



CITY OF
BIG BEAR LAKE *California*

FINAL REPORT

**Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1B Project
Contract number ML18088**

**Submitted by:
City of Big Bear Lake**
August 23, 2021

“Prepared for the Mobile Source Air Pollution Review Committee (MSRC) under the
AB 2766 Discretionary Fund Work Program.”



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Acknowledgements

The City of Big Bear Lake wishes to acknowledge the Mobile Source Reduction Review Committee for its funding and program support and guidance.

The City also wishes to acknowledge the Southern California Mountains Foundation for their exceptional work and support for this project.

Disclaimer

“The statement and conclusions in this report are those of the contractor and not necessarily those of the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) or the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The mention of commercial products, their sources or their uses in connection with material reported is not to be construed as either an actual or implied endorsement of such products.”



Project Description & Work Performed

The Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) provided grant funding support to the City of Big Bear Lake Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1B project. The Rathbun Creek Trail (Trail) was identified in the Big Bear Valley Master Plan of Trails and during the 2014 Quality of Life Presentation as a project important to our community. The proposed Trail was planned to be constructed in multiple phases as an ADA accessible paved creek side trail with picnicking areas and multi-use facilities placed along Rathbun Creek extending from the lakeshore to the base of Bear Mountain Ski Resort.

Phase 1 of the project includes the portion of trail between Elm Street and Big Bear Boulevard, and is divided into two segments. The first segment (Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1A), from the trout ponds to Elm Street, was successfully completed in 2017. This segment of the trail has become a popular outdoor recreational amenity that is enjoyed daily by residents and visitors. The second segment (Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1B) continues north to Big Bear Boulevard.

Trail segment 1B is a 1,200 linear foot, ten-foot (10') wide asphalt trail with a two-rail stained wood lodge pole fence on each side. This segment also included the installation of one (1) pedestrian bridge similar to the pedestrian bridge installed during the construction of trail segment 1A. A shorter twenty-six foot (26') bridge spans a small tributary to Rathbun Creek about 300 ft. downstream of the area known as "the ponds". The bridge was fabricated, delivered to the project site, and installed on constructed bridge supports (concrete abutments). The bridge is a clear span and did not require mid-stream bents (columns).

The City partnered with the Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) throughout this project. SCMF constructed and/or installed the following project elements:

1. Designed and installed six (6) interpretive signs;
2. Installed lodge pole fencing and maintenance gates;
3. Installed two (2) pet pick-up stations.
4. Installed two (2) wood benches.

Problems Encountered

The project alignment included several easement acquisitions from local businesses and properties located along Rathbun Creek, as well as permitting with San Bernardino County flood control district for the section of the trail where the alignment presented encroachments into SBCFCD right of way.

The easement acquisitions and permitting was a longer process than anticipated, and the City worked together with the property owners to address their concerns regarding the loss of usable area, additional requirements from each individual property owner, and disruptions to businesses during the course of construction.

Due to hydrology concerns from SBCFCD, alternative alignments were analyzed for rerouting the continuation of Rathbun Creek Trail, which resulted in a request of change of the original scope of the project to the MSRC contract. With this considerations, the trail is now operational and currently being used by locals and visitors who enjoy the improvements.



Emissions benefits

The Rathbun Creek Trail Section Phase 1B provides a multitude of benefits, such as increasing active transportation use along the Moonridge Business District, home of the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, and an area that is often congested by traffic to the Bear Mountain Resort. This project achieved a necessary connection to enhance active transportation in the Big Bear Valley. The project is centrally located and creates a safe route to the following:

- Big Bear Boulevard Retail
- Existing class I, II and III bike lanes
- Local Schools
 - o Big Bear Middle School
 - o North Shore Elementary
- Utilities
- Health Care
- Other Local Interests
 - o San Bernardino County Library
 - o San Bernardino County Services
 - o Big Bear Sheriff's Station
 - o Big Bear Mountain Resorts (Bear Mountain and Snow Summit)
 - o Numerous hiking and biking trails in the City and San Bernardino National Forest
 - o Big Bear Lake
- Planned Transit Facility

The City of Big Bear Lake is currently working with local stakeholders to construct a transit facility, where residents and visitors can park their vehicles and ride their bicycles to their destination. The City has identified two potential properties on the east end of Big Bear Lake. This project will provide a vital connection between the planned transit facility and the Moonridge Business District, which has a realignment project under construction that will create a Class II bike lane and enhance the pedestrian access to the area.

By encouraging residents and visitors to use active transportation, we aim to decrease greenhouse gases, reduce miles travelled, increase safety, promote social equity and environmental justice, and foster a community of bicycle enthusiasts. The City is considered the cycling capital of Southern California, and is one of the premier destinations for mountain biking. Big Bear Lake is home to the best lift-served mountain bike park in Southern California and hosts several bicycle events such as AMGEN Tour of California, Redlands Bicycle Classic, and Tour de Big Bear. The Big Bear Cycling Association has guided and organized rides during the spring, summer, and fall riding seasons.

