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July 12, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Pocatello, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Bannock County Seek Community Input on Trail Vision

The City of Pocatello, US Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and Bannock County are looking for the community's feedback and participation on trail accessibility, sustainability, and diversity. The goal is to protect natural and cultural resources, promote safety, and provide users with opportunities for solitude and stewardship.

After meeting with ten focus groups and gathering over 1,100 responses from a 2021 trail survey, the City of Pocatello found most people enjoy the local trails for many reasons. These include ease of access, proximity, views, beauty, solitude, wildlife, and a variety of experiences they provide.

The survey also revealed some primary trail system issues like trail maintenance, trailhead restrooms, security, trash, trail user education, trail safety, and too few authorized trails. Additionally, the proliferation of user-created trails is considered problematic for the environment, trail maintenance, redundancy, and clarity of authorized trail use.

Based on the input from the survey, the City along with a group of stakeholders who enjoy the outdoors developed a draft vision for local trails and an app for assessing how well trails match this vision.

The City, USFS, BLM, IDFG, and Bannock County seek public input on this vision and strategies. With the new app, the community can assess trails for any needed improvements. Comments would help evaluate existing authorized trails, enable users to assess user-created social trails for potential inclusion into the system as authorized trails, and help close trails that do not fit into the trail system vision.

Trails can be assessed anonymously through the Survey123 app (which allows for offline data entry) or on the internet. All data from this assessment effort will be shared publicly in real-time. Additionally, the results will be shared with the community in the fall once a compiled, prioritized list of improvement projects, has been created to reflect an official regional trail map for agency review and adoption.

The City along with USFS, BLM, IDFG, and Bannock County hope the community-based trails working group will continue past this initial effort to assist with ongoing trail education, stewardship, assessment, and maintenance.

The City and organizers are excited about this opportunity to directly involve the local community in the stewardship of the trails that mean so much to our citizens.

Please read about and provide feedback on the vision and strategies here: docs.google.com/forms
You can provide trail assessment input here: survey123.arcgis.com

Reach out to Hannah Sanger, Pocatello Science and Environment Division Administrator, at hsanger@pocatello.us with any questions about this effort or how you can participate.

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