We Did It!

by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, http://www.railstotrails.org

We asked our members to speak up for active transportation in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. You took action, loudly asking our elected officials to protect Transportation Enhancements (TE), the nation’s largest federal funding source for trails, walking and bicycling.

You spoke up, and Congress listened.

Our congressional representatives recognized the role walking and biking play in a balanced transportation system, and allocated $800 million to TE. While this is less than two percent of transportation funding in the recovery package, it represents a doubling of TE spending for communities in the next year.

These hundreds of millions of dollars for TE will allow communities across the country to create jobs by building trails and other infrastructure immediately, while simultaneously addressing congestion, environmental concerns, the obesity epidemic and economic challenges in the long-term.

TE is a long-standing program that has historically enjoyed bi-partisan support. Its place within the stimulus package, however, heralds the recognition among elected leaders that active transportation

Continued on Page 13

President’s Message

by John Downs, Board President

Greetings, Foothillers. It has certainly been a busy winter for the organization as we continue to grow our membership, train more Courtesy Patrol members, improve the unpaved section of the upper “bowtie” segment on the way to Buckley, and even have fun as volunteers in 15 degree weather at “Fantasy Lights” – the park district’s display at Spanaway Park during the Christmas season.

As you will read in this issue, the winter floods had a tremendous impact on the Foothills Trail system. The trail between the mitigation area and South Prairie was literally washed out for about a hundred yards! But the damage is not limited to that distance. I’m estimating a quarter mile of trail will have to be repaired or replaced. The county is expecting FEMA funds to help cover the cost of repair. But something will have to be done to protect the trail from the next flood.

Also, a large section of the rail bed in Gale Creek Canyon between South Prairie and Wilkeson was washed away, forcing us to reroute the R2R. The Gale

Continued on Page 4
BicycleRecycle Loses Training Wheels

BY JERRY LARSON, FOUNDER, BICYCLERECYCLE

At the October 2008 board meeting the Foothills Trail Coalition Board of Directors voted unanimously to separate the BicycleRecycle program from the Coalition, allowing it to become a “stand alone” operation.

The memorandum of understanding, presented to the board by Markus Dennis, Executive Director, and Jerry Larson, was discussed at length before reaching this decision. The primary reason for the change was the expected growth of the program (more than 2000 bicycles per year) which would distract from the Coalition’s primary mission.

Larson thanked the board for their deliberations and conveyed his appreciation to the Coalition for its support during the startup period.

Operation of the BicycleRecycle program will be continued by Jerry Larson, founder, Richard and Joanie Harrelson, operations technician and computer tech respectively, Ed Davis, planning & development, and Eric Wilbur, metal salvage. All are members of the Courtesy Patrol.

The operation will continue to reclaim, refurbish and put bikes back into use. Donated bicycles are received from private parties, landfill operations, and retail bike shops. “Bikes are donated to the less fortunate or will be sold following refurbishment,” stated Harrelson. “I would like to recognize Randy Lindblad, long-time Coalition member, for his generous contribution of a shop site to consolidate the various facilities previously utilized into one efficient operation,” concluded Larson, a.k.a Capt2Wheeler.
Winter rainstorms have brought a flood of changes to the Foothills Trail and the R2R

BY JOHN SELBY, BOARD MEMBER

Coalition work parties had nearly finished building several, beautiful, 4-foot wide boardwalks in Gale Canyon (last year’s leg 4) when Gale Creek became Gale Torrent and swept our hard work into Puget Sound. Remember the Mountaineers’ parking lot where the R2R has started for the last six years? Both lanes of the paved road along the parking lot were washed away on Veteran’s Day. As a result, access to the Carbon River entrance of Mount Rainier National Park was only possible through the parking lot. Before it was repaired, vehicles entered the lot via a temporary access bulldozed through the trees at the west end and exited through the gate at the east end.

Continued on Page 10
Creek trail is lost for the immediate future. See the article on page 3.

