

SAN JUAN ISLAND TRAILS COMMITTEE
Bike Trails Outreach

MEETING MINUTES
November 17, 2008

Present

Jeff Roberson, Jeff Iverson, Louise Dustrude, Deborah Hopkins, Tracy Roberson, Steve Ulvi, Scott Boye, Judy Packard, Wayne Helgoth, Dick Coffee, Sally Hawkins.

Notices of upcoming events:

1. SJI Trails **Steering Committee: December 2, 4pm**, Library- all are invited.
2. The next **group ride** will occur on Saturday morning, **December 6th, at 10:30 A.M.**, starting at the Friday Harbor High School;
3. SJITC **Bicycle trails meeting: December 8th, from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.** at Whidbey Island Bank, Community Meeting Room.
4. **SJI Trails Committee Meeting: December 10, 5pm**, Whidbey Island Bank

Meeting Goals

T. Roberson opened the meeting with introductions by attendees. Prior to the meeting, she disseminated the following informal agenda by email to the bike trails outreach group:

- (1) Group goals and mission;
- (2) Prioritizing projects;
- (3) Assigning duties;
- (4) Naming our group;
- (5) Scheduling future rides;
- (6) Clarifying ride objectives.

Group Goals Discussion

T. Roberson reported to the group comments that absent parties had transmitted to her prior to the meeting, including the following:

- Continued access and responsible trail maintenance/building on the Mitchell Hill DNR property;

- We may want to separate the group into two subgroups:
 - A multi-use/mountain bike trail subcommittee;
 - And a road bike committee;
- One suggestion for a group name is “San Juan Cyclists”;
- We may want to engage in monthly rides with vests or other clothing that make the group easily-identifiable;
- Implementing the County’s Non-motorized transportation plan; scenic
- Improving bicycle safety and facilities in the Town of Friday Harbor;
- Creating a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan that embraces multi-use trails as transportation enhancements;
- Make biking more safe from town to West side sites (lime Kiln, County Park and English Camp and back);
- We should plan meeting dates farther in advance;
- We may want to design bicycle tours in town and around the island that focus on historic sites. These tours could include historic barns and farms that Sandy Strehlou is currently mapping.

T. Roberson handed out the Priority Trail Corridor maps and then solicited views from those in attendance regarding their goals, which included the following:

- Education of drivers regarding the significant number of cyclists along the County’s roads, including large signs along county roads as they leave the Town of Friday Harbor;
- Improved commuting options and increased bike-friendliness in town, such as improved sight lines along road intersections and corners;
- Improved facilities in town for bicycle parking and to encourage people to leave cars parked during the day;
- Encouraging the County to erect “share the road” signs, primarily on roads where there are no shoulders;
- Widening and marking the curve on Roche Harbor Road just beyond Terrace Drive from town and marking the road for cyclists;
- Requesting that the sheriff’s office enforce unlawful driving, whether by automobile or bicycle;
- Education in school curriculum for young cyclists, which should be implemented regardless of the state of the roads;
- Network of multi-use trails created over several generations;
- Development of multi-use cross-country corridors for all;
- The conversion of roads from 11’ wide with 3’ shoulders to 10’ roads with 4’ shoulders, which public works has reportedly identified as a possibility for certain roads. This would hopefully slow cars;

- Preparation of maps for visitors to guide them for bicycling through the islands;
- Fabrication of reflective vests with catchy slogan or group logo that could be sold to members and others;
- Construction of multi-use trails;
- Multi-use trails and long-term planning. Would like to collect digital images of, and research funding source for, multi-use trails in other locations for presentation to the trails committee.

Action ideas (for Town of FH improvements)

The group suggested starting by contacting town government officials to request bicycle improvements, such as Liz Illg, and then schedule a meeting with King Fitch to lobby for those improvements. Jeff Iverson offered to help with this effort in his position on the town planning department.

S. Ulvi suggested that the group gather additional information before contacting town officials to request improvements, and that the group create a document that reflects analysis regarding the desired improvements. He also recommended that we involve the sheriff in this conversation.

The group identified the following desired improvements for Friday Harbor:

- Bike racks;
- Striping;
- Informational signs posted in shops;
- Improved sightlines.

Formalizing our Plan

Steve also suggested that prior to embarking on loosely organized action items; it may be beneficial to create a written document that outlines our plans, mission statement and goals. This will insure that we are all on the same page. The group then identified the following summary of preliminary goals (in no particular order):

- Education;
- Safety;
- Multi-use trails;
- Long-term planning;
- Access, such as parking facilities in town and guides to assist visitors traveling by bicycle through the islands;
- Increased cycling in the County.

Before moving forward, the group identified the need to evaluate County and Town transportation plans, such as the Non-Motorized Plan. This plan provides Public Works with guidance, policies and goals for pedestrian and bicycling transportations facilities including road shoulders and roadside or off road paths. It also establishes a required minimum expenditure of approximately \$100,000 per year divided between the islands, for specific non-motorized transportation projects. The upcoming projects and allocations can be viewed in the “Six Year Transportation Improvement Program” on the County website under Public Works.

T. Roberson noted that some of the guidance documentation that will direct the group’s work may be inconsistent. For example, the Scenic Roads Manual recommends against wide shoulders, which might appear to conflict with the Non-Motorized Plan’s goal for shoulders wide enough for bicycle travel. At the same time, T. Roberson noted that narrow, scenic roads could be consistent with hidden multi-use trails just beyond the road’s edge.

Group’s Organizational Home

T. Roberson pointed out that the San Juan Island Trails Plan supports road shoulders, multi-use trails and the County Non-Motorized Plan. Currently our group is a sub-committee of the SJI Trails committee, many, but not all of the goals we have discussed seem to fall within the scope of the Trails plan. As our mission and goals evolve, and the Trails Committee’s County parent group changes, a decision may need to be made about our status as a sub-committee and creating a separate, spin-off group for general bicycle road safety advocacy. Discussion ensued and no action was taken.

Group Name

The group discussed several possible names, such as San Juan Cyclists, Bikes ‘n Things, Pedals & Feet, Out spoken’ and variations on the terms “Pedal” or “Spoke,” but did not reach agreement on a group name. This discussion was continued.

Upcoming Action Items

- S. Ulvi, T. Roberson, agreed to work on a formative document for this group that would establish goals, mission and vision;
- Judy Packard agreed to create a draft of a Share the Road poster for review and to hang in store windows around town;

- Sally Hawkins agreed to begin creation of digital photos of multi-use trails for future presentation purposes. Anyone with photos to share are encouraged to do so;
- The next **group ride** will occur on Saturday morning, **December 6th, at 10:30 A.M.**, starting at the Friday Harbor High School;
- **The next meeting** is scheduled for **December 8th, from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.** at Whidbey Island Bank, Community Meeting Room.

Bicycle Ride Goals

The group discussed the goals for the regular bicycle rides and did not reach consensus. While most or all of the group members are interested in raising cycling awareness on San Juan Island, there was not full agreement on how to do that. Several people suggested lengthy rides around the island, while others recommended rides near the greatest number of people, in Friday Harbor. In addition, several people recommended riding together in close physical proximity, while others believed that creating disruption for motorists would be unproductive and the ride would be more effective if the group spread out over a distance. While some concern was expressed that we would not be able to ride close together if children joined the ride, one member suggested that the most physically able members of the group could easily moderate their speed to match that of the less fit. No Action was taken, this discussion will continue.