Joseph Branch Trail   
Key Stakeholders Interview Report

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Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc401478314)

[Purpose 3](#_Toc401478315)

[Background 3](#_Toc401478316)

[Methods 5](#_Toc401478317)

[Interview Invitation 6](#_Toc401478318)

[Interview Instructions 6](#_Toc401478319)

[Interview Introduction 7](#_Toc401478320)

[Interview Questions 7](#_Toc401478321)

[Method Challenges 9](#_Toc401478322)

[Results 9](#_Toc401478323)

[Demographics 9](#_Toc401478324)

[Historical/Rails questions 10](#_Toc401478325)

[Discussion 15](#_Toc401478326)

[Demographics Summary 15](#_Toc401478327)

[Community History Summary 15](#_Toc401478328)

[Rails with Trails Summary 15](#_Toc401478329)

[Benefits of Trail 16](#_Toc401478330)

[Concerns/Mitigation strategies for the Trail 16](#_Toc401478331)

[Suggestions for the Trail/Feasibility Study Process 16](#_Toc401478332)

[Conclusion 16](#_Toc401478333)

[References 16](#_Toc401478334)

[Appendix A 16](#_Toc401478335)

# Introduction

A 63 mile rail-with-trail project proposed to follow the Joseph Branch Rail Line from Elgin to Joseph is in process of being evaluated in terms of social, economic, and environmental factors. The following report evaluated the social component of the potential Joseph Branch Trail project by gathering the views of stakeholders in the communities that would be affected by the creation of a trail. Over 60 names were recommended by the community, and 30 individuals were randomly selected for the interviews. The 6 interviewer volunteers (Sara Miller, Terry Edvalson, Vicki Searles, Ed Shaul, Dana Kurtz, Tim Funk) conducted 26 interviews between July-September 2014.

# Purpose

The purpose of the key stakeholder interview process was to interview a group of 20-30 individuals representing elected officials, government agencies, adjacent land owners, business owners, and other community stakeholders. The following report summarizes the information obtained and will be presented at the Trail Concept Review Committee Meeting and Public Workshop.

# Background

The following background information was sent to each selected interviewee:

**Background**

The Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA), a public governing body made up of county commissioners and citizens from Union and Wallowa counties, purchased the 63-mile rail line between Elgin and Joseph in 2001. They retired the substantial debt incurred to make the purchase in 2013. The purchase of the line secured a significant economic asset worth nearly $10,000,000.

In 2013 the WURA board of directors, encouraged by a group of citizens, agreed to consider building a multi-use recreational trail on the railroad’s right of way. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission was asked for support in determining the feasibility of an Elgin to Joseph rail-with-trail project. The request for assistance recognized most rail-trails are the result of a cooperative effort between an active citizen group, a responsive public agency, and a supportive community, all of whom share a vision for the trail. Projects that falter in their progress are usually lacking involvement from one of these three important groups (Doherty 1989).

For purposes of advancing public discussion of the possibility of a rail-with-trail a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed to by WURA, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), and Eastern Oregon University (EOU). The vision statement in the MOU states:

"The Wallowa Union Trail concept has the potential to create unique economic and natural resources benefits for the NE Region and for Oregon.  These include, but are not limited to, enhanced recreational opportunities, expanded and promoted tourism, community development, small business stabilization and expansion, multidisciplinary education and career development opportunities, connection to and potential expansion of regional arts and cultural programs connections.  The NE Region, used here as Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties, already has a number of communities with intact historic downtown centers, an iconic working landscape defined by the area's farms and ranches, and is distinguished by magnificent mountain ranges and river valleys.  The development of rail-with-trail facilities could encourage additional interest in visiting the region, creating new opportunities for the local economy, and enhance recreation and quality of life for local residents."

As with the future name of the trail, the final decisions regarding going forward with a rail-with-trail project will be made by WURA.

