Along the Trail

by Julie Wiley, Coalition Member

He grew up in the big city of Chicago, spent 21 years serving in active duty in the Air Force, and then Froilan (Chico) Marin settled down in the Puyallup area working as the Facility Maintenance Supervisor at the Emerald Queen Casino. When he started experiencing health concerns, the doctors at the Veterans Administration Hospital diagnosed him with a blocked artery. They assured him that a simple surgical procedure would take care of the problem. During the simple procedure an artery collapsed, inducing a major heart attack. The heart attack was followed by a stroke, leaving him unable to walk and legally blind in both eyes.

When the V.A. failed to provide the necessary physical therapy to regain his independence, Froilan, assisted by his girlfriend, Lou Ann Voelker, set out to rehabilitate himself. Gripping both handles of his walker, Froilan practiced his first unassisted walk on the narrow road of a local cemetery which provided a flat, paved surface and safety from motor traffic and sidewalk curbs. After much practice, Froilan graduated to a cane.

I met up with the two of them along the public trail behind the Puyallup Fred Meyers. Froilan was 3 years into the rehabilitation process. Every morning, weather permitting, he and Lou Ann can be seen along the Puyallup Riverwalk Trail. Froilan instructs Lou Ann to keep her own pace, even if that means walking ahead of him. He knows the exact number of steps that it takes to get from the car to the entry of the trail. Froilan uses the shadows of Alders, firs and concrete strip mall buildings, the various angles in which the sunlight hits his face, and the rippling water of the river current to determine his coordinates. On his return trip, the sounds of grating wheels on concrete ramps and bickering teenage voices at the skate park confirm that his daily trek is almost complete. The trail has taught him to see and walk again. The trail supports and enables his independence.

President’s Message

by John Downs, Board President

Welcome to the summer edition, 2009, of the Trail Line News. The heart and soul of the Foothills Trail Coalition and its success is due to the many hours and years that individuals have donated to our mission. In lieu of mentioning names, I will say that several active members have been with the Coalition since its beginning 25 years ago, while the rest of us have joined along the way and become active as time and circumstances permit. Members of the Courtesy Patrol volunteer throughout the week, riding or walking the trail, talking with users, or assisting other organizations with their trail events. The Board of Directors meets monthly to guide the organization in its mission. Many members assist on work parties, special events, and other needs as they are identified. Our newly elected treasurer, with 40 years of accounting experience, is working diligently to streamline our accounting processes. For the Rainier to Ruston Relay and Ultra, our major fund raising event, to be successful, we need 85 volunteers – some for only race day or a few hours leading up to the race, while others work on the race all year. Other volunteers manage or staff our Western Washington Fair booth each fall.

Some folks have rather critical jobs that they have performed for years and have indicated that personal circumstances have

Continued on Page 4
Summary of Questionnaire Results
BY ED DAVIS, COALITION BOARD MEMBER

We wish to thank the more than 28 respondents who returned their questionnaires with their membership renewal forms. The top ten highlights of the respondents’ main comments are as follows, with the highest number of comments listed first and shown in decreasing order. There were a number of very good single comments that will be dealt with later in a more detailed report after more questionnaires are received.

1) Complete the section of the trail from the end of the Puyallup Riverwalk to the East Puyallup (Meeker) trailhead, and complete the trail connection from South Prairie to Buckley. (These two responses were about equal in number.)

2) Expand and improve the website to provide timely information to the membership regarding what trail sections are open and those that are closed, (e.g. washouts, etc.), including what is needed from the membership to assist in the Coalition.

3) Acquire rights-of-way for the sections of the trail to be extended, e.g. through the trailer park in South Prairie.

4) Keep up lobbying efforts to permit trail development through grants, donations, etc.

5) Complete the total trail from Mount Rainier to Ruston Way in Tacoma.

6) Work with adjacent counties and jurisdictions to connect the Foothills Trail to other trail networks.

7) Develop a program to get youth and families involved in the Coalition.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Mission:
The mission of the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition is to assist Pierce County communities in the creation, maintenance and usage of a connected system of non-motorized trails for healthier people from Mt. Rainier to Puget Sound.

