

Fall  
2017

# contours

## COLFAX-ALBION-PULLMAN (CAP) RAIL CORRIDOR WORKSHOPS

### The Colfax–Albion–Pullman (CAP) Leadership Committee

**Lisa Carloye** – Pullman Civic Trust, Chair of Leadership Committee

**Todd Vanek** – Colfax Mayor

**Carolyn Emerson-Farr** – Albion Mayor

**Glenn Johnson** – Pullman Mayor

**Eileen Macoll** – Pullman City Rep.

**Michael Largent** – Whitman County Commissioner

**Karen Hinnenkamp** – Property Owner

**Larry Fox** – Property Owner

**Larry Farr** – Property Owner

**John Shaheen** – WSU Transportation Services

**Bobbie Ryder** – Palouse Trail Committee

**Alexandra Stone** – NPS, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

**Stephanie Stroud** – NPS

**Bob Westby** – WSDOT Rails, Freight, and Ports Division.

Over 200 area residents participated in lively discussions on the future of the railroad corridor linking Colfax, Albion and Pullman during a series of five community workshops during 2016.

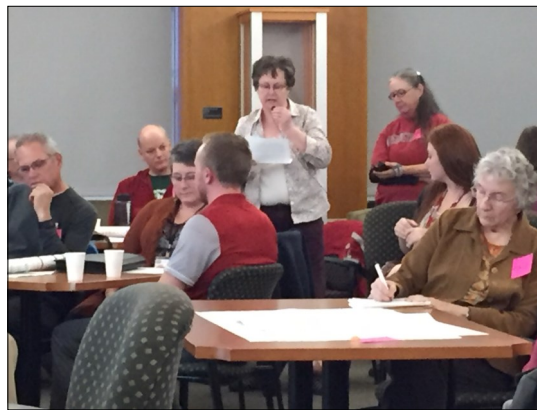
A dynamic kickoff workshop in June featured historical background, current status and future possibilities for this idle corridor from Bob Westby, head of the Rail Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Alexandra Stone of the National Park Service (NPS) outlined examples of rail-trail conversions from across the U.S. and in the Northwest to illustrate one of the options (trail creation) presented. This information, together with discussion points raised by an audience with widely diverging views, formed a framework for the ensuing workshops held in each of the sponsoring cities and at WSU.

The community workshops in November and December invited people to gather again to discuss their concerns and visions in conversations as well as an open mic session. These discussions were challenging at times but achieved the goal of being inclusive of all perspectives and voices.

Pullman Civic Trust organized and facilitated these workshops, with support from the WSDOT and support from the NPS via a technical assistance grant. A Leadership Committee guided the content and organization of the process. This Committee was comprised of representatives from a group of adjacent landowners, each of the three cities, Whitman County, WSU Transportation Services, the Bill Chipman Palouse Trail Committee, WSDOT Rails Division, and Pullman Civic Trust.

A link to the full report summarizing the workshop comments is available on the WSDOT website <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/CAPCommunityWorkshops2016FinalReport.pdf>. You can find a link at [pullmancivictrust.org](http://pullmancivictrust.org). Going forward, Pullman Civic Trust will continue working with the Leadership Committee while exploring options for retaining public ownership of the corridor and addressing the concerns expressed in the workshops. This newsletter highlights some of the information and lessons learned during this community process.

PCT extends a warm thank you to all who participated, shared their thoughts and asked important questions.





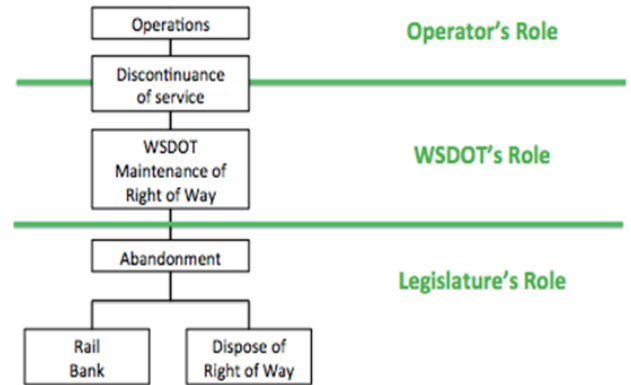
## WHAT WE LEARNED AT THE CAP COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

We learned that the most likely futures of the CAP Corridor right-of-way (ROW) are:

- The ROW is retained by WSDOT which assumes maintenance responsibilities for the right-of-way.
- The ROW is disposed, returning to private ownership.
- The ROW is railbanked, which allows trail creation while retaining the ROW for future rail needs.