Pat Johnson and Dixie Gatchel are going to Washington DC in March in support of the nationwide Active Transportation program sponsored by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Pat and Dixie will meet with our state representatives and senators to promote the cause. Related to this project is the grant application prepared by Dixie and several others that, if selected, could bring up to $50 million into Pierce County for trail-related construction. The county’s list of projects was included in the grant application. The bad news is this: without additional funding from either this grant or the “Stimulus” bill, the county will be very limited in expanding the present system of parks and trails.

Recently, the Coalition received a handwritten Letter of Appreciation from the Parks Director, Kathy Kravit-Smith, expressing her gratitude for our organization for all the support we provide to the county. To quote a few sentences: “... You and the gang take care of the trail, clean up messes, communicate to the public, contribute incredible man/woman power, and when I ask for your help ... you are there!” Also, “…I am so fortunate to call you friends and will always sing the praises of you and your organization.” Let me add that it takes a lot of dedication, time, and professionalism from everyone in the Coalition to make us the respected group that we are.

On a closing note, I’m being incarcerated (jail time) in Puyallup on March 19th at 1pm. If you would like to see me stay in jail, just send homemade cookies, but if you would like to help me attain my release, please send a donation in my name to the Muscular Dystrophy Association South Sound Chapter. You can do this on line at https://www.joinmda.org/09puyallup/johndowns, or visit me in the “clink” with a donation at Puyallup’s Pioneer Park pavilion. (P.S.: You can still send cookies with the bail.)

Memberships and Donations

by Tom Enlow, Board Member

Up to $29
David McMakin, Ian McMakin, Liam McMakin, Patrick McMakin, Paul & Jennifer McMakin, Seumas McMakin, Linda Hinds, James Craig Isom, Nina Cameron, Donna Jennings, John Olson, Elizabeth Buhl, June M Coloff, Madeline Davidson, Mary Fries, Renee Moran, Dave Wetzel.

$30-$49

$50-$99

$100-$999

$1000 and up
Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club, Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation.

Thank You!

Persistence is the twin sister of excellence.
One is a matter of quality; the other, a matter of time.

Marabel Morgan, The Electric Woman
The Hitching Post

BY JEANETTE FOHN, COALITION MEMBER

In the last edition I reported on the 100-year flood as if it was a big deal, news worthy. Then a month later we had the 500-year flood! Out of fear that I somehow offended the gods, I have decided not to report on natural disasters, other than to say that my heart goes out to those who suffered losses due to this round of nature’s fury.

On the bright side, I was pleased with the number of my fellow equestrians attending the Foothills Trail Coalition’s Annual Meeting (there were five of us, which is probably four more than last year!). Thank you for voting me in as a new board member! I look forward to representing equestrians on the Foothills Trail.

On Feb. 14th I was honored to be a speaker at the monthly Courtesy Patrol meeting and training session. The group was very receptive to safety concerns for equestrians. We talked about cyclists and pedestrians approaching slowly, allowing the equine lots of room and giving a gentle, verbal, audible warning so as not to frighten our horses. In return for their continued support and respect, I promised to remind my fellow equestrians to wear helmets for their own safety and to please dismount and kick the manure off the trail should your horse relieve himself on the pavement. I am constantly advocating a wider dirt path in the hope that safety and manure will not be an issue for future sections. A suggestion was also made to remind equestrians to carry cell phones in case of emergency. Always good advice!

A few weeks ago I hiked (on foot without my equine partner!) from the Manley Moore Bridge downstream towards the High Bridge that spans the Carbon River south of Carbonado. This is the route that the runners and walkers follow in the famous Rainier to Ruston Relay and Ultra on National Trails Day. I was shocked by all the trees that were down and sediment that was left behind from the flood. I was even more impressed by how much work had been done to repair the trail. This is a really nice dirt trail that follows the river. After about two miles we ran into a very hard-working crew of Back Country Horsemen. They were doing an incredible job clearing fallen trees, bush whacking and in some places creating new trail where the prior one had been washed out or covered by a land slide. Thank you, Back Country Horseman!!! I look forward to riding on this trail in the summer when it has had a chance to dry out and pack down a little.

