

Silverton Celebrates the Long-Awaited Opening of Baker's Park Trails

By Lisa Branner

Silverton's trail community finally got the celebration it had been waiting for. On Saturday, August 23, locals and visitors of all ages came together for the grand opening of the Baker's Park Trail System—an event originally planned for last fall but postponed when an early snowstorm closed the new trails.

Although the first 7-mile loop quietly opened in October 2024 and quickly became a favorite for hikers, runners, and bikers, Saturday marked the first chance for the community to celebrate together. More than 40 people joined the all-ages hike/run/ride, braving a heavy afternoon downpour that left everyone soaked but smiling. The rain gave way to an evening of food trucks, local drinks, and live music in Anesi Park, where Telluride jam band Joint Point headlined a festive community concert.

The Baker's Park system is the first purpose-built trail network in San Juan County—a vision more than a decade in the making. Once complete, the 30-mile system of natural-surface trails will offer something for every age and ability, while balancing recreation with protection of the fragile alpine landscape.

At the heart of the project is the Silverton Singletrack Society (SSS), a volunteer-led nonprofit that has carried the effort from concept to reality. SSS coordinated the planning, approvals, construction, and fundraising that have made Baker's Park possible—raising more than \$1 million to date, including a pivotal \$750,000 Community Impact Program Grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). Saturday's event celebrated both the

milestone of the first trail opening and the promise of future growth secured by the GOCO award. It also honored the perseverance and dedication of SSS, with partner organizations commending the group's tireless commitment to seeing the project through.

The event also highlighted the broad coalition of partners that has sustained the project: San Juan County, the Bureau of Land Management, the Town of Silverton, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, Southwest Conservation Corps, the Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry, and GOCO. Each has contributed expertise, oversight, labor, or funding, while local volunteers have pitched in at trail work days and helped maintain the new system.

"This has truly been a community-driven project," said SSS President Klem Branner. "We've had incredible support from our partners, as well as from the people of Silverton who believed in the vision and worked hard to make it happen."

While the first 7 miles are now open, work continues behind the scenes. This summer's focus was refining existing trails and preparing for the next phase of growth. IMBA staff are flagging more than 20 miles of new trail alignments and will produce Phase 2 and 3 design briefs. Pending BLM approval following cultural and biological reviews, these trails could be shovel-ready by next spring. Construction of Phase 2—adding another 10.7 miles—is slated to begin in May 2026.

Already, Baker's Park is reshaping recreation in Silverton. Families are walking and biking close to town, runners are training on the loop, and visitors are extending their stays to include trail time.



Group of local mountain bikers look at map of future Bakers Park Trails .



Klem Branner presents at Anesi Park Celebration of opening of Bakers Park.

Beyond recreation, the project is strengthening Silverton's outdoor economy, creating opportunities for local busi-

nesses while giving residents a free, close-to-home way to connect with the mountains.

As the last chords of Joint Point's set drifted into the night, the mood was unmistakable: gratitude, pride, and anticipation. For a town that has long dreamed of sustainable trails, Baker's Park is more than a network of paths—it's a shared accom-

plishment and a promise of adventures yet to come.

Support the Trails

Want to help Baker's Park continue to grow? Contribute to the Boost Baker's Park Go-FundMe campaign: www.gofundme.com/f/bakers-park. Every donation goes directly toward trail construction and maintenance.



Photo by Cracked Compass Photography

Silverton Singletrack held celebration party in Anesi Park after a group ride on Bakers Park trails.



Photo by Cracked Compass Photography

Pinto boys Griff & Talon ride Bakers Park with group last Saturday.