Colfax-Albion-Pullman Rail-Trail Opportunity

Railbanking and trail building for multimodal transportation and economic vitality
About Us

Pullman Civic Trust (PCT) is a non-profit volunteer organization of more than 700 community-minded citizens of the Palouse.

PCT was established in 1983

PCT has completed many projects including the Bill Chipman Palouse Trail, Three-Forks Wayside, and River Park waterfall. PCT continues to enhance the region’s trail system.
Today’s Outline

Issues
PCC railway corridor has remained idle since 2006

Opportunities
Railbanking preserves rail corridors for future use

Successes
Community conversations and agency presentations

Challenges
WSDOT agreeing to railbank requires legislative approval
2006

- Trestle between Colfax and Albion burned in 2006 shortly after WSDOT purchased the rights of way.
- This section of the Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) Rail System has remained idle ever since.
- Lack of traffic demand opens the door for railbanking and trail creation.
19-Mile Trail
CAP links Colfax and Albion, WA to Julietta, ID

60-Mile Regional Trail
CAP trail is part of a bigger regional trail system
Scenic Corridor Highlights the Palouse
What is railbanking?

The National Trails System Act
P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 116-9
Railbanking is a Coordinated Effort

Federal law, Ownership, and Corridor management

Federal Law

• Preserves the national rail network
• Retains existing rail easements
• The right of reactivation is retained by the railroad (WSDOT)

Ownership

• WSDOT relinquishes ownership of the ROW
• Cost of maintenance assumed by railbanking entity/management group.

Management

• This trail will be managed by a consortium of entities
• Responsible for upkeep, maintaining weeds, etc.
• Fundraising through grants and donations

The Palouse has two successful railbanking models.
• Bill Chipman Palouse Trail operates as a County Park.
• Latah Trail operates as a non-profit.
Railbanking Opportunities

- Saves WSDOT money when maintenance is done by a trail management group that procures funding from dues and donations
- Frees up valuable assets for use elsewhere in the rail system
  - Rails, ties, and crossings materials. WSDOT will salvage materials
- Provides year-round transportation and recreation opportunities
- Converts WSDOT long-term liability into a benefit to the State.
- Preserves taxpayer investment
  - Railbanking preserves this public amenity for the benefit of all WA State Citizens.
High Rate of Return on Investment

- A 60-mile trail from Colfax to Julietta becomes a Destination Trail
- Colfax could capitalize on overnight visitors as a trailhead
- WSU and UI bring people, the trail gives a reason to stay longer
- Trails provide public access to view the Palouse landscape.
- Trails rank high as enticement for recruitment and retention
- Trails give all ages a recreational amenity and safe transportation routes

"Locally, every time there is a user on the trails it represents a $10 benefit to the local economy in food, fuel, or lodging."

--Friends of the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes
Trails Improve Quality of Life

- Active recreation opportunities
- Added health benefits
- Historical preservation
- Connects rural communities, as did the Railroads
- Taxpayer investment preserved for all ages

*All citizens and future generations benefit.*
Community Outreach

- Robust community conversations
  - Workshops in Colfax, Albion, Pullman, and WSU
  - Presentations to over 25 agencies and civic groups
    WA Bikes, Port of Whitman County, County Commissioners, ASWSU, Palouse Trails Committee, Pullman Kiwanis, Rotary, WSU Foundation, League of Women Voters, etc.

- Meeting reports on WSDOT website

- Local and regional planning documents include the CAP trail:
  - RTPO plan
  - City of Pullman Comprehensive Plan
  - Pullman 2040 plan
  - Pullman Chamber of Commerce
Next Steps

• Railbanking
  • Create a railbanking entity
  • Introduce legislation to railbank

• Trail building
  • Fundraising
  • Build trail in phases:
    Phase 1: Colfax to burned trestle & Pullman to Albion.
    Phase 2+: Replace trestle and extend through middle

* Please support the Legislative process to railbank this corridor
Thank you

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