

Dear Editor,

The Ferry County Commissioners are doing their best to save our 28 mile long rail road corridor that, "Omnitrax", now has permission to abandon. The Surface Transportation Board in, "the other Washington", is allowing Omnitrax to remove the rails, ties, and switching equipment this spring. The, "ballast", or large rock beneath the track must remain undisturbed according to STB's ruling for a variety of reasons; one, because Ferry County was granted what's called a utilities/trail use condition to ensure the opportunity to retain the entire corridor for the counties economic benefit. What this means is the county may be able to retain the entire corridor for future reactivation, while in the meantime, public utilities (such as high-speed internet or sewer lines) could be installed. Also, a simple trail could be constructed, allowing everyone to benefit from this great resource while working toward those rails going back in. This has occurred elsewhere--it is possible!

As losing this economically essential infrastructure would be a disaster for Ferry County, a group has formed to support the commissioners efforts to save our rail corridor. We are calling ourselves "Ferry County Rail Trail Partners" and our website should be up by the time you read this: ferrycountyrailtrail.com. We will be adding items to it on a regular basis to further explain the process and hope to hear from those interested in this vital effort. In addition, we are asking all who support the, "rail banking", (briefly outlined above) of the Ferry County Rail corridor to please either email that support to: Commissioners@co.ferry.wa.us or send a letter to: Ferry County Commissioners 290 E. Tessie Ave Republic WA 99166

Melissa Rose Malo Wa.