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 Subject: Hike down Dead Indian Hill wagon trail - Wednesday 16 September
 X-Attachments: D:\Maps\Hikes\2026-09-16 DIH Wagon Trail\DIH Wagon Trail Map.pdf;

Hello hikers -

Planned for Wednesday 16 September (the tentative plan was for Friday 18 September but now NOAA is predicting 70% chance of precipitation that day) is a shuttle hike down the legendary Dead Indian Hill wagon trail that was part of the route to Sunlight, Crandall, and Cooke City from the 1870s until around 1912 when the original graded road down the hill was completed. Freight wagons going down this hill would drag good-sized trees with branches on to control their descent. Some of those drag trees are still visible toward the bottom of the hill more than 100 years later.

As of right now, NOAA predicts sunny with a high of near 55 degrees F, with light and variable wind in the area on 16 September.

Sunlight residents (and geologists) Hank Heasler and Cheryl Jaworowski have been researching this trail for several years and have agreed to be tour guides.

This leisurely hike will begin at the Dead Indian Summit viewing area and end where the trail crossed Dead Indian Creek near the present campground. The attached PDF shows the route as a solid red line.

There will be about 2,000 feet elevation change in a bit over two miles. The highway backslopes where the wagon trail crosses Wyoming Highway 296 (Chief Joseph Highway) are the steepest parts of the route and call for caution for those short distances. No guarantees, but my memory from last fall tells me there is very little if any deadfall timber across the trail.

If anyone is interested in participating but concerned about the elevation change, it will be easy to park (or be dropped off) at the lowest southern switchback (by the "296" in a circle on the map) and join the group for the final portion of the wagon trail. There is good parking along the highway and since the trail is well out of the trees and in the wide open there we will be hard to miss. Most of the drag trees are along this lower portion, of course.

Because this trail is on the west side of a steep hill it will be in shadow until well into the morning. No need for an early start!

Those coming from the Cody / Powell area will meet at the Cody Law Enforcement Center at 0900 hrs to arrange carpooling. That should put us to the summit around 0930, where we will likely unload some passengers. Then we will drive to the parking loop just east of the Dead Indian Campground and leave vehicles for the return trip. We will pick up at least two and perhaps more passengers coming from the Sunlight / Crandall area, go back to the summit, and should be on the trail around 1000 hrs. I will bring the Suburban.

Bring what you need, including water, lunch, bear spray, trekking poles, rain gear, etc. There is an archery deer season in the area; rifle season for deer and elk begins 01 October.

Please respond by "Reply All" if you plan to participate. Feel free to contact me with any questions, suggestions, etc. Thanks, hope you can come along!

Because this will be a fairly short hike there will be plenty of time for walking the lower part of the original graded road (completed in 1909 and used until 1961 - the solid blue line on the map), checking out the new mountain-bike trails and cross-country-ski trails being developed by the Friends of Shoshone Trails group in the upper Paint Creek area, visiting Sunlight Falls, or whatever else the group would like to do.

Glenn Borkenhagen
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