

May 14, 2007

Ferry County Board of Commissioners
Courthouse
Republic, WA 99166

RE: Non-motorized use of the future railroad trail

Dear Sirs:

We are writing in support of the non-motorized use of the future railroad trail. The trail would be a substantial benefit for Ferry County residents, and an attraction for visitors to come to our area; however these gains would be diminished or eliminated if the trail becomes designated for motorized use.

During many years with the US Forest Service, it was my responsibility to conduct the research for the development of recreation plans for National Forest lands. The research indicated the need to separate motorized users from hikers, horseback riders, and other non-motorized uses of the forest. Studies in WA and elsewhere showed that these uses were not compatible, and Forest District Rangers reported many conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users where separate areas were not designated.

A non-motorized trail will be a safe place for horseback riders, families on bicycles, students running for exercise, and older people hiking. Motorized vehicles will be incompatible with horses, walkers and bicyclists. A scenic non-motorized trail will be unique in this area and will attract individuals and groups from outside the area for running, horseback riding and bicycle tours. These visitors will provide spin-off opportunities for area businesses such as motels, restaurants and craftspeople. The opportunity for motorized uses is available on Forest Service lands and other areas throughout the state, and a motorized trail is unlikely to draw additional visitors looking for a unique experience such as the Ferry County Rail Trail.

Finally, out of consideration to the many property owners who have expressed their willingness or desire for the trail, it is important to designate the trail for non-motorized uses only. A trail next door with the noise and intrusion of motorized vehicles would severely intrude on their enjoyment of their private property.

Once again, we strongly support the completion of a non-motorized trail along the railroad corridor. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Burke and Ann E. Seiter