I was asked by the Courtesy Patrol how many equestrians use the trail. I really have no idea, so if you ride a horse on the trail, have ever used the trail, or are planning on riding on it some day, I would love to hear from you. Email me at jeanettefohn@msn.com and put Foothills Trail in the subject line. If you would like to volunteer, the Courtesy Patrol would love to have equestrians! Contact Jerry Larson at capt2wheeler@comcast.net. To write an article, email John Selby at johnanddottieselby@att.net. To join a work party, contact Don Partington at cedarfamily@comcast.net.

It is volunteers like you that make the Coalition work!

Happy Trails!

Along The Trail

BY JULIE WILEY

At night, Kelly Grant finds herself passionately involved in a love triangle as the character Christine in the musical Phantom of the Opera, but during the day her heart is on the open trail. Kelly is a marathon runner. I met up with Kelly along the trail while she was performing at The Paramount Theatre in Seattle. With her father alongside, she took a short break at the McMillin Trailhead to share her enthusiasm for trail systems.

In every city the company tours, Kelly searches out the local trails for her marathon training. Running on trails allows her clean air to breathe so that her lungs will remain strong and healthy for vocalizing. It also provides her with a safe place from traffic so that she
Networking for Trails:

Cushman Trail
by Marcos R. McGraw, Project Engineer, City of Gig Harbor

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 2.5 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 will be built on a pin-pile bridge to minimize impacts to the wetland.

Surveying, clearing, grubbing and erosion control for the trail is in place. Trail excavation and wall construction was completed prior to the winter shut-down. Gabion basket walls have been installed.

The project remains on winter shut-down, but the contractor cleaned up damage caused by the heavy rain. The contractor made all improvements to the erosion control and will place the pin-piles for the bridge to be constructed just south of Wilkinson Farm Park. The winter schedule will include less work with large equipment to reduce the risk of erosion and excessive disruption of wet, native soils.

All work is scheduled to be complete by early summer 2009.

Fennel Creek Trail
by Gary Leaf, Community Services Director, Bonney Lake

Bonney Lake received a $1.5 million grant for trails and sidewalks that will make it safe for kids to walk to school. We have started design work and construction will begin later this year. One mile of trail will be built between Victor Falls Elementary School and housing developments along Angeline Road. There will also be a mile of sidewalks constructed so students can walk to two other schools in the same general vicinity. The trail will go along Fennel Creek and will be the first part of our five-mile Fennel Creek Trail. Sidewalks will be under construction this summer, and the trail a few months after that, depending on how long it takes to get permits.

Edgewood Interurban Trail
by Diane Kerlin, Chairperson for the Edgewood Parks Advisory Board

The Interurban Trail in Edgewood has been at a standstill for awhile. Public Works Director, Dave Lorenzen, left in October to take a position in Oregon, and the City is in no hurry to fill the open position due to the budget shortfall. In the meantime, existing staff has been swamped with work and the move into the new City Hall building. Previously approved grant funding will allow construction to begin on the trailhead park at 114th Ave. E. and a quarter-mile section of trail to the west.

Fife & Milton Interurban
by Milton Loeflin, Coalition Member

Diane Kerlin, chairperson for the Edgewood Parks Advisory Board, recently organized a joint park board meeting for the cities of Fife, Edgewood and Milton. One of the topics on the agenda was Fife’s plans for linking to the west end of Milton’s Interurban Trail at the 70th Ave. E. overpass of I5. Fife has no plans to provide a separated trail link. Their trail efforts consist of bike lanes along 20th Street when road improvements are done between 70th and 54th Avenues.

Also, it was revealed that road improvements along the Puyallup River will be held until the county and/or state decides what their plans are for road extensions, bridges and trails.

There are still no official or semi-official counts of trail users on the Milton portion of the Interurban, but park board members and citizens regularly comment on the high number of trail users.
I am sad to report that we have suffered significant losses of trail due to flooding. Our biggest loss was in Gale Canyon between South Prairie and Wilkeson. In that area, we had spent many days building trail and footbridges around two washouts which occurred in the fall of 2006. Now all the progress we’d made there is gone. Our options in Gale Canyon have diminished greatly until Pierce County Parks Department establishes a new trail route. You can see photos of this disaster in the article about this year’s Rainier to Ruston Relay (R2R) on page 3.

