Lower Burnett Phase I Finished

BY RUSS MATTHEWS, COALITION MEMBER

The beautiful, four-bridges section of the Foothills Trail in Lower Burnett is complete. The contractors have finished paving the middle segment (Phase I) of the trail between Buckley and South Prairie. This beautiful trail crosses four bridges and runs adjacent to a pristine wetland. The only public access is from the south end of the paving of the Foothills Trail from Buckley. Park your car there roughly a mile southwest of Buckley along Highway 165. You will be walking along about 1.5 miles of undeveloped trail before you arrive at the newly paved section. Our work parties have kept the undeveloped portion clear, but if you mountain bike it, you will need to walk your bike through several muddy stretches.

The newly paved section begins as you cross 268th Ave. Court East. This is a private road for local homes and is posted. Please do not park in this area or your car may be towed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Photos By Russ Matthews
Map by Bill Harmon, Coalition Member

President’s Message

BY JOHN DOWNS, BOARD PRESIDENT

Welcome to the fall edition of the Trail Line News! We are privileged to have as a member of the Coalition Mr. Bob Rowen, a photographer with international credentials. Bob has taken a tremendous interest in the Foothills Trail and desires to produce a video for the Coalition, preserving the legacy of the trail. Recently, Bob produced a 3 ½ minute video called “Visions of the Foothills Trail,” which by now should be posted on our web site. This video demonstrates in a limited fashion the breadth of the trail and what could be produced with the proper funding. Therefore, to expand on the video, we will organize a campaign to raise the funds needed to bring Bob’s vision to fruition and share the trail on a national or international forum. You will hear more about this in the near future.

On August 13th, Dr. Ernie Bay, Dixie Gatchel, and I were guests on TV Tacoma’s morning show “City Line.” We were invited to discuss the Trail’s history, where we are now, what the long term goal is with the trail and obstacles to its completion. Additionally, we had a short discussion on Active Transportation, compliments of Dixie. Our segment was started with the showing of “Visions of the Foothills Trail.” I encourage all of you to visit http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Page.aspx?hid=10248 and enjoy the interview.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
Dear Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition,

I am better known as a fair weather rider, but every time I see a peek of sunshine, I’m out on your trail. My favorite section is the ride from Orting to So. Prairie. I am doing my best to keep this tired 76-year old body of mine as active as possible. First, I’d like to thank all of the people involved in providing such a great riding area. The trail is well kept, but still gives you the relaxed wilderness atmosphere. So, as a big user of the trail, I figure it is time to join your group. Enclosed you will find a check for a singles membership.

Sincerely,
Bernie Duesterbeck

Dear TLN Readers,

Don’t like sidewalks, bike lanes and better transit? Don’t believe in or care about global warming? How about $4, $8, $10 or even $20 per gallon gasoline?

I suggest we should read “$20 per Gallon - How the Inevitable Rise in the Price of Gasoline Will Change Our Lives for the Better.” This new book is by Christopher Steiner, a civil engineer who also happens to be a staff writer for Forbes Business Magazine. Then we should review “Plan B 3.0 - Mobilizing to Save Civilization” by the well-known Lester R. Brown of the Earth Policy Institute. President Bill Clinton says, “We should all heed Brown’s advice.”

We know $4 gasoline killed General Motors in six months. $12 gasoline will certainly change life in America and the world. Steiner suggests the end of air travel as we know it and the need for a nuclear powered container ship industry. I call it the Great Disruption. We need to maintain our existing infrastructure but get ready for a rich future where we switch to other sources of energy. Steiner says the future is only 10 short years away.

