Teton Basin Ranger District
Jay Pence, District Ranger
PO Box 777
Driggs, ID 83422

Re: Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails, Project

Dear Mr. Pence,

The City of Victor, with an increasing population of 1,928, is guided by the community and City Council adopted values of Connected to Nature, Sustainable, Family Friendly, Culturally Historic and Small Town Feel. As such, the City prioritizes work, development and initiatives that are driven by the adopted values and also enhance economic, social, health and wellness quality of life factors for citizens. Multi-use, low-angle trails and trail access points that are close to Victor City limits embody the values of Connected to Nature, Sustainable (access to trails by walking, running, biking, or skiing from town or a minimal vehicle trip), and Family Friendly (enhanced access for all ages). Furthermore, accessible trails close to town are a boost to the local economy, and provide social, health and wellness benefits to citizens. (The Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon Detailed State and Travel Region Estimates, 2012, Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study, 2007, Use of a Community Trail among New and Habitual Exercisers: A Preliminary Assessment, 2004, A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails, 2005).

As such, the City of Victor is in support of increasing low-angle, multi-use trails and trail access points close to City limits and seeks to initiate the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project. This project proposes approximately 15 miles of new trail consisting of key links and alignments that would establish multiple low-angle loops that originate from the existing Mike Harris trailhead parking area, located .5 miles from Victor City limits. The result would be a dramatic increase in connection of and connection to existing low-angle trails.

Project Background

Trails and trail access are important and revered amenities to City of Victor residents, residents of the greater Teton Valley and the Western Greater Yellowstone Region and to visitors from outside the region. For years City staff and elected officials heard these sentiments expressed and in 2010 the City of Victor initiated the Southern Valley Trails Project (SVTP) to formally study the demand for trail access. The study focused on trails and trailheads easily accessible in the southern end of Teton Valley and was inclusive of diverse trail users representing the interests of grazing permittees / cattle ranchers & shepherds, motorized trail users, equestrians, hikers / trail runners, mountain bikers / winter fat bikers, skiers, and snowmobilers. The SVTP Final Report noted low-angle, multi-use trails and trail access close to town as desirable by a variety of user groups and on February 22, 2012 Victor City Council unanimously adopted the Southern Valley Trails Project Final Report as a guiding document. The study, and input received by the city, shows that the historic trail system currently managed by the Forest Service accommodates grazing permittees, equestrian and experienced motorized users but it does not adequately serve the expanding non-motorized community.

The Mike Harris area was selected as the location for Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails, Project based on the natural topography, proximity to Victor, location along the heavily traveled Idaho State Highway 33 (SH-33)/ Wyoming Highway 22 (WYO 22) corridor, ample existing parking and nearby camping facilities. In the summer the
corridor has an average daily trip (ADT) count of 10,000 vehicles; the corridor provides access to visitors traveling to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks as well as Jackson, WY. Collaboration efforts with wildlife managers indicate that increasing trail densities in this area should have minimal effect on wildlife populations. The development of low-angle trails in the Mike Harris area would expand trail access to a wider skill level and age range of users, creating incentive for a broader range of travelers to stop and spend time in Teton Valley.

Project Area

The project area encompasses approximately 850 acres spanning from the Mike Harris trailhead parking area to Pole Canyon in Caribou-Targhee National Forest (see attached map). The project includes non-motorized, stacked loop trails near the Mike Harris Campground that also connect to Pole Canyon. In addition, the project will include a motorized connection from the top of the Powerline trail down the closest ridge to the south side of the HWY 26 to connect to the old Pine Creek Pass Road, tying into the sheep corrals next to the HWY on the west slope of the Big Holes. (A map updated to include motorized component will be attached.)

Project Details

- Number of acres: Approximately 850 acres
- Number of miles of new trails: 15
- Trail density: 0.018 miles of trail/acre

Summer and winter trail systems on public lands close to, or connected to communities are common throughout the region (Sun Valley, ID, McCall, ID, Pocatello, ID, Missoula, MT, West Yellowstone, MT, Jackson, WY).

Regional trail density precedents include: Cache Creek drainage, Jackson, WY 30 miles of trail in 4,400 acres with a density of 0.007 and Pocatello City Creek Trails, 50 miles of trail in 3,000 acres with a density of 0.017. Given that the number of acres used as the project area for Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails, Project--is so small in comparison, the ratio of trails to acres will be higher. In both the City Creek and Cache Creek examples above, the overall acreage encompasses entire drainages. If we were to use the larger Pole Canyon/Mike Harris area as our scope of project, the trail density ratio would be far lower. However, we feel the scope of this project is in line with other urban interface trail networks regionally.

Project Construction

The project would be constructed through the efforts of volunteers and paid labor to be funded through grant sources and local donations. Grant sources could include RTP funds, IMBA grants, Bikes Belong grants, etc. Volunteer commitments would come primarily through the active local non-profits Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP) and Mountain Bike Teton Valley (MBTV). TVTAP, established (1998) has a 15 year history of trail building and trail maintenance projects and 800 members. Mountain Bike Teton Valley, established 2013 as a chapter of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), already has a membership of 150 and has been well funded by the local community in year one.

