



June 2000 Foothills Newsletter

President's Message

Shared courtesy means shared trail enjoyment for all!

Whenever I walk or ride our Foothills Trail, or indeed any similar well used trail, I am gratified to note how responsible most people are about litter, and about their animals. Unfortunately, however, there are always the few who leave their mark, or choose not to observe trail rules or even common courtesy. This has moved two of our members who represent special trail constituencies--road cyclists and equestrians--to elaborate their concerns in separate articles elsewhere in this issue. This moves me to speak to the few dog owners who do not stoop to clean up their animals' toilet droppings, or observe the posted leash law. There really isn't much to say about the droppings except "PLEASE CLEAN THEM UP!" A plastic bag inverted over the hand like a glove makes this a pretty simple and sanitary chore. Imagine what kind of a trail experience it would be if all dog owners neglected this common courtesy.

The practice of allowing dogs off leash is another matter. I do not know how many times I have politely reminded dog owners that their animal should be on leash, only to have them pull a leash from their pocket to assure me that they were aware. In the pocket does not count! While some dogs may be well trained, under voice control and well behaved, this is not always the case. There is no way to justify exceptions. Recently a trail neighbor complained to me that dogs off leash had on different occasions sported into her pasture and chased and harassed her livestock. In another instance my own five-year-old granddaughter became terrified when approached by an off leash dog twice her size. On another occasion one of our board members, a sturdy lady with dogs and horses of her own, was yanked to the ground when her animal on leash was challenged by a small unrestrained terrier.

I can appreciate that people like to let their dogs run off leash when they can, but this trail is not the place. One lady, when approached, responded that she only let her dog off leash when nobody was around. I guess that made me a nobody!

I have yet to meet anyone using the trail who does not love it. Love should equal respect, including respect for one another as fellow trail users. Respect requires courtesy, and shared courtesy does mean shared trail enjoyment for all.

ACTION ALERT

The US Department of Transportation recently released "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach". The League of American Bicyclists encourages you to take a copy of this very positive policy statement to your city, county and state government and ask them to adopt it.

You can download the document at:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/Design.htm>.

The first line of the document reads: "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach" is a policy statement adopted by the United States Department of Transportation. USDOT hopes that public agencies, professional associations, advocacy groups, and others adopt this approach as a way of committing themselves to integrating bicycling and walking into the transportation mainstream."

Bicyclists all around the country need to work together to make this statement a reality. Your help is important because some local authorities are pressuring FHWA to back away from its own policy.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As a first step, please write to Administrator Wykle of the Federal Highway Administration and tell him that you think the new policy is an excellent vision for future of transportation. Please send copies of your letter to League of American Bicyclists and our friend on Capitol Hill Congressman James L. Oberstar.

Live better by using trails

A recent study by Dr. Ross C. Brownson and colleagues of the Saint Louis University School of Public Health in Missouri found that adding new public walking trails may entice more people to get out and exercise.

Researchers found that a relatively small percentage of the population surveyed is meeting current public health recommendations for moderate exercise such as walking. About 20 percent of those surveyed were regular walkers, noted the study authors. The investigators found that overall, 45 percent of adults had walked for exercise in the previous month, and 20 percent walked regularly (defined as five or more times per week for 30-minute periods). Although one third of the group that was interviewed had access to a trail, only 39 percent of that group used it. However, more than half (55 percent) of those who used the trails reported walking more since they began using the trails.

Women and people with lower income and education levels were more likely than others to up their walking time since they began using the trails. Walking trails are a relatively inexpensive way to get people moving, the authors conclude in the study, which was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Health.

"Much more work is needed on ways to actively promote trail use and in determining whether there are longer-term effects on walking behavior among subgroups at highest risk of sedentary lifestyles," Brownson concluded. (American Journal of Preventative Medicine 2000;18)

We are looking for wetlands:

We are required to replace any wetland, however small, which may be eliminated in the conversion of the railbed to a trail. This must be done by converting non-wetland to wetland and maintaining it as such indefinitely. That requires finding and purchasing dry land with freshwater access, flooding it, and assuring that it remains a wetland in perpetuity. As you can imagine, this is a major problem. We must replace very little wetland, but the cost and time required to do so is significant.

Readers having any information concerning properties suitable for conversion to wetlands are asked to call 253-841-2570, or write to P.O. Box 192, Puyallup, WA 98371.