**Example Rail-with-Trail Concept Guidelines**

* a description of the conditions along the entire 63-mile rail corridor, even though the trail may be developed in sections as funding becomes available;
* estimates of bicycling, walking, equestrians, and other uses by Union and Wallowa counties residents and by visitors to the two counties;
* work with WURA and property owners adjacent to the railroad corridor to preserve and enhance their properties and the corridor as an active railroad while enhancing the trail as a recreational and transportation alternative within and between communities along the trail;
* development of amenities along the trail (i.e., parking at trailheads and access points for automobiles and vehicles with trailers, restrooms, potable water, bike racks, camping and picnic sites, litter receptacles);
* recommend a trail design and development standards that are easy to maintain and access by maintenance, security, and emergency vehicles;
* identify connections to host community trail access points that provide maximum access to amenities, shops, services, and community facilities that will bring benefit to the community with the least impact on the communities’ residents and resources;
* describe possible extensions to northeast Oregon and state-wide bicycle scenic trails and byways systems;
* identify possibilities for business enhancement and new business development predicated on the profiles of expected local and visitor trail users; and
* identify possibilities for using existing or future trails to connect to communities or future trails that might be included in roadway improvement projects.

**The Study Process**

A Trail Concept Review Committee, comprised of citizens and elected officials from Union and Wallowa counties, is being formed to provide guidance to OPRD and EOU. The Committee membership will represent a variety of viewpoints and will ensure non-bias analysis through the evaluation of assessment and research reports and citizen input at key milestones during the public planning process.  The Committee will guide the development of trail design alternatives, mitigation measures, strategies for engaging community members, and will provide recommendations to the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority during consideration of the trail concept.

There will be interviews of individuals with differing opinions about building a trail and a series of public workshops in each of the counties to collect opinions about the trail in general and about trail design alternatives. The information collected during the public workshops will be formulated into questions for a survey to test public opinions about trail alternatives. The information collected in the physical assessment of the rail corridor, research results developed by EOU, and information collected in the public workshops and survey results will be presented to the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority Board in January 2016.

EOU will maintain a project web page where information about the study will be available to the public.

# Methods

A mailed invitation followed up by a phone call was sent to each of the 30 randomly selected key stakeholders from the list of 60 people identified by the community as those with important perspectives associated with trail development. The following is a description of the methods used in this interview process.

## Interview Invitation

The following mailed invitation was sent from interim EOU president, Jay Kenton, to each identified key stakeholder that was randomly selected from the list of 60 individuals recommended to the team as opinion makers in the region:

July 10, 2014

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

We are asking you to participate with a select group of key stakeholders in an important study to determine the feasibility of adding a recreational trail adjacent to the railroad tracks between Joseph and Elgin. This study has been authorized by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA), which owns the rails. Eastern Oregon University (EOU) is managing this study with assistance from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

An important element of the study is key stakeholder interviews, which will help assess potential benefits and impacts associated with a regional trail in this location. This trail, if developed, could be made available for hiking, fishing, bicycling, horseback riding, and similar types of uses. As envisioned, the trail has the potential to enhance recreation and economic development opportunities in the region. Since WURA is interested in understanding issues related to the trail concept, your input is highly valued.

If you would kindly participate, your interview will be conducted within the next four to five weeks at your convenience and will take less than an hour. Responses will be used for analyzing issues and will help determine the level of support for the trail concept. The names of all interview participants will be kept confidential. A response form is enclosed to let us know if you are willing to participate or not. A preaddressed postage paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience to use to return the form. Prior to this interview, you will be called to confirm an interview day and time. You will also be sent a brief fact sheet about the trail concept assessment process, along with background information on the Joseph Branch rail line.

We hope you will help us by sharing your views of the trail concept.

Thank you,

Jay Kenton, Ph.D.

