

Sept 2001
Foothills Newsletter

"Into the future, out of the past."

So proclaims the title of a newly painted mural facing Meridian Street on the west wall of Charlie's Restaurant in Puyallup. The central feature of the mural is a lone cyclist pedaling down the middle of a streetcar track toward the viewer. The mural was inspired by a 1905 photographic negative of Meridian Street. What a pleasing coincidence it is that this particular subject should be chosen for the building that has been for the past 15 years the weekly Wednesday luncheon headquarters for the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition!

In the mid 1900s railroads and bicycles were in. Railroads were creating new communities across the nation, and bicycles were the latest and most popular mode of local transportation. By mid-twentieth century trains were rapidly succeeded by air travel and bicycles were largely considered appropriate only for children beneath the age of 16. America's forty-odd year love affair with the automobile knew no bounds. As with other things in life both the airplane and the automobile are proving once again that there can be too much of a good thing.

A quarter century ago, in response to President Jimmy Carter's National Suggestion Box, I proposed a thesis by which we as a country could and should begin weaning ourselves from our growing dependence upon the personal automobile. I argued for more transportation choices and a balanced transportation system. I also predicted that the automobile as a prime mover of people could not be relied upon much further into the twenty-first century than it had preceded the twentieth. In the spring of 1977 the then contrived oil shortage and resulting panic was already a bad dream that the American public was hastening to forget. Automobile production was destined to reach new highs. As we begin the twenty-first century, has it reached a peak? Let's hope so! The latest manufacturing statistics forecast significantly reduced new car production. Park and ride facilities are filling up faster than they are built. Road rage is on the rise and traffic tie-ups are the rule. In many places we have simply run out of room for new corridors and adding new lanes has often become economically and logistically impractical. Automobiles have robbed our inner cities of their vitality and have severely blighted suburban landscapes. Our mobility has been impaired by major arterials and other traffic obstacles to where it is often difficult if not impossible to get from one neighborhood to another by bicycling or walking.

Arguments over the escalating cost of light rail often overlook the near comparable cost of alternative new highway construction. We need our cities back, and light rail, together with more bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities, will make this happen. We need more efficient transportation connections between our cities, and here, too, light rail, improved bus service, and, yes, multipurpose trails, will make this happen. Both rails to trails and rails with trails are essential to a better way of living. Back to the future!
Ernie Bay

Thank Governor Locke

On June 19 Governor Gary Locke vetoed Condition 1, Section 233 of ESSB 5327! So what does all this mean? It means that after more than 20 years of hassle, the East Lake Sammamish Trail became free to proceed. Opponents were a few wealthy lakeside homeowners who had over the years ignored and encroached into the former railroad right-of-way. One of these was a national rails-to-trails nemesis and founder of NARPO (National Association of Reversionary Property Owners). During the last round of TEA-21 Transportation Enhancements, King County was awarded \$900,000 in state and federal matching funds to open the trail on an interim basis. Finishing the development of the trail is expected to require several more years. As a last (hopefully) ditch stand opponents managed to insert language, referenced above, that would have blocked expenditure of the Enhancement grant, pending an interlocal agreement between the three trail affected cities, Issaquah, Redmond and Sammamish, and King County. The mayors of both Issaquah and Redmond not only readily signed the provision, but publicly endorsed that the trail proceed without further delay. But Sammamish balked. Attempts to remove the disabling language was tabled in the house transportation committee and failed to receive the necessary votes in the senate. County Executive Ron Sims, and before him Gary Locke, have been strong supporters of the trail. Thus it was consistent for Governor Locke to sign this critical veto. Thank you, Governor Locke!

Governor Locke's official reason for his action is as follows. "This section would have directed the Washington State Department of Transportation to withhold federal transportation enhancement funds for the East lake Sammamish Trail Interim Improvement Project until inter-local agreements are secured between King County and the cities of Sammamish, Redmond and Issaquah. The transportation enhancement funds that were conditioned by this section are federal pass-through dollars designated for local agency transportation projects and programs. While the state plays an important role in selecting these types of projects for federal funding, I believe it would be inappropriate for the state to condition the receipt of these funds beyond the Local Agency Guidelines prepared specifically for the administration of these projects."

Note: Since Governor Locke's action we have been told that ELS trail opponents have filed suit in Pierce County that might still delay or prevent the ELS trail's interim opening.