The process leading to each option is illustrated in the flowchart shown.

### Process Steps



Pros and cons associated with each option, particularly for the Disposal or Railbanking options were raised during community workshops. Highlights include concerns about the costs associated with creating and maintaining a 19-mile trail and trestles, juxtaposed with excitement for the recreational opportunities a trail of this length can provide for people of all ages and abilities. Those living along the corridor expressed frustration with the lack of weed control and maintenance they currently live with and shared their fear of how a trail would impact their quality of life as it would impact their privacy and disturb the tranquility they value. Other community members were enthusiastic about the economic benefits for regional businesses from increased tourism and argued that trails are good for recruiting and retaining employees for area businesses. Concerns about safety for trail users and for trail neighbors were also expressed.

### Summary of Workshop Comments

The comments from the workshops were transcribed and grouped into common themes :

- |                           |                                   |                              |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Safety</i>             | <i>Crime &amp; Vandalism</i>      | <i>Privacy</i>               |
| <i>Financial Benefits</i> | <i>Financial Costs</i>            | <i>Health &amp; Wellness</i> |
| <i>Recreation</i>         | <i>Environmental Preservation</i> | <i>Maintenance</i>           |
| <i>Liability</i>          | <i>Legal Questions</i>            |                              |

For an explanation of these themes and discussions go to [www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/CAPCommunityWorkshops2016FinalReport.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/CAPCommunityWorkshops2016FinalReport.pdf) or follow the link at [pullmancivictrust.org](http://pullmancivictrust.org).

### Summer Research

Over the summer and fall of 2016, Pullman Civic Trust volunteers, NPS and members of the Leadership Committee gathered information to answer questions raised at the Kick-Off workshop. This included:

- 1) Literature Searches
- 2) Intercept survey of Chipman Trail Users
- 3) Public Records search of calls to County Sheriff for the Chipman Trail
- 4) Infrared trail user count on the Chipman Trail
- 5) Speeder car expedition along the length of the corridor from Pullman to the missing trestle located two miles east of Colfax.

## PRESIDENTS'S COLUMN

By Lisa Carloye

It has been a whirlwind year for PCT. After successfully competing for a Technical Assistance grant from the National Park Service, we embarked on a year-long journey to bring together major stakeholders and community residents to engage in open discussions of the future of the Colfax-Albion-Pullman (CAP) rail corridor. The stakeholders leadership meetings led to dynamic workshops structured to hear all viewpoints and to facilitate face-to-face conversations between those with different views.

As PCT moves forward, we hope to maintain these relationships and steer the ongoing discussions so they remain civil and community-minded. We took to heart the concerns expressed by adjacent landowners and town residents and will actively be looking for ways to mitigate potential conflicts. We appreciate their sharing knowledge about the corridor. We also appreciate hearing the excitement and ideas for how a trail can enhance the economic vitality of the Palouse and the quality of life for area residents in many different ways.

We will continue to work hard to advocate for a public corridor that will be a good neighbor as it serves as an engine to tie our communities together.



For a current list of Pullman Civic Trust Board of Directors check our web page at [pullmancivictrust.org](http://pullmancivictrust.org).



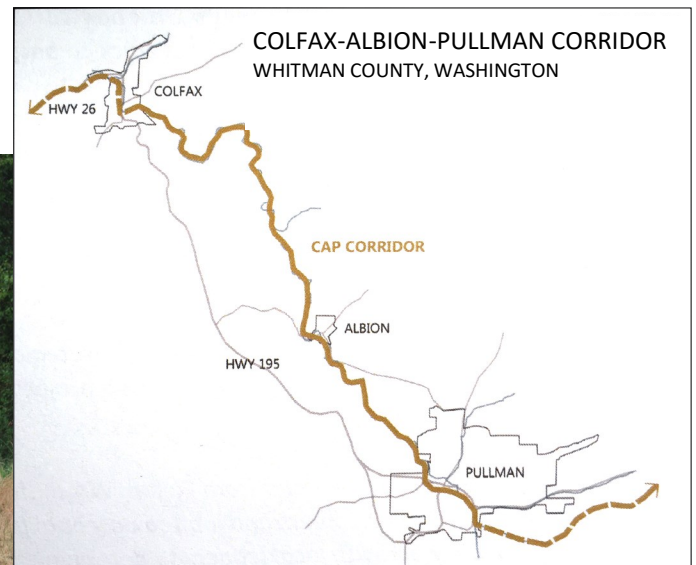
## WHAT DOES THE CAP CORRIDOR LOOK LIKE?