Trail serves special needs

We were recently pleased to discover that the SKIFORALL Foundation has scheduled two events this summer on the Foothills Trail. The SKIFORALL Foundation has, since 1979, been providing year-round instruction and opportunities for people with special needs to enjoy typical Northwest outdoor recreational pursuits. Cycling events using adaptive cycles and tandems are scheduled for the Foothills Trail on June 24 and September 17.

Persons wishing more information on these events, including those wishing to volunteer their assistance, may call 425-462-0978 or email info@skiforall.org.

Annual auction changes date

The Foothills Trail Halloween Auction will be October 14 and not October 28 as previously announced. It seems that the Liberty Theater had errantly double booked that evening and had to honor the earlier party. The site, the date and the auctioneer are now

secure so please mark your calendar for October 14, and prepare to party! Also, please assist us with auction items. We are looking for approximately 30 items for the auctioneer and any number of silent auction items. Please see the April issue of the Trail Line News for auction ideas. If you have an item to contribute, please call our voice mail at 253-841-2570 and leave a message.

Meet your board

Chuck Morrison is a new board member and is not only a can do, but also a will do person. He is one of those people who come out of the blue when least expected to help breathe new life into an organization. Such was the case when your president received a call about two years ago.

"Ernie, I have been a member of the Foothills Trail Coalition for some years, but would like now to become more involved." And involved he became. Chuck, a former container freight manager for SeaLand Co. and recently semi retired, began attending regular trail meetings and volunteering for committee and task leaderships at the drop of a suggestion. He is currently working on trail signage, mile markers, rest stop rock arrangements and, together with Randy Holmes, work party coordination. He and his wife Mary, and other family members, were also very active in last year's trail auction. One of Chuck's passions is railroad history and another is "bents." He owns two recumbent bicycles, and is a member of the Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club. Obviously these two passions, along with Chuck's zeal for volunteerism made him an ideal candidate to become one of the Coalition's newest board members. Chuck is also president-elect for the Orting Kiwanis Club.

Like the rest of us he is in love with the trail, and his fondest dream is to share it with as many people as possible by finding a location and establishing a bicycle rental/sales/storage business, in (where else?) but Orting.

Next issue features another new board member--equestrian Linda Clark of South Prairie.

Want more trails? A tax to tell about

A very important bill was passed out of the 2000 Washington State Legislature. The bill was EHB 3105 entitled Metropolitan Park Districts-Sales and Use Tax. The bill allows that the Pierce County Council, the Tacoma City Council and the Board of the Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma may jointly place a measure before the voters of Pierce County to approve a sales tax increase for zoos, aquaria, wildlife preserves and regional parks. The three elected bodies are all moving forward to get this proposal to a vote. The targeted ballot date is Tuesday, September 19. Less than four months away!

What the voters will be asked to approve is a Pierce County sales tax increase of one tenth of one percent (\$0.001). This does not affect any other county in the state. The amount anticipated for collection is about \$8,500,000 in the first year, and projected to grow at about four percent a year thereafter. The ballot proposition requires a simple majority vote (50 percent plus one) for passage. The money received from this tax may solely be used for public park facilities.

You might recall that last year there was a considerable debate regarding this same measure. If this proposition would have been submitted to the voters and approved in 1999, all of the proceeds would have been directed to the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium and to the Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. The Pierce County Council chose instead to ask the state legislature to amend the bill to include other parks throughout Pierce County. The bill was amended, so now all of the cities and towns and the unincorporated areas of Pierce County will share in the revenue.

The formula for the distribution of revenue is as follows: the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium and the Northwest Trek Wildlife Park will receive 50 percent of the total, or about \$4,250,000 the first year. Each municipality in the county would receive a percentage of the other 49 percent determined by population. (One percent is normally deducted for tax collection and accounting, but this bill differs in a way to be explained later.) For example, Puyallup with a population of 30,740 is 4.4 percent of the 700,000 people in Pierce County. Their first year distribution would be \$190,219. Orting has a population of 3,825 which is 0.5 percent of the total. Revenue due them in year one would be \$23,669. There are about 316,500 people living in unincorporated Pierce County which is 45 percent of the county's population. Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department would receive just over \$1,927,000 as its percentage. Remember also that these dollar estimates are forecast to increase by four percent each year. The parks and trails in every community in the county will benefit from this tax measure.

There is one tiny quirk in the bill that merits an explanation. It is the practice of the State of Washington, Department of Revenue, which manages the tax collection systems in the state, to withhold a minimum of ten percent for administration. In this bill, however, the ten percent will be distributed to the state department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) [to provide community-based housing for persons who are mentally ill]. State Senator Lorraine Wojahn was able to insert this clause to satisfy some of her personal issues with the bill. There is no net loss of money for parks because of this condition.