Bob Myrick
PE, Director of Community and Government Relations
Tacoma Wheelmen’s Bicycle Club
Coalition Member

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Foothills Trail Coalition Board

President.........................................................John Downs (360) 897-2617, foothillstrail@gm.com
Vice President................................................Pat Johnson (360) 829-2068, pat.johnson@t3.net
Executive Director...........................................Markus Dennis (253) 381-1358, greenwaycorps@gmail.com
Treasurer........................................................Loras Gassmann (253) 508-3354, LAGasman@msn.com
Secretary......................................................Peggy Levesque (360) 897-8253, pllevesque@comcast.net
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President Emeritus...........................................Ernie Bay (253) 840-7118, BUGTRAIL@aol.com
Board Members....................................Edward (Ed) F. Davis (253) 508-7533, odysseyed@hotmail.com
............................................................................Bill Harmon (253) 475-1337, charnon@venture.com
.............................................................................Jerry Larson (253) 845-7219, capt2wheeler@comcast.net
.............................................................................Don Partington (253) 863-5367, cedarfamily@comcast.net
.............................................................................John Selby (253) 841-1767, johnanddottie@att.net
.............................................................................Jeanette Fohn (360) 897-2286, jeanditetohn@msn.com
.............................................................................Ken Woolery (253) 863-4773, klwood@comcast.net
.............................................................................Tim Duggan (253) 306-3717, tmn1@iclink.com

Publisher:
The Trail Line News is published by the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition, P.O. Box 192, Puyallup, WA 98371. Our website is http://www.piercecountytrails.org/ and our email address is foothillstrail@gmail.com.

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.

Editing:
The Trail Line News is edited by John Selby, (253) 841-1767, johnanddottie@att.net.

Layout:
The Trail Line News is designed by Charlene Binfet, 253-236-4873, joe_char@msn.com

Printing:
The Trail Line News is published quarterly at L&L Printing and Graphics, (253) 848-5546. Circulation is approximately 1500 copies.
Jeanette Fohn is our equestrian representative on the Coalition board. She graduated from WSU with a degree in accounting and works as an instructor for Green River Community College. Jeanette moved from Fife to South Prairie four years ago, because she fell in love with the area after biking on the Foothills Trail.

Jeanette started riding horses as an 8-year old growing up in Federal Way at a time when there were many places to ride and neighbors kept horses in their backyard. Jeanette shares her passion for riding with her daughter Sarah who is a member of the United States Pony Club. They both are also members of the WoodBrook Hunt Club. “Growing up in western Washington, I appreciate how quickly land is lost to development and how important it is to preserve trails for future generations. It is an honor to work with such a dedicated board. Their support for equestrians on the trail is remarkable. Now we just need more equestrians coming to meetings, volunteering for work parties, and helping to improve the trail for horses.”

In addition to horseback riding, Jeanette, husband Scott and Sarah enjoy hiking, cycling, jogging and skating on the Foothills Trail. Jeanette’s dream would be “to have a dirt trail parallel to the paved trail for all dirt lovers - joggers, dog walkers, mountain bikers and horses.”
In last year’s fall issue of the Trail Line News I announced that Pierce County had awarded a contract to construct the bridge over South Prairie Creek and Lower Burnett Road as well as a bridge over Spikton Creek. These bridges are now completed, paved and ready to be joined with other segments of the trail. Progress is steady, but at the mercy of regulations, money and time. However, things are proceeding. The route from South Prairie through the RV Park has been identified, and negotiations are continuing to secure this segment along South Prairie Creek and to connect to the recently completed bridges leading to Buckley.

Upcoming events include the Western Washington Fair, South Prairie’s Centennial Salmon Run on Sept 26th, and the Planning Conference on Oct. 22 for next year’s Washington State Trails Coalition Meeting. A signup to work the Coalition booth at the Puyallup Fair is available through our website at http://www.piercecountytrails.org/. Sign up early and often to support your Coalition. Additionally, if you have an interest in serving on our Board of Directors, please contact me through our website or email to foothillstrail@gmail.com.

The Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition is built by many individuals. Some are active, some aren’t, some make a one time donation, while others support the Coalition by their continual activism. However, all have a desire to improve outdoor recreation opportunities in Pierce County and the Pacific Northwest.

Memberships and Donations
by Loras Gassmann, Coalition Treasurer

Up to $29.00

$30.00 to $49.00

$50.00 to $99.00

$100.00 and above
The Hitching Post

by Jeanette Fohn, Coalition Board Member

They are finally here! The much anticipated “Foothills Trail Equestrian Courtesy and Safety” brochures. These pamphlets outline trial etiquette for equestrians, so that we will continue to be a welcome sight for other trail users. They may be downloaded from the Coalition website at http://piercecountytrails.org/. Copies will be available at the Puyallup Fair for interested equestrians and trail users. A huge “Thank you!” to Linda Clark, equestrian board member for 12 years, and Kathy Kravit-Smith, Director, PC Parks & Recreation, for all the work they did to get them published!