Work party attention has shifted to preparing a temporary route for the Rainier to Ruston Relay (R2R) which will come down through Buckley and over the brand new trail and bridges in the Bow Tie. Projects later this year may include trail clearing in Puyallup, Kapowsin and Edgewood.

For news on upcoming work parties, check our web site at http://www.piercecountytrails.org/or email Don at cedarfamily@comcast.net.
Look Who’s Number One!

by John Selby, Editor

The League of American Bicyclists has announced their first annual ranking of Bicycle Friendly States, scoring all 50 states on more than 70 factors, evaluating their commitment to bicycling and covering 6 key areas: legislation, policies and programs, infrastructure, education and encouragement, evaluation and planning, and enforcement.

The highest scoring states overall were:
1. Washington
2. Wisconsin
3. Arizona
4. Oregon
5. Minnesota

According to their web site, Washington scored consistently high in all ranking evaluation categories. A few highlights of the state’s bicycling commitment are its exemplary bike-related laws and dedicated state-level funding sources for cycling related projects and programs. This has resulted in a signed and mapped statewide system of bike routes and education of both drivers and cyclists on the rights and responsibilities of cyclists. The results of these efforts are shown through the high numbers of bicycle use and membership to cycling advocacy and promotion organizations throughout Washington.

Active Transportation Campaign Shifts into High Gear

by Dixie GatChel, AT Coordinator

Foothillers, it’s time to fish or cut bait! The first stage of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) Active Transportation (AT) Campaign 2010 is ready for prime time. Campaign focus shifts from preparing case statements and building stakeholder support to transmitting the message for Active Transportation to our congressional representatives. Foothills Coalition Vice-President, Pat Johnson, and yours truly will participate in planning sessions and visits with our representatives in Congress during the RTC Western Region Active Transportation Forum in Washington D.C. on March 12-13, 2009. Please provide me your best ideas to take with us for carrying the AT Campaign forward to success.

Want to see what the Foothills Coalition’s AT Dream Team has been up to this winter? All those home-made muffin sessions around my kitchen table paid off as follows. Our nineteen-page proposal and case statement for the Pierce County Active Transportation Regional Network is viewable at www.railtrails.org/. First, click “learn more” in the Spotlight box headed “Investment in Bicycling and Walking Will Save Billions!” and read RTC’s definitive report titled Active Transportation for America. This report quantifies, for the first time, the benefits that America can expect from elevating the priority of bicycling and walking in our nation’s transportation system. Next, you’ll find the Pierce County proposal listed under Puyallup, because that was where our original executive summary centered.

As interest in the campaign grew, so did our concept, which now includes most of the Pierce County urban rail-trail towns along the Sounder Commuter Train and Pierce Transit systems.

And that isn’t all, folks. When the call came from RTC for “shovel-ready” infrastructure projects for consideration under President Obama’s stimulus program, the AT Dream Team, inspired by Tacoma Wheelman legislative guru, Bob Myrick, came up with 27 rail-trail town projects. We made the deadline by noon on December 15, 2008, with three minutes to spare. Whew! Kudos to the AT Dream Team members for giving their expertise and passion to the cause of Active Transportation: Ernie Bay, Ed Davis, Buzz Grant, Bill Harmon, Russ Matthews, Bob Myrick, Dave Seago, John Selby, Ken Woolery, and a special thanks to Mary Ellen Matthews for her invaluable help editing the case statement.

This issue of Trail Line News also introduces and welcomes Foothills Coalition member Julie Wiley as a regular contributor. Julie has a great way with words and the camera, and her first story about an encounter with a daughter and dad out on the trail “burning calories not carbon” is both delightful and inspiring. See page 11.

Remember, Foothillers, this is a grassroots campaign and we’re it! Send me your ideas at gatcheldb@msn.com.

Happy Trails & Peace out Y’all!

What is Active Transportation?

AT = Bicycle + Walking + Biking + People + Rails-to-Trails + You
Notice:

Editor Seeks Replacement
BY JOHN SELBY, EDITOR

The Trail Line News is seeking a new editor. If you are interested, please contact John Selby at 253-841-1767 or JohnandDottieSelby@att.net.