President

## Interview Instructions

The instructions to the volunteer interviewers were as follows:

1. Be neutral
2. Move quickly through the first 6 demographics questions, as some people have lots of details they could share, just the basics are fine.
3. Take notes on the key points so that you can summarize them in the interview write up. If there are any strong direct quotes that would be helpful in representing people’s views, mark them in quotes so we can use them on the website.
4. Complete the interview write up and email it to me at [dana.g.kurtz@gmail.com](mailto:dana.g.kurtz@gmail.com)
5. Remind the interviewees the comments and answers will not be attributed to them.
6. They will be listed in the report to WURA as individuals contributing to the concept study effort.
7. Let the interviewees know they will be able to review the current conditions report on the EOU website in late October/early November when it has been completed.
8. The report will be the basis for public meetings in Wallowa and Union counties.
9. Make a note on the questionnaire and report if the person interviewed wishes to receive a copy of the interview notes. Also indicate they can send additional comments directly to Dana at dana.g.kurtz@gmail.com.

## Interview Introduction

The following standardized introduction was used to introduce each interview:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the key stakeholder Joseph Branch rail-with-trail survey.

I am (Name). I am an (EOU student/community volunteer). It should take less than an hour to complete the survey.

Your responses to the survey will provide information critical to structuring presentations for planned public meetings and a final report to the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority about the feasibility of constructing a trail alongside the rail line between Elgin and Joseph. I hope the information sent you with the letter asking you to be interviewed was helpful. We are seeking your opinion based on what you know about the proposed rail-with-trail.

Your responses to the questions will be aggregated and summarized with the responses of others who have agreed to be interviewed. Your identity will be kept confidential and anonymous.

If you would like, I will see than my survey report of our conversation is sent to you for review to see if you want to change anything or add more information.

*(Start going through the questionnaire.)*

## Interview Questions

The following 18 questions were asked to each interview participant.

**Demographic and Civic Engagement Questions**:

1. Does your property/residence/farm/ranch/business/agency/organization have a common boundary with the Joseph Branch rail line? If yes, where is it located?
2. If not along the rail line, where are you located and approximately how far is it from the rail line?
3. How long have you owned or been associated with the property/farm/ranch/ business/agency/organization in that location?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How many employees/staff members/volunteers are employed or engaged in your residence/farm/ranch/business/agency/organization

**General Health of the Community and Rail-with-Trail Questions** (*Ask* *question for county and community*) *(Union County interviewees should be asked to comment on how other communities in the county not on the trail could be impacted by a trail between Elgin and Joseph.)*

1. How do you think the economy of (Wallowa/Union County/Elgin/Wallowa/Lostine/Enterprise) is doing compared to 20 years ago?
2. What do you feel are the greatest challenges facing (Wallowa County/Union County/Elgin/Wallowa/Lostine/Enterprise/Joseph) face over the next 10 to 20 years?
3. What do you believe needs to be done for (Wallowa/Union County/Elgin/ Wallowa/Lostine/Enterprise/Joseph) to meet these challenges?
4. Do you think the proposed rail-with-trail will contribute to meeting the challenges discussed?If yes, how will the trail contribute? If no, why not?)
5. What opportunities do you think could be created for area residents and businesses if the Elgin to Joseph recreational trail or segments of the trail between communities is developed?
6. If a trail is built along the rail line between Elgin and Joseph, how do you think towns along the trail could benefit?
7. How might communities in Northeast Oregon that are not on the rail benefit?
8. What questions do you have about the Wallowa Union Trail Concept assessment and feasibility study process?
9. What challenges or concerns do you think a trail could create for residents, businesses, and towns along the rail corridor?
10. A citizen Trail Concept Review Committee, public meetings, survey, website and e-mail will be used to collect public input regarding the trail. Do you believe these methods provide adequate opportunity for public input in the assessment and feasibility study process? If no, what might be done to improve the process?
11. Do you feel that it is possible to develop mitigation strategies which would address your concerns regarding development of the rail-with-trail?
12. If a trail is built, how might you use it?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Method Challenges

This survey was not random as people were selected by community members. It was a discussion based survey with notes taken and although transcripts were sent to interviewees it is possible some points were lost. It is also possible that because the responses were verbal and not written there could be some discussion between interviewer and interviewee that was not completely neutral. Every effort was made to reduce these biases, but they are listed as they may have impacted the results in unknown ways.

