



MONTANA'S VOICE FOR
BICYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

TO GIVE



Cyclists on the Saltese Trestle, near Butte, Montana.

Bike Walk Montana Mid-Summer News 2025

Happy Summer! Hope you're outside — walking, cycling or rolling — enjoying another beautiful summer in Montana. The Board and Committees at BikeWalk Montana have been busy, and we can use your help as we make Montana a better/safer place to live, work, and play. Contact us today to share your skillset and let us know where you can help. We would love to have you! info@bikewalkmontana.org



Spring '25 brought several Bicycle Rodeos to schools and community hospitals.

Bike rodeos teach kids safe cycling skills. BikeWalk Montana Board members participated at several of these events from Billings and Bozeman, to Three Forks, Helena and beyond. Thank you to schools, hospitals, public and private groups and individuals, who do the work to organize these fun and instructional events. YOU make Montana a safer place to live, work and play!

If you'd like to organize a bike rodeo in your area but don't know where to start, check out this PDF from Safe Routes to School: www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Bike_Rodeo_CT.pdf

Or this NHTSA Guide to Best Practice: www.nhtsa.gov/book/countermeasures-that-work/bicycle-safety/countermeasures/other-strategies-behavior-change/cycling-skills-clinics-bike

Bike Walk Montana supports these efforts by directing organizers to toolkits and other resources. We can also connect organizers to a network of supporters within their community. We work with community members and organizations who support safe cycling skills across Montana. We want to build a stronger coalition and share the mission and vision of Bike Walk Montana; a safer place for all who walk, bike or roll.

BIKEWALK NEWS UPDATE

Shout out to Amanda Cooley, Planning Director, Powell County, and the team she led to win a RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant for the "Parks to Passes" project. The project funds a feasibility study to close 157 miles of trail gaps in the Great American Rail Trail along the 262 miles from Butte, Montana, to the Idaho border. BWMT will assist wherever we can.

BikeWalk Montana has formed a Montana Rail Trails committee.

The committee is led by Madison County BikeWalk Montana member Tom Elpel — an author, builder and conservationist — with assistance from Darlene Tussing (previously bike/ped coordinator for the city of Billings, currently retired and living in the Ruby Valley). The group is assessing Montana inactive rail line potential.



Abandoned rail line, Ruby Valley.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) bought MT Rail Link's active rail lines, but did not purchase the inactive lines which lead to small communities in Montana. These lines have great potential to become wonderful multi-use paths. The BWMT Rail Trails Committee is exploring the possibility of acquiring these inactive rail lines. Public rail trails offer scenic, safe, fun and healthy places for transportation and recreation. **We hope you are interested in helping make this happen for Montana.** To be included in the online discussion group, please send your email to committee chairman Thomas J. Elpel at thomasjelpel@gmail.com, or Darlene Tussing at darlene.tussing@gmail.com.

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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE 2025 SESSION WRAP-UP

Our Legislative Committee members had a busy year working for better biking and walking laws in Montana. In addition to monitoring all bills with the word bicycle in the text, we helped educate legislators regarding two bills this session.

First, we helped defeat HB 124 (The Wrong Way Bill), an effort by Glasgow area farmers to have bicyclists ride against traffic on the highways. Rep. Albus' intentions were good, to keep bicyclists and drivers safer on rural highways in northeast Montana. But after working with Rep Albus and explaining safe cycling practice he withdrew the proposal.

Second, we failed again to bring the nationally adopted three-tiered e-bike classification system into Montana law, SB 387. We worked hard with interested groups to craft a bill that was supported by several statewide organizations. Updating the definition of an e-bike is important because governments and others who manage the use of roads, shared-use paths, and trails need a standard definition to keep all users safe. We advocate for walking, cycling and rolling for transportation and BWMT's focus is working to make our cities and streets safer for every mode of transportation. We will continue to build understanding of this important issue.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR AN EXCITING OCTOBER

Sign up today for the **2025 MT Association of Planners (MAP)** meeting to be held in **Helena, October 6–8**. mtplanners.org/conference/montana-association-of-planners-2025-annual-conference/. The conference is a collaborative platform for sharing knowledge, fostering discussions, and promoting excellence in planning within the unique context of Montana. BWMT members and partners will be presenting two sessions to improve outcomes for bike, walk and roll planning in your communities.

The **MT Outdoor Recreation Summit** will be held in **Billings, October 21–23**. Sign up Today! outdoorcommunitypartners.org/2025-montana-outdoor-recreation-summit/

BikeWalk Helena, a chapter group of BikeWalk Montana, is being re-energized by local members, concentrating on Helena specific projects. For more information check the BikeWalk Montana Facebook page, or email your contact information with the title "BikeWalk Helena" to info@bikewalkmontana.org.

Your membership and donations help us do our work to advocate, educate and network for safe and sustainable walking, bicycling and rolling across the state of Montana. Thank you for your support!

— *BWMT Board of Directors*