

Trail work connects King to Cache Creek

Shade Monkey Trail will extend to base of King.

By Ben Graham

Trail work has begun on Snow King Mountain that will provide a better connection between the base of the hill and Cache Creek for mountain bikers.

The goal is to help make Snow King a “starting point for hiking and biking excursions out of town,” Snow King Ski Area and Mountain Resort General Manager Ryan Stanley said.

The work largely involves extending the Shade Monkey Trail to the base of Snow King. It also will be graded to encourage cyclists of various skill levels to use the town hill as an “access” point to the multitude of biking trails in the Snow King and Cache Creek area. “This will make the trail a better grade. It’s too steep right now,” Stanley said.

It could help ease some of the traffic that often clogs the Cache Creek trailhead as well, according to Friends of Pathways Education Director Lauren Dickey. Her organization is partnering on the project with the ski area and the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

“We understand there’s more and more people on the trails,” Dickey said. “Anything we can do with the facilities, with trail building, to accommodate people entering at different access points, we support that.”

“What we really want to do is take some of the pressure off Cache Creek.”

The path currently starts in the Pine Glades development, in an area that will soon be home to a new condo.

By having a public access point at the base of Snow King, Friends of Pathways also hopes that more people will walk or bike to the trailhead.

The project also involves moving the horse trail from the open slope to the treed area above the Aspen Hill Cemetery.

“Effectively we’re taking the horses off of the main ski run,” Stanley said. “It should help eliminate horsehiker- biker interactions.”

The long-term vision is to “segregate” trails, Stanley said. That means adjusting trails to better accommodate specific users, which should help cut down on conflicts, he said.

The ski area and Friends of Pathways will host a volunteer day Aug. 16 for people who want to help with the final day of trail work. Food and beverages will be provided, courtesy of Budweiser.

The project was made possible by a grant from the nonprofit Keep America Beautiful, Stanley said.

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– Lauren Dickey

