

Joseph Branch – Rail-Trail Concept Planning

Elgin Meeting:

Elgin Community Center, 260 N 10th St

December 2, 2014

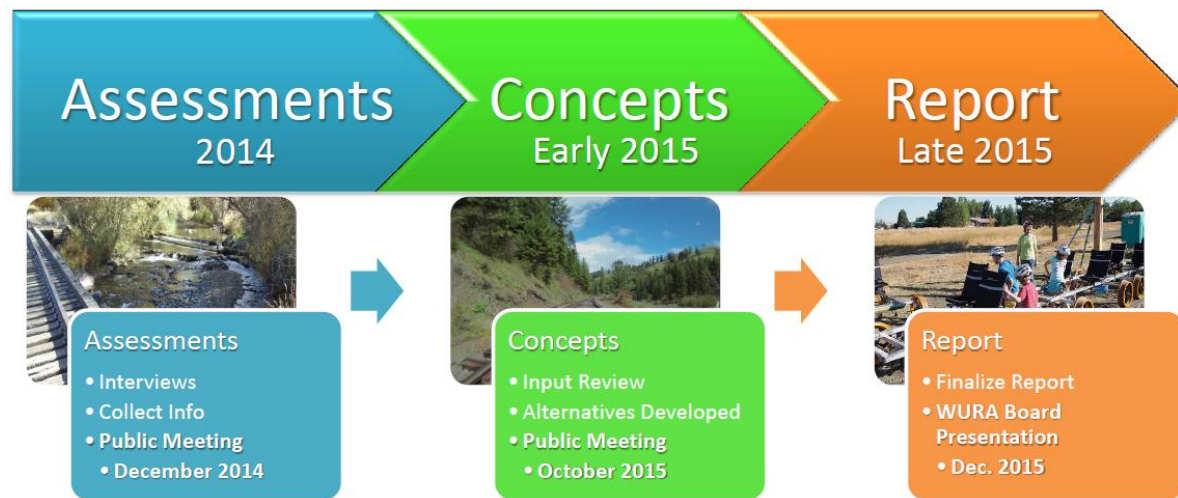
Meeting Summary:

Project Background

Citizens of Wallowa and Union Counties approached the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) and asked about the feasibility of a rail-trail on rail right-of-way from Elgin to Joseph. WURA approached local, regional and state partners about developing a partnership to review the feasibility and suitability of a rail-trail. The planning team has developed a scope of work and process to help determine the following in a concept plan:

- The level of local community support for the rail-with-trail concept;
- Physical and environmental conditions within the rail corridor and how a trail could be accommodated within and/or adjacent to the existing right-of-way;
- Impacts that the trail could have on existing and future uses within and adjacent to the rail corridor;
- Opportunities that the trail could provide for local and regional recreation;
- Opportunities that the trail could provide for tourism and economic development;
- Opportunities for integrated education and community learning led by a major Oregon University partner;
- Whether the trail could be designed and managed to address concerns identified by WURA, local communities, landowners, and agencies; and
- Options for funding the cost of development and of ongoing maintenance of the trail.

The planning process will follow three phases: Assessments, Concepts and Report.



Review of Existing Conditions Report

The planning is currently in the assessment phase. There was an overview of the assessments being conducted, such as:

- Stakeholder Input
- Economic Impact Assessment
- Adjacent Land use Assessment
- Historic Assets Assessment
- Existing Recreation and Tourism Asset Assessment
- Physical Assets Assessment
- Physical Environment Assessment

Small Group Breakout Sessions

The attendees broke into small groups to review the map tiles for the project area. They provided the planning team input on opportunities, concerns/challenges and other pertinent information. The data was collected on large map books.

Large Group Discussion

The attendees got back together and reviewed common themes of comments.

Summary of Common Comment Themes

Constraints/Concerns	Opportunities	Map Tiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not good idea in valley • Impact farm use • Costs for o&m passed on to locals • Initial intent of railroads vs • Emergency access constraints • Zoned/ planning process if move forward • Liability • Privacy loss • Sanitation • Cost to develop • Thin row is narrow • Op and maintenance • Livestock issues • Screening for visibility • Non motorize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to new use- gas line, fiber optic • Salvage rails • Sold back to adjacent landowners • Bring back train • Local business • Elgin to Minam trail only idea • Size appropriate to use- not too wide • Something used by locals • Event facility-run, ride events • Connection between river- rafting, paddling • Train and trail enhancement rec. opp • Adopt a trail-volunteers to reduce cost and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at county roads for trail connection vs rail row • Trespass • Theft • Adjacent buildings • Trash • Dogs (users vs adj. landowners) • Law suits • Weeds • Fencing • Privacy concerns • Off row idea concerns • Impacts to livestock • Hydrology • Water and restrooms • Local knowledge opps- wildlife viewing • Towns B&B proposed

Next Steps

The planning team will review the information gathered through the public workshops. This information will be useful for the team to identify and investigate alternative concepts for trail development and route alternatives. A community survey will come out in April 2015. The next public workshop is scheduled for the fall of 2015.