Ads:
Business card ads are published for a fee of $25 per quarter or $100 for one year, paid in advance to the Coalition and sent to the Ad Manager, John Downs, P.O. Box 192, Puyallup, WA.

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Government Affairs Report

by Bob Myrick, Coalition Member

The Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club (TWBC) committee on government affairs met on Tuesday, April 7 at the Taqueria Guadalajara in the Stadium District at First and Tacoma Avenues. We met there again on Tuesday, May 5 at 6pm to carry on our agenda for 2009.

We discussed Dixie Gatchel’s and Buckley Mayor Pat Johnson’s recent trip to Washington D.C. to lobby for a model community Active Transportation grant of $50 million that might be available to a few communities in the near future. If we were lucky enough to get such a large grant, it would be used to complete a significant portion of the planned non-motorized trails in Pierce County as detailed in Dixie’s Case Statement on Active Transportation.

I told the group about my meeting with Chief Engineer Mark Johnson from Sound Transit to talk about their plans for the Sounder to go from Tacoma to Lakewood. As you may know, we are very interested, since six future trails converge on the Freighthouse Square area. The local community is concerned about plans to put the rail line on a large, raised berm. A Cascade Land Conservancy ad hoc group, Community Stewards, is studying the latest proposals. I met with Mark on April 14 and came away pretty satisfied that our trails are being given proper attention. The berm proposal only blocks off one street, so it doesn’t affect TWBC very much at all. There will be a post and beam rail structure for several hundred feet near Pacific Avenue that will become a defacto park area. In late May or early June, Sound Transit may be presenting their latest proposal down here in a public meeting. You should watch for it and try to attend the meeting and give your input.

Ralph reported on the progress of bike-related proposals at the state legislature. The Traffic-Actuated Signal bill for bicycles didn’t make the cut and the Three-Foot Passing Rule was in trouble. The Safe Routes to School funding was still alive. Now, the legislative session is closed and Safe Routes to School is currently shown on their website as “Del. to Gov.”

The group talked about a one hour presentation on KUOW radio that focused on bike transportation and the new book, Pedaling Revolution: How Cyclists Are Changing American Cities by Jeff Mapes. Portland was used as an example of a city that has been transformed in character by increasing everyday cycling to between 4 and 6 percent of daily trips. The author posits that this level of bike use changes the whole character of a city and contributes to traffic calming and livability.

On April 21, I went to a lunch meeting at the Pierce County Parks and Recreation office where the progress of the new Pierce County Trails Plan was presented. The consultants, MIG, have identified about 288 miles of possible trail in the County so at our present rate of construction, we might be finished in a little over 100 years. I think we all agreed that the trail plan will have to prioritize needed trails, and some of the trails would be soft surfaced. Funding will also be a big issue. Some thought needs to be directed to “how much trail do we need?” and “who should build it all?” For more information visit: http://www.piercetrailsplan.org/. See also the article in Networking for Trails.
changed and they need to be replaced. One extremely important task is maintaining the database of our members for accuracy. The importance of this is manifested in mailings to our members, including the newsletter and the annual membership appeal letter. We need someone to start working with our current database manager so they can assume responsibility by the end of the year.

We need someone to take over as the Editor of the Trail Line News. The present editor has served in this capacity for ten years. In the interim he has assumed other duties that, when combined, put him on overload. This position is listed on our website.

Respondents to our recent survey have made several suggestions to improve the organization, including periodic social gatherings. If someone would like to assist in this capacity, please let us know. And I would like to thank everyone who responded to the survey which is itself another example of volunteerism. A synopsis of the survey is found in this issue.

We need a volunteer to start working with our representative to the Western Washington Fair to learn the system and assist our present representative.

I have been approached by an organization in Orting to share office space with them. This office is located in downtown near the trail but is only open 20 hrs a week. It would be at no cost to us, but again would require volunteers to operate it. This option will be presented to the Board at the May meeting.

The Foothills Trail Coalition is built by many individuals working together. Some are active, some aren’t, some make a one time donation of time or money, while others support the Coalition by their continual activism. We all do what we can, because we all have a desire to improve outdoor recreation and healthy transportation opportunities in Pierce County and the Northwest.

