

ROUTE OF THE HIAWATHA OPENS MAY 26th * PRESS RELEASE

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It's Time To: RIDE THE HIAWATHA – A Scenic Mountain Bike Trail In this our 20th Anniversary Season!

The Route of the Hiawatha – A Scenic Mountain Bike Trail that runs along the Old Milwaukee RR bed, opens on May 26th! The trail is open 7 days a week through September 23rd. Trail hours are 8:30 am to 5 pm.

America's greatest adventure begins high atop the Bitterroot Mountains along the Idaho/Montana border when you enter the massive 1.66 mile long St. Paul/Taft Tunnel, built in 1908! When you emerge, you follow the historic rail trail which incorporates; 10 cavernous train tunnels and crosses 7 sky-high trestles. Riders and hikers will venture past sparkling mountain creeks; deer, elk and moose; and enjoy endless views of the towering ID/MT Bitterroots. All this on a section of trail described as ***"the most scenic stretch of RR in the country."***

The Trail is located midway between Spokane, WA and Missoula Montana, yet garners guests attention from all across America and the globe. Guests, both local and international, start by visiting Lookout Pass Ski Area - getting off I-90 at exit 0 on the ID/MT line. Here they pick up trail passes, rental bikes, helmets, bright lights, maps, water and snacks, before traveling five miles east to Exit #5 in Taft, MT. From here it's another two miles up a dirt road to the Trailhead where your first order of business is to pedal through the longest of the tunnels the St. Paul / Taft Tunnel. Look for a historical marker on the tunnel wall about half way through and learn which side bored through the fastest and how accurate they were in joining up in the middle. Remember all the engineering was accomplished by hand without the aid of computers.

The trail has been described as ***"The Crown Jewell of Rail-to-Trail Conservation in the Country"***, and was chosen as a **USA Today Top Ten Pick** as well as being inducted into the **Rail-to-Trail Hall of Fame**. This all downhill ride is appropriate for individuals and families of all ages. Children ages 5 and up who know how to ride a bike have indeed finished this trail on fixed speed bicycles.

What Makes this bike trail different: Let me count the ways: 15 mile all downhill ride from Taft,

MT to Pearson, ID, shuttle bus available to transport you and your bike back to the top, incredible RR history, majestic scenery including snow covered mountains, abundant wildlife, you'll ride in two states crossing from MT into ID, one of the most unique Rails-to-Trails conversions in the country, 7 sky-high trestles, 10 dark tunnels which require powerful lights to ride through safely, a waterfall, 47 interpretive historical signs, and best of all it's all family and kid friendly. Learn more: www.RideTheHiawatha.com

Lookout Pass is easy to get to: Travel I-90 to Exit 0 on the ID/MT Line. We're just 200 yards off the exit ramp. www.SkiLookout.com | Phone: 208.744.1301 | The Route of the Hiawatha Trailhead is just another 5 miles east to exit #5 off I-90 and then two more miles up a dirt road to the East Portal of the long Taft Tunnel.

Lookout Pass Ski & Recreation area operates the Route of the Hiawatha under a special use permit from the USFS. A small usage fee is charged to all users: **Trail passes are \$11 for adults, and \$7 for kids ages 6 to 13 years of age.**

HIAWATHA VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNZgbvngelk>

READ HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SIGNS: <http://www.ridethehiawatha.com/interpretive-signs>

HISTORY OF THE RR: <http://www.ridethehiawatha.com/history>

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MEDIA:

Media interested in telling a story about the trail or wanting to enjoying a ride along the trail in hope of doing a future story on the trail, should reach out to; Matt Sawyer – Director of Marketing to make arrangements.

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNZgbvngelk>

PHOTO GALLERY: <http://www.ridethehiawatha.com/photo-gallery> To request hi-res photos for a story call or eMail me at: 208.744.1301 x21.

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