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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 due to holiday conflicts, so check our website for changes: www.piercecountytrails.org.

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.

Courtesey Patrol Meetings:
Scheduled on 2nd Saturdays of each month at High Cedars Golf Course, 149th St. Ct. E., Orting. 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.

Foothills Dash, March 21st
This is a 5K and 10K Fun Run. Check in is at 8 a.m. at Ptarmigan Ridge Elementary School, Orting with a 9 a.m. start time. Details at http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/parks/footdash.htm

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
This event is for walkers as well as runners. If you would rather volunteer than compete, call John Selby at 253-841-1767. Details at http://www.rainiertoruston.com/

TrailsFest, July 18
Rattlesnake Lake Recreation Area
Details at http://www.wta.org/trail-news/trailsfest
Fortunately though, the good news this year is as good as the bad news is bad. Pierce County has finished a new section of trail between Buckley and So. Prairie, including two spectacular bridges - one over Spiketon Creek, the other over So. Prairie Creek and Lower Burnett Road. The latter is a curved span 50 feet high and 400 feet long in three arches, evoking the original RR trestle. This new 1-1/4 mile section of trail is in the middle of what has become known as the Bow Tie, two huge opposing loops of RR grade which climbed 200 feet out of the So. Prairie Creek valley onto the Buckley plateau.

It is fitting (some would say about time!) that this new section of trail begins the final connection between Buckley and Cascade Junction, where the RR from Tacoma past So. Prairie branched north to Buckley and south to Wilkeson, Carbonado, and Mt. Rainier. After all, the town of Buckley is where Dr. Tait and his friend, Fred Hart, conceived the idea of the Foothills Trail and where the first piece was built. There still remain two sections (one on either end of this new one) to connect the trail to Buckley and So. Prairie, but with the construction of this middle section, there is no longer any doubt that it will soon be accomplished.

Wouldn’t it be fun to run and walk the newly finished trail across these beautiful bridges? That’s just what we are going to do. Instead of going down Gale Creek, which is not possible until a reroute is built around the worst washout, we will run the old Spiketon Road from Wilkeson to Buckley (leg 3), then down the historic Bow Tie to So. Prairie (leg 4). Since that adds an extra leg, we will drop the leg from the Mountaineers’ lot and start the race at Fairfax near the Manley Moore Bridge. Markus and I have always wanted to add a water crossing to this event, and now we have. Spiketon Road crosses So. Prairie Creek as a ford, about knee deep. As the saying goes, we have turned lemons into lemonade!

Another welcome change is that Mr. Ricks has given us permission to cross his property between Tubbs Road and the old RR right-of-way just north of the Carbonado cemetery. Therefore, on leg 2, instead of going down the highway to Wilkeson crowded between the fog line and the guard rail, runners and walkers will take the forest trail down the historic RR grade. Please don’t cross Mr. Rick’s property except on race day.

Other changes you can look forward to are on legs 10 and 11. The Fife exchange has been moved to the levee trail across from Saddle Creek along the Puyallup River, lengthening the challenging run on sandy trail by about 3/4 mile, but shortening the overall distance of leg 10 by almost 2 miles. No longer will runners have to negotiate miles of sidewalks on leg 11 because it will continue on the sandy trail along the river and then on the dirt road on the levee all the way to Lincoln Avenue, where it crosses the Puyallup River on the pedestrian walkway. Along the way, runners will pass under a couple of RR trestles and two freeways then around a huge, new wetland, constructed last year between SR509 and Lincoln Ave. - a beautiful run along the river.
Foothills Coalition to Participate in Subway Safe Rider Citation Program

BY DIXIE GATCHEL, COURTESY PATROL MEMBER

Bolo! Be on the lookout, Kids! President John Downs of the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition reports that Courtesy Patrollers, for the fifth year, will be issuing Subway Safe Rider Citations along the trail. Safe Kids Pierce County and the Lakewood Fire Department coordinate the program to encourage the wearing of safety helmets by children biking, scootering, inline skating, skateboarding and horseback riding. The Safe Rider Citations are redeemable for a free child-size sandwich at participating Subway shops in the Seattle/Tacoma area from late spring until the end of the year.

