



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



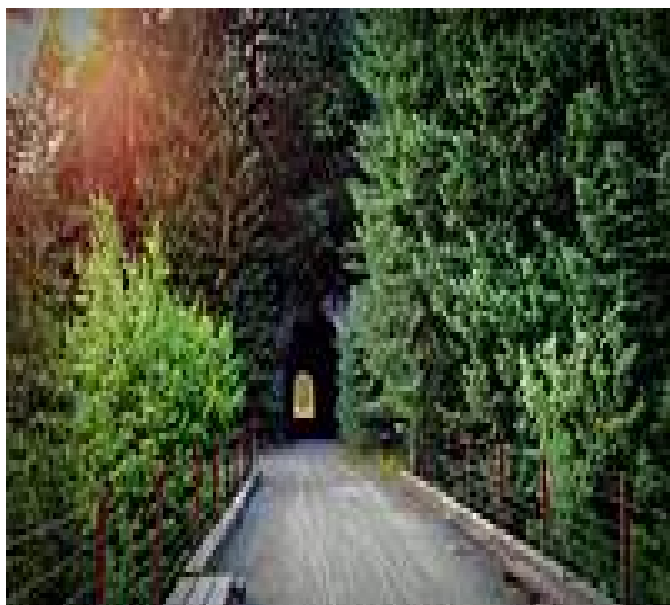
**Route of the
Hiawatha**
Idaho



Route of the Hiawatha

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Note: Route of the Hiawatha is only open between May and September. The trail is operated by Lookout Pass Ski Area under a



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The trail is operated by Lookout Pass Ski Area under a special-use permit of the U.S. Forest Service. Trail users must obtain and display trail passes. For more information, please visit the [organization's website](#).

The Route of the Hiawatha in Idaho is a 15-mile rail-trail that meanders between Pearson and the Idaho/Montana border, where the trail continues into Montana as the [Route of the Olympian](#).

About the Route

The Route of the Hiawatha's most well-known feature is

the long St. Paul Pass, or Taft Tunnel, which burrows 8,771 feet (1.6 miles) under the Bitterroot Mountains at the state line between Idaho and Montana.

The Idaho section opened the first 13 miles in May 1998 for hikers and wilderness biking. This stretch of the trail between Roland and Pearson currently goes through eight tunnels and travels over seven high trestles, following the mountainous terrain along Loop Creek drainage. Between Moss Creek and Pearson the trail is open only to non-motorized traffic. The ride from Roland just below the West Portal of the St. Paul Pass (Taft Tunnel) to Pearson is gentle along a gravel road. The grade is an easy 1.7%, from 4,160 feet at the West Portal to 3,175 feet at Pearson, over 13 miles. A shuttle bus provides transportation for riders and their bicycles between Pearson to Roland.

The Taft Tunnel, a dark 1.6 miles, is popular with trail goers; motorized vehicles are not permitted. The main parking area is at the East Portal, 2 miles from Taft Exit 5 off I-90; follow the signs. Midway through the tunnel an interpretive sign indicates the Idaho-Montana state line and discloses which crew reached the center of the tunnel first in 1907. Look for the beautiful waterfall at the West Portal of the tunnel. To bypass the Taft tunnel, drive up and over the tunnel for 5 miles along Forest Service Road 506 and Roland Summit and park at the Roland trailhead. It's about 15 miles from the East Portal trailhead to Pearson.

From Lookout Pass to the East Portal the trail follows the old Northern Pacific railroad grade approximately 10 miles to the Taft site. Along the way the trail crosses the St. Regis River three times, passes through one tunnel and goes under Interstate 90 twice before arriving at Taft. From Taft, the trail rises gently at an about 2.1% grade for 2 miles to the East Portal of the Taft tunnel.

Connections



Route of the Hiawatha

Idaho

States: Idaho

Counties: Shoshone

Length: 15miles

Trail end points: East Portal of St. Paul Pass Tunnel (MT/ID border) to St. Joe River Rd (Pearson)

Trail surfaces: Dirt, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Mountain Biking, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

The Route of the Hiawatha runs between the [Milwaukee Road Rail-Trail \(Pearson-to-Calder\)](#) (St. Joe River Rd, Pearson) and the [Route of the Olympian](#) (East Portal of St. Paul Pass Tunnel at the MT/ID border), both of which offer parking.

Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



Route of the Hiawatha

Idaho



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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