September on Red Grade Trails meant breaking ground for an additional mile of hiking trail on State Land. We are continually energized by the 30+ volunteers from the community who have donated their time, strength, and ideas to help us develop high quality and sustainable trails.

SCLT is allowed to construct 5.3 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails on State Land under a special use permit. Existing trails named “Prairie” and “Tip of the Woods” make up just 1.8 miles of this total. The new trail, “Drifter”, will branch off of existing mileage, carefully climbing the north-facing slope and crossing the treed saddle to a beautiful vista with 360-degree views.

Believe it or not, natural surface trail building is both an art and a science. To make sure this trail becomes as awe-inspiring as the community supporting it, volunteers work under the guidance of professionally-trained SCLT Trails Manager Tami Sorenson. In addition, Wildwood Trails, the professional trail building company that helped with the first two trails, will join in the effort this fall, bringing extra skills and momentum before the snow arrives.
Community-valued Conservation

We have been working diligently on the conservation front and are excited to share our anticipation of several projects closing before the end of 2016, with a fourth to follow in 2017. The public benefits of these projects are diverse and significant, from protecting some of the most productive irrigated agricultural lands along Wolf Creek to environmental rehabilitation along the Tongue River and increased public access.

Each of these projects is incredibly unique with acreages ranging from 7 to nearly 500 acres with similarly-varied transaction methods, including purchase of a life estate, bargain-sale conservation easements, and assignment of a purchase option. From a financial perspective, these projects are comprehensively valued at $2.19M. Together with our project partners (unique to each project), we have raised $2.03M, most recently with $252,000 in awards from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust in addition to private fundraising efforts. We eagerly look forward to sharing a complete picture of each project as it closes, and are just $160K (9%) from reaching our funding goal. If you are interested in our conservation mission and helping us meet this goal, please contact us at 673-4702 or director@sheridanclt.org.

Project work like this would be impossible without our community’s vision for landscape conservation in this county. Thank you for allowing SCLT to seek out and work with private property owners for local benefit.

Tongue River Initiative Update

In partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Tongue River Initiative (a project-dependent partnership of SCLT, The Nature Conservancy, and Sheridan County Conservation District) would like to announce opportunities for Russian Olive removal with native species restoration, as well as stock water development and fencing. Landowners within the upper reaches of Tongue River, Little/Big Goose Creeks, and Prairie Dog Creek are encouraged to contact a TRI partner for more information. TRI will be mailing landowners in these areas with specific information this fall, with the NRCS and SCCD coordinating individual projects. Sign up deadline with the NRCS is October 21st with work taking place in 2017. With a recent grant award from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust and partnership with the Plank Stewardship Initiative, the TRI partnership is able to offer this removal and native replanting program with just a 5% landowner contribution. There are no requirements for public access for this or any other conservation-related projects completed by the TRI partnership or SCLT. For more information visit sccdwy.org or contact Sheridan County Conservation District at 672-5820 ext. 3.
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Please pass our newsletter on to a friend, recycle it, or let us know if you’d rather not receive a paper copy to help us reduce waste and costs. Thank you!

Stay on that Bike!
SCLT was thrilled to work with the Bomber Mountain Cycling Club as well as Tom Balding, Tom Kinnison, and Sarah Wallick to purchase and place three bike cattle guard rollovers along Soldier Ridge Trail this summer. They give the trail a great vibe! Thank you for making these improvements possible, and thanks to the many volunteers who helped maneuver them into place!

Photo: Rider Dave Olson glides over the second bike rollover on a sunny afternoon at Soldier Ridge Trail.

A Mule for the Trails
Thank you! SCLT was recently gifted a gently-used Kawasaki Mule to assist with maintenance duties associated with our trail work. Have something that might similarly help our mission? Let’s talk!