# Results

The following summarizes the responses to each interview question. For the full responses from each interview please see Appendix A, Interview Responses. Names have been replaced with a numeric identifier.

## Demographics

Question 1 and Question 2: Proximity to the proposed trail

14 out of the 26 people interviewed lived adjacent or within 1 mile to the proposed trail.

Question 3: Length of time and host community

Of the people interviewed, the amount of time they have lived in the region was broken down as follows:

* 3 have lived in the area less than 5 years
* 6 have lived in the area 6-15 years
* 7 have lived in the area for 16-30 years
* 10 have lived in the area 31-72 years

The interviewees were located in the following locations:

* 8 Wallowa
* 2 Lostine
* 3 Joseph
* 5 Enterprise
* 2 Elgin
* 7 Other (La Grande/North Powder/Haines/Baker City/ College Place, WA)

Question 4: Occupation

Of the 26 people interviewed there were 13 women and 13 were men interviewed. Occupations were broken into the following number in each category:

* Economic Development (6)
* Artist (2)
* Property Owner (2)
* Retired (1)
* Rancher (3)
* Public Sector Natural Resources (3)
* Small Business Owner (3)
* Non-Profit/advocacy group (4)
* Other (Editor, Bank CEO) (2)

Question 5: Number of staff/volunteers in the organization

* 11 of those interviewed reported no staff/volunteers
* 10 reported between 2-10 employees staff/volunteers
* 3 reported 20-30 staff/volunteers
* 2 reported more than 30 staff/volunteers

These estimates include temporary and seasonal employees.

## Historical/Rails questions

Question 6: Economic trends in the last 20 years

The comments made about the economy included several narratives:

*“Putting the 2008 downturn aside, I feel it has been rather flat over the past 20 years”*

Stability: People noted that the communities in the region know how to weather an economic downturn. Growth was described as flat. People described the regional economy as a stable economy that does not experience booms and busts to the same degree as the national economy. One person commented that Union is the most stable of the three counties because of the variety of jobs including the university, hospital, federal agencies, state agencies, fire services, and Union Pacific railroad.

Decline of timber and vision for the future: Many people commented that the regional economy has been impacted from the timber industry decreasing and mills closing. People looked back to the high wage jobs that the timber industry provided in the past and do not see the same opportunities now. Some believed that the key to economic revival is bringing back those same timber jobs, while others saw tourism, small scale agriculture and farming, and technology jobs as vital to the region’s economic future. Tourism is the main sector mentioned for future growth—but many people noted it is a highly seasonal form of employment. It was also noted there is a need to extend the tourist season and make it year round.

*“There appear to be fewer businesses. One factor is major absentee owners spending a limited amount of time in the county.”*

Shift in demographics: A few people who have lived in the area on the scale of decades noted the ageing of the population due to the lack of quality employment causing people to move away to work and then return in their retirement years. People remarked that it is a big deal when a baby is born in the county and believe that a shift to family wage jobs, and multigenerational economies is needed to sustain the area.

Sustaining agriculture: Due to favorable weather conditions, and national prices, agriculture, and associated occupations was viewed by many of the people interviewed to be an economic sector that is sustaining at historical levels or improving in recent years.