After hearing rave reviews about the recent guided tour through Gale Canyon, I decided to check it out for myself. I left the horse trailer at home and started out on foot from just north of Wilkinson off of John’s Road and 156th. The trail was beautiful and very serene with intermittent views of Gale Creek. The footing would be excellent for horses this time of year, but possibly too muddy in the fall. I would not want to tear up this wonderful trail! Unfortunately, about a mile in there was a partially broken manmade bridge and a washout from last year’s flood that my horse would have trouble getting past. On foot it was no problem to go around the washout area while the creek was low. If you are braver than I, you will continue to find fabulous footing until you reach a 4-foot high windfall that is impassible on horseback. It looks as though this tree was cut on one side but has not been removed yet. Equestrians, we need you at the next work party! I read that Don Partington and the Backcountry Horsemen had put in many hours on this trail, and we all owe them a huge “Thank you!”

After about an hour and 15 minutes of walking, we came out to the newly paved trail by the beaver pond and wetland and a short walk later arrived at the huge Coalition Bridge. I was thrilled to see that the dirt path beside the pavement was at least 4-6 feet wide, thanks to those wonderful people that helped in the design of this new section. They put the entire dirt path on one side, so that it would be wider and safer for horses, joggers, dogs, etc. When the ground solidifies and the grass grows in, this will be a really nice place to ride!

Please always remember to be safe, courteous and respectful of other trail users. Happy Trails!

Courtesy Patrol to the Rescue!

by Ernie Bay, Coalition President Emeritus

The Courtesy Patrol earned its colors on a blistering hot day in late July when a trail walker spotted my bright yellow green vest and alerted me to the plight of a ten-year old boy stranded on a raft just offshore downstream. The boy had managed to scramble upon the State Department of Fisheries’ fish counting raft moored in the river west of the Sumner-Puyallup Bridge when he became separated from his mother in a float tube accident. A voluminous torrent of water encircled the raft, leaving no choice but to call 911. The Sumner Fire Department responded in force, and within a half hour the excited boy scrambled up the bank to a very relieved mother. Chalk another one up for the Courtesy Patrol.

MetLife Home Loans
2921 5th Avenue NE
Suite 210
Puyallup, WA 98372
Direct (253) 864-4747
Fax (253) 435-5250
klbutler@metlifehomeloans.com
kristabutlerloans.com

Krista L. Butler
Relationship Manager

MetLife Home Loans is a Division of MetLife Bank, N.A.
Networking for Trails:

Cushman Trail
by John S. Selby, Editor

The pin-pile bridge support structure and sub-deck are now complete. It will be finished with a layer of pervious asphalt for the traveled surface. All but one of the structural earth walls are now complete just north of Rosedale Street, and the trail is graded nearly to subgrade. Next, the contractor will install a heavy crushed surface base course and then the top course and pavement to complete the process. For details and photos, visit http://www.cityofgigharbor.net/page.php?id=998.

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

Design for the first mile of trail is nearly complete. We plan to go out to bid later this year or early next year, depending on when we receive permits from the Army Corps of Engineers. Some design changes have been made to accommodate the steep terrain section of the trail.

Puyallup Riverwalk
by Ernie Bay, Coalition President Emeritus

The planned connection of the Puyallup Riverwalk with the Foothills Trail remains on hold indefinitely until a long-standing property annexation issue can be resolved. Also, an interim connection with 134th Ave. NE that was expected to be achieved this summer has been delayed by a BNSF requirement that a shed be constructed beneath its railroad bridge to protect trail users from possible train-related debris. Design work has been authorized, and the City of Puyallup now hopes to have this project completed by next summer. Meanwhile access to 134th from beneath the highway and railroad bridges is open and has been somewhat improved by Pierce County River Improvement’s flood repair to the levee earlier this year.