Project Maintenance

Local non-profit Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP) established 1998 has a 15 year history of trail building and trail maintenance projects, with a member base of more than 800. Each summer TVTAP engages over 140 volunteers to work on trail building and trail maintenance projects. The combined efforts of volunteers amount to over 1,400 hours of volunteer labor each season. Mountain Bike Teton Valley (MBTV), established 2013, already has
a membership of approximately 150; a founding principal of MBTV is dedication to trail development and maintenance work. Skyliners has been established in Teton Valley since 1969 with active members that have been involved in promoting motorized recreation trail use in our national forest. Skyliners has worked closely with our local Forest district in rebuilding and maintaining our trails in the Targhee forest with many of its members. Skyliners has been keeping track of hours that are turned in from individuals and organized projects that have produced over 300 man-hours of labor in 2013. All of these organizations are well positioned to coordinate the ongoing maintenance of these trails. Additionally, these trails will be built with modern trail design standards (IMBA and USFS design standards) that reduce the amount of on-going maintenance through proper construction.

Support

The City of Victor is not alone in supporting the enhancement of low-angle, close-to-town, multi-use trails. Please see attached letters of support from local business owners, elected officials, non-profit groups, citizens in support and citizens who have volunteered on past trail building and maintenance projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Zachary Smith
Mayor of Victor
January 23, 2014

Jay Pence, District Ranger
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
PO Box 777
Driggs, ID 83422

Dear Mr. Pence,

Please accept this letter of support for the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails project proposed by the City of Victor. Sustainable recreation and projects like the City of Victor’s proposed Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project, with the proposed low-angle trails and close to town location, embody the values of Victor and Teton County for Sustainable, Connected to Nature, and Family Friendly communities and help promote local economic growth and vitality.

With Victor’s main intersection just under 4 miles from the Mike Harris trailhead and the City’s proposed location of the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project it is possible for a Victor resident or visitor to travel to the trailhead and connect with nature using active transportation. For families, the enhancement of low-angle, multi-use trails would provide increased opportunity to safely connect with nature just a short vehicle trip from town.

Quality of life in Teton Valley and the City of Victor is one of our strongest economic drivers. Part of what makes Teton Valley’s quality of life exceptional is the access to recreational opportunities. Thank you for your consideration of my support for this important project.

Sincerely,

Kathy Rinaldi
Teton County, ID Commissioner
"To enhance recreational and economic opportunities for Teton Valley through development of our mountain biking resources."

1/15/14

To Whom it may Concern,

This letter serves to pledge support for the Mike Harris area, Southern Valley Trail Project being proposed by the City of Victor. As a local non-profit with the Mission of supporting economic development and recreational opportunities through mountain biking, we are very excited to see this project come to fruition. There is a significant absence of close to town, low angle, multi-use, urban interface trails surrounding Victor. This project will not only benefit Victor, but all of Teton Valley.

As shown by many studies, the importance of such community assets cannot be ignored. The greatest opportunity for the City of Victor, and the Teton Basin Ranger District, for long term sustainability is to engage our citizens with our surrounding public lands. This proposed project will allow trail users of all ages and ability levels to enjoy our National Forest without committing to an all day outing on significantly steep terrain.

As an organization, MBTV pledges to aid in the long term maintenance of these proposed trails by helping to coordinate volunteer and fundraising efforts. With its proximity to Victor, and its location on the main commuter travel corridor, we feel that volunteer efforts will be plentiful. As citizens and visitors realize the tremendous benefits of this trail project, there will be an outpouring of volunteer support for maintenance. Enthusiasm for trail volunteerism surrounding this project will also serve to grow the overall amount of volunteer trail maintenance throughout the entire Teton Basin Ranger District.

Thank you for considering this proposal and allowing the construction of these trails.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dave Tremlis
President
Mountain Bike Teton Valley (MBTV)
January 22, 2014

Jay Pence, District Ranger
Teton Basin Ranger District
PO Box 777
Driggs, ID 83422

Re: Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project

Dear District Ranger Pence,

Please accept this as a letter of support from Teton Valley Trails and Pathways (TVTAP) for the *Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails (SVUIT) Project* as proposed by the City of Victor.

Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 organization dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyle living in Teton Valley Idaho and Wyoming through the development and promotion of non-motorized trails and pathways. Our mission is, “Teton Valley Trails and Pathways promotes a trails and pathways connected community”. The SVUIT project aligns directly with our goal of supporting non-motorized trail development of sustainable and accessible trails on public lands. TVTAP has a long history of volunteer directed trail maintenance and building in the Teton Basin Ranger District. We believe our members would be interested in lending support to see the development of the Mike Harris trail as noted in the proposal. We are willing to keep our members abreast of opportunities to work on this project.

We have heard from our members that live in the southern end of Teton Valley that there is a need for more opportunities to access public lands on single track trails and think this project would meet with great support.

We hope you will consider approving the request by the City of Victor to provide a valuable and needed asset to the community.