**Memberships and Donations**

**by Loras Gassmann, Treasurer**

**Up to $29.00**


**$30 - $49**

The Hitching Post

by Jeanette Fohn, Coalition Board Member

Are you unsure of what to do when you encounter horses on the trail? The horse is a prey animal and has a very strong “fight or flight” response to danger. His biggest fear is that something is going to sneak up and attack him from behind. Even the best trained horse can react out of surprise and fear. Here are a few guidelines to help both you and the horse and rider with your next encounter.

Approaching: With a reassuring voice give an audible warning like, “Hello, coming up on your left.” Slow down and give plenty of room on the side you are approaching from.

Parking: We are working on getting horse trailer parking signs for appropriate trailheads. Trailers can park in the back of the McMillin trailhead, the gravel parking at the trailhead in Crocker, or between the fire station and the latte stand in So. Prairie. There is also horse trailer parking near the old Fitzler’s mill just south of Buckley on SR 165. Neither Buckley nor Puyallup allow horses inside their city limits.

Helmets: Helmets should be worn by equestrians just like cyclists. Unfortunately, we can’t enforce it, but we can encourage it. If your horse spooks and throws you off, you’ll be glad you were wearing a helmet.

Bridges: Trail signs say dismount. We are trying to get mounting blocks installed near bridges. In some cases, however, it may be safer to stay on. Who goes first? Please yield to horses.

Dogs: Trail rules require that dogs be on a leash. Loose dogs can frighten horses and make for a very dangerous situation.

Kids: Parents, please remind kids not to run up to horses. Tell them to walk slowly and ask the rider if it is OK to pet the horse. Teach them to always approach a horse from the front at an angle where the horse can easily see, never from behind.

Manure: This is a problem for equestrians as well as other trail users. Ideally, the dirt path to the side of the pavement should be wide enough that manure would never fall on the pavement. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and it is not always safe for the rider to dismount and kick manure off of the pavement. One option for equestrians is to obtain manure bags that attach to the horse’s tail. Equestrians, please try to keep on the dirt shoulder whenever possible or come back to clean up the manure if you can not dismount. Remember we share the trail with others!

Carts: Blinkers used on cart ponies severely restrict the horse’s vision to the side and he can’t see behind at all. The cart harness also restricts the horse’s movement which makes him feel even more vulnerable and more likely to bolt if frightened. Please be especially cautious when approaching a horse attached to a cart.

Thank you for sharing the trail with equestrians!

The reward of a thing well done
is to have done it.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson
Networking for Trails: Cushman Trail

Phase 2 of the Cushman Trail is a project in partnership with Pierce County, Tacoma Public Utilities and the City of Gig Harbor. The new trail extension will be 2 miles of 16-foot wide pervious asphalt with gravel shoulders on each side. This phase connects to the existing trail at the Pierce Transit Park & Ride on Kimball Drive and will end at 96th Street NW (off Burnham Drive). A new trailhead with restrooms and parking will be located at the end of Grandview Street. New crosswalks will be installed across Grandview, Foster and Rosedale Streets. The trail has a section between Foster Street and the Wilkinson Farm Park that is currently being constructed on a pin-pile bridge to minimize impacts to the wetland. The 39 Excelsius Cedars authorized by Tacoma Public Utilities to help screen the pedestrian bridge have been planted. Project completion is scheduled for late fall or early winter 2009. -by Marcos McGraw, Gig Harbor Project Engineer

The Cushman Trail pushes toward Gig Harbor’s Rosedale Avenue, soaring above rooftops on a wooden causeway to insure compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) grade requirements. Some trailside residents recently complained about the appearance of the unfinished structure and its effect upon their privacy. Pierce County Parks, the lead agency for the trail, has installed plantings which will substantially shield their view of the under-structure. - by Ernie Bay, President Emeritus

Edgewood Interurban Trail

by Diane Kerlin, Coalition Member

With a mid-May deadline the City of Edgewood is applying to the Pierce County Regional Council for transportation funds that would complete Phase I of the Edgewood portion of the Interurban Trail from 114th Ave. E. to Military Road.

