

Rails-with-Trails concept plans presented to WURA

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Rails-with-Trails is still not a project, but the planning process has achieved step three in a four-step process that leads to presentation of a concept assessment report to the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA).

Step one was the kickoff of the idea and the creation of a team to carry the work through. Step two was the survey of stakeholders, assessments and public meetings. Step three was the presentation of options for construction of the 63-mile trail. Those presentations were made at three meetings in Elgin, Wallowa and Joseph on Aug. 18, 19 and 20.

The entire document outlining the steps, the goals and the findings is available for viewing at Enterprise Public Library and online at www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails.

Throughout the process three basic tenets were set forward: the rails would remain in place, no funding would be provided by WURA, and a decision about whether or not to proceed would be made by WURA at the end of the concept planning process.

The survey of residents affected by the project was open from April 14 to June 17. There were two surveys done at that time: one available to anyone on the website and one that was a statistical survey of Union and Wallowa County residents who lived within the zip codes where the rail passed through. The mailed surveys went out to 550 individuals and 150 responded. The majority of respondents (59 percent of those who received paper surveys and 84 percent of those who used the online form) supported some type of trail.

The percentages were different for the 16 adjacent landowners who filled out paper surveys with 25 percent opposed to the entire trail, 19 percent approving the entire trail, and 38 percent supporting certain portions of the trail. Responses of 47 landowners who accessed the online form



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

This bridge between Joseph and Enterprise is typical of the constraints the Rails-with-Trails planning group must deal with in designing the trail. On the Minam-to-Wallowa portion of the trail there are four bridges and a more than 2-mile section of canyon with no current shoulder for a trail.

broke down this way: 57 percent support the entire trail, 21 percent oppose the entire trail, and 19 percent support parts of the trail.

Concerns were very similar for all respondents with trespass, unleashed pets, illegal motor vehicle use, and loss of privacy (for adjacent properties) being the top concerns.

The research group conducted city and county land use reviews, checked the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, identified 28 properties from Elgin to Joseph on the registry of National Historic Places in addition to historical cemeteries along the route, checked main street assessments and found that the trail project was compatible with all of these reviews and plans.

The design team then broke the 63.5-mile distance into six sections of trail and did some more calculations before coming up with a \$14.1 million price tag for the development of the whole project.

Some parts of the trail will be more expensive than others,

and alternatives to each development were presented.

For instance, the Minam to Wallowa segment, 12.79 miles long, contains four bridges, 35 culverts and 15 road crossings. For that segment a primitive trail is proposed along the canyon for about 6.75 miles. The next two miles are very constrained, so a different path system would be needed. The team suggests that the trail run in the rail for that section. Developed and improved trails will be made closer to Wallowa and the Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center to allow local users to make connections to recreational sites.

An alternative to this is using low-traffic county and city roads for about 6.2 miles of the segment and the use of sharrows (shared lane bicycle markings) on the road within city limits.

The final Concept Plan will

be presented to WURA by December 2015.

WURA will then consider whether or not they wish to proceed to the actual design phase, where decisions will be made. Before design decisions are made, WURA will need to create governance to oversee fundraising, construction and maintenance of the rails-with-trail. There will most likely be a board, a Trail Advisory Committee, a Trail Technical Advisory Committee, and perhaps other committees.

The most prevalent governance system for rails-to-trails or rails-with-trails is a government agency working with a Friends Group, according to a 2015 National Policy Consensus Center study.

Questions about the process should be directed to Terry Edvalson, tedvalson@eoni.com or Dana Kurtz at www.eou.edu/rails-with-trails.



Courtesy photo

Dr. Lowell Euhus (left) and Terri Bronson flank the honored birthday person, Wilda Zollman.

Gathering marks Wilda Zollman's 90th birthday

Although her 90th birthday was Sept. 12, Wilda Zollman celebrated it the evening of Aug. 8 at the Wallowa Lake Lodge. In attendance were long-time friends and family, including: Dr. and Mrs. Lowell Euhus, Nola Grisom and daughter Tera, Greg and Claudette Wieck, Herbert and Nadine Bork, and Terri Bronson as well as daughter Julia, and grandson David McCarver and his family.

Wilda enjoyed a slide show of photos from her 90 years, listening to the music of Evelyn Swart and singing her own rendition of a song she composed about her love for Wallowa County to the tune of Red River Valley, which brought the house down!

Wilda Irene Zollman, born Sept. 12, 1925, has lived 85 of her 90 years in Wallowa County. She grew up on a ranch at Shamrock Ridge north of Enterprise where her parents farmed 200 acres of hay. She attended school at Flora until 7th grade and then lived and worked for Marcel and Vera Norton, east of Flora, milking cows for \$5 a week.

Wilda met Wilbur Zollman over at Uncle Ira's at the age of 14. She worked at the cannery and lived at the Alder Slope place. They began dating and were married when Wilda was 17 in Walla Walla, Wash. They moved to town and lived in a house with no indoor plumbing and water for four months. They celebrated when they got plumbing in!

In 1948, Julia Ann Zollman was born, in the old

hospital, adding much joy to Wilbur and Wilda's life.

Wilbur and Wilda were a hard-working team, cutting wood for a living and then buying a ranch on the outskirts of Enterprise and creating a living with farming, woodcutting, milk cows and hogs. The cream was sold and the milk fed to the hogs. It was hard work but a rewarding life.

After Julia married Charles McCarver in 1965 and left home, Wilda worked at the potato harvesting for several years.

She was part of the Cow Belle club and attended church at the Enterprise Assembly of God. More joys came as daughter Julia and Charles McCarver provided four grandkids: Helen, Kenneth, David and Kimberly. All the grandkids spent time on the ranch, but David and Kimberly spent several summers helping Grandpa and Grandma.

Wilda enjoys reading and crocheting and makes a mean pie, according to local Enterprise resident, Keith Byrd. She loves people and has many friends in Wallowa County. In 2001, Wilbur passed away and Wilda continued to live on the ranch until 2010 when she moved to Nampa, Idaho, to be near family. She now lives with daughter Julia and near two of her grandchildren, and she has seven great grand-children just in the Nampa area that she enjoys seeing frequently.

Cards to Wilda can be mailed to 11106 Brassy Cove Loop #102 Nampa, ID 83651.

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AROUND ENTERPRISE

Progress is being made on the new Welcome To Enterprise sign at the top of the hill. Kudos to the project's craftsmen! Stay tuned...

THANK YOU

The family of "Coach" Don Wilson would like to thank our extended families and friends who showed, helped, and supported us prior to and after the memorial service. We are very appreciative of all you have done. We especially want to thank those who were a part of the memorial service and potluck after. Your assistance made the day very special, happy, sad, touching and memorable. The family thanks you for your cards, flowers, condolences and prayers. Donations to "Light the Night" for his favorite school, Wallowa High, are also appreciated.

Don Wilson was loved as a Dad, Grandpa, Great-Grandpa, Coach, Teacher and Friend. He is already missed.

The Chieftain says,

Think Pink

The Chieftain will be donating all pink ad color proceeds from the month of October to the Wallowa Memorial Hospital. The money will go towards mammography exams for those unable to afford them in Wallowa County.



Show your support by placing your business ad in **PINK** in the month of October. Call or Email Jennifer today! 541-426-4567 jpowell@wallowa.com

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