Small Group Comments:

Map Set #1
Challenges-
trespassing
fire potential + damage
Trash + littering
Liabilities
restrooms or lack of
communication due to remoteness
no cell phone coverage
traditional use of R.O.W.
lack of water in canyon
pavement from Elgin at Minam
keeping motorized vehicles out
Opportunities-
service sales for communities
shuttle services
bike shop sales
tour guide + packages
access to fishing
potential property value increases
commuter train/service train
health/recreational benefits
safer than riding the roads
bring influx of younger people
safety due to grade
more accessibility
attract higher income tourists
spill over benefit to communities
only way to see canyon area
trail would be good counter point balance to older tourists
food/meals opportunity along the trail
overnight stay opportunities
connectivity to other bike routes
organized tour opportunities
bike rides NW example
could enhance rail cart opport.

#	Comment	Tile	Type
1	trail head parking+ restrooms, kiosk + maps	1	G

2	job for orientation/interpretive	1	G
3	view points + interpretive signs	1	G
4	property crossing	1	O
5	pave initial section (all of this)	1	B
6	fishing opportunity	1	G
1	view point	2	G
2	rafting stop	2	G
3	rail is close to river	2	B
4	ranch views	2	B
1	view point + restrooms	3	B
2	livestock + fencing (fishing area begins)	3	B
1	wildlife viewing from entire area	4	G
1	needs restrooms, picnic areas	5	R
2	interp. Info	5	B
1	BLM trade opportunity	6	B
2	restrooms /picnic/services - opp. to work with BLM	6	G
3	Hatchery tours/interp.	6	G
4	Viewpoint (yarrington crossing area)	6	G

Map set #2 (B)
Challenges-
Users use other than on the ROW
trespassing + damage
Change ROW to allow trail
Nothing said about F+W impacts when trail is placed
trash and garbage along ROW
public facilities
Hancock timber - landowner
access to trail
Facilities for horse access
preservation of historic sites along ROW
Mix of Users
Opportunities-
what might be under ROW- Fiber optics line and gas line
Safety for users rather than on road
concessions along
seasonal tours + opportunity
Lodging increases
tours of hatchery

ODFW + USFW
Commercial money for local retailers, bike shops, horse track
Outfitter - dikes, hikes, horse, fishing
amenity to attract knowledge workers to area
history of area
improve physical activity opportunities
access to emergencies services along the trail
construction of new heli sites
short term (5-10) years local construction opportunities

#	Comment	Tile	Type
1	Commercial opportunity - vacant property former saw mill	1	G
2	souvenirs + bike rental	1	G
3	community center	1	G
4	B+B lodging	1	G
5	bird watching	1	G
6	At least 5 miles out from Elgin should be paved	1	B
1	two dots - fishing opportunities	2	G
1	All tile surface would be asphalt on fine gravel for wheeled access	2	B
1	two dots - road access	3	O
1	possible concession stop	3	G
2	possible concession stop/camp ground?	3	G
1	road access 2 dots	4	O
1	concession	4	G
2	bird watching	4	G
3	potential easement for access + take out	4	G
2	Pristine + semi-remote	4	B
1	Private Property? Access to/from ROW	5	O
1	All services - access, public facilities, escape route, concession, horse loading ramp/corrals	6	G
2	Point of interest - hatchery	6	G

Map set #6
Challenges-
while they @ omae, can't have at 1 side whelee two
cost (signal system)
safety -emergency phones
public info (ease of access)
Env
legal

privacy
near homes
safety - make people aware
water bathrooms, trash, house mess
train noise, smoking
fencing
negative farm perceptions
constraint river mountain road bed
legal concerns with land owners
access to public lands
Opportunities-
gaps in fence/sign (core gate) strategy
Elgin- longest stretch
river rafter connection
blm/usfs access areas
access to wild? Section off part of river
maps + signs
wildlife
fishing opportunities
providing area with Minam key (wheelchair access)
Fiber optics/gas lines

Type/#	Comment	Tile
G1	PARKING LOT	6
G2	PARKING LOT	6
R1	restriction	6
G3	camp spot	6
R2	barbwire fence	6
R4	steep bank	1
R5	steep rock cut	1
R6	houses	1
B1	possible alternate route	1
R7	cows housing	1
G4	hunaha park - rv park camping (swim pool)	1
G5	crowser (jerry/bob) possible access road	1
R8	flood plain concerns	1
G6	opera house - take off	1
G7	Elgin boat and saddle = shuttle service	1
G8	community center - shower help for bikes	1
G9	medical service	1
G10	bridge with local people history	1

