

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Former Olympian Hired by Seeley Lake Nordic Steering Committee

Seeley Lake, MT - February 8, 2011

Olympian and Nordic ski trail designer John Morton of Morton Trails was recently in Seeley Lake to assess the potential of Seeley Lake's Nordic trails. Morton Trails teamed with local firm CTA Architects and Engineers and was selected through a competitive bidding process to perform a Nordic events and training center feasibility study for Seeley Lake. The team was selected by Seeley Lake's Nordic Challenge Steering Committee, a group representing various interests in the community. The committee was very pleased with the Morton/CTA proposal and is excited to have the team on board.

The Nordic Challenge Steering Committee hosted introductions and a local tour of Nordic ski facilities for the project team. The principals of the company John Morton and David Lindahl (a former competitive masters cross country racer with a Ph.D. in economic geography) spent three days in the area evaluating the Seeley Lake ski trails, learning about the community and gathering economic data. Team member Jeff Crouch with CTA of Missoula was also in Seeley Lake for the tour. Mr. Crouch has played a significant role in developing sport events in the region.

The Nordic ski community has already proven its ability to host very successful winter events including the Annual Over Seeley Creeks and Ridges (OSCR) cross country ski race and the Seeley Lake Biathlon. These events take place on an acclaimed Nordic trails system built and maintained through thousands of hours of community support. A portion of these trails are also incorporated in the Annual Race to the Sky sled dog event, a qualifier for the Iditarod.

The feasibility study will both assess Seeley Lake's ability to attract skiers and analyze the related benefits of a Nordic center on the local economy. The idea for the project arose from the reported success of similar rural communities in Maine and Washington, now supported by similar Nordic ski centers. The feasibility study will supply economic, market, technical, financial, and management analysis specific to Seeley Lake.

Morton remarks, "The Seeley Lake Nordic trails have a great start toward a course that could attract national attention. National and international race venues can be built within very small areas." For instance, the Vancouver Olympic trails for Nordic skiing (10 km) and the Biathlon trail (5 km) were constructed within one square kilometer of hillside offering tremendous on-site spectator access, as well as spectacular television coverage. "The Seeley Creek Nordic Trails area is already large enough for the additional work required for an outstanding race venue," Morton continued. "The Seeley Creek Trails are exceptional, having been originally designed by ex-Olympian Jon Elliott." The Feasibility Study will be completed and presented to the Nordic Challenge Steering Committee this spring.

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The project concept developed out of a need to create year round economic stability for the Seeley Lake community and is supported by a group of representatives from the Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation, the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc., Missoula County Rural Initiatives, and the State Department of Commerce. For more information on the Seeley Lake Nordic trail project, contact Marcy Allen, Bitter Root Economic Development District Executive Director.

Resources:

<http://www.mortontrails.com/>

<http://seeeylakenordic.org/>

Similar Communities:

http://www.mainewsc.org/about_economic.html

<http://www.mvnordic.com/>

About BREDD, Inc

The mission of the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc. is to accelerate the conservation, development, and utilization of natural and human resources to improve the level of economic activity, and to enhance environment, quality of life and standard of living in Mineral, Missoula and Ravalli Counties, Montana. BREDD, Inc receives funding for our work from Regional Partners and U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

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