The Foothills Trail, along with the Cushman Powerline Trail, The Puyallup River Levee Trail, the Puyallup Riverwalk and many other trail projects in Sumner, Milton, Fife, Tacoma and elsewhere in Pierce County would be eligible for funding from this tax measure. This is a huge opportunity for trail users and supporters in Pierce County. Please share this information with your friends and fellow trail supporters, and encourage them to vote on September 19.

Just when we thought we had heard them all!

People are often surprised when they learn of the opposition that the Foothills Trail encountered during its early days, and still encounters in areas yet to be built. "Why would anyone be against a trail?" The following comments recently were posted on the Internet regarding surveys and community meetings in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida--all of which, by the way, have many popular rail-trails in place. Samples do not always sell the product!

Cumberland County (PA) Greenway study.

"They did a mail survey about citizens' attitudes toward greenways. As usual there was overwhelming support. But, also, as usual, there were a few objections. I'm sure you've heard most of them before (I left the best for last)."

Stop wasting hard-earned tax dollars

Another infringement on individual rights

[I] own a farm; do not want people using my land

Few people would benefit from this but many will have to support it financially

No need for this project

Spend our money on important issues

Trail projects have produced negative factors

There are enough parks around. No need for more!

Against greenways; no time to use them and would only be for rich people

We have too much playing. We should be teaching young people responsibility and not depending on the state or government. Protect private property. When you make trails you are making opportunities for rape and murder. No more socialism.

I would oppose any control of such corridors by the United Nations.

[Well, I certainly hope RTC President Dave Burwell remembers this the next time he addresses the UN!]

Ohio

"How about these written objections I've received in mail just in the last few days from comment forms provided at a public meeting in one of the most influential neighborhoods in our area. This corridor is 100 yards from their property lines."

We would like to address the proposed bike and hike trail along the power line easement. . . We do not understand why you would want a bike and hike trail in a residential neighborhood. . . We are concerned that a walking/biking trail will create a place for people to come and congregate and lead people to our homes. This will create an easier way for people to vandalize our properties.

We can drive to a trail if we want to walk.

Cows and horses can bite and kick. They are also valuable! [A new cartoon opportunity for those with an artistic flair. Forget the TVs, these bikers are going to steal my cows.]

Akron is one of the top urban sprawl areas in the country. We must stop this urban sprawl. [Yes, they are referring to a trail that would link schools, commercial and residential areas.]

What is all this warm and fuzzy bikeway baloney?

Nice presentation but get out and stay away! We will drive wherever we want to go.

Submitted by Dave Whited of Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, Ohio

Palm Bay, Florida

I don't want to look at some mother pushing a stroller behind my house.

This is a question of wants versus needs; they just want a trail there, while we have a need to keep our view the way it was when we bought our place. [Needs, in the classical sense refer to food, air, shelter, etc.]

There are trails other places in the county that you can go to for bicycling.

We don't see why a few people who want to ride bicycles should interfere with us homeowners.

Property dispute decision delayed

No decision was reached on Friday, May 19, the day when a summary judgment was sought before Superior Court Judge Rudy Tollefson as to the ownership of two trail

parcels. These parcels are claimed by both the Foothills Trail Coalition and historic trail adversary Mary Harris. Ms. Harris claims ownership via quiet title, while the Foothills Trail Coalition possesses a quit claim deed for the property granted to us in 1994 by the original and rightful owners. A related quiet title claim involving another party was previously and unsuccessfully pursued by Ms. Harris clear to the United States Supreme Court. Both properties involved a common seller. In court Ms. Harris's attorney successfully convinced the judge that there is, at this time, no basis for summary judgment unless the Coalition files a counterclaim for quiet title against Ms. Harris. Our attorney has now initiated this claim and the case will be heard in trial before Judge Tollefson in September. Until a decision is rendered, and Pierce County knows whom to pay, trail construction cannot proceed beyond where the pavement now ends at the Wetlands Bridge. Should the Coalition prevail we will use our payment for the property to advance the trail.

In addition to her claim of quiet title, Ms. Harris is also trying to claim adverse possession by asserting that she has been effectively the sole user and custodian of the property since prior to 1994. In fact, the unimproved section of trail beyond the Wetlands Bridge and continuing southward beyond crossing Arline Road has been in constant and uninterrupted use by the public and the Coalition since the rails and ties were removed in 1986.

This is where you can help. If at any time since 1994 you have traveled south on the Foothills Trail more than a half mile from where the pavement now ends, we would appreciate knowing so that we can better document our case. Please call our hotline at 253-841-2570, or email details to bugtrail@aol.com.