Photographs & Outreach

The Rathbun Creek Trail project has been subject of numerous City Council Agendas which presented the proposed improvements to the public. The City followed the outreach plan submitted and approved to MSRC, and found great support from the public and residents in the area.

The City's public outreach included the following:



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1. The project's information was posted in the City's website
The City's website has been a great information platform for our community, information about the project was posted as well as the master plan for the Rathbun corridor, construction plans, and more relevant information.
Currently, the City has posted information regarding the trail in the City's website below:
<https://citybigbearlake.com/index.php/services-main/city-parks-and-city-trails>
<https://citybigbearlake.com/index.php/component/docindexer/?task=download&id=2490>
2. Presentation of the Project to City Council.
The project has been, and will continue to be presented to City council for project updates and release to the public as the trail continues to be built towards the lake and the forest in the next phases.
3. The installation of the bridge and the trail improvements was also published in the local newspaper and the City retains documentation of the article posted.
<https://bigbeargrizzly.net/photo-single/100/?mode=team>



Figure 1- Beginning of Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1B



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Figure 2 - New pedestrian bridge



Figure 3 - New retaining wall and cross gutter



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Figure 4 - Picnic Tables and Trash receptacles



Figure 5 - Vehicular gates supplied and installed by SCMF



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Figure 6 -New interpretative signs, supplied and installed by SCMF

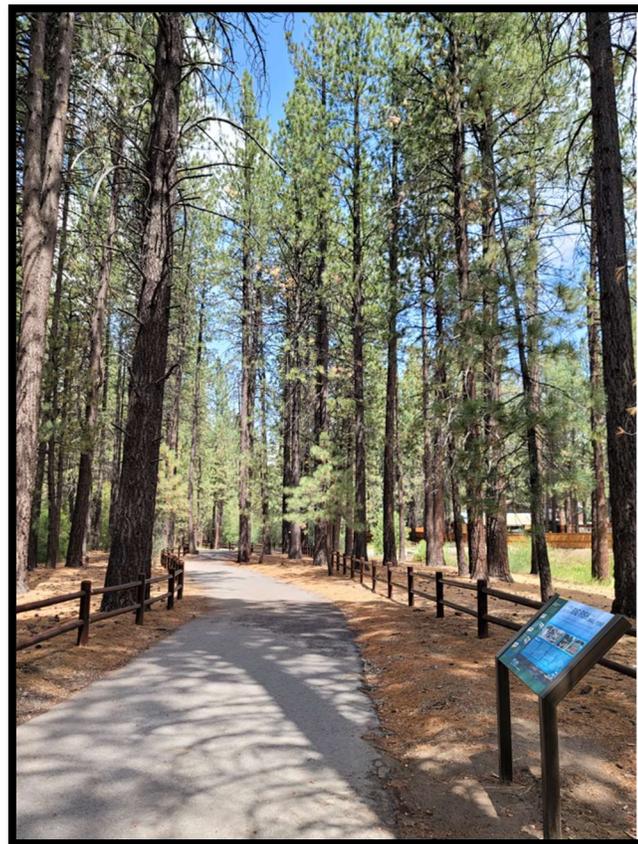


Figure 7 -Rathbun Creek trail at "the ponds" looking North-West

Public Services Department

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Figure 8- Trail at the future trailhead looking South-East



Figure 9 - Rathbun Trail near Sizzlers looking North

Summary and Conclusions

The Rathbun Creek Trail Phase 1B project included the construction of 1200’ of 10’ wide asphalt paved trail, installation of 1 pedestrian bridge crossing, construction of 100’ of retaining wall, construction of 2 PCC cross gutters, installation of 2 bollards at the bridge landings, installation of 2400’ of wood rail fence, supply and installation of Class II base and Asphalt pavement, installation of picnic tables and trash receptacles, installation of pet pick up stations, and fabrication and installation of interpretative signage.

As part of the MSRC grant contract, the City performed pedestrian and bicycle counts in 2 different days, in a lapse of 2 hours. These counts were performed by a visual count of the users and the location selected to perform the counts was the Best Western parking lot. The following are the results for the counts:

Date	Time	Pedestrians		Bicycles	
		NB	SB	NB	SB
4/9/2021	2-4pm	11	13	3	4
5/7/2021	2-4pm	15	12	5	7



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Pedestrian counts were performed during colder weather season, and the City anticipates to see an increase of the users during the summer and fall seasons, which is the period of time when cyclists travel to the valley to perform mountain biking and events like the Tour of Big Bear take place.

The Rathbun Creek Trail is a popular destination for both locals and visitors, and has provided the opportunity to reduce the usage of motor vehicles for cleaner means of transportation. As the Trail is extended in the following phases, it will continue to provide more opportunities for clean transportation and communication around the valley.

The City of Big Bear Lake recommends that future trail projects include sufficient planning time to coordinate any right of way acquisitions, as well as allocation of sufficient time for permitting with the environmental agencies, this will avoid unplanned delays in future projects.

The City is excited about the completed trail and will continue to track the usage of the improvements through pedestrian and bicycle counts that will be performed in the future.