Check out the artwork! Riverwalk Trail users beginning their journey from beneath the SR512 overpass north of East Main Street are now treated to a two hundred fifty-foot mural, depicting a string of giant salmon along a curlicued river. Anchoring the piece at the west end of the retaining wall behind the blue “flashcube” buildings is the Riverwalk’s native American salmon icon. The east end of the mural concludes with a striking caricatured salmon skeleton.

The work was done by artist Mike Hollins of Puyallup and was sponsored by Valley Arts United, The Kiwanis Club of Puyallup, The Puyallup Kiwanis Foundation and the Foothills Rails-To-Trails Coalition.

The purpose of the artwork is both to culturally enhance the trail experience and to help deter repeated graffiti. Experience has shown that most graffiti artists generally respect good artwork, but are quick to deface blank walls. A previous mural beneath the Meridian Street Puyallup River Bridge commissioned by Valley Arts and the Puyallup Kiwanis in 2001 remained essentially unmolested for eight years before being mistaikenly obliterated by an antigraffiti detail of temporary parks help. An ill wind can blow some good. That incident initiated a replacement mural also by Mr. Hollins and subsequently the mural behind the Puyallup Executive Park.

Mr. Hollins is excited about his work and is eager to depict a twenty foot-high blue heron on a nearby bridge column. All we need is more sponsors.
The first bridge you come to was built in 1999. It is called the FEMA Bridge. As you continue downhill the next bridge crosses Spiketon Creek and was built in 2008. Continuing on you will next come to the Lower Burnett Bridge over South Prairie Creek that was completed just this summer. This spectacular, 400-foot long, 50-foot high curved bridge supported by arches on the site of the original railway trestle is the highlight of this section of the trail. It was designed by Don Pederson of Pierce County Public Works. The next point of interest is the large wetland to the south of the trail. Stop and take time to look for birds in this area. Our plans are to build a rest stop and wildlife viewing area. As you leave the wetland area be sure to notice the large culvert under the trail. It was installed several years ago to allow salmon from South Prairie Creek to enter the wetland. If you have some time to spend you may be lucky enough to spot the beavers that are at work in the wetland. Finally, you will cross a bridge that was built in 2001 over South Prairie Creek. Funds from the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition helped pay for the material for this bridge, so it has been dubbed the Coalition Bridge. You have now reached the end of currently owned Pierce County property. As you head back to your car, I expect you will join me in eagerly awaiting the completion of Phases II and III, connecting both ends of this middle section of the trail to South Prairie and Buckley.
Active Transportation Report

by Dixie Gatchel, Coalition AT Coordinator

Keeping up with what’s going on in Congress as it reframes the Federal Surface Transportation Act is akin to tracking a frisky little flea on a red hot skillet. The work of the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition (FRTTC), as participants in the nationwide grassroots Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) Campaign 2010 for Active Transportation (AT), is coming along amazingly well. In networking with other groups and organizations we discover a gratifying symbiosis between their goals and ours for a Pierce County Active Transportation Regional Network. We share, more or less, similar goals for healthier bodies, healthier communities, healthier economies, and, ultimately, a healthier planet. The RTC motto, “Burn Calories not Carbon,” aptly suits the President’s goal for alternative low-emission types of energy and qualifies our project proposals for stimulus funding.

Several congressional committees are now drafting varying versions of the new Surface Transportation Authorization Bill of 2009 to define Federal funding for the next six years. The naysayers denigrate bicycling and walking as “yuppie stuff” and unworthy of consideration as important modes of transportation in the new legislation. Therefore, please continue your all-out efforts to convince your Representatives in Congress to authorize a dependable, 10% portion of the transportation funding for safe and seamless connections to public transit. In addition, please remind them that connecting rail-trails to our transit systems not only provides alternative transportation, but also preserves the railbanked transportation corridors for the future.