Most of the participants authorized to issue the citations are uniformed law enforcement and fire service personnel. Courtesy Patrol members, in yellow vests with logo and name tags, ride the trail on a regular basis offering help and information to trail users. They are permitted to participate in the program because the uniform makes them easily identifiable to the children encountered on trail stops. In addition, Courtesy Patrollers are retrained annually in certification classes such as the one now underway in Orting. In 2008 one thousand Safe Rider Citations were issued to delighted young trail users.

And the kids eagerly await the start. Jerry Larson, Courtesy Patrol leader, aka Captain2Wheeler, overheard a young boy out near the McMillin trailhead say recently, “Hey Mom, there’s that guy in the yellow vest who gave us the Subway for wearing our helmet last year. Let’s see if we can get another one.” He can, but only one citation can be redeemed per child per Subway visit. This helps ensure that the citations are being used for what they are intended – to promote helmet use.

WINTER RAINSTORMS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Further along leg 11 is another significant change. Runners on Puyallup Avenue will turn right on D Street after the transit station, cross the new bridge over four RR tracks, then descend onto Dock Street. After passing under the stay bridge of SR509, runners will turn right onto the expansive esplanade along the Thea Foss Waterway and hand off at the Tacoma exchange on the Museum of Glass plaza. Leg 12 continues along the length of the esplanade before rejoining Dock Street. Due to a wedding at the MOG, runners after 4:30 PM will stay on the sidewalk past the museum.

Again this year, the Rainier to Ruston promises to be an adventure in your own backyard!

See you on National Trails Day, June 6, 2009!

Along the Trail Continued from Page 5

Kelly loves the idea of connecting trail systems with other public forms of transportation. In most cities, she’s forced to rent a car to get to trails. Her preference would be either to walk or hop on a bus to access trails. Kelly has discovered that she doesn’t have to be dependent on cars to do what she loves.

Photo by Julie Wylie.
Kelly Grant and her father on the Foothills Trail near the McMillin trailhead.
Our Committee met on February 3 at the Taqueria Guadalajara in the Stadium District at First and Tacoma Avenue. We will meet there again on March 3 at 6 PM to continue our discussions. It was gratifying to have eight people at the meeting including Ken Peachey, Diane Wiatr, Ralph Wessels, Carla Gramlich, John Ernest Berry, Steve Brown, Bob Warfield and me.

Diane Wiatr works for the City of Tacoma as the Mobility Coordinator. She shared information regarding the Request for Proposals that is out on the streets to provide the new Mobility Plan (nonmotorized transportation) for the city to cover operations and improvements for the next six years. TWBC will be involved in helping to select the consultant on this job and will be involved in the development of the plan which will address pedestrian mobility, bicycling and the use of transit to get around the city. Diane reviewed her desire and ours to get to a point where Tacoma can be considered for Bronze level or higher status from the League of American Bicyclists. Diane also indicated that Tacoma has a new Public Works Director, Mr. McKinley, who comes from Bellingham, which has a great system for moving about by walking and bicycling due to the university there and the community’s interest in nonmotorized transportation.

Bob Warfield discussed his ongoing work and concerns with trying to get Lakewood fully connected to Tacoma and getting a complete network in Lakewood. The City Manager, Andrew Neiditz, is a TWBC member, former City Manager in Sumner, and participant with his wife in our first Big Wheels Ride last year. Lakewood is making great strides with their nonmotorized system, but as we know, it takes a long time when funds are limited. In the future, we hope to connect the Water Ditch Trail to Lakewood and have the trail completed across the creek near the State Game Farm and have a foot path or trail to Kobyashi Park in University Place down on Chambers Creek.

