



# Yellowstone Rails to Trails

In Montana, the town of Emigrant hugs the majestic Yellowstone River, just thirty miles north of the national park. Yet, lacking even the most basic parks and trails, it's not uncommon to see a parent pushing a stroller down the highway. The conversion of the town's rusting rail line into a walking and biking trail would anchor this growing community with social and recreational opportunities, natural climate solutions, and good sustainable jobs.

## Rails to Trails Vision

Founded during the Gold Rush in Paradise Valley, Emigrant is rich in history and natural splendor. But these assets are largely untapped because of the town's lack of public trails and are increasingly at risk of being lost to real estate development.

The community has a solution: remake its former rail line into a dynamic trail for hiking, cycling, birding, and more. The "Yellowstone Rail-Trail," would offer breathtaking views, vibrant social hubs, and improved access to the river and cultural sites.

At the community's behest, Trust for Public Land secured an agreement to protect a **three-mile stretch** of the rail corridor. With your help, we can stitch together Emigrant's abundant resources, and secure its future health and prosperity.

## A Range of Benefits

The Yellowstone Rail-Trail would bring a wide range of benefits to Emigrant and State of Montana.

- **Health Benefits:** The trail would offer sweeping views of the Paradise Valley and Absarokas Mountains and opportunities for outdoor exercise and recreation. Physical activity and access to nature are vital to overall health and wellbeing.
- **Community Benefits:** The trail would foster a deeper sense of community by providing a social hub in the heart of town and celebrating historic and cultural sites, such as old gold mines and a Native American buffalo jump.
- **Economic Benefits:** The trail would uplift the local economy and contribute to the Great American Rail-Trail that, in Montana alone, is projected to increase visitor spending by \$16M, create 200 jobs, and generate \$7M in income.
- **Environmental Benefits:** The trail would preserve critical habitat, riparian land, and migration corridors for wildlife like bald eagle and gray wolf, and sustain natural climate solutions like carbon sequestration and flood mitigation.

## Why Trust for Public Land

Trust for Public Land is working to connect everyone to the joys and benefits of the outdoors. For nearly 50 years, we have helped communities in the Northern Rockies protect the places that inspire us and bring us together, places like Story Mill Community Park in Bozeman, and Swan Valley in Northwest Montana. Moreover, we have led the creation of thousands of miles of trails across the United States, from the iconic 606 rail-trail in Chicago to segments of the Appalachian and Pacific Crest national scenic trails.

With decades of experience leading complex land protection and trail efforts, TPL is best positioned to realize the community's vision for Yellowstone Rail-Trail. We will facilitate the land acquisition, act as a bridge between stakeholders, lead community engagement, and design and build the trail system.

## An Equitable Model

At Trust for Public Land, we believe that health is more than what happens at your doctor's office; it is a state of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Access to nature, active living, community belonging, and good, meaningful jobs—all of these factors play a role in overall health and quality of life. The loss of natural resources and character, and traditional jobs and ways of life is affecting communities across the West. Trails like the one planned for Emigrant demonstrate a model for rural revitalization. They diversify economic opportunities, attract and retain young people, improve health outcomes, promote climate resilience, and bring new cultural vibrancy.

## How You Can Help

The Yellowstone Rail-Trail offers a lifeline to the town of Emigrant and a model for renewing communities. If we fail to protect this land now, this trail and its many benefits could be lost forever. Please give today and make a difference in the lives of our community. For every \$1 raised, we leverage \$50 in public dollars for our conservation efforts.



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**Melissa Dulin**  
Director of Philanthropy  
Northern Rockies Program  
406.582.6250  
melissa.dulin@tpl.org

Images: Lucas Cain, TPL Project Manager