

Tahoe-Pyramid Lake bike trail to receive \$2M boost

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A long-distance bike trail envisioned to link Lake Tahoe with Pyramid Lake could close a significant route gap along the Truckee River in the coming years thanks to a \$2 million federal grant.

Last week, California State Parks announced the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway is one of nine non-motorized trail projects in the state recommended for funding under the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program.

Of \$8.4 million available, the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway is recommended for nearly \$2.02 million to complete the three-mile trail gap from Hirschdale to Floriston along the Truckee River in Nevada County.

"This is a game changer," said Janet Phillips, president of the nonprofit Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway. "We've been inching our way toward completing the trail, and having this grant to finish the canyon portion is really huge."

Only one project was recommended to receive more funding — roughly \$2.47 million for a 1.25-mile paved multi-use trail segment along the San Seavine Channel in Southern California.

The Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway was one of 74 applications received for the federal program, requesting \$60.1 million, according to California State Parks.

Projects recommended for funding either develop new trails that connect neighborhoods to outdoor recreation areas, schools or workplaces,



COURTESY JANET PHILLIPS

An image of the steep slope below I-80 where the Hirschdale-Floriston trail segment is planned to be constructed between the freeway and the Truckee River.

More online

Visit tpbikeway.org to learn more about the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway.

Visit parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/635 to view California State Parks' announcement recommending trail projects for funding.

or those that close critical trail gaps to expand trail systems, according to State Parks.

Once built, the Hirschdale-Floriston segment will close the bikeway's final gap in California, allowing cyclists to ride continuously from Tahoe City to Sparks.

It's a particularly difficult portion to construct, Phillips said, since it traverses the steep and rugged terrain of the Truckee River canyon.

"The canyon was developed with the (Union Pacific) railroad getting the best land and the (Interstate 80) freeway getting the second best, and we're trying to squeeze into the remaining ground," she said. "... Without that grant, I don't know how we would have gotten that section built."

As the bikeway's partner, funding will go to Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District for the project, which includes construction of a dirt

trail, retaining walls and a cantilevered catwalk.

To secure funding, projects must comply with various federal requirements, be approved by the Federal Highway Administration and raise 12 percent in matching funds.

Phillips said she is optimistic the nonprofit can raise the \$300,000 matching funds needed in time for trail construction.

Several permits still need to be secured to build the three-mile link, she said, with construction aimed to start in 2017 and completion anticipated as early as fall 2018.

Its completion will make the envisioned 116-mile

bikeway 80 percent complete, leaving only two trail sections in Nevada — Sparks to Mustang and Clark to Wadsworth — undone.

When asked about hurdles faced in completing the bikeway, Phillips said: "In California, it's about terrain and funds. In Nevada, it's mostly about private landowners."

Phillips hopes the entire

Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway is finished by 2023 — 20 years after the concept went public and donations received for implementation.

Once finished, the route will descend more than 2,000 feet over 116 miles, using a combination of existing dirt and paved roads along with sections of new trail and bridges.