Meet your board

Bill Harmon

Our newest board member and secretary, Bill Harmon, is truly a treasured asset to our Coalition. He has long been our trail archivist, making sure that clippings of our various trials and successes are preserved for posterity. Bill, as a charter member, has weathered our many battles from the very beginning. He is a faithful participant in our meetings, work parties, fair booth and auctions. Bill is also a long-time member of the Mountaineers. Recently retired from Boeing, Bill is looking forward to enjoying an even closer association with the Foothills Trail.

East Lake Sammamish Trail opposed

Since Governor Locke's veto of the trail-delaying language in the transportation bill, opponents have taken a new tack. Issaquah lakeside residents and long time opponents of the ELS Trail, Warren and Vicki Beres, and Jayme Mcallister, have recently filed suit in Pierce County against King County and Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad. The suit alleges among other things that the as-built railroad (in place for more than 100 years) was not situated within the original federally granted 200 foot wide railroad corridor. Plaintiffs have filed for quiet title and restraining order and vacating previous judgment enabling trail.

Enumclaw considering trail link

(from News Tribune, May 2, 2001)

The City of Enumclaw would do the South Sound a big favor if it succeeds in adding a new strand to the growing web of recreational trails linking communities in the region. The more miles of trail that can be added, the better. An expanded trail system would bring residents more opportunities for recreation and exercise. There's also a less obvious benefit--the system's use as a transportation corridor. As trail systems grow and connect more communities--and more homes to workplaces--some commuters could choose to abandon their vehicles in favor of bicycles or skates.

Enumclaw has announced its intention to build a four-mile trail to Buckley at a cost of about \$1.3 million. The next step would be for representatives from Enumclaw, Buckley and Pierce and King counties to meet to develop funding strategies and resolve potential problems such as deciding how to cross the White River to complete the Buckley link. The good news is that the proposed trail has generated widespread popular enthusiasm and a willingness by municipal and county officials to cooperate. Buckley welcomes the proposed link. Pierce and King county park officials are interested in working out an agreement to make the trail happen.

Under Enumclaw's proposal, workers would convert the old Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad bed into a paved trail for walking, in-line skating, horse-back riding and bicycling. But travelers on the proposed trail wouldn't have to stop in Buckley. That's because the trail would join the main stem of the Pierce County Foothills Trail, still being expanded by the county and some municipalities.

Once completed, the Foothills Trail will run 23 miles from Puyallup to Buckley, with an eight-mile spur from South Prairie to Wilkeson and Carbonado. [Maybe someday to Mt. Rainier.]

The Enumclaw-Buckley link would be an important addition to a developing network full of recreation and transportation potential.

Cascade Junction bridge work encouraging

The steel beams were delivered on Friday, July 20, and additional concrete was added to raise the height of the abutments the following week. On August 20, while the wood decking was being delivered, Fort Lewis' 864th Engineering Battalion (the assembly crew) was getting ready to fight range fires in Eastern Washington.

What a difference a day or two makes! The heavy rains of August 21 and 22 canceled those plans and now it looks like the 864th may start putting the bridge together next week as scheduled. Remember, the work is being accomplished during a critical

"window" of time when salmon and other species will not be running through South Prairie Creek. The next newsletter will tell the story--"It's up" or "Wait until next year"--but all signs are looking positive at press time.

Dear Foothills Rails To Trails Coalition;

I commend you on your efforts to build the Foothills Trail. Much has been said lately about our young people being overweight and suffering many of the diseases related to obesity. When I was young I rode my bicycle everywhere. Today there is so much traffic on the streets it is unsafe for our young people to ride bikes there. Bike trails and bike lanes are in very short supply. Bike trails and bike lanes should be readily available in all neighborhoods. I think this would encourage not only our young people to ride but adults as well. This would allow them to get the exercise they need to keep from becoming overweight. Besides, bike riding is healthy and a lot of fun. Keep up the good work!
Sincerely, Larry Coghill, Auburn, WA

Recently I biked along the Foothills Trail--always an enjoyable experience. Sometimes I've biked there from as far away as Federal Way. We try to take the back roads. The stretch from the McMillin trailhead along 162 to the county road (about one mile) has always been unpleasant. Imagine our surprise yesterday when we discovered that this section is being paved. Yeah! Put this \$\$ towards more trail!
Thanks. Sylvia Feder, Covington. [Enclosed \$50.00.]

