



## Bike Match Update 07.29.21 - Matthew Rochon

RCR's Bike Match is going on three months in operation as of this newsletter. To date, we've matched 28 bicycles, with more on the way. Huge THANK YOU to our volunteers, who have contributed nearly 50 hours of time receiving, repairing, and delivering bicycles. We have provided bicycles for local riders undergoing rehabilitation, commuting to work, pulling children and riding as a family on the Core Trail, and going off to college. We've also grown our partnerships and provided youth bicycles through Integrated Community, The Cycle Effect, Boys and Girls Club, Partners in Routt County, and the Winter Sports Club.

Although we've had success in our charter of getting bikes out of garages and under riders in our community, we are still working toward our vision of being a bicycle hub for our community. We still lack a permanent (or semi-permanent) space and we could always use more mechanics. We also continue to struggle a bit with ensuring that underserved populations know about our program.



Fortunately, we have plans for a temporary donated space planned to be available in the October/November timeframe. This will provide us the opportunity to host maintenance programs, will provide a space for group maintenance events, and will allow us to begin accepting donations of bikes that might be better suited for parts--which will allow us to fill parts bins and service more bikes with used, but serviceable parts to keep costs down and bikes safe. Continuing with the safety theme, several riders were provided helmets through Steamboat Roofing's "Hammers to Helmets" program; however, some of the recipients have been seen riding around town not wearing their new helmets. This simply highlights the need for more involvement and mentoring from the program,

something we're not currently resourced to do. Having a consistent place to hold follow-up educational events, where we can talk about trail etiquette, safety, and maintenance for bike recipients will greatly enhance our ability to better integrate new riders into our community.

Bike Match really has been a community effort and everyday we continue to be impressed with the generosity of our Routt County Riders. Though we have a growing group of mechanics, we could always use more volunteers. We have had several maintenance events, and they are growing in size. The first was hosted by Essam Welch at Iron Wheel Trading in Hayden--who provided serviceable used parts to keep our costs down--and the second was held at Lone Oak Studios, hosted by volunteer mechanic Theo Dexter. Food and drink were provided by Dude and Dan's and Ski Haus Liquor - New Belgium, respectively and we had a good time sharing knowledge and fixing bikes. We now have a cadre of about ten volunteers, led by Ty Ryland, who has personally repaired no less than 10 bicycles. Ideally, our volunteer mechanics will take a bike home, work on it at their leisure, and then return the bicycle to Bike Match when it is ready to ride. Parts are provided by the Bike Match program. We will continue to hold monthly maintenance events to learn from each other and network, as well as to catch up on any backlog maintenance, but the bulk of the repairs are being done through the generosity of mechanics who "adopt a bike."



Finally, we could use your help in getting the word out to those in our community that might not know about the Bike Match program. We have provided information on our program to Integrated Community and through their help, our bike request form is available in Spanish as well as English...and we've matched several bikes to requests in Spanish. We've also had a successful and growing partnership with The Cycle Effect, which provides the opportunity to ride and race mountain bikes for girls who would not have the resources to participate in the sport otherwise or who would gain from the physical, mental and emotional benefits of mountain biking. Additionally, the Boys and Girls Club, Partners in Routt County, and the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club have all helped connect riders needing bikes with donated bicycles. That said, we still have more bikes being donated than people requesting them, which speaks volumes to the generosity of our community, but we believe that there are still a lot of riders/potential riders that aren't riding because they don't have a bike and don't know about Bike Match.

Moving forward, we're thankful to Routt County for the overwhelming support of Bike Match, which makes us more certain than ever that this program provides an important and valuable service to our community. We intend to keep matching bikes, while looking for opportunities to mold this program into the community resource we envision. Our vision is to establish a bicycle hub that brings our cycling community together. This organization would ensure everyone in our community has access to a bike, a place to work on it, along with

the skills and knowledge to keep our bikes running safely and smoothly, coupled with an understanding of rules the road and trail use etiquette so that all of our trail/road users can happily share our wonderful Routt County resources without relying solely on our cars--or at the very least, keep the traffic down for those that must drive.

How to get involved: First, join Routt County Riders and encourage others to join as well. Our collective voice is louder as our membership grows. Curious what bikes we have? Our landing page is live.

<https://routtcountyriders.org/bikematch/>. You can also reach out to [matthew@routtcountyriders.org](mailto:matthew@routtcountyriders.org) if you'd like to donate a bike or get more involved with our program. Freedom - Fun - Transportation - Recreation - Bike Match!!!