

SAN JUAN ISLAND TRAILS COMMITTEE
Bike Paths Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2009

Present

Joe Cussen, Peter Dawson, David Dehlendorf, Deborah Hopkins, Tracy Roberson, Karla Sabin.

Notices of upcoming events:

1. SJI Trails Committee Meeting: June 10th @ 5pm @ Whidbey Island Bank
2. Bike Paths Monthly sub-committee meeting: June 15 @ 5pm Whidbey Island Bank

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved without change.

Bike Paths Projects:

The updated Bike Paths project priorities tally sheet was circulated. Anyone who has not yet voted may still do so by emailing their top four choices in priority order to Tracy. As of May 18th, 35 of the 70 on our mailing list have responded, current top priorities are:

1. Pipeline trail connecting Town and Trout Lake Watershed.
2. Expanding shoulders on designated roads and pending road projects.
3. Multi-use trail to Gravel Pit and Jackson's Beach – thru Buck property.
4. Bailer Hill, West side, West Valley, & Mitchell Bay Rd safety improvements.

There was discussion about actions to be taken next on these projects but no decisions were made.

Pipeline Trail Ad-Hoc Committee

David reported that a committee is forming to pursue ideas for making the Pipeline Trail a reality. A meeting was held in early May. The committee is hoping to reach out to the farmers and property owners along the possible trail corridor to hear their concerns and search for mutually beneficial solutions. Currently the Town is in the process of Engineering for the new pipeline. Information about the location of the existing right of way is not yet available and future pipeline right of way will not be available until fall. Once these locations are known, discussions about where the trail could possibly be located can begin. Steve Ulvi represents the Bike Paths on this Ad-Hoc committee, and we are seeking any bicycle enthusiasts, San Juan Valley residents or others who would possibly use this trail to join in this effort.

Trails Committee Projects submitted for 6 year TIP

The San Juan County Public works department asked the Trails Committee to submit updated details on all of our trail projects by the end of April so each could be considered for inclusion in the 6 year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). David reported that 7 projects were submitted,

ranging from road crossings & signage for trails to actual trail construction projects. Two of the projects include bicycles as “multi-use trails: the “Valley Farm Trail” (formerly known as the Pipeline trail) and the Jackson Beach Trail. The Pipeline Trail was divided into two sections the first section called the “Valley View Trail” would go from town to Douglas road and possibly out to a very scenic viewpoint on the Preservation Trusts’ newly acquired Sundstrom property. This trail could possibly be constructed as a much shorter term project and would possibly not be multi-use. The second section is the “Valley Farms trail” which would go from Douglas road the rest of the way to Wold Road. This is a long term project that would take many years to accomplish and will possibly require cooperation of Town, County and neighboring property owners.

Potential Town to Jackson’s Beach Trail:

As was suggested at our last meeting, Doug, David and Louise met with Peter Kilpatrick and Nancy DeVaux of the SJ Community Home Trust to talk about a potential easement for a multi-use trail through the Buck property to the Gravel pit. Peter and Nancy seemed receptive to our ideas. As suggested by Peter, a follow up letter was sent to the Home Trust design team and the Buck family asking for an easement to build up to a 10’ wide multi-use trail through the project from Grover street to the Gravel pit. Trails will be part of the Green space plan to be done in about a month.

Scenic Byways and multi use opportunities

Deborah reported that our scenic byway has been approved by the Governor, but we are still waiting for the grant for the corridor management plan. Once the grant is approved work will begin on the plan which will take about 1 year to write. The plan will require input from everyone in the community and be about protecting the byway without exploiting it. Any project in the plan can qualify for federal funding which requires 20% matching funds. We will want to make sure that any potential trails along our Scenic Byway corridor are included in the management plan. The State is very interested in bike trails as part of the byway and there may be some situations where trails projects would even be given priority over other types of projects in consideration for funding.

General discussion:

There was much discussion about using media such as a website or our local online papers to promote or educate visitors and locals about group rides and safe bike routes on the islands. Since this is not really covered in the Trails Committee mission statement, Tracy suggested this falls more in line with the goals of the Bike Club. There is concern that there has been dwindling interest in the Bike Club, and maybe it is because the Bike Paths committee is attempting to meet needs that could be better addressed by the Club. It was agreed that we will request a Bike Club meeting to see if there is any serious interest in promoting rides, and if there are volunteers willing take on projects such as bike route maps on the website, writing educational safety guidelines, leading group rides, addressing town and county signage etc. Tracy will contact the Bike Club to schedule a meeting as soon as possible. The meeting announcement will be emailed to all Bike Paths members.

Tracy shared an email from Ellen Barton who is preparing a regional bicycle and trail map for the the North Sound Connecting Communities project. She is asking for help to identify bike routes and or trails in the San Juan Islands. The project goal is to also identify “gaps” in the system possibly for future infrastructure funding requests. Tracy will forward on information about local contacts such as the Bike Club, and Island Bicycles and will provide some information on San Juan Island routes.

Deborah spoke to Backroads bicycles about their experiences riding on San Juan Island. Overall they feel safe and have great experiences. Their only complaints were about the chip seal being bumpy, and the locals are unfriendly towards the end of the season. For ferry offloading they wait at the top side of the ramp until all vehicles are offloaded to reduce confusion for their riders. They avoid Beaverton Valley Road because of all the large work vehicles.

The next regular Bike Paths meeting will be the third Monday in June, same location.