

## **SAN JUAN ISLAND TRAILS COMMITTEE**

### **Bike Paths Subcommittee**

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

**March 9, 2009**

#### **Present**

Karla Sabin, Wayne Helgoth, Liz Illg, Glen and Bobbie Gullickson, Steve Ulvi and Tracy Roberson.

#### **Notices of upcoming events:**

1. SJI Trails Committee Meeting: March 11 @ 5pm @ Whidbey Island Bank
2. Pipeline Trail Information Meeting sponsored by the Trails Committee: March 13 from 6-7:30 pm @ Library
3. San Juan Island Bike Club rides: Sat. March 14 @ 1 pm and Sun. March 29 @ noon. Start at the High School. See [www.bikesanjuan.com](http://www.bikesanjuan.com).
4. Basic Trail Construction Training is tentatively planned for San Juan Island under the auspices of the Trail Committee May 22-23, 2009. No participant fee is anticipated and details will emerge over the next few weeks.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved without change.

#### **Outreach to Bicycle Tour Groups:**

Bike paths member and San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau Director Deborah Hopkins has offered to contact bicycle tour groups who have or plan to visit San Juan Island in order to better understand and respond to their needs and concerns. Tracy is compiling a list of questions and asked for other ideas. A short discussion emphasized the following questions:

- What routes do they chose to ride and why?
- What general safety concerns do they have?
- Are there potential routes that they consider unsafe or are there specific sites or locations that they consider dangerous?
- Number of Cyclist per trip and trips per year to SJI?
- Amount of money spent here by the touring group, and at what types of shopping or services paid for?
- Would they consider using multi-use trail segments if they had the option?
- Would they consider providing funds to help with local bicycle projects underway on the island or strengthen Share the Road outreach efforts?
- Are there any groups that have discontinued tours in the San Juans? For what reasons?

#### **Meeting with Public Works and funded projects:**

As a follow up to the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, Magda Balise and, David Dehlendorf met with Rachel Deitzman and Shannon Wilbur of Public Works.

Public works would like to complete three existing trail projects on San Juan Island, prior to funding any new projects. These projects are Golf Course Trail, Cattle Point Rustic trail, and Jackson's Beach Path. Tracy described the "S curves" in Golf Course Road that have an adjacent county easement on which the county has set aside funds to construct a trail. This trail could potentially be a multi-use opportunity. The issue of access by walkers and bicycles to Fairway Drive (a private road) beyond this area to connect with Cattle Point Road trail efforts is still problematic. Little was known by members in attendance about the status of the Jackson's Beach Path and the Cattle Point walking trail is in the process of easement approvals.

New projects that Public works is considering working with the Trails Committee on are the Park to Park trail, and the Pipeline Trail. The Park to Park Trail project will eventually connect Lime Kiln State Park with the San Juan County Park. There is a lot of neighborhood support and a trail within the Westside Road easement or on property owned by people willing to grant a trail easement will greatly increase safety and enjoyment along that scenic area. In response to a question Steve suggested that many of the trail segments along that road would not lend themselves to general bicycle use due to a narrow and winding tread. The easements across private properties may not allow for multiple use anyway. The Pipeline trail is a potential multi use trail that is in the process of gaining great momentum, more will be learned about the status and possibilities for this trail at the meeting on Friday March 13<sup>th</sup>.

There was also mention of the fact that there are very few, if any, bicycle safety improvements on the County 6 year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). How projects get on the 6 year TIP is usually from the County Non-Motorized Plan or the SJI Trails Plan.

### **SJ County Parks, Recreation, and Preserved Lands Plan (2009-2010):**

This is a six year plan which provides direction for the County. The new plan will be published in 2010, this has been identified as a process for the Bike Paths group to be involved with. As part of the current plan 2005-10 County parks conducted a survey of islanders and visitors, the findings from the 2004 survey indicated a very high level of support for trails and bikeways: "82% of county residents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "Trails & bikeways should be an integral part of transportation planning for the county" while 71% agreed that "Trails & bikeways should be a critical consideration in public land acquisition projects". Under "needs for specific trail types": "The two highest scores were for bike paths along roads, on Orcas and San Juan islands, followed by clearly delineated bike paths between major destinations". In retrospect it seems that some of the questions were too broad and may have been confusing but the overall implications are clear. The group felt that County Parks should consider administering another survey in the near future with more specific bicycle activity questions. Since the "Action plan" relies heavily on implementation of the SJI Trails Plan and the County Non-motorized plan, it is important that we continue to review and revise these documents to include safety improvements for bicycles. The group agreed that it would also be very useful if the to compile data on the potential positive economic impacts of bicycle tourism in the island economy. The Current Plan and survey results can be viewed at <http://www.sanjuanco.com:80/Parks/PRC.aspx>.