Question 7. Greatest challenges in the next 10-20 years for the region

*We need to find other ways to make our physical resources work for us. Tourism is not the total answer…However, it is critical considering the few resources we can exploit in this rural area.”*

The answers to this question were centered on the need for growth and economic diversity. Challenges included the need to strengthen the university to create an educated workforce, attracting advanced manufacturing, and supporting small scale businesses. The challenge of attracting working age people to the community (not just retirees) was listed again and again as vital to finding the critical balance between growth and sustainability of community. The challenge that the economy has been facing for a while is the transition from the forest products economy to a different economic base to carry the economy. While tourism has been successful in some areas the communities need to come together and help it trickle into smaller towns. The exodus of youth to urban areas is an issue that family wage jobs and training could help. Environmental concerns are also challenges for the region—water scarcity, sustainable agricultural and forestry practices and shifting from exporting raw materials to processed ones are concepts that the community must face. Many people mentioned declining enrollment in schools as a worry because the declining educational system undermines the potential for the area to grow.

“…The challenge with promoting more tourism is to protect a place without loving it to death.”

Through all of the ideas for tourism and growth, interviewees all stressed the importance of maintaining eastern Oregon values including preserving our heritage and ensuring that people who relocate here know their responsibilities to the community.

Question 8. What do you believe needs to be done for (Wallowa/Union County/Elgin/ Wallowa/Lostine/Enterprise/Joseph) to meet these challenges?

The following is a list of ideas presented by people interviewed to help the towns meet challenges discussed above:

* Tourism: advertise in magazines and share our story to attract visitors
* Jobs: Workforce education through specialized training programs at the university relating to technology and health care businesses
* Economic diversity: support the mills, artist/tourist jobs, agro-tourism, niche tourism (bicycles, extreme sports, rail cars, equestrian trails)

*“We need more collaboration between different sectors of the community (political, tourism/business, university, hospital, and small communities all coming to the same table for larger discussions)”*

* Public Sector Natural Resources: Support the forest service to increase logging at a sustainable level
* Education: improve K-12 education systems
* Partnerships: Work with the federal government to fund projects in the area, support the momentum in areas like Lostine
* Multiple use: support multiple uses for forestry, agriculture

Question 9. Could the proposed rail-with-trail contribute to meeting regional challenges?

Answers were broken down into three categories—Yes, No, and Somewhat:

*“The trail probably won't contribute in a significant way. I see the cost of development and maintenance will out spend any benefit to the economy”*

Yes: 16 people felt that the trail would provide valuable services to communities along and near the trail including bringing in outside tourists, improving quality of life, introduce outdoor people to the area, potentially encouraging them to make their home here, extend the tourist season, and add opportunities for small businesses.

*“The trail will be an asset…*

*The trail, combined with the railroad, will be synergistic, supporting each other through increased visibility and creating new opportunities”*

No: 3 people felt the trail would provide nothing of value to the community because of issues including prohibitive cost, not helping the declining timber industry, and bringing problems to the area including crime, trespassing, dogs, accidents, lawsuits, and reduction of private property rights.

Somewhat/Unsure: 7 people were unsure as to the effects noting that quality of life would be improved, local contractors may or may not be used to build the trail, and additional jobs might be created during the 3 month tourism season, but likely not on a year round basis.

Question 10 and Question 11. What opportunities could be created for area residents and businesses if the Elgin to Joseph recreational trail or segments of the trail between communities is developed? How could towns along the trail could benefit?

Opportunities discussed would be the hiring of local people, opportunities for business expansion and growth (bike shops, fishing trips, motels, campsites, shuttles/transportation, restaurants, hikes, triathlons, races, equestrian rides, food catering, community events, and farmers’ markets along the trails). Jobs to maintain the trail would also exist (litter patrol, security, weed control). Recreation opportunities and quality of life would be improved for residents and visitors.

*“By linking towns the trail will spread out visitors getting people away from Joseph and the Lake to explore other communities.”*

Communities along the rail line would benefit from the same opportunities.

Question 12. How might communities in Northeast Oregon that are not on the rail benefit?

*“It is hard to see any benefits. Depends on what else (other trails/byways) is tied into the trail”*

People interviewed concluded that, while benefits would be smaller for these communities, communities not along the trail would benefit from the tourists being near/extending their vacations, and people stopping for groceries, sundries and gasoline for the road. Quality of life would improve with the increased access to recreation opportunities. Some interviewees did not think that communities away from the trail would benefit very much at all.