We discussed Senate Bill 5545 and House Bill 1810 which would authorize the Pierce County Council to put a parks, trails, recreation and open space proposal on the ballot if Tacoma and Metro Parks ask for it. This excess sales tax proposal would be 0.1 percent or one penny on a ten dollar purchase. Money for building trails and the other stuff would go to Pierce County, Metro Parks and the smaller cities and towns. In a normal economy, this tax would raise almost $13 million a year according to ForeverGreen Council. TWBC has endorsed the proposal provided that Metro Parks sends the money to the City of Tacoma since the city is the entity providing construction of the future trails here. We are also very concerned that monies should also be used to provide bike lanes and arterial sidewalks that are near our trails to serve as connectors.

Finally, February 24 was Bicycle Advocacy Day in Olympia and you should find information on this in the TWBC’s newsletter or on the Bicycle Alliance of Washington website. BAW has three major issues this year, including a three-foot safe passing law, proper signage for detours thru construction sites and providing proper detection of bikes for street stop traffic control devices.

Ride more and worry less.

[Editor’s note: This report is summarized from Bob’s report to the Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club. He kindly shares it with the Coalition because the interests of our two organizations are very similar. Their Government Affairs meetings are open to anyone wishing to participate. Contact Bob Myrick at 253-370-3752 or BobMyrick@msn.com.]
As a registered dietitian and animal-lover, I have recently made the decision to switch to free-range eggs. In the past, I have unknowingly eaten eggs from hens that were confined to a small area for their entire lives. After a visit to a local free-range farm and reading about the benefits of these eggs, I am convinced that free-range eggs are superior.

It's important to know that a true free-range farm is one on which the hens are allowed to freely forage for food on pasture land as they would do so naturally. Some eggs that are labeled free-range are not truly free-range, because the definition according to the USDA is “allowing access to the outside.” Not all hens that have access to the outside have pasture land on which to forage.

My first experience with the concept of true free-range eggs was at Sweet Valley Farm, 4214 River Road Tacoma, (253) 922-7074. When I visited the farm to purchase some eggs, the owners, Fred and Annette Massella, kindly invited Markus and me for a tour of her six-acre farm, which has been in their family for over fifty years. They have 250 hens and plan to grow to about 400-500 within a year. Their hens forage the land by day and roost in an outbuilding by night for protection from predators. Conversely, most commercial egg producers keep their hens in small wire cages that confine the chickens and do not allow for natural movement or nutrient intake. Visiting Sweet Valley Farm was a very educational and eye-opening experience for me.

Not only are true free-range hens treated humanely, but their eggs have more good nutrients and fewer not-so-good nutrients than commercial eggs. The 2007 Mother Earth News Egg Testing Project analyzed eggs from 14 farms nationwide for nutrient content. The study showed that free-range eggs surpassed commercial eggs in several categories: they contained on average one-third less cholesterol, one-quarter less saturated fat, two-thirds more vitamin A, two times more omega-3 fatty acids, three times more vitamin E, and seven times more beta carotene. At least six older studies report superior nutrient content as well. Though more research is needed, I think we are headed in the right direction towards showing free-range eggs’ superior nutrient profile.

The final and possibly most important benefit of free-range eggs is their incredible taste. I tested the eggs in several baked goods as well as alone, and was delighted by the flavor and consistency they gave to products. If nothing else, I would bet that taste alone would convince anyone to make the switch as I have.

That being said, you do pay more for the noticeably higher quality of these eggs. They are priced fairly. But I would rather pay a little more for quality and peace of mind, knowing that the hens are treated well, than support an industry that may not properly care for their hens. Whether you are compelled by the fair treatment of animals, superior nutrient content, or taste, now is an EGG-cellent time to go free range!
Membership makes a difference!
The work we are doing is made possible because of your membership and generous support. Credit cards accepted.

- $20 Single
- $30 Family
- $50 Pathfinder
- $100 Trail Builder
- $200 Corporate  (Includes a 1 year ad in the Trail Line News)

Orting Kiosk Engraved Bricks

Number of brick(s) @ $100 per brick = $
Name(s) to appear on brick(s)

Charge my  □ Visa  □ Mastercard
No:________________________  Exp. ______
Name:____________________________________
Address:____________________________________
City:___________  Zip:____________________
Phone:_________  Signature:____________________
Email:____________________________________

Mark your categories, mail form and check to:
Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition
P.O. Box 192,
Puyallup, WA  98371-0021