The goal for the RTC campaign at its launching in August 2007 was to fund 40 Federal Transportation Enhancement grants for $50 million each if the campaign were successful. FRTTC submitted 27 rail-trail projects for enhancement funding consideration, and also for the later stimulus funding. So what’s going on now? Who knows? The draft version of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act) may expire on 09/30/09 or it may be extended for 18 months until new legislation is passed. Who knows? CLEAN-TEA (Clean, Low-Emission, Affordable, New Transportation Efficiency Act), S. 575 & H.R. 1329, is released and may replace SAFETEA-LU. CLEAN-TEA directs funding to clean transportation investments like public transportation and passenger rail, affordable neighborhoods around transit stops, and neighborhood improvements that increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. I think there’s a fly in the ointment when it comes to the stated “reliable revenue.” Revenue is derived from a proposed Low Greenhouse Gas Transportation Fund fueled by 10% of the money generated from the auction of carbon emissions allowances from the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (a.k.a. “cap and trade bill”, H.R. 2454) recently approved by the House. Unfortunately, the legislation allows most carbon emission credits may be given away rather than auctioned, so it doesn’t sound like a reliable source of funding to me.

Another worrisome matter: The Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the source of needed funding for our goal, is derived mainly from federal motor fuel taxes. Decreased revenue forced Congress to appropriate $7 billion in emergency money to keep the HTF running just until the end of this fiscal year, 09/30/09. The HTF is running on empty. So who knows what’s going to happen next?

Am I discouraged? Not on your life! Our cause is just and a vital part of the solution needed to alleviate our rapidly deteriorating quality of life. I’m in the middle of a new book recommended by Bob Myrick entitled “$20 Per Gallon – How the Inevitable Rise in the Price of Gasoline Will Change Our Lives for the Better.” Author Christopher Steiner predicts how drastically our world will change as the price of gasoline rises from $6 on up to $20 per gallon. Steiner sees this as good news, suggesting that our world will be simpler, safer, more family-friendly, and, in general, feature a healthier way of living. Who knows? I’m good!

Happy Trails and Peace out Y’All
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.

**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:**
October 17th and November 7th. 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. For work party details please visit our website at http://www.piercecountytrails.org/events.php.

**South Prairie Centennial Salmon Run, September 26th**

**Climate Ride 2009, September 26-30**
See notice in this issue and for details go to http://www.climateride.org/

**Washington State Trails Coalition Fall Planning Meeting, October 22, 3:30-7 PM**
Help plan the 2010 Washington State Trails Conference. Joepepi’s Italian Ristorante, 2207 N. Pearl St. (dinner provided). Contact Rick Hood by email at President@WashingtonStateTrailsCoalition.org or by phone 425-275-3013.
Details at www.WashingtonStateTrailsCoalition.org

**Pierce County Trails Conference, November 12th**
See notice in this issue or call 253-845-2973 for details.
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.

**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.

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**Notices:**

**NO TRAIL ACCESS in the Loop**
**by Russ Matthews, Coalition Member**

At the Coalition’s request Pierce County Parks will place two “NO TRAIL ACCESS” signs on the private road in the Loop where the Foothills Trail crosses 268 Ave. Ct. East above Lower Burnett road. The local home owner has the area posted as a tow away zone. However, he has agreed to allow our work parties to park there for trail work. Please respect his wishes and not park in this area unless you are on an organized work party.

**PC Trail Conference**
**by Jayme Gordon, Executive Director, ForeverGreen**

Save the date of Thursday, November 12, 2009 for the 5th Annual Pierce County Trails Conference at the Puyallup Methodist Church hosted by the ForeverGreen Council. A representative from the Puget Sound Regional Council has been invited to give the keynote presentation on the PSRC regional non-motorized trails plan. The event will include a panel discussion of recent developments and plans for popular trails in Pierce County. Breakout sessions will address the intersection between trails, transportation, health and open space. A great dinner, displays and time for networking will be included as well as the ForeverGreen annual meeting and election of officers.

Details and more information are available at (253) 845-2973.

**Climate Ride 2009**
**by Kartik Sribarra**
**Policy Outreach Manager, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**

Last year, I had the honor of riding with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s “Team RTC” in the first annual Brita Climate Ride. The five-day, 300-mile ride from New York City to Washington, D.C., showcased the bicycle as a viable solution to help slow climate change, culminating with 100 cyclists from around the country pressing our legislators on Capitol Hill for action. The ride is taking place again this year, September 26-30, and I encourage you to join Team RTC for the journey.

