

**Sally's Y blazing new bike trails**

by: Sarah Melton  
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**ABOVE: Ron Johnston, (right), Operational Vice President of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte uses a chainsaw the clear a path that will be uses for the Sally's Y Bike Trail in Denver. BELOW: Keith Isenberg, owner Blood Swear and Gears Cycle Shop in Denver uses a skid-stir to clear a path for the Sally's Y Bike Trail in Denver. Seth Mabry / LTN Photo**



Volunteers have spent the past several weekends cutting the new bike trails at Sally's Y, the first YMCA in east Lincoln County.

When completed, the Sally's Y will be located off Optimist Club Road and the new N.C. 16. The trails, roughly six to eight miles, will take up 85 of the 160 acres.

Part of the Sally's Y trails, at least one mile, will be deemed part of the Carolina Thread Trail, which will span 15 counties in North Carolina.

The Sally's Y trails will be wider than most trails for multiple uses, such as biking, hiking, running and walking. The land is mostly flat, but the trail will have a few hills.

Keith Isenberg, co-owner of Blood, Sweat and Gears Cycle and Skate Shop, has spearheaded the efforts to build the Sally's Y trails.

He was also responsible for creating the Denver Cross Country Trail at the old R-anell Homes manufacturing facility in Denver. The three-mile trail cost only a few hundred dollars to create

Clearing the Sally's Y path has had some challenges. Volunteers are wrangling with thick undergrowth, dense vegetation and poison ivy.

"It's going to take a lot of work to get that trail in there," Isenberg said. "It's not going to be easy. It is property that has not been used for anything other than hunting."

The trails will require little funding, except for a bridge that will need to be built over Forney Creek. Other possible expenses would go toward improving the surface of the main trail and equipment.

"We want it to be a natural area," Isenberg said. "That is the beauty of a mountain bike trail. It is very low impact on the environment."

So far, Isenberg and his volunteers have completed about one mile of trail, but need at least 3.1 miles for its Sally's Y Bicycle Ride and 5K Run on April 25.

Ron Johnston, operational vice president of the Lincoln County YMCA and Sally's Y, is extremely grateful to Isenberg and the volunteers for putting so much effort into building the trails.

"Keith has been so passionate about the hiking and biking trails," he said. "He has been the energy that has moved the project to the point where we are out there cutting trail."

Besides energy, Isenberg has used his own money to purchase some of the equipment needed for the work. He has the expertise, and many friends, to help do the job.

"They are out there cutting limbs, raking dirt, cutting roots out of the ground and just really doing the back-breaking work," Johnston said.

Volunteers typically work on the trails Sunday afternoons. If you would like to help, contact Keith Isenberg at 704-822-8803.

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