

Fall  
2015

Pullman Civic Trust



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## Preserving Public Corridors

### **Pullman Civic Trust Awarded Technical Assistance Grant from National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program**

#### *From the Board*

A long-range vision of the Pullman Civic Trust includes preserving the rail corridors, known as the Palouse River Coulee City (PRCC) rail line, linking Pullman to Colfax and Pullman to Fallon. At this time, the rail lines are owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). If WSDOT railbanks the lines, the system can remain a public right-of-way, preserving the lines for the future, maintaining its value for the public, securing the corridor for possible rail service and connecting our communities as the rail corridors have for Whitman County citizens for more than a century. If the lines are abandoned, the property could revert to private ownership and be lost forever.

Railbanking keeps our communities connected and vibrant. A railbanked rail corridor not only preserves the public right-of-way, but it can serve as an economic engine for our region when converted into an interim trail. Because the Colfax to Pullman corridor connects to the Bill Chipman Palouse trail and ultimately to the Latah trail, this expansion of the existing trail system can increase tourism, support recruitment for local businesses, and add to the quality of life for residents. Railbanking the Pullman to Fallon corridor creates an extended spur off the 8-mile Pullman Loop trail that would be appealing to mountain bikers, runners, and other recreationists.

The National Park Service technical assistance grant will provide professional facilitation and guidance to help citizens of Whitman County and public officials work through discussions with those in favor and those opposing railbanking. The purpose of these discussions is to identify appropriate and feasible solutions that can ultimately provide the greatest public good.

To accomplish our vision the community will need to engage in a rigorous public process. Articulating opportunities, concerns, pros and cons is important for public officials, friends and neighbors. Facilitating such a process requires the skills of a professional planner and community development specialist. The Pullman Civic Trust hopes to use a public participation process to make the community stronger by reaching consensus about the potential for retaining in public ownership the right-of-way of the Upper Hooper subdivision of the Palouse River and Coulee City (PRCC) rail line between Pullman and Colfax and between Pullman and Fallon.

There are 37 connected miles of rails that are under consideration for abandonment or railbanking. The discussion so far has involved civic groups, adjacent property owners, residents interested in recreation and business development, elected officials, and other interested parties, but so far there has been no concerted effort to talk about the future of the railroad right-of-way in a systematic way. Pullman Civic Trust is aware that whether or not to abandon the rail lines has consequences to all people in the region, and facilitation of the discussion along with serious evaluation of the potential outcomes is required. Information is needed about what other communities across the country are doing, what has been successful, what to avoid and what can help our rural communities, our rivers, our wildlife and our economy. We hope you will participate in these important discussions. Times and dates to be determined.

**WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN UP-COMING COMMUNITY FORUMS. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN 2016.**

This is the season for giving without a thought of getting. It is happiness because we see joy in people. It is forgetting self and finding time for others. It is discarding the meaningless and stressing true values.

- adapted from  
Thomas S. Monson

## President's Column

By Lisa Carloye

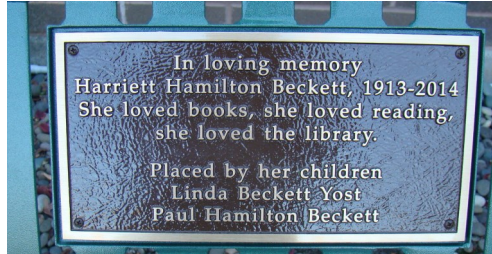
It's been a dynamic and volatile time for trails in Eastern Washington recently. At the same time the state Legislature passed a transportation budget that included more funding for trails and non-motorized transportation than ever before, our local representatives reportedly inserted a line item to close 135 miles of the John Wayne Trail into the budget in response to landowner complaints about poor management by the state Parks Department. This move to abolish a long section of the trail galvanized supporters and prompted long needed discussions on how to better manage this resource.

While many of the most egregious problems adjacent landowners experienced with the JWT are unique to that trail and its management structure, there are some lessons for Civic Trust to apply to our own rail-trail project. Weed control, dumping, and trespassing are primary concerns for JWT landowners and we share those concerns for our own proposed trail. Unlike the JWT, which is managed by Washington State Parks, our trail would likely be locally governed and controlled. If we are successful in moving our dreams of a trail forward, we will carefully consider best practices for monitoring trail usage and ensuring that the design considers ways to make illegal dumping difficult and trespassing unnecessary. Safety and weed control are primary considerations as we work to identify a local lead agency who will assume responsibility for corridor management under the rail banking process.