Dear Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition,

Thank you for your perseverance in creating and developing the trail. I am always so impressed at its popularity. It is wonderful to see people out and about instead of confined to their cars. I was just reading the newsletter and was reminded of how good it is to have access to the pedestrian bridge across the Puyallup River at the McMillin trailhead.

Also we had a chance to talk with a Pierce County employee who was surveying the old Beardslee/Forbes acreage. What a fabulous piece of land! Congratulations on figuring out a way to keep it undeveloped! Keep up the good work!
Sincerely, Misty Bulley [\$ 200 contribution enclosed].

We need some bigger help!

On July 21 11 volunteers turned out for the monthly work party and cleared brush from a two-mile length off the end of the pavement. Muddy conditions stopped the effort about 1/2 mile beyond Arline Road. We need some bigger help to get through that spot before the summer comes to an end and the fall rains set in. A mechanized shovel of some type would do the trick. We have a place to safely park and hold the equipment we need. Call 253-841-2570 if you can help us out.

We are told that official clearance to pave the entire distance to South Prairie will be another year in coming. In the mean time, the Coalition would like to make that section of the trail passable for walkers, horses and wide-tired bicycles before the end of this calendar year. That will not happen without the "bigger help" we are looking for. Take a

look at the wet spot yourself. The trail up to it looks great.
We are taking suggestions on how the problem can be solved. Let us know your ideas.

Parks and Trails Lose a Friend

Scott Pierson January 28, 1943 - June 17, 2001

We all lost a friend and visionary in Scott Pierson on June 17. Scott died suddenly of a heart attack while cycling home from work as a Tacoma city planner and architect. Scott's legacy includes accomplishments too numerous to mention, but Tacoma and Pierce County residents enjoy and benefit from these daily. Stroll Rustin Way, visit Titlow Park or Tyler Square, enjoy landscape plantings throughout the city. Scott had a major hand in them all. In addition, he was involved in the city's Non-motorized Transportation Plan, Recreation and Open Space Facilities Plan, Pierce County Bicycle Guide Map, Helmets on Wheels Program, Walkable Communities and the Pierce County SafeKids Coalition.

Trails for which he was planning include the Puyallup River Levee Trail and SR-16 Trail and Washington state-wide bike routes. Scott's family requested that donations in his memory be contributed to the causes that he supported. These included The Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club, the Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, Transportation Choices Coalition and Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition. As of this date twenty contributions totaling nearly \$1,200 have been received by the Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition. At Scott's memorial service the Washington Department of Transportation donated several varieties of trees for people to take and plant in an appropriate location in memory of Scott. We chose an American Service Berry, *Amelanchier canadensis*, which is now planted just behind the McMillin trail marker.

Footprints & Bike Tracks 2001 Conference

October 10-12, 2001

The Footprints & Bike Tracks 2001, Biking and Walking: Transportation for this Millennium conference will be held October 10-12 at the West Coast Olympia Hotel in Olympia. The conference provides an educational forum to increase the amount and safety of people walking and biking in Washington's communities. The conference shows how bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs can help create more livable communities. Discover new programs and projects, share successes and plan future bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

The conference is designed for people working or advocating for bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements. The audience is potentially very broad and includes a wide range of transportation stakeholders such as elected officials, planners, engineers, educators, advocates, developers and financiers, health providers and law enforcement officers.

Conference session titles include Recent Trends & Future Implications, Trail Development in New Corridors and Community Based Bicycle Education & Pedestrian Safety. There will also be three mobile workshops available for conference attendees.

For registration information please contact Kimberly Colburn at 360-705-7879 or colburk@wsdot.wa.gov or register on-line at www.bicyclealliance.org. For more

information regarding the conference program, please contact Barbara Culp at 206-224-9252 or barbc@bicyclealliance.org.

Jan Wolcott a hero!

We are proud to reprint the following excerpt from an article in the fall issue of Rails to Trails. This is the national magazine of the Rails To Trails Conservancy. The article by Christopher Swope is entitled "Trail Titans, 5 Trail Heroes," and relates to the political labors of people achieving rail trails. Way to go, Jan!

Making Trails Piece By Piece

When the Burlington Northern railroad abandoned a 25-mile rail corridor east of Tacoma, Wash., in 1986, Jan Wolcott had no idea what he was in for. Wolcott, head of the local parks department in Pierce County, wanted to turn the trail bed into the Foothills Trail, the county's first major trail park. The railroad, however, had not followed federal "rail banking" procedures to keep the corridor intact, and adjacent property owners claimed title to the land. That left Wolcott with the arduous task he's been diligently working on for 15 years: reassemble the corridor for public use, bit by bit.