This year’s ride has a new, exciting wrinkle: RTC has been named a beneficiary of the event! A portion of every dollar raised will go straight to RTC’s work promoting rail-trails, walking and bicycling throughout the country. Secondly, there will be twice the number of riders as last year—meaning more opportunities for friendships, challenging conversations and riding partners.

Unfortunately, I won’t be able to make the ride this year, but I’m excited that we’re assembling another fun, committed team of supporters for the 2009 Brita Climate Ride. Last year’s ride was filled to capacity, and this year’s ride is already more than half full. Join Team RTC now, and help us build more rail-trails and active transportation facilities around the country, expanding transportation and recreational opportunities for everyone. The cost is $100, and riders raise $2,400 or more, with proceeds going to RTC, Focus the Nation and Clean Air-Cool Planet. Believe me, it’s worth it—you’ll never forget this ride!

For details, visit http://www.climateride.org/.

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TWBC Government Affairs Report

BY BOB MYRICK, COALITION MEMBER & TWBC MEMBER

The Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club government affairs committee met again on Tuesday, July 7. Our meeting was very well attended with 11 people to hear Ian Macek and T. J. Nedrow from the Washington Department of Transportation discuss several matters.

The Puget Sound Regional Council’s 2040 plan is out and available for comment as there are at least five alternative future transportation scenarios. The draft Pierce County Regional Trails Plan is out on the website at http://www.piercetrailsplan.org/ and the Countywide Transportation Plan is being developed thru the rest of the year. The first meeting for Tacoma’s Mobility Plan has taken place and there will be 11 more monthly meetings to help guide plan development. Marguerite, Carla and I have been asked to provide input as committee members. Dianne Wiatr was present from the City to discuss the plan.

T. J. and Ian discussed the status of the 24th Street On-Ramp funds. Our club saved at least $500,000 by avoiding construction of a tunnel on the Scott Pierson Trail near 24th Street near Gig Harbor, so $512,000 was provided for other amenities there. Pierce County originally received $306,000 to help design and build bike shoulders in the area. The grant was reduced to $123,000 down in Olympia and needs to be spent by November. Gig Harbor received $175,000 to provide amenities for cyclists. Tacoma received $15,000 to fund a small connection from Skyline to Jackson on the north side of SR16.

Ian talked about the Statewide Pedestrian and Bike Plan and indicated that staff training is taking place relating to bike/ped design expectations and standards. This training will be widely distributed to regional transportation planning organizations. Ian said a few things about Complete Streets on the state highway system. Near Tacoma, SR99, Pearl Street and SR167 will receive Complete Streets treatment. There is a process for including pedestrians and bikes on the highway system. We asked about improving the state’s bike map. Ian said there is no money available to even print more maps. T. J. talked about efforts to improve construction zone signing for ped and bikes.

We are continuing to follow the Sounder train “D” to “M” Street extension across Pacific Avenue. I will attend a special meeting to further discuss the berm versus elevated structure alternatives. The Puyallup Riverwalk connection to the Foothills Trail is still not made and the matter needs our attention. Dixie Gatchel and I attended Advocacy Training in Puyallup. It was presented by the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department to promote healthy living. Dixie, a few others and I will be attending a two-day workshop put on by Puyallup and the Health Department to study improving the non-motorized environment in South Hill Puyallup. Dianne announced that seven bike racks will be coming to the Tacoma Dome thanks to Steve Brown’s relentless efforts. The Mixed Use Centers Ordinance went before the Tacoma City Council in early August. The City hopes to accomodate its required population growth in these centers and a Complete Streets proposal is contained within the ordinance and will be incorporated into Tacoma’s Mobility Plan.

It is time to ride. Last week, I went out and looked at the progress on the extension of the Cushman Trail in Gig Harbor. The trail should be finished late this year. [See the article in Networking for Trails.]

We can still ride in September and October in dry conditions. I hope to see you on the road. Remember, ride more and worry less.
Finally, Wilkeson has a rest stop on the Foothills Trail

by Becky Gilbert, Coalition Member

A couple of years ago I had an idea that we needed a rest stop here in Wilkeson, dedicated to all the persons who have volunteered their time and energy to make this community better. The theme for the garden rest stop and memorial is, “Pillars of the Community.” All funds to construct this project were private donations.

