



2021 San Isabelle Glacier Project Report

Overview

The Boulder Climbing Community's (BCC) Front Range Climbing Stewards Program (FRCS) has completed a 3 week trail work project on the Isabelle Glacier Trail in the Brainard Lake Recreation area in partnership with the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forest-Boulder Ranger District (USFS) and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy (RMC). The primary objectives for this project were to address the impacts of various user groups accessing the glacier via the original trail that passes through delicate alpine meadows.

Project Synopsis

In 2019, BCC and the USFS agreed upon a strategy of rerouting the existing hiker trail that accesses Isabelle Glacier by constructing a durable and sustainable new trail through a south facing talus field (**Figure 1**). By constructing a trail with a southern aspect, snow will melt earlier in the year, allowing much easier access to the glacier above. The talus field reroute will also put the trail on a much more durable surface, in contrast to the existing trail which crosses many alpine meadows and marshes and is severely eroded.

In 2021, BCC, alongside a 5 person RMC youth corps crew continued constructing a durable hiking path through the adjacent talus field, beginning where the 2020 trail work finished (**Figure 2**). This work consisted of creating a primitive path through the talus that blends in with the natural environment. Stone was left natural, with minimal shaping done, in order to give the trail a "hidden" feeling. When staircase structure were constructed, they were built erratically and in a primitive fashion (**Figure 3**) BCC was responsible for the design and construction of this new stretch of trail, as well as providing training in dry stone masonry techniques to the RMC youth corps crew. The labor and planning for this project can be found in **Appendix A**.

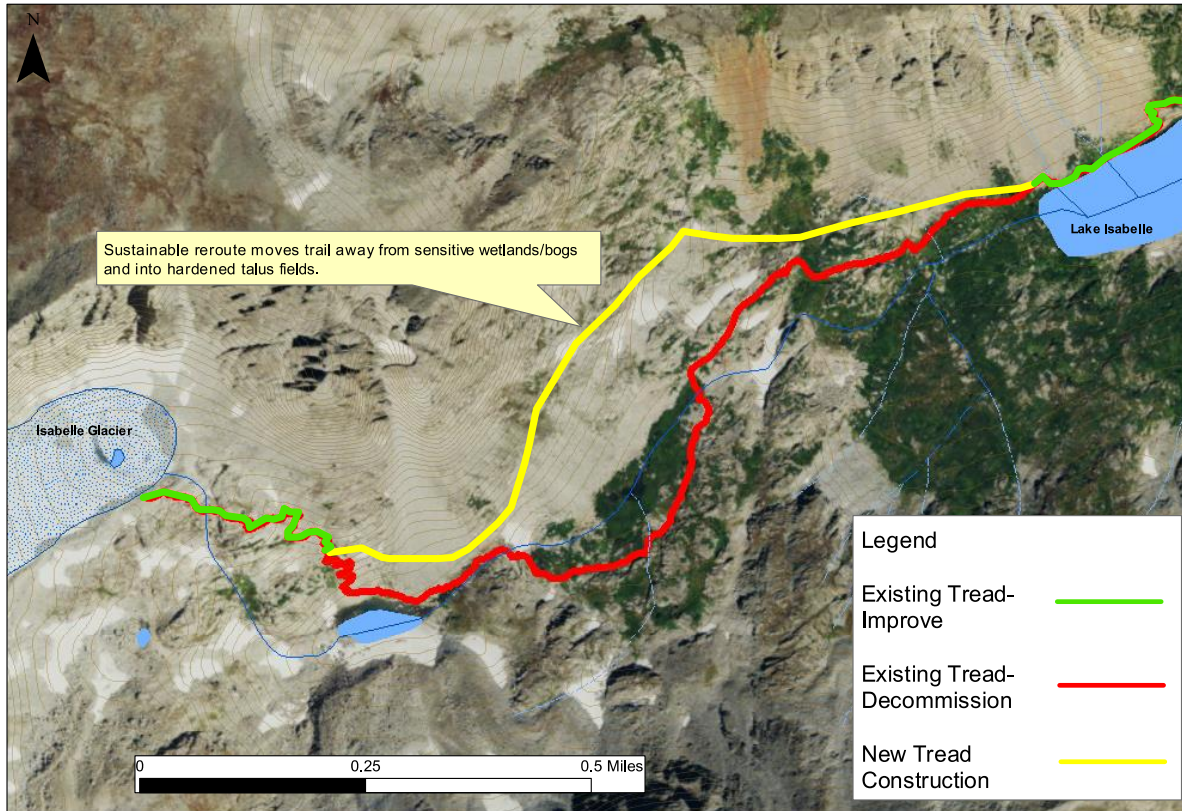


Figure 1

Project Outcomes

At the end of the project, 533 linear feet of durable and sustainable trail were built, including 250 ft² of retaining structure and 63 stone steps. Please see the full Work Metrics Section in **Appendix B**. Another 3-week session has been scheduled for 2022, in which FRCS plans to build the majority of the reroute, in hopes of completing construction during the 2022 field season.



Figure 2: RMC crew members shifting larger stones that would eventually become the retaining structure for the built trail.



Figure 3: BCC staff worked closely with RMC crew members to teach them masonry and trail skills.

Appendix A: Labor and Planning Hours

Labor Type	Hours
FRCS Paid Labor	480
FRCS Planning	15
RMC Youth Corps	560
Total	1,055

Appendix B: Complete 2020 Work Metrics

Project Outcome	Amount	Unit
Trail Improved	533	Linear ft
Rock Steps	63	#
Retaining Structure	250	Ft ²
Aggregate/ Crush Fill	1200	Ft ³