Pullman Civic Trust is, first and foremost, an organization seeking to build community by facilitating connections between people and the natural/agricultural landscape, between people and local businesses, and amongst citizens who call the Palouse home. We envision a rail-trail connection to Albion and Colfax that is a community asset to all residents whether they live in town or along the rail corridor.

## Bench at Neill Public Library

You may have noticed that there is a new bench outside Neill Public Library that completes the design for the reading plaza. This bench is dedicated to a special person, Harriett Hamilton Beckett by her son, Paul (Skip) Beckett and daughter, Linda Beckett Yost. Harriett lived to a healthy 100 years. She was a teacher, mother and community participant. Harriett served Pullman as the President of Friends of the Library and managed the fund-raising campaign for the new library we enjoy today. When you have a moment next time you are at the library, have a seat on Harriett's bench, read a book and enjoy the view.



## An Innovative Solution to Parking Lot Pollution

Rob Buchert, City of Pullman - Stormwater Services Program Manager

The city of Pullman is retrofitting two of its public parking lots to be more environmentally friendly. The Neill Public Library lot and the South Street lot are receiving much needed facelifts that will include several new Low Impact Development (LID) features. LID combines innovative engineering with natural processes to manage stormwater at its source.

Stormwater is rain and snow melt that runs off surfaces such as rooftops, paved streets and parking lots. As water runs off these surfaces, it can pick up pollution like oil, fertilizers, pesticides, soil, trash, and animal waste. The polluted water then either flows directly into a local stream or drops into a storm drain and flows through storm pipes until it is released **untreated** into a local waterway. In addition, runoff from large impervious surfaces in urban areas (such as parking lots) can cause hydrologic impacts such as scoured streambeds, incised channels, instream sedimentation and loss of habitat. (Source: [www.ecy.wa.gov/water/stormwater](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/stormwater))

The LID features being installed with this project will provide much needed flow control and treatment of polluted parking lot runoff before it travels off-site to the nearest stream. The Neill Public Library lot will be improved by adding two types of permeable pavers, a bio-retention swale, a tree box filter and a hydrodynamic separator. South Street lot improvements include permeable pavers, porous asphalt and a bio-retention swale. The primary goal of the project is to improve water quality in the South Fork Palouse River. A secondary goal is for the city to demonstrate the applicability of a variety of LID practices to the public, while gaining practical knowledge on the installation of LID in Pullman so the city can serve as a resource in promoting LID as a viable stormwater management tool. This project is being made possible by a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology. Construction is currently planned for late summer of 2016.

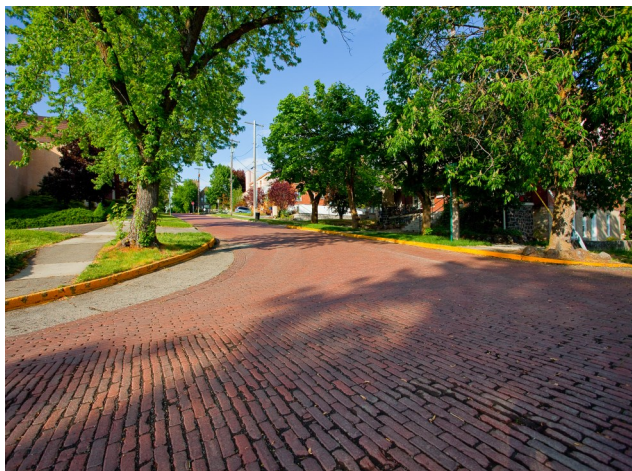
For more information, contact Rob Buchert at (509) 338-3314 or [rob.buchert@pullman-wa.gov](mailto:rob.buchert@pullman-wa.gov).