Working with Pierce County Parks and Recreation we came up with a design. After many delays an agreement between the county and the Town of Wilkeson was reached and construction started in June.

Since this project is dedicated to volunteers, once again they were called upon to help. Our Historic Wilkeson Sandstone Quarry donated the flagstone. Without the generous offer from flagstoner Chuck Nelson, the memorial garden rest stop would not have been possible. Wilkeson resident Bob Sutphin came to my rescue and cleared a good portion of the site and laid down the surface for the flagstone. Special thanks are due to the volunteers from the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition, town residents, town employees, family members and friends. Our goal was to complete the project by the Wilkeson Centennial celebration, July 18th. Thanks to the help of volunteers, we were able to complete the construction of the Memorial Garden in just nine days. Hours before the celebration started the last stone bench was moved into place.

Come to Wilkeson, rest in the Memorial Garden and look around and see how the Foothills Trail has enhanced our town.

Work Party Report

by Don Partington, Coalition Board Member and Trail Crew Coordinator

Our trail crews have been working between South Prairie and Wilkeson, most recently with mowing and cutting back overhanging brush. This is a very pretty section of the Foothills Trail, and we most often refer to it as Gale Canyon.

Over the last few years Gale Creek has had a number of very high flows which have washed away a couple sections of the original rail bed. This last winter, a third section began to wash away. Luckily, the high flows subsided before the erosion had reached all the way across the rail bed. Since that time, we have been communicating with Pierce County Parks and Recreation about the need to protect this county asset from further damage. Several roads and levies around the county have suffered similar damage and have been repaired already. The Coalition has offered to assist the county in protecting this treasure from further damage.
Women Sweep the R2R
by John S. Selby, Editor and Assistant Race Director

On National Trails Day, Saturday June 6, 2009, runners, walkers, and ultras took on the seventh annual Rainier to Ruston Rail-Trail Relay and Ultra. It was another great race.

For 223 participants it was truly “an adventure in your own back yard.” For the Coalition it was a chance to show off over a mile of newly constructed trail between Buckley and So. Prairie, including two beautiful new bridges. With the help of the Backcountry Horsemen, we were able to reopen the upper Carbon River trail after the January floods. Even Carbonado residents cooperated by opening private property to parking at the exchange and removing debris on the trail behind the cemetery so runners and walkers could enjoy the old railroad grade all the way to Wilkeson.

We had 7 solo and 4 teams walking 27 miles (6 legs), 6 ultras running 50 K, and 6 ultras and 33 teams running 50 miles (12 legs). Our participation was down to 73% of last year, but the Tacoma Marathon was also down by about the same percentage, perhaps due to the tough economy.

Five new records were set this year and one old record broken.

* 50K ultras Terri Gray (Team TJ) from Everett, WA and Julie Stark (One Crazy Lady) from Granite Falls, WA came across the finish line together in 5 hours 30 minutes to set new course records for the women’s masters and military divisions respectively.

* Four-position running teams Real Old Guys from Mil, OR and 62d FSS-2 (USAF) from McChord AFB, WA set new records respectively for super masters in 6 hours 28 minutes and military in 6 hours 53 minutes.

* The 6-position, collegiate running team Stellar (UPS) from Tacoma, WA set the time to beat for future challenges at 6 hours 48 minutes.

* The 3-position, high school walking team 5 Asians and a Bosnian, (International School), Bellevue, WA, finished in 6 hours 56 minutes to clobber their previous record of 8 hours 35 minutes.

This was also the “year of the woman” as three women beat all the men in the 27-mile solo walk (Misty Strong, Lake Tapps, WA), the 50K ultra (Maria Amaya, Tacoma, WA) and the 50M ultra (Jenny Appel, Puyallup, WA). My own 6-runner relay team, The Mystery Kids, won a Bent Spike award for the worst screw up - both our support van and our runner independently made wrong turns that sent them toward So. Prairie instead of Buckley! Oops! The result was that the Assistant Race Director’s team was disqualified, because we skipped the Buckley exchange!