An equestrian speaks

by Linda Clark

As an avid equestrian, I am truly excited about the inclusion of horses on the Foothills Trail. Through cooperative efforts we equestrians are dedicated to improving and enhancing the experience for all users of the trail.

While riding the trail recently, I have noticed a few horses being ridden on the asphalt surface. I would like to express my concern of the risk involved in riding on that hard surface. A shod horse and the asphalt surface make a slick combination. All riders are aware that choke points like bridges exist. Other than those, horses should be ridden alongside the trail surface. The county with the Coalition's guidance has afforded strips on either side of the pavement. This is a better surface for horses' footing. Trail etiquette is such that horses should be ridden off the asphalt.

I would also like to acknowledge and support the courtesy of cleaning up after your own horse while using the trail. Please kick the manure off the side of the trail.

Our future in sharing the use of this park is only enhanced by following some reasonable effort on our behalf. Let's be a positive wave for the equestrians of the future.

If you would like to be involved in future equestrian planning, such as a trailer ramp along the park, please contact this author at 360-897-6163

Bicycles and cars--same roads, same rights, same rules

Taking the highway

by Carla A. Gramlich

A number of years ago I was in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and was going to ride my bicycle to Spokane and back. I managed to find the trail in Coeur d'Alene and started west toward Spokane. Shortly after leaving town, the trail ended. There was a missing link between Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls. I checked a map and found a road that would get me over to Post Falls.

While traveling on this wide road, a truck went by blasting his horn and telling me to get on the trail. My reply to myself, since he was long gone, was, "Could you tell me were I could pick up the trail?"

I tell this story because bicyclists are experiencing similar incidents in the Orting Valley. As an ardent trail supporter over the years I never understood why bicyclists would be against trails. These incidents are giving support to an anti-trail attitude among cyclists, which I hope to diffuse. I am a cyclist who loves to take to any paved trail and experience the joy of other users. On a recent sunny Sunday I was enthralled to see the many types of users enjoying the Foothills Trail as I headed back into Orting. On the other hand, some of my fellow cyclists felt on this busy Sunday afternoon that we should take to the highway.

A highway or a nice quiet trail? Why would anyone in his or her right mind choose the highway? The reason is that the Foothills Trail, on nice days, is becoming like the bicycle highway up north known as the Burke-Gilman Trail. On a sunny weekend afternoon the demand on these trails is pushing some users onto the highway. Thankfully it is the fast cyclists and not the young mothers pushing strollers that are heading to the highway.

Currently the Foothills Trail has a speed limit of ten mph. If the winds are favorable, most cyclists can reach a speed of 20 mph without trying very hard. This would put the cyclist in jeopardy of receiving a \$1,000 fine according to the rules of Pierce County.

Now I really don't think that there will be radar on this trail to catch anyone going over ten mph, but it has been done on other trails. However, the potential for injury is great with a cyclist traveling over 20 mph and passing other users going five mph. This is why

I support keeping speeds low on the trail and for users to use some common sense. On days when the trail isn't busy, cyclists can cruise safely along and slow down when they encounter other users. On days like the Sunday above, cyclists may have to keep speeds lower than ten mph to accommodate other trail users.

If a cyclist should have an accident on the trail while going over the speed limit of ten mph, I would hold the cyclist responsible. If you agree with this statement, then you can begin to understand why some cyclists prefer the highway. Fast bicyclists do not belong on the trail.

Another reason for taking the highway is that the trail basically doesn't go anywhere, yet. Some cyclists have graduated to longer trips, over 15 miles. With a little dedication some of these cyclists will leave the trail and travel farther into Pierce County. Some motorists will never comprehend that riding 50 miles is fun and can be done. I realize that taking the road and going farther than what the Foothills Trail allows is not for everyone, but I will support and try to help improve the roadway for cyclists to have that opportunity.

I believe that some communities are realizing that highway bicyclists can be beneficial for their communities. On our 50-mile trip that day, the group easily dropped \$100 in purchases for lunch, coffee and lattes. If we had only gone 15 miles, that figure might have been lower. The group got some exercise without causing air pollution and the community took in some money. That could make some communities start to encourage more cyclists like the State of Oregon has done by improving the highway along the coast. People come from all over the world to bicycle down the Oregon Coast. Communities encourage and appreciate the cyclists and it isn't because of our funny outfits.

The trail is a terrific asset to the Orting Valley and the local bicyclists have been great supporters of that project. Because it is highly unlikely that a separate path will be built all over Pierce County, drivers and bicyclists have to learn to share the roadway. My dream is that motorists will wave with all fingers when they safely pass me on the rural roads of Pierce County.

