



June, 2010

The purpose of Inland Northwest Trails Coalition is to promote the Inland Northwest as a premium non-motorized recreation destination while creating a viable active transportation system for our residents.

The last report was August 2009, this one includes results of some things we tried to put in place last summer.

State of the Trails reports from the Annual Meeting:

Robbi Castleberry from Palisades NW <http://www.palisadesnw.com/> , a neighborhood group of supporters for this combination of City Park and Conservation Futures properties.

- Since Rimrock Drive has been closed to motorized vehicles there has been an increase and diversification of wildlife in the park. The gate at the north end will eventually be moved to the end of the road since there no longer needs to be vehicle access.
- New land additions are pending for the north end of the park through previous acquisition.
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant will provide a Fire Safe Program for the interface between homes and the park.
- Biological control has been very successful in eliminating Knapweed.

Andy Dunau from the Spokane River Forum <http://www.spokaneriver.net/>

- Water Trails are becoming more popular as a recreational experience and can even be combined with other outdoor activities by connecting to hiking and biking trails.
- In the process of including Spokane River as a Water Trail for Spokane County Trail Plan.
- Challenge is Public Access (newest access point below Upriver Dam, management conflict is holding up progress on State Line access point).
- River Trails are good for business – bring in tourists but also are being used more by residents that have never had the “on the river” experience. Try it out – Trips and Maps click here. http://www.spokaneriver.net/?page_id=307
- Whitewater Park near Sandifur Memorial Bridge is on hold for Environmental Impact analysis.

Jeff Lambert from the Dishman Hills Alliance (AKA The Dream Trail Work Group) Connecting People to Nature

- Representatives from many outdoor groups are working together to complete a Wildlife Corridor from Dishman Hills Natural Area to Iller Creek Conservation Area and Big Rock (Rocks of Sharon) across the Dishman Ridge.
- There are five critical goals:
 1. Wildlife habitat requiring an unbroken corridor at least 300 feet wide.
 2. Native plant and ecosystem protection.
 3. Education of youth and adults about nature and the outdoors.
 4. Recreation and fitness with a “Dream Trail” of 12-miles.
 5. A viewshed of forested slopes for much of Spokane.
- Land purchases or easements are needed to connect the corridor and most of the landowners are listening.

- Contributions are needed for purchase of land – possible Conservation Futures nominations as well. Dishman Hills Natural Area Association membership is \$15. Additional contributions for land purchase are welcomed too.
Mail to DHNAA
3415 S. Lincoln Dr.
Spokane, WA 99203

Mike Aho – Spokane City Parks and Recreation Department

- In the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, after surveys were conducted, Parks and Trails were voted most important.
- Beacon Hill has several nominations to Conservation Futures. They would add about 340 acres to the already 800 plus. This will extend access for mountain bikers and hikers.
- Work parties have been blocking vehicle access and removing transient camps.
- Volunteers are working on a one mile trail from Joe Albi Stadium to Riverside State Park as part of the effort to connect the city to parks. There is a work Day scheduled for July 10th and another on August 1st at 9am. It will be called The Dwight Merkel Trail. For more information click here. <http://spokaneparks.org/Parks/page/709>
- Watch for the opening celebration “Dwight Dash” with a fun run and pancake breakfast on August 7th.

Barbee Scheibner Back Country Horsemen <http://www.bchw.org/> /INTC for Mt. Spokane <http://www.mountspokane.org/> and Riverside State Park

- Mt. Spokane Trail plan includes a new trail from Smith Gap to replace the old “straight up” trail with switchbacks. Spokane Mountaineers started work on it last fall.
- The snowmobile route is being moved away from the Cross Country Ski Area.
- Riverside State Park received a Wal-Mart Grant and work is being done on the trails. Steps are being added to a steep area of trail north of the Bowl and Pitcher. Signs will also be added to guide equestrians to a route around the part of the trail closed to horses at the Bowl and Pitcher. <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2010/apr/11/riverside-projects-start/>

Dan Schaeffer Fish Lake Trail Action Group/INTC

- Phase 1 and 2 are complete, about 8 miles have been paved from the Trailhead at S. Milton St. just south of the intersection of Government Way and Sunset Blvd. to Scribner Road just past Marshall of Spokane Cheney Road. The trail continues another 2 ½ miles to Fish Lake but because of unsafe railroad crossings it is currently suggested that cyclists take Scribner Rd. to Spokane Cheney Road and travel that route to Fish Lake. From Fish Lake the Columbia Plateau Trail continues paved for about 3.5 miles to Cheney and beyond that unpaved gravel through Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and beyond.
- Phase 3 requires railroad overpasses and will cost an estimated 4 million. Federal funding may provide 2 million, State funding 1.6 million but \$400,000 will need to be raised locally. Corporate sponsors are needed as well as public donations. at our Inland Northwest Trails Coalition website <http://www.inlandnorthwesttrails.org/> .
- Another challenge is the WSDOT project that designates an arterial combined with Fish Lake Trail next to 195. As supporters of Fish Lake Trail it would be helpful to suggest that alternatives be considered. This plan is over 20 years old. Read about the WSDOT project here: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F2E2D30D-0BAC-4DA5-B4BF-9D90E39256EC/0/FishLakeTrailFolio.pdf> .