When this portion of the trail was first cleared for design purposes, it was discovered that a large number of automobile tires had been dumped there and strewn along the area. They have apparently been there for a long time. Some are completely hidden under the dirt and vegetation along the trail corridor. I talked to Don Partington about a future work party to help get them unearthed and cleared out. Before this can happen we need to have a plan for disposal. The Edgewood Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is open to suggestions. If you have specific information on recyclers or anyone else that would take them off our hands, please contact me at drkerlin@comcast.net or call Bonnie at Edgewood City Hall, 253-952-3299.

Puyallup Riverwalk

by Ernie Bay, President Emeritus

The long-awaited connection between Puyallup’s Riverwalk and the Foothills Trail may have to wait a little longer. While most right-of-way issues have been resolved, negotiations with at least one property owner are stalemated pending the finalization, possibly this fall, of land use plans for the annexation of the area involved. Meanwhile, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad has agreed to allow the trail to proceed beneath its trestle, contingent upon the completion of structural safeguards to protect trail users from possible overhead train debris. According to Ralph Dannenberg, Puyallup Parks and Recreation Director, once final design is approved by BNSF, construction plans are ready to proceed. With luck we could have pavement beneath the highway and RR bridges and a temporary connection to 134th Ave. by Christmas.

continued on page 13
Networking for Trails: Continued...

Pierce County Regional Trails Plan
by John Selby, Trails Advisory Group Member

Did you know that Pierce County is preparing a Regional Trails Plan? More specifically, Pierce County Parks and Recreation is funding the work by consultant, MIG, with the following goals:

1) Summarize trail planning endeavors already in place in Pierce County by state and local agencies, cities and towns, and private organizations.
2) Identify preferred trail routes that provide connections within Pierce County and to surrounding counties.
3) Provide design standards and guidelines that incorporate Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.
4) Identify priorities and costs.
5) Clarify the County’s role in trails maintenance, development and acquisition.
6) Include a prototype public involvement process for implementation of specific trail projects that builds on existing processes.

In a nutshell, they are inventorying all existing Pierce County trails, determining where the missing links are, and providing a plan to complete a truly regional, trail network. You can download the recently published “Needs Assessment Summary Report” and give your feedback at their website: http://www.piercetrailsplan.org/.

Rainier to Ruston
by John S. Selby, Founder and Assistant Race Director

By the time you read this, the seventh annual Rainier to Ruston Rail-Trail Relay and Ultra will be history. Unfortunately, this newsletter goes to press a few weeks before the event on National Trails Day, the first Saturday in June, so if you wish to read about how it went, we suggest you go to the race website at www.rainiertoruston.com. The results will be posted as soon as possible, but it usually takes a week or two, so please be patient.

At this writing, however, expectations are high for a great race. The flood damage last winter and the construction of the new trail and bridges between Buckley and South Prairie forced some welcome changes - starting the race at Fairfax, using the old Spiketon Road and water crossing between Wilkeson and Buckley, and making the newly finished trail and bridges part of the course. Other improvements to the course are using the entire levee trail on the north side of the Puyallup River between the Meridian and Lincoln Avenue bridges, crossing the new overpass on D Street above four RR tracks, and running the beautiful esplanade along the Thea Foss Waterway past Tacoma’s icon - the Museum of Glass. At this time, our registrations are well ahead of previous years. If this popularity continues, the R2R will again be “An adventure in your own backyard!” for a record number of people.
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING BOTH CONFUSING AND CHALLENGING
by Dixie Gatchel, AT Coordinator

Charting a course through the alphabet flotsam and jetsam in the changing seas of Active Transportation is both confusing and challenging. Let’s weigh anchor for a spell and sort it out. The display below depicts the lopsided allocation of the Federal Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) fund which inspired the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) Active Transportation 2010 grassroots campaign. Roads get the hog’s share, while public transit and bicycling and walking as alternative modes of transportation are funded disproportionately and counter to what the people want. See the chart.

The Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition is a participant in the RTC Campaign, joining shortly after the launching in Portland in August 2007. The current SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-a Legacy for Users) expires September 2009. The original goal of the RTC campaign was twofold: (1) Lobby Congress to extend SAFETEA-LU before it expires; and (2) double the Transportation Enhancement (TE) for bicycling and walking as multi-modal transportation choices from 1% to 2% of the total TE allotment. Forty $50 million grants were up for grabs.