Question 13. What questions do you have about the Wallowa Union Trail Concept assessment and feasibility study process?

Many of those interviewed had questions relating to the feasibility study process including:

* Who is conducting the study?
* What is the format of the study design?
* Will bathrooms and water be available on the trail?
* How will the trail be funded? Where will the funds come from?
* ELJO name VS Joseph Branch Trail (ELJO is not popular)
* Considerations with tieins to the Nez Perce trail?
* Who decides if this moves forward?
* How realistic is it to think the railroad and trail can coexist?
* How much revenue and expenses has WURA generated from RR operations?
* Does the revenue justify operating the railroad
* Trail logistics—will it be paved, wheel chair accessible, handicap accessible, horses allowed, start and end, will there be multiple trail heads, parking, restrooms, fees for use, one way shuttle service?
* Are there case studies considered?
* Are we spending too much money on the feasibility study process and not enough on funding the project itself?
* Will this project be cost effective? Will the feasibility study include cost estimates?
* Are ATVs considered? Snowmobiles? Cross Country Skiing?
* What will the surface of the trail be made of?
* Will this project impact the environment and private property to an unacceptable level?
* Advertise the public process more through the newspaper. Will landowners have a big enough say? More newspaper information.
* What is the timeline for this feasibility study?

The interviewers did not attempt to answer these questions, but except for the most technical ones, it is planned to address these topics in the feasibility study.

Question 14. Challenges or concerns that the trail could create for residents, businesses, and towns along the rail corridor?

*The primary challenge is the inherent conflict of interest between private land concerns and open public projects*

The following concerns were listed for the development of the trail:

* Keeping up with tourism demand—are there enough rooms at motels etc.?
* Adjacent landowner concerns include who is on the trail, what activities, vandalism, noxious weeds, concerns about livestock stress, ATVs on the trail, trash, bathrooms, noise, lack of privacy, safety, fencing issues, pre-existing distrust of WURA because of the rail-car storage issues, obnoxious bike groups, threat of fires, threat of trespassers, animals on the trail, liability, including from livestock guard dogs interacting with trail users
* Cost outweighing the trail benefits
* Will patrolling the trail overwhelm the limited sheriff and police forces currently available in small towns?

Question 15: A citizen Trail Concept Review Committee, public meetings, survey, website and e-mail will be used to collect public input regarding the trail. Do you believe these methods provide adequate opportunity for public input in the assessment and feasibility study process? If no, what might be done to improve the process?

Overall people felt that these strategies were effective, a few additional good suggestions were:

* “Belly up to the bar” and meet and greet people face to face at events to create ownership of the trail
* Meet with service centers and senior centers to get ideas.
* Comment box at the chamber of commerce in towns along the proposed trail
* Mailed request for adjacent landowner input through written comments
* Use the radio, newspapers
* Get the word out early and often—no women’s shelter mistake
* Sponsorship “adopt a highway”
* Use of online survey tools Facebook, survey monkey, etc.
* Create a good map

Question 16. Do you feel that it is possible to develop mitigation strategies which would address your concerns regarding development of the rail-with-trail?

* There is a concern that the environmental impacts of developing the trail might be difficult to mitigate (technical difficulties, tight spaces, and geologic constraints).

*“While it is not possible to satisfy everyone, it is possible to try and mitigate most concerns”*

* People interviewed believe that mitigating public concerns and addressing questions can be accomplished with transparency, being highly organized, and continued public outreach, especially through the newspaper and radio. There is the goal to be upfront and not have hidden agendas. Listening to concerns and addressing them is how people feel this could be mitigated.
* People believe that privacy concerns will be difficult to mitigate, but can be helped by good trail maintenance.
* Only one landowner interviewed felt that no mitigation was possible (they did not oppose the Minam to Elgin section, only the section near their property line).
* People generally believe that other rail with/to trail projects have be successful in mitigating similar concerns.