Sincerely,

Tim Adams
Executive Director

Teton Valley Trails and Pathways promotes a trails and pathways connected community
Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Inc. is a 501 c (3) tax exempt, non-profit organization under IRS Section 170(b) (2) (ii) for both federal and state tax purposes
January 24, 2014

Jay Pence
Teton Ranger District
PO Box 777
Driggs, ID 83422

Re: Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project

Dear Jay:

On behalf of Skyliners Motor Club, based here in Teton Valley Idaho. We wish to provide this letter of support to the Teton Basin Ranger District. As you know, Skyliners Motor Club has been established in the valley since 1969 and takes great pride in the trails and recreation use on public lands here in Teton County, Idaho.

Skyliners are in full support of the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project. Skyliners have made a conscious effort to collaborate with all users of our National Forest in order to maintain a sustainable trail system. Skyliners are also happy to invest time and other resources in support of this project.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the president of Skyliners Wade Kaufman at 307 413-2057 or any of the other board members. Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Best regards,

Wade Kaufman
President of Skyliner’s Motor Club
January 10, 2014

Name
Business Name
Street address
Victor, ID 83455

Dear Mr. Pence,

This letter serves as our business support letter for the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails project proposed by the City of Victor. We feel strongly that the quality of life in Teton Valley and the City of Victor is tied to our recreational opportunities and feel that low-angle, multi-use trails and trail access points in close proximity to City limits will enhance recreational opportunities.

As business owners, we have noticed a significant number of our customers patronize our business before or after recreating. With Victor’s Main Street business district just under 4 miles from the Mike Harris trailhead and proposed location of the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project we anticipate that the proposed enhancements would positively impact our business as well.

We support sustainable recreation and consider trails and trail access improvements close to town to have an added layer of sustainability due to their proximity to the population center. We feel the impact of sustainable recreation on the community is virtually totally positive and fully support the City of Victor’s proposal for the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Battlesman Grill
Grand Teton Brewing Company
430 Old Jackson Highway
Victor, Idaho 83455

January 23, 2014

Jay Pence, District Ranger
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
Post Office Box 777
Driggs, Idaho 83422

Dear Jay,

I am writing to support the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails project proposed by the City of Victor. I feel strongly that the quality of life in Teton Valley and the City of Victor is tied to our recreational opportunities and feel that low-angle, multi-use trails and trail access points in close proximity to City limits will enhance recreational opportunities.

As a business manager, I have noticed a significant number of our customers patronize our business before or after recreating. With Victor's Main Street business district just under 4 miles from the Mike Harris trailhead and proposed location of the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project I anticipate that the proposed enhancements would positively impact our business as well.

I support sustainable recreation and consider trails and trail access improvements close to town to have an added layer of sustainability due to their proximity to the population center. I feel the impact of sustainable recreation on the community is almost totally positive and fully support the City of Victor's proposal for the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails Project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rob Mullin
Brewmaster and Chief Operating Officer
January 10, 2014

Name
Business Name
Street address
Victor, ID 83455

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Sincerely,

[Signature]
Victor Empacista
January 10, 2014

Name
Business Name
Street address
Victor, ID 83455

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric Spitzer
Vice President
ProGuideDirect.com
January 10, 2014

Fitzgerald's Bicycles
20 Cedron Rd
Victor, ID 83455

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Sincerely,

Scott Fitzgerald
Owner
Fitzgerald’s Bicycles
Victor Velo exists to promote healthy lifestyles and economic development in Victor, ID by providing diverse cycling opportunities.

1/15/14

To Whom it may Concern,

This letter serves to pledge support for the Mike Harris area, Southern Valley Trail Project being proposed by the City of Victor. As a local non-profit with the Mission of supporting economic development and healthy lifestyles through cycling, we are very excited to see this project come to fruition. There is a significant absence of close to town, low angle, multi-use, urban interface trails surrounding Victor.

As shown by many studies, the importance of such community assets can not be ignored. The greatest opportunity for the City of Victor, and the Teton basin Ranger District, for long term sustainability is to engage our citizens with our surrounding public lands. This proposed project will allow trail users of all ages and ability levels to enjoy our National Forest without committing to an all day outing on significantly steep terrain.

As an organization, we pledge to aid in the long term maintenance of these proposed trails by helping to coordinate volunteer efforts. With its proximity to Victor, and its location on the main commuter travel corridor, we feel that volunteer efforts will be plentiful. As citizens and visitors realize the tremendous asset of this trail project, there will be an outpouring of volunteer support for maintenance.

Thank you for considering this proposal and allowing the construction of these trails.

Sincerely,

Scott Fitzgerald
Vice President
Victor Velo
January 10, 2014

Name
Business Name
Street address
Victor, ID 83455

Dear Mr. Pence,

VICTOR VALLEY MARKET
5 S. MAIN
VICTOR, ID 83455

This letter serves as our business support letter for the Southern Valley Urban Interface Trails project proposed by the City of Victor. We feel strongly that the quality of life in Teton Valley and the City of Victor is tied to our recreational opportunities and feel that low-angle, multi-use trails and trail access points in close proximity to City limits will enhance recreational opportunities.

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Sincerely,

Thomas W. Diving 1.16.2014