Ever wondered what the CAP Corridor looks like? What is all the excitement about this rail corridor? Like you, PCT was curious so we arranged a speeder car tour of the corridor to see it **first hand**. Speeder cars are the little open-air maintenance rail cars that were used until the 1990s (today they use pickup trucks on flanged wheels). Joining in the fun were county commissioners, mayors, corridor neighbors, and other CAP Leadership Committee members.



The Palouse River and Coulee City Railway System (PCC), currently owned by WSDOT, travels through unique rural landscape in Whitman County. The CAP section of the corridor parallels the South Fork of the Palouse River as it winds **thru** the rolling Palouse wheat fields and farmland. The corridor also travels **thru** forested ravines and between rocky outcrops, landforms rarely found in a region dominated by farmland.

We also got an up-close view of the unsprayed weeds, some trestle repairs in need of attention, and a sense of how a trail might impact those living nearby. Landowners who live along the rail line shared their experiences, pointing out areas of concern. Further discussions provided ideas for possible solutions and opportunities. Besides being a fun adventure, the **interaction** for trail enthusiasts, trail opponents, and local officials to spend time together along the corridor made for a very informative outing that we hope to do again in the future.



*14 trestles cross the Palouse River as the rail line weaves back and forth across the river valley. One trestle is a steel bridge.*







## Creating Community through Public Corridors

### PULLMAN STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT CREATES COMMUNITY

In March of 1910, Pullman experienced its worst recorded flood, resulting in damaged infrastructure along the banks of its three main waterways- the Missouri Flat Creek, the South Fork, and Paradise Creek- The flooding resulted in the isolation of College hill from the rest of the town. The students helped construct a temporary bridge across the river as well as aided in rescue of citizens stranded on their rooftops. This event resulted in cooperation and a sense of community spirit between WSU students and the larger Pullman community.

WSU Graduate student, Kayla Wakulich, presented this research information at the PCT annual meeting on May 16. Her work at WSU involves the ecological restoration of Missouri Flat Creek and exploring alternative platforms in which this project can bring together WSU students and the community. Her research has brought to light the need for connection between students and the Palouse. Wakulich's work aims to understand the reasons for the students' feelings of isolation and to create avenues for inclusion with the community around the creek restoration project. She has been successful in bringing the creek ecology and WSU art students together in an ecoart exhibit in downtown Pullman held in September 2016. Plans for a future exhibit are in the works. The goal of Wakulich's project aims to create an ongoing dialogue and interaction between community groups and university students, as well as help students gain a better sense of connection to the City of Pullman and the ecology of the Palouse. The creek restoration project involves Federal, state, county and city agencies as well as WSU environmental science students, non-profit groups, and community volunteers. PCT has created a database of the groups and will promote community involvement.

#### Adopt a Stream

Pullman Civic Trust teamed up with VISTA volunteer coordinator Riley Sorensen and students from Spokane Falls Community College to complete our third and final 2017 Stream Cleanup in October.



### NEW BIKE RACK ON KOPPEL FARM TRAIL

Thanks to the family of Diane Smerdon, a new bike rack bearing the Trail's magpie logo was dedicated during the 2017 Koppel Farm Spring Fair. Honoring Diane's mother Ruth Pacyga, the rack memorializes her love for Pullman and the wish of her family to contribute to our trail system. Noting that her mother always wished she had learned to ride a bike, Diane is happy to support this fun, healthful activity. As the dedication ceremony concluded, a 6-year-old girl rode up and was the immediate first user of this bike rack.



Smerdon Family members: Nicholas Smith (grandson), Michael & dian Smerdon, Amy Smith (daughter) with Pacyga memorial bike rack.



First bike on the rack was ridden by Isabelle Van Kuiken.

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)