### **Bike Paths Projects:**

The working list of potential projects and areas of focus were revisited. This list a result of reviewing the Trails Plan and discussions since formation of this subcommittee. Tracy provided colored stickers representing 4 votes from priority 1 to 4 for each of the 7 people attending this meeting. After clarifications of some of the projects stickers were applied to specific projects under the multi-use trail and safety improvements headings with the understanding that the important issues under general research and processes would be addressed by the group as opportunities arise. Tracy suggested that once the results of this prioritization were agreed to by other regular participants unable to attend this meeting forming small workgroups for each of the top priority projects should be the next step. Below is the complete list in priority order by category with this small sampling of voting results posted:

#### **Multi-use Trails (with paved or permeable surface):**

1. Pipeline trail connecting Town and Trout Lake Watershed (20 pts)
2. Expanding Airport Trails (toward town) for Bikes (7 pts)
3. Multi-use trail to Gravel Pit and Jackson's Beach – thru Buck property (6 pts)
4. Multi use trail along Beaverton Valley Rd beginning near Foxhall, if dump is re-located a huge need for a safe, off-road route will result. (4 pts)
5. Land Bank Beaverton Marsh Preserve multi-use trail (adjacent to County Roadway) there is also a potential connection between this trail and the ball fields trail. (3 pts)
6. Community ball-fields perimeter trail (1pt)
7. Bike trail on Warbass (0 pts)
8. Bailer Hill/Westside multi-use trail (0 pts)

#### **Mountain bike trails:**

1. Insuring continued future access to Mitchell Hill DNR Land (4pts)
2. Exploring possibilities of a Mountain bike area in the Gravel Pit Park area (0pts)

#### **Town/County road safety improvements:**

1. Review Bicycle Signage County-wide: "Share the Road" message (14 pts)
2. Bicycle Boulevards throughout Town (4 pts)
3. Expanding shoulders on designated roads and pending road projects (4 pts)
4. More Bicycle pull-outs (2 pts)
5. Bailer Hill, West side, West Valley, & Mitchell Bay Rd safety improvements (0 pts)

**In addition, items on the “to Do” list are as follows:**

**General Research**

- Review and update Trails Plan for bike path potential
- Review & suggest updates to SJC Non-motorized Transportation Plan
- Create library with photos & details for trail construction for access on website.
- Research Available grants and potential funding
- Research Multi-use trail costs
- Economic benefits of Bicycle pathways (research and compile data)

**Processes to be involved with:**

- County Parks Recreation and Land Preservation Plan (2009-2010)
- Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan (2009)
- National Parks Service Mitchell Hill acquisition
- SJC 6 year Transportation Improvement Program Plan updates
- County-wide bicycle alliance or coalition
- Town – Tucker improvements scheduled for 2010 (perform needs assessment attend town meetings to advocate for bicycle safety in the design)

**General discussion:**

Liz mentioned that the Tucker Street Road Improvement Project is slated for 2010. This street is both an important in-town link for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as the way out to Roche Harbor of interest to tour groups. There was some discussion of the results of similar widening and side-walks along Guard Street. It was agreed that the needs assessment level of project planning requires close attention by bicycle enthusiasts.

Glen and Bobbie Gullickson have just returned from a year away with many interesting experiences and suggestions for improvements here based upon extensive bicycle touring in Florida.

Apparently, the American Lung Association conducts a bike tour to the island every year using the fairgrounds. Few were familiar with this tour so further inquiry will be necessary.

One of the most important areas of focus for both the subcommittee and the newly formed bike club is raising awareness of the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists on island roadways. Broad educational efforts building upon the Share the Road poster created by Judy Packard and closer attention to signage were mentioned. Although there is not general agreement as to the best strategies for emphasizing the importance of moving from planning talk to action by local government agencies regarding bicycle use and safety on local roads, we did agree that success would require active participation in order to positively influence the scope of new projects and implementation of ongoing projects.

Pullouts along busy roads and at appropriate sites on hills were also discussed and require participation by active riders to ensure realistic locations for these improvements.

We talked about the level of "mountain biking interests" within the subcommittee and bike club and how those enthusiasts may not be aware of efforts in that regard by this group (e.g. Mitchell Hill addition to English Camp and trail development in the gravel pit area).

**Wrap up:**

Tracy emphasized the importance of attendance at the upcoming meeting on the Pipeline trail to ensure that multiple use interests are conveyed and considered. She also requested that another Bike Paths committee member may want to step in to represent the interests of this subcommittee in the many pipeline meetings to come as her time is limited.