The puzzle that is Wolcott's trail has some 200 pieces to it, each presenting its own challenge. Jan has had to negotiate purchases individually with each landowner, which hasn't been easy. Some of the landowners are virulent trail opponents. Wolcott has had to use the county's condemnation powers several times. Even today, after a decade and a half, he still has 40 parcels left to acquire before the Foothills Trail corridor is completely reassembled. "The one thing we never did," Wolcott says, "is abandon the idea that we wouldn't let the corridor go."

The most difficult part for Wolcott has been figuring out which landowners have rightful claims. This is much harder than it sounds. Some families who owned land along the corridor for generations had split the property among many heirs. Wolcott and other county officials had to research the lineage of more than 100 people from one family alone--digging through birth, marriage and death certificates--to reconstruct the chain of title.

In 1996, plans were brewing in Congress to gut the federal rail banking law. That's the law that makes it easier to keep abandoned rail corridors intact and which would have been Wolcott's savior had the BN railroad followed it. Wolcott testified before a congressional committee, relating his trail-building saga and warning Congress not to make every rail-trail effort as nightmarish as his own. Without rail banking, Wolcott argued, few rail-trail efforts would get done anywhere. After listening to Wolcott, Congress decided to leave the law alone.

For all of the trouble in Pierce County, Wolcott's efforts are paying off. Several sections of the Foothills Trail (totaling nine miles) have opened in recent years. The trail, which parallels a river where salmon spawn and features a stunning view of Mt. Rainier, has been a huge hit. It's not unusual for 3,000 people to use it on a single weekend, walking, running, biking, in-line skating and simply enjoying the scenery.

There's more good news. The county recently negotiated for a 4.5 mile extension to the Foothills Trail, to be opened alongside an active railroad. Small victories like this are what have kept Wolcott going all these years. "There have always been enough

encouraging signs that we never considered not building this trail," Wolcott says. "We could always see the light at the end of the tunnel."

We're now safe beyond the wetlands

Trail users may now continue their travels beyond the Wetlands Bridge near South Prairie without fear of tacks and nails or the intimidation of "No Trespassing" signs. As we reported in the March issue of the Trail Line News our historic nemesis, Mary Harris, offered to buy out the Coalition's quit claim interest in a critical trail parcel for which she claimed quiet title just days before the true ownership was to be decided in court. We understood from our lawyer that Harris had agreed to our compromise selling price of \$27,500, and also the condition that we would have immediate right of entry and use.

Shortly after the court date had passed we received the document of agreement. Much to our dismay the stated sales price was \$27,000 and not \$27,500. More disturbing was language that would have forbid our use and maintenance of the path transecting the property. This was a complete contradiction of the terms that we had stipulated. Eventually, Pierce County Parks made Harris a conditional offer of \$90,000 for her ownership, but only if it comprised all seven parcels including the Coalition's quit claim. Soon thereafter Harris settled with the Coalition on our original terms. This clears the way for Pierce County Parks to proceed to condemnation on Harris on October 9, 2001. It also clears the way for trail users to journey beyond the Wetlands Bridge in peace and tranquillity. As always, trail users are reminded to please respect private property and not to stray from the designated pathway.

Bricks Apology

We are sorry it has taken so long to inscribe the bricks with the names of our valued contributors, but we have good news! We are delighted to report that on June 12 72 bricks were inscribed at our Orting kiosk. This begins a new subscription cycle with five more bricks already requested. We ask new subscribers to please be patient until a total of at least 25 bricks is purchased before the next series of bricks can be contracted for inscription. We hope to be able to accomplish this goal before next summer.

From the June 17, 2001, Seattle Times.

From Copenhagen to Berlin by Bike

Cycling enthusiasts can now travel from Copenhagen to Berlin using 380 miles of bike paths that opened this spring, connecting the two capitals. The route is designed to feature scenery along the Baltic Sea, from eastern Denmark to the German states of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Brandenburg. Information in English will soon be available at www.tmv.de.

History Repeats Itself

Last month representatives of local governments and trail advocates met in Sumner to discuss ways to connect the Foothills Trail, the Puyallup Riverwalk and the city of Sumner's trail plan. In this light it is curious to look back more than a hundred years to a

similar meeting as reported in the Sumner Herald of July 1, 1898.