As of mid-May, the RTC campaign is scrutinizing the progress of CLEANTEA, the replacement for SAFETEA-LU, now being shaped in Congressman James Oberstar’s T&I committee. CLEANTEA (H.R. 1329) stands for Clean, Low-Emission, Affordable, New Transportation, Efficiency Act. Be ready to batten down the hatches for a rough sail through stormy seas when CLEANTEA comes up for a vote in the Senate. The favored “low-emission” concept appears to be “carbon cap-and-trade” which is a contentious topic to begin with.

The Foothills Coalition, along with 53 other communities across the country, answered RTC’s invitation to submit a case statement in competition for one of forty $50 million grants that might ensue from a successful campaign to enhance bicycling and walking as transportation modes. Our case statement lists 28 rail-trail-type projects to facilitate a Pierce County Active Transportation Regional Network. The case statement utilizes the Foothills Trail as the spine of an active transportation system that links rail-trail towns to existing Sounder/Pierce County Commuter Systems by means of safe and seamless connections. These connections would comprise Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, trails, bike lanes, etc.

The Foothills submission is listed as “Puyallup” on the RTC web site but was expanded to all of Pierce County as a result of interest engendered at a press rally held at the Foothills East Puyallup Trailhead in October 2008. The local event was scheduled to coincide with the RTC nation-wide press release. Distribution of the Foothills Coalition’s case statement for a Pierce County Active Transportation Regional Network, along with the compelling RTC report Active Transportation for America (ATFA) helped enlist four goal-sharing stakeholders to our cause: Pierce County Parks & Recreation, Tacoma Wheelmen, ForeverGreen and the City of Bonney Lake. We invite interested stakeholders, especially those who may benefit if the RTC campaign pays off, to partner with our team.

Members of the Foothills AT Dream Team had high hopes for smooth sailing, excited by the prospect of how far $50 million would go in enhancing bicycling and walking. Then in December a typhoon broke loose with the world financial system in free fall, millions losing jobs, and business icons facing bankruptcy. RTC sent a petition, signed by over 15,000 of us, urging Congress CONTINUED ON PAGE 11
Calendar of Events

Meetings:
Washington State Trails Coalition Meeting:
Tacoma, October 2010, hosted by the Foothills Trail Coalition. Planning is underway. If you would like to be involved, contact Markus Dennis at 253-381-1358. Details at http://www.washingtonstatetrailcoalition.org/index.html

Monthly Board Meetings:
Open to all members and are generally held on the 4th Thursday from 7-9 PM at the Puyallup Public Library, south entrance. Monthly meetings may be rescheduled, so check our website at www.piercecountytrails.org for changes. June 25th meeting at Engle’s Pot Luck, 6 PM; July 23rd meeting at South Prairie Community Center, 7:00 PM after 5:30 PM potluck.

Weekly Meetings:
Informal luncheons from 12-1 PM at Charlie’s Restaurant, 113 East Main, Puyallup. All are welcome to come and share what they have been doing to promote the mission of the Coalition. No business is conducted even if a quorum of members is present.

Courtesy Patrol Meetings:
Scheduled on 2nd Saturdays of each month at High Cedars Golf Course, 149th St. Ct. E., Orting. No-host breakfast starts at 8 AM and the casual meeting at 9 AM with a free-for-all discussion about the past, present and future of the Courtesy Patrol. Guest speakers and training sessions are often included. Contact Jerry Larson at 253-845-7219 or Capt2Wheeler@comcast.net.

Events:
Work Parties:
Generally held on Saturdays as announced by email. Call Don Partington at 253-863-5307 to get on his distribution list or email him at cedarfamily@comcast.net.

CarLESS Commute, June 2-15
Details at http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/parks/carlesscom.htm

Rainier to Ruston Rail-Trail Relay and Ultra, June 6
Details at http://www.rainiertoruston.com/

Engle Potluck, June 25, 6-9 PM
See Notice in this issue.

Gale Creek Canyon Walking Tour, July 11
See article on page 12 in this issue for details.

TrailsFest, July 18
Rattlesnake Lake Recreation Area
Details at http://www.wta.org/trail-news/trailsfest

Wilkeson Centennial Celebration, July 18
Notices:

Engle Potluck Picnic
Solstice-time, June 25, Thursday, 6-9 p.m.