[Views are the author's own and not necessarily shared by the Foothills Coalition.]

The bridge that Murphy built!

We have all heard of Murphy's Law. Well, Murphy and his gremlins were certainly out in force the weekend of May 5. That was the day that the Carbon River Railroad Bridge between Orting and South Prairie was to be redecked. The weather was ideal, the materials were purchased, the food was planned and the Tacoma Pile Drivers had once again volunteered their services. A couple of years earlier the pile drivers had decked the Puyallup River Bridge at McMillin with time to spare. So, what went wrong?

First a bit of history. The salvage company that removed the railroad ties and rails in 1986 offered to spare the Carbon River Bridge, along with several others for possible trail use. The county was not yet in a position to buy, so the Coalition offered to purchase the bridges from Burlington Northern Railroad to relieve them of liability. Burlington Northern, however, would only consider selling to the county. It next developed that adjoining landowners claimed the bridges by virtue of the footings and abutments upon which the bridges sat. There were seven claimants in the case of the Carbon River Bridge. The county could only acquire the bridges by condemning the related properties, but at the time had neither the money nor an ordinance to condemn. As trail opponents were seeking a means to destroy the Carbon River Bridge, heavy winter floods washed out the SR 162 highway bridge immediately downstream thus completely cutting off traffic between Orting and South Prairie. As an emergency measure the Washington Department of Transportation arranged with trail-opposing landowners to deck and use the railroad bridge as an alternate until a new highway bridge could be built. Opponents agreed on the condition that all decking and improvements would be ripped out once the highway bridge was replaced.

Once highway traffic resumed and as the deadline for dismantling the bridge improvements neared, Pierce County Trails Coordinator Claudia Peters was able to negotiate settlements with each of the purported claimants. The final deal was struck within hours of the scheduled dismantling.

Back to the present with Murphy waiting in the wings.

The original decking had been considered temporary and as such had been untreated lumber. It now had to be replaced in anticipation of the bridge being paved as an add-on to planned trail construction in South Prairie later this summer. The lumber, comprised of several thousand feet of 20-foot 4 by 12s, was scheduled to arrive on site by noon Friday. It did not and as Pierce County Parks Director Jan Wolcott was heading back to his office he passed the McMillin bridge only to see the last pallet being off loaded nearly seven miles north of its intended site. Once the lumber was relocated and a guard posted through the night, all was ready to go the next morning. Or was it?

The pile drivers showed up bright and early and raring to go, but where was the rental equipment they were to use? Turns out that it had gone way south, and was waiting at the Carbon River Highway Bridge at Fairfax near Carbonado! What is more, it turned out that critical pieces of equipment were not in proper working order. Needless to say, the work got started late and only a fraction of the bridge was completed. The lumber had to be guarded two more nights, and then hauled off for safe keeping for another month.

Next, to top it off Jan Wolcott informed us that the right of way permission from WSDOT that we had been waiting on for many months to proceed with the South Prairie Trailhead had just been denied. A technicality was blamed. It seems that three donation deeds for which the Coalition arranged and paid legal costs in 1992 were not acceptable. Donors, we were told, must be offered payment at appraised property value when federal funds are involved. As a result moneys originally granted for this trail section have been

ordered returned to the federal government. One more delay, and additional expense. How long a delay we do not yet know. Suffice it to say Murphy and his gremlins must be delighted with themselves.

Letters

Dear Trail Builders

In putting information together for income tax filing, I found that I had somehow failed to make a contribution to the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition for 1999. To remedy that situation, I am enclosing a check for \$100 for 1999-2000. I have heard and read wonderful things about the trail and your progress. Keep up the great work!

Best regards,

Charles Wilkinson

Foothills Trail a Millennium Trail:

The Foothills Trail was recently honored to be among 2,000 trails nationwide designated as "Community Millennium Trails" on June 3, National Trails Day.

The designation includes both a certificate signed by Hillary Rodham Clinton and a trail marker featuring a trail of red and white flag stripes that lead into a star-spangled blue background topped with the numerals 2000. The certificate reads, "The White House Millennium Council designates as a Millennium Trail - Foothills Trail - In recognition of efforts to bring the community together to 'Honor the Past--Imagine the Future' by developing a trail that connects people to their land, their history and their culture."

Both the certificate and the trail marker will be displayed at the McMillin Trailhead.

For more information on Millennium Trails please visit the official web site at www.millenniumtrails.org.