G11	barbwire fence	5
G12	overlook (picnic table)	5
G13	Picnic spot	5
G14	BLM + FS land access pint (unmaintained road)	8
G15	camping, hiking, - rondowa	8
G16	old road, 3 miles above sheep creek rapids	8
G17	history, hotel	8
G18	use train to haul bikes	8
G19	helicopter pad - to help people	8
G20	waste dump station (not quite there)	
G21	big rapids (christenson falls)	3
B2	FS + cheaper to make a bridge and go on the other side?	3

Map set #7
Challenges-
lack of contact with property owners
litter
restrooms
access to property
timber land - fire
safety
users - who?
Opportunities-
Help make communities destinations
commerce

#	Comment	Tile	Type
1	increase in commerce	1	G
2	bluff?	1	R
3	increase in hunting off trail - no guns 100 ft of rail way	1	R
4	small bass fishing opportunity	1	G
5	culvert repair could benefit + cost could be conserved	1	GR
6	public concern for farming styles	1	R
7	rapids - concern for public	2	R
8	trail cost for - building around	2	R
9	land owner tax increase	2	G
10	easement for trail thru land		NO COMMENT FOUND
11	trespassing	3	R
12	sight-seeing opportunity	3	G

13	no road access	5	R
14	emergency access	5	B
15	road access	5	G
16	more exposure to fish hatchery	7	G
17	easier to build a trail	7	G
18	Dude ranch - Horse rental	7	G
19	shuttle business	1	G
20	outdoor store access to trout fishing delinquent activity	1	G
21	guide - tours	1	G
22	access to trout fishing	8	G
23	delinquent activity	1	R
24	wildlife - snake, cougars, bears	1	R

Full Map Set #1
Challenges-
Narrow corridor
how rail authority going to work?
Scope of work - to develop - time to develop
Ecological damage to development? Worth?
Trespassing mgmt
trash mgmt
human waste mgnt
how to develop in constrained areas
o&m - Who/how?
natural damage
access points - where at, will meet needs (social + neighbors)
Opportunity and minority rights
Opportunities-
existing trailheads
is scrap a funding resource, since "decertified" from minam to joseph
view +++
flat + level accessible
hard pack trail surface
Multi-use opportunities
economic driver/gains
rail + trail (tour) 2 options
local opp for families kids
obesity
being used for public use secure
hwy 82 is tight narrow - allow safe bike/hike route (canyon)
use trail w/in tracks

#	Comment	Tile	Type
1	no restrooms add	14	R
2	add restrooms	14	R
3	opp for fishing on river	14	G
4	acquire for camping	16	G
5	non-public bridge - like access	16	R
6	bridge may not be safe	16	R
7	parking @ gun club	17	G
8	ODOT property managed by ODFW	17	G
9	Property owner 2 mill is supportive and may consider dev. Opp	17	G
10	business (dale reynolds) opp	19	B
11	Lions park - camping /restrooms there	19	B
12	swift rv parking - showers , rv slips, laundry	19	B
13	Nez perce trail - alt. route opportunity	19	G
14	City park existing parking	19	B
15	trailhead opp?	21	G
16	trailhead opp?	22	G
17	hiking opportunity - non-maintained county road = lone pine	22	G
18	clark mansion - may be refurbished into B &B	23	B
19	restroom	23	G
20	hurricane creek trail (tile 29)	29	B
21	lostine tavern	24	B
22	B&B	24	B
23	connect Lostine to row	24	G
24	access points	25	G
25	country rd - not maintained trail opp.	25	B
26	fence in row	26	R
27	old hw 82 row - potential	26	G
28	camping on ODFW	29	G
29	th ???	29	G
30	check ownership (think city) -, camping, everything	32	G
31	airport	32	G

Public Comments:

E.M. "If funding is a challenge, this project could be done incrementally, a few miles at a time. I really like the idea of accessing the trail from Palmer junction, thus dividing what might be conflicting users, e.g. hikers and horses, or baby strollers and roller bladers."

M.M. "How did WURA get control of this investment without community involvement? Plus

demographics favoring those adjacent and [in] close proximity to corridor skews towards negative. Should be focusing on younger people who do not live in a rural setting. Corridor should support healthy lifestyles. Emphasize parents etc.”

- L.L. “I live in town (Elgin) right above the railroad tracks. My concern would be any cutting into the hill below our house to accommodate the path. There are approx. 6 houses along that Beginning stretch from Eglin that would be affected by this. Also - Summer (dry) season - what about the potential of someone smoking, throwing out their cigarette and starting a fire??”
- M.H. “This is a very well thought out and positive project for NE Oregon.”
- K.R. “Being that 70% of chronic diseases (high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease) can be treated , prevented and reversed with good lifestyle choices and exercise, having a quality trail for walking an riding bikes (getting exercise) would be welcomed by the medical community and hospital administration! To encourage the development of a healthy community, it's critical to provide adequate facilities to encourage heathy lifestyle choices, specifically a safe and quality way of getting exercise.”