For decades the Mountaineers & Audubon have celebrated the summer solstice with a picnic in the Engle garden. You are invited to join us again this year. There’ll be displays by Pierce County outdoor and environmental allies, music, entertainment, falconers with their live birds, native plants for sale, and Earth-friendly ideas for kids of all ages. Children and grandchildren are MOST welcome. And don’t forget how great the food is at these events!

• At the Engle Garden, 4011 Alameda Avenue, University Place, just south of Fircrest.

• We Furnish: Coffee & punch.

• You Bring: A hot or cold entree, PLUS a salad or dessert, PLUS your own table service and a “situpon.” Beer and wine is BYO.

• No RSVP necessary. Rain does not cancel.

• Contact: Helen Engle, hengle@iinet.com (e-mail preferred), Phone: 253-564-3112.

Last Chance to Buy a Brick?
by Ernie Bay, President Emeritus

This may likely be the last chance to add your name or that of a friend or loved one to the scores of those that are inscribed in the brick bench below the Foothills Trail sign in our Orting kiosk. Because of weather factors bricks can only be engraved on site once a year, and then only when sufficient purchases have accumulated to enable an on-site engraving appointment. Since the order form on the back cover page of our newsletter is easily overlooked, and we only occasionally highlight the brick program, we often meet our annual engraving deadline with barely enough orders. Consequently, we are seriously considering terminating the program after the September 2009 engraving.

Engraved bricks are not only a good way to show your support for the trail for posterity, but also a great way to gift, honor or surprise a friend or relative for whatever occasion. Order one or more inscribed bricks today so that you do not miss out on what might be your last chance. See the order form on the back of this newsletter for details.

Prefer to Read the TLN Online?
by John Selby, Editor

If you would prefer to read the Trail Line News online in full color, just let me know. I will take you off our snail mail list and put you on an email list to notify you when each newsletter goes up on our website. You will not only be among the first to read the TLN, but you will save your Coalition about $1 in printing and mailing costs. That may not sound like much, but if half our membership did it, we would save over $2500 per year, money that we could spend on trails.

Courtesy Patrollers Ahead of the Curve on First Aid
by Jerry Larson, Courtesy Patrol Chairman

Keith Lassen, a Courtesy Patroller and certified medic first aid instructor for Pierce Transit issued nine Medic First Aid successful completion cards to Courtesy Patrol members on April 25th at the Pierce Transit Training Center. The 4-hour course covered first aid as well as CPR. “The modern, up-to-date facility where first aid is taught to employee drivers of Pierce Transit and the professionalism of Lassen were extraordinary,” exclaimed Jerry Larson, Chairman of the Courtesy Patrol. “The training was especially practical due to the application of first aid on each other and CPR on the robots provided.”

Dixie Gatchel and Mariella Arnold, first aid card holders at Mount Rainier, agreed. “So much has changed in first aid that you must update every couple of years to stay current with proven procedures.” Larson added, “It

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13
Recent legislation, submitted by ForeverGreen to fund trails, parks and open space in Pierce County, stalled in the state Senate before the critical cut-off date in March. This legislative season was a stormy one for local tax funding. In the state House of Representatives, the leadership was reluctant to approve local taxing options this session. Thus, the companion bill in the House failed to make it out of the House Finance Committee before the deadline.

As this session wound down, there were efforts to amend related bills on city and county taxes to keep the legislative proposal alive. ForeverGreen coordinated efforts with Metro Parks to identify several legislative opportunities, but long-term funding was a low priority in a tough budget year.

Legislation often takes three to five years to pass. This session showed just how difficult the process can be. The legislative process requires a broad and strong coalition of support to be successful. The team effort of several ForeverGreen board members, together with the help of County Council members, local park officials, and other groups such as the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition and the Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club let us progress further than in previous years.

An evaluation of our performance can help us make a better effort next year. The ForeverGreen board will review these efforts and determine if continuing to work on this proposal is the best option for long-term funding or if other avenues should be investigated. Our lobbyist will be sharing his evaluation and suggestions with the board during the review, and we expect to reach a decision about next steps by early fall.

Happy Trails and Peace out Y’all!