Question 17. If a trail is built, how might you use it?

Almost every person interviewed (25/26) thought of ways that they would use the trail, if built. These included biking to get groceries, walking, hiking, jogging, access to fishing holes, horseback riding, buggy use, as a means to advertise to visitors in the areas, and as a safe family-friendly activity. These ideas show that the trail would have potential to add to the quality of life for area residents—not just tourists.

Question 18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

In this question, the people interviewed reiterated their questions about the trail (both technical and political) as well as concerns about specific details of trail design. These comments are included in the above sections, but are available in full text versions in Appendix A. Overall, these comments provided a sense of support, but knowledge that so many of the details have yet to be worked out.

# Discussion

The majority of people expressed support of the trail in a cautiously optimistic way. However, almost everyone expressed logistical and social concerns for how the trail would affect those living nearest to it, how it could be created with a minimal impact on the environment, and whether it would be technically and financially feasible. It is the goal of the feasibility study to research these issues. This initial interview process of key stakeholders was intended to gauge support and identify concerns related to the concept of a rail with trail.

## Demographics Summary

Understandably, landowners and those living nearest to the trail (engaged in non-tourism work) had the most concerns about trail development and use interfering with privacy and ranching/working operations.

People who lived in the area for the shortest amount of time had fewer concerns than those living in the area for longer.

People with small businesses and economic development related occupations were most excited about the rail with trail project, and offered many insightful considerations based on previous community based initiatives.

## Community History Summary

The memory of the jobs associated with the logging, milling and timber industry was strongly represented. People hoped for bringing back mill jobs, but also said that substitute family wage jobs could be more sustainable and forward looking. Many acknowledge that there may not be one single solution to creating a vibrant economy that allows people to live in the area, but that it will come through a variety of small steps to increase quality of life and draw entrepreneurs to the area.

Opinions about the trail differ from town to town—there was great excitement from several people in Wallowa, Lostine, and Joseph to build on the burgeoning agro/environmental tourism movement in the area by creating a trail. There was also the most concern from landowners about privacy reduction and trespassing/ranching disturbances in Wallowa County. It appears that in La Grande and Elgin there is less information about the trail and more awareness is needed.

## Rails with Trails Summary

The benefits, concerns, and suggestions provided by these stakeholder interviews were valuable in determining areas to focus on in the feasibility study phase of this project.

### Benefits of Trail

Benefits of the trail observed by the key stakeholders were illustrated by comments on increase in quality of life, attracting new families and entrepreneurs to the area, tourism and additional services, and preserving the heritage of eastern Oregon while transitioning into a more sustainable community-based economy for the future.

### Concerns/Mitigation strategies for the Trail

Concerns about trail development were centered on the environmental impact of building a trail, impact of increased numbers of people in the area, reduction of privacy for landowners and residents, and concerns about direct trail impacts including liability to adjacent landowners, trail animals, trash, vandalism, livestock threats, trespassing, motorized vehicles etc.

### Suggestions for the Trail/Feasibility Study Process

Communication suggestions: Transparency, public outreach, more information through the newspaper and radio, personal and written invitations to adjacent landowners, comment/suggestion box in the chamber of commerce offices in each town.

Technical suggestions: funding, paving, bathrooms/water, fencing, connections between Nez Perce Trail, and thinking about how to sequence the building of the segments.

# Conclusion

There is widespread interest in this project according to the 26 key stakeholders interviewed. There are many large and small obstacles to overcome but these interviews provide support to continue the process of the feasibility study for the Joseph Branch Rail with Trail project.

# References

Doherty, Susan. *Rails-Trails and Community Sentiment, A Study of Opposition to Rail-trails & Strategies for Success*. Washington, D.C.: Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1989.

# Appendix A

Interview text—names removed