John Wayne Trail links now end at St. Regis, Montana

Bicycle trails which would be linked to the John Wayne Trail under a proposal in the works at Tekoa now extend another 31 miles to St. Regis, Mont., according to Mike Domey, proprietor of Excelsior Cycles, in Kellogg, Idaho. He commented that the trail segment into Montana has been an added attraction which brings bicycle riders to the Silver Valley.

The proposal at Tekoa would link the 224-mile John Wayne Trail from the Idaho state line north of Tekoa across the Lovell Valley to Plummer and connect with the 69.1-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes to Mullan.

Domey is a former member of the advisory committee for the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes which runs from Plummer to Mullan, Idaho.

From Mullan, the trail link continues on the former Northern Pacific Railroad route. The route extends from Mullan across Lookout Pass to Taft, Mont., where Rainy Creek forest service road leads to the East Portal of the Taft tunnel at the top end of the Trail of the Hiawatha, the popular link of tunnels and trestles on the former Milwaukee grade out of the St. Joe River Valley.

Domey notes the extended route east to St. Regis follows the St. Regis River route into Montana. Called the Olympian Trail, it is also on the former route of the Milwaukee.

The Olympian starts at the opposite end of the parking lot at the top end of the Taft Tunnel parking lot where the Hiawatha Trail ends.

The Olympian Trail is all downhill as it roughly follows the St. Regis River grade. One feature is the Dominion Tunnel and trestle which is 3.5 miles down the grade from the parking lot starting point. It is built in the same mode as the trestles and trails of the Hiawatha.

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the first 8.6 miles of the trail down to Saltese, Mont., are restricted to bicycle use only.

Domey noted the NorPac Trail also continues down the St. Regis River part of the way to the town of St. Regis.

Domey said most of the bicycle riders who come into his shop while visiting the Silver Valley area are attracted to the area by Trail of the Hiawatha. Most use the trail via the shuttle which operates out of the Lookout Pass ski area lot.

The Hiawatha...