## Brick Streets

By John Anderson

The Civic Trust is one of the agencies and organizations working toward building and installing a monument to Pullman's brick-paved streets. The portions of Palouse Street and Maple Street (formerly known as Star Route) still paved in brick laid in 1913 are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Pullman Register of Historic Places. The goal of this project is to produce a monument that will draw attention to the streets and provide a place to display the plaques from the two registers. Students in the WSU chapter of Alpha Rho Chi, the national honorary and service fraternity for architecture and the allied arts, are designing the monument and will supervise its construction. They are working closely with the College Hill Association and WSU faculty members as well as the City's Historic Preservation Commission. The current vision for the monument is based on a wagon wheel, the sort of wheel that might have helped haul freight and mail from the railroad depot up College Hill shortly after the streets were paved. The pavers were laid to improve wintertime traffic on streets that were previously a muddy mess in rain and snow. The monument will be placed on city property along Palouse Street near the intersection of Maple Street at a site adjacent to the brick-paved streets. PCT is also interested in making improvements to the Palouse Street Path, one of the City's oldest paths.



Want to donate to Pullman Civic Trust? You can use the enclosed envelope or go on-line to our website: [pullmancivictrust.org](http://pullmancivictrust.org)

### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whitman County Commissioners  
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Neill Public Library  
College Hill Association  
Chipman Trail Committee  
Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity

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## Economic Benefits of Trails *by William Warfel*

Economics and Bicycling? Is that a thing? It sure is! Academic research is starting to explore the economic impacts of bicycling and recreational infrastructure, particularly examining the regional economic impact of rails-to-trails projects. From increasing healthy lifestyles to decreasing traffic congestion, trails offer a bounty beyond just recreation.

A recent study found that North Carolina's Outer Banks produces \$60 million in bicycle tourism; a tremendous economic impact. A similar study in 2008 determined that Portland, OR experienced a \$90 million economic boom related to bicycling activities. Even on the Palouse the economics of bicycling are evident. Between Pullman and Moscow there are 5 bicycle shops employing a number of people, paying taxes, and keeping money in the local economy. The Filling Station café in Troy estimates 70% of business comes from trail traffic. Our scenery is picturesque and thus supports tourism, bringing a multitude of guests coming to take pictures, hike, ride bikes, and recreate.

Tourism aside, recreational infrastructure provides terrific benefits. On any given day, even in the worst of weather, the Bill Chipman trail is well used. From cycling, running, walking, and skiing, this trail provides a transportation alternative and recreational opportunity that helps decrease traffic congestion and maintain a healthy populous.

Other studies have determined that real estate values are higher when located near recreational infrastructure. The National Homebuilders Association indicates that trails often increase property values saying "Trails are the most desired community amenity that homeowners seek when buying a home (2008)." As a community invests in various infrastructure, property values increase, having a profound impact on other economic areas. This can be witnessed just one hour north along the 77-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes from Plummer to Wallace. According to Jon Ruggles, Friends of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alene President, Plummer, Harrison, Kellogg & Wallace, ID garner >\$14 M annually from the Trail via lodging, fuel, food, equipment, and incidental purchases by trail users (2015).

Bicycling and recreational infrastructure have many different benefits beyond recreation. Trails contribute to the local economy. Next time you are walking, running, biking, or skiing between Pullman and Troy, take a minute and think about how great the area is around you!



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*If you dream about more trees in your city, areas for pedestrians to enjoy, cleaner rivers, a welcoming look to downtown, or paths and trails creating a walkable/bikeable community, we invite you to join us. Your voice can make a difference.*



## ADOPT-A-STREAM 2015

A pleasant fall morning on October 3 brought out 11 enthusiastic adults and students for the Pullman Civic Trust stream clean-up work party. We were especially appreciative of the 5 youngsters who joined parents and friends to walk our assigned segment of the South Fork of the Palouse River from the Spring Street Park to Pufferbelly Depot to pick up trash. The most unusual item found was a rusting metal folding chair in the middle of the river under the Kamiaken Street bridge, retrieved by one PCT Board member with the foresight to have worn wading boots. Overall, there did seem to be less trash this year than last year, an encouraging sign.

After enjoying a rest and treats on Pine St. Plaza, we participated in a nature walk led by Brian Bell and sponsored by PCEI. Following the Downtown Riverwalk, we asked questions as he pointed out features of a healthy stream and appropriate landscaping. He described the previous condition of the river and helped us envision how the river could look, years into the future.

Stay tuned for our next cleanup effort in spring 2016 as we do our part for the Pullman City Stormwater Services/ PCEI efforts to bring health to our local rivers. If you would like to be notified of the date and time, send us an email at [www.pullmancivictrust.org](http://www.pullmancivictrust.org).