Jane Baker Washington Trails Association

- Iller Creek ridge trail section completed and old trail closed off.

- Trail reroute project at Liberty Lake to benefit the beavers –read how beavers benefit us here http://www.landscouncil.org/news/new_page_2.asp that were flooding the old trail. Lots of volunteers and Back Country Horsemen went to work and created a lovely .4 mile trail that follows the creek to a crossing far above the beaver flooded area. There is a possible grant for a bridge but that might take some time so the volunteers made a bridge from a downed tree. A culvert was needed so rocks and dirt were moved and wet, dirty tired volunteers had a very successful work day. See photos here <http://www.tiny9.com/u/8425> .
- Work parties scheduled for Little Pend Orielle National Wildlife Refuge – Mill Butte Trail June 20th <http://www.fws.gov/littlependoreille/recreation/trails.html> , Kettle Crest (CNW Rendezvous June 26-27th <http://www.conservationnw.org/calendar/june-26-kettle-range-rendezvous/> . Next onto Salmo Priest for Backcountry Trail work (backpacking) and a car camp trip in August. For more information or to register for WTA Work Parties <http://www.wta.org/volunteer/trail-work-parties> .
- Fall will have 3 trail work days at Liberty Lake working on the trail up to the falls after a very steep rocky section experiences a blast of dynamite. Watch the INTC emails or check the INTC website <http://www.inlandnorthwesttrails.org/> for announcements and links to register for these work parties as they are not on the WTA site as yet.

Bill Kelley – City of Spokane Bicycle Advisory Board <http://www.bikespokane.org/>

- Spokane has added a Master Bike Plan to the City Comprehensive Plan. This shows a cultural change in policies and programs in favor of alternative transportation. There is good support for this plan on our City Council.
- It will: *Improve safety *increase bicycle lanes *educate motorists, cyclists and the public *provide connectivity and continuity *provide parking and lockers.
- Advocacy through events include Bike to Work Week, Spoke Fest and Summer Parkways.
- Education will be provided through YMCA, Schools, City Departments, Businesses and Police Enforcement.
- “Complete Streets” will include consideration of all motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in street planning. To learn about “Complete Streets” : [http://futurewise.org/spokane/completestreets/document view](http://futurewise.org/spokane/completestreets/document_view)
- Design Plans – STA has provided some funding toward improvements – previous bond money could not be used but future bonds should include funding for Bicycle Plan implementation.
- Current Project
37th Avenue this year between Perry Street and Grand Boulevard, new bike lanes will be installed and sidewalks, but on-street parking will no longer be allowed Most of the 37th Avenue project will be paid for by the 10-year street bond approved by voters in 2004, but the Spokane Transit Authority is paying for the sidewalks. Also on 37th Ave from Perry to Regal streets, the installation of the sharrows, placed the length of the project, will improve bicycle safety and usage along this corridor. More info on sharrows in Spokane: <http://www.spokanecity.org/services/articles/?ArticleID=1975>

Also in the news...

Centennial Trail continues to fundraise for the connection to Long Lake (\$50,000 + state parks funds)and as Kendall Yards ‘ripens’ there may be some action west of town from Monroe Street.

Ferry County successfully completed several miles of trail, with INTC members joining their annual meeting to celebrate their success in persisting to keep the project non-motorized (per funding stipulations). Thanks Bob...

Parks District Funding – the possibility to create a special assessment to fund maintenance and amenities for parks and trails was explored by the INTC Board – this is a tough time to pull it together (when isn't?) but it stays in the back of our minds as a 'someday'.

Spokane Regional Transportation Council/SmartRoutes (the Rails to Trails initiative to fund 40 communities for 5 years with \$5M) continues in the form of House Bill 4722 on the federal front. Locally the committee is preparing to create a new priority list, having completed some projects and getting more information about others. This group is also working to integrate its efforts into the regular SRTC activity. The reorganization of SRTC has brought more input for walk/bike transportation in the form of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). A big win for us. Additionally SRTC has hired MIG to consolidate transportation plans and create a community transportation vision that includes bicycle and pedestrian modes. Thanks Paul, Barb...

Earth Day – The most active, well attended event in recent history.

Maps – we continue to work on providing useful maps for both planning and outdoor activities.

Website – Have you seen www.inlandnorthwesttrails.org? it is amazingly comprehensive – a real 'go to' source for activities and information.

Administrivia – We were awarded an AmeriCorps grant for a volunteer organizer and coordinator position for the region, but unexpectedly the award-winning Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute was not funded for 2010-11 and will close at the end of 2010. This was a program that funneled hundreds of people into this region. This means our position will not be funded.

Pay Pal is up and running – thanks to all who donate, it helps pay for
Insurance for all organizational members
Website maintenance and technical help
Maps/support for projects
AmerCorps Match
Supplies for activities

Even though there's "no money" the climate of enthusiasm for outdoors and activity has changed – improved - a lot in the years – decades – since people started working on intentionally securing the land and experiences we love. Our well-placed advocates (on community boards and commissions) really make a difference. Thanks all

Don't forget to buy raffle tickets and attend Sekani Adventure Day July 10)

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