"Last Wednesday evening, at a well attended meeting, a petition was drawn up and is being generously signed, to present to the county commissioners, for a bicycle path from here to Puyallup. Also, a club was formed and organization perfected of the Sumner Cycle Club, with the following officers: H.S. Church, pres., R.E. McFarland, vice pres., H.R. Ryan, sec., and T.B. Davis, treas. The club will be governed by the bylaws of the Puyallup Club. Dating from the first day of July, 1898, 25 cents per member per quarter in advance will be charged, the funds to be expended on the path. The ladies are cordially invited to attend the meetings and sign themselves as members. B.S. Fryar having kindly consented to grade one mile of the road at his own expense--and Puyallup, we are sure, will assist with at least one mile at their end--this will leave us about a mile to grade. In order to get this done it will be necessary for members to donate one or more days labor, and a paper is being circulated to this purpose; we note thereon already, a dozen who have signed for three and four days. Let everyone who rides a wheel "ginger up" and help carry the project to completion. ..."

Walk the Milton-Edgewood Section of the Interurban Railroad

Meet other rails-to-trails enthusiasts on September 15 at 10 a.m. and walk the section of the historic Interurban rail bed that runs through Milton and Edgewood. We will park on the gravel road leaving the south-east side of the 70th Ave. E. overpass over I5 in Fife, then carpool everyone up to the beginning of the three-mile walk at 114th Ave. E. and Jovita Blvd.

The Seattle-Tacoma Interurban was the first, high-speed electric railway, built to main line standards, to operate in the Puget Sound region. The tracks were built from Tacoma through Fife, up East Hylebos Creek at Milton, over the "hogback" in Edgewood, down the North bank of Jovita Creek and through a curved tunnel under Stewart's Point. From there it ran out onto the White River Valley where it since has been converted to the Interurban Trail extending north to Interstate 405. The original track followed the Duwamish River north into downtown Seattle and later up to Everett. Short spurs were also built into Puyallup and Renton.

Service began on September 25, 1902, with trains leaving the station every two hours and reaching speeds up to 60 miles per hour on straight sections of track. Fare wars broke out between the Interurban and the passenger boats shuttling between Seattle and Tacoma. Land developers sold acre lots for \$65 along the railroad line.

Completion of the first paved road, Highway 99, between Seattle and Tacoma spelled the end of the Interurban. It's last run was on December 30, 1928. Today the Interurban Railroad is history. Come and walk it with us and imagine the future of a rail trail over the "hogback."

Take two trails and call me in the morning

Feeling overwhelmed? Stressed out? A dose of nature might be just the prescription you need. Studies show that nature has a restorative value that helps us recover from mental fatigue. According to Stephen Kaplan, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, natural patterns such as rippling water or swaying tree branches relax us by

focusing our attention.

Even a view of trees or flowers can enhance well-being. So look for nature close to your home or office. Take short hikes. Enjoy gardening. Visit a park, a nursery or a trail. Open each of your senses to the natural world, breathe deeply and leave your worries behind, at least for a while.

Do you have a picture that's "worth thousand words?"

We would like to look at any photos you may have taken that speak for what the trail means to you. In the past we have resorted to showing lines on big maps to convey what the trail means to us. While a trail is useful in getting from one place to another, it is valued for many other things as well. It allows families to get out and be together; it's a safe place for kids to learn to ride a bike and to see nature as the seasons change.

Do you have a photo that displays one or more of the grand attributes of the trail? Do you think it's a great example of what the trail means? Is it a picture that's "worth a thousand words?" The Coalition would like to see it. Please send a copy to P.O. Box 192, Puyallup, WA 98371.

South Prairie gets a trail head and nearly 3,000 feet of trail

Jan Wolcott, Director of Pierce County Parks, announced that bids have been accepted for construction of a trail head facility, parking lot and a section of trail in the town of South Prairie. It is hoped that work will begin before Labor Day.

The design matches the "station" look of the facility previously constructed in McMillin and will be on the vacant lot across SR 162 from Arnold's Texaco. The trail section will begin behind the South Prairie Fire Station, pass by the trail head and run along First Street and cross the town's western edge.

See the "bigger help" article to find out about connecting South Prairie with the Wetlands bridge pavement.