Congratulations to all the winners and the 85 volunteers who pulled off another great race! And thanks especially to our sponsors for supporting this exciting event.

Easton Strong contemplated his mother Misty’s gold spike award received for her accomplishment of walking 27 miles in six and one-half hours.

Photo by Ernie Bay
Dixie and Clay Gatchel could never get enough of the outdoors. They were avid skiers, volunteered in national parks and more recently took up hiking. The Puyallup, Washington duo discovered rail-trails in 2000 after driving by the Foothills Trail near their home. While cycling on the trail, they met rail-trail enthusiast Ernie Bay, who encouraged them to join his courtesy bicycle patrol. They did.

At the end of a November 23, 2005, ride, Clay caught his right pedal on a bollard placed in the trail to discourage cars from coming onto the paved pathway. He catapulted over the handlebars and called out to Dixie.

He couldn’t move.

The impact collapsed his third and fourth cervical vertebrae, leaving him quadriplegic. Ten days later he died from pneumonia at 87. After 58 years of marriage, the shock sent Dixie into a deep funk. She felt lost. Eventually she ventured out onto the trail by herself, but it seemed so lonely without Clay. She didn’t know how to change a tire or replace a busted chain.

Bay convinced her to attend Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s 2007 TrailLink Conference in Portland, Ore. The keynote speech about Active Transportation inspired her. She liked the idea of using rail-trails as seamless connections between towns and public transportation stops.

“It’s all about getting people to leave their cars in their garages whenever possible,” she says. “Especially for short trips.”

The 85-year-old got involved with a grassroots campaign to establish a regional active transportation network in Pierce County, Wash. She now spends her days advocating for the cause. She writes a regular column on the subject for a local newsletter, prepares case statements for funding requests, organizes stakeholder meetings and makes sure the public understands what active transportation is and why it’s important. “It gave me a new reason to go on living and do something useful,” she says. “I’m not the kind of person who can just sit around.”

Never comfortable talking in front of a crowd, Dixie joined Toastmasters so she’d feel confident speaking about Active Transportation before city councils and other large groups. Whenever she feels nervous or discouraged, she thinks of Clay: “He would be right here with me.”

[This article about Coalition members Clay and Dixie Gatchel is reprinted from the Fall 2009 issue of Rails-to-Trails with the permission of the Rail-to-Trails Conservancy. Jennifer Vogelsong is a journalist at the York Daily Record/York Sunday News in York, PA.]
The recently established “Courtesy Patrol University” concluded the third annual CP class graduation at High Cedars Golf Club in Orting on May 9, 2009. Pat Johnson, Mayor of Buckley, Vice President of the FRTTC and a Courtesy Patroller in her own right, was the keynote speaker and covered the points of interest on the completed portion of the Foothills Trail in her presentation. It rang like a Chamber of Commerce dissertation and reminded each patroller of the awesome opportunities they have earned as a CPU graduate to repetitively experience the beautiful 17 miles of Foothills Trail as they interact with the public and protect the environment.

Twenty-four patrollers received their certification (seven for the first time) and their identifying yellow vests from Dr. Ernie Bay, President Emeritus. Each year the CPU curriculum improves with diversified classes to upgrade the skills and knowledge of each patroller. This year’s program included: Orientation by Past Presidents of the FRTTC, Equestrians on the Trail, First Aid Overview, and What You Should Know About Bicycles.

First-time certification graduates were Janet and Don Rich, Dr. Haven Silver, Joy Hill, Beth Buhl, Dick Chauner and Galen Stark.


FRTTC/CP.

The Courtesy Patrol was created in 2002 to encourage trail courtesy and to provide trail information to users. Members assist with special events such as the Foothills Dash, the Daffodil Classic Bike Ride, the Rainier to Ruston Rail-Trail Relay & Ultra (R2R), and the South Prairie Salmon Run. Other activities include the Puyallup Fair and the Orting Market where information booths are manned, providing trail information to the public.

Interested parties are encouraged to become involved in this great outdoor activity for personal health and volunteer good will! Contact Jerry Larson at capt2wheeler@comcast.net or 253-845-7219.
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