

Leadership in Government

Ada County Parks and Waterways Warm Springs and Penitentiary Canal Greenbelt Pathways

The Warm Springs and Penitentiary Canal Pathways project rebuilt nearly 1.14 miles of the Boise River Greenbelt between the Warm Springs Golf Course and the East Park Center Bridge and another 1.3 miles between Shakespeare Way and the Diversion Dam.

The pathways were over 30 years old and in dire need of reconstruction. Paralleling the open Penitentiary Canal, these pathways were narrow, sloping towards the water, and crumbling away in many places – posing a safety hazard for walkers and bikers.

The project scope determined that piping the waters of the Penitentiary Canal underground created room for a wider and safer path for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. While choosing to pipe the waterway increased costs due to federal requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Ada County Board of Commissioners, through the use of foregone taxes, was able to accommodate the increased construction costs and keep the project on schedule.

In addition, completion of this reconstruction project was contingent on effective collaboration with the US Bureau of Reclamation and Boise Project Board of Control, involving multiple site walkthroughs, evaluations, and coordination meetings.

The reconstructed pathways were completed in summer 2018 and serve as a much needed regional connection to open space, natural resources, and trails for commuters and recreational users alike, promoting increased public health and quality of life.