**Active Transportation Continued from Page 8**

to secure explicit funding for bicycling and walking in the federal economic recovery package. This resulted in $1.3 billion for Active Transportation. Unlike TE allocated through SAFETEA-LU, TE funds from this recovery bill have no federal matching requirement. States may impose a requirement for matching funds.

In mid-December 2008, RTC notified campaign participants that the Obama Administration was disbursing emergency stimulus funds to put people back to work and jump-start the economy. We input 27 of the projects from our Pierce County Active Transportation Regional Network, one at a time, making the 4-day deadline with 3 minutes to spare. On February 19, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and $787 billion is now being distributed throughout the country.

So how does the Foothills Coalition’s Pierce County network fare in allocation of the ARRA funds distributed so far? It’s too early to tell. The Puget Sound Regional Council allocated $36 million in stimulus funds to 11 Pierce County projects. Our major priority is to connect and complete the Foothills Trail from South Prairie to Buckley. To the best of my knowledge, we have three irons in the fire: Senator Patty Murray has designated a policy request for funding; Pierce County Parks & Recreation has a funding request pending with Washington State’s Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO); and our Foothills request for ARRA funding, submitted to Congress by RTC, is pending. Indirectly, we all benefit from the completion of the City of Puyallup’s Shaw Road Extension and the Orting highway 162 rechanneling changes if accommodations for bicycling and walking enhancements are included. Stay tuned! Events affecting the future of funding for bicycling and walking enhancements are happening fast, and we intend to stay in the crows nest and on the lookout. We are prepared to act quickly to counter any adverse actions on the part of naysayers and CAVERs (Citizens against Virtually Everything).

Happy Trails and Peace out Y’all!
Walking Tour of Gale Creek Canyon

BY BUZZ GRANT, PAST PRESIDENT

On Saturday July 11, 2009 your Foothills Trail Coalition directors will lead a walk of about 4 miles that will take about 2 hours on the undeveloped Foothills Trail through Gale Canyon between South Prairie and Wilkeson. Some people would like to call it Claudia’s Canyon, and to find out why, you need to join this walking tour. All are welcome to take this stroll through the future jewel of the Foothills Trail. We will start the walk at the end of the new asphalt in the upper Loop of the trail that Pierce County Parks and Recreation recently finished, cross the new bridges over Spiketon Creek and South Prairie Creek, then proceed up Gale (Claudia’s) Canyon along the Wilkeson Branch Line of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. Along the way, we will walk under the canopy of trees with moss hanging from the limbs and along bubbling Gale Creek running free through the canyon. The quiet, pristine setting will charm you. Very few homes can be seen through the foliage, and there is absolutely no smell of exhaust or sounds of automobiles. It’s just plain peaceful.

Meet us at the South Prairie Trailhead on SR 162 east of Emory Street in South Prairie for a 10:00 AM departure time. The Coalition will transport you by vans to the starting point and return you to South Prairie from Johns Road. Please RSVP to Buzz at railroadbuzz@q.com at least one week prior to July 11. Please note: The Gale Canyon portion of the walk is over rough trail and is definitely not ADA accessible.

Thank You, Backcountry Horsemen!

BY JOHN S. SELBY, EDITOR

Unless you’ve been out on some of our trail crew work parties, you may not be aware of the work that the Backcountry Horsemen do for our trail. They are truly amazing workhorses (actually mules). Tom Faubion and his friends, John Aldrich, John Jensen, Denny Dargan, Bill Budd and others, have put in many long hours building and repairing the trails through Gale Creek canyon and especially the upper Carbon River canyon. They often start with breakfast in a local restaurant at around 6 AM and work into the late afternoon. They are not only hard workers, but fun to be with as well. Maybe that’s why we call them “work parties.” Join us sometime and get to know the Backcountry Horsemen and, of course, Tom’s dependable mule, Speedy.
The trail damage incurred by our January floods is scheduled to be fully repaired before June 1. More than $40,000 damage was sustained by the trail. This involved some blacktop, but was mostly due to shoulder erosion. The damaged shoulders left high trail edges in places that compromised the asphalt and created a risk to trail users who veered too close to the margins. The repair work is being done by Lloyd Enterprises, a firm that did most of the original trail construction.

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm”  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

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