$ _____

Certification for Public Use

I hereby certify that: (1) I am duly authorized to represent the agency, organization or individual officially responsible for permitting trail use on this trail; (2) the trail is in existence and will be available for public use, to the best of my knowledge, for at least 10 consecutive years after designation; (3) the trail has been designed, constructed, and is maintained according to best management practices in keeping with the anticipated use(s); (4) the trail is in compliance with applicable land use plans and environmental laws; and (5) all affected land and water owners, public or private, have been notified and have given their written consent to this application. If this trail becomes permanently closed to public use, we will immediately notify the Department of the Interior's National Recreation Trail Coordinator.



Applicant Signature:

Acting Director

Agency or Organization: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Address: **Bozeman Fish Technology Center
4050 Bridger Canyon Road
Bozeman, Montana, 59715**

Phone and e-mail: **(406)587-9265, Robert_Muth@fws.gov**

Date of signature: **October 29, 2009**