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# Foreword

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Dear Trail Friends,

The Latah Trail, like countless other community projects worldwide, is all about the people-- people like you, interested in making their "home" a better place to live, getting to know and interact with their neighbor and perpetuating good health and a healthy environment. As the author Willa Cather wrote, "Happiness is being immersed in something greater than yourself." And so it is with the Latah Trail.

The Spokane and Palouse Railway Company sowed the seeds of this organization in 1890 through acquisition of right-of-way for railroad purposes from Moscow through Troy, Kendrick and Juliaetta to Arrow Junction on the Clearwater River. In 1984, Burlington Northern, the successor owner, formally abandoned railroad use.

A crisp, serene January ski tour through Bear Creek Canyon between Troy and Kendrick served as the motivation for several trail enthusiasts to preserve the 38-mile long right-of-way for public, recreational use. The Latah Trail Foundation (LTF) was then formed as an Idaho not-for-profit corporation in April 1998, for the purpose of promoting trail use in Latah County. LTF's seven directors held a public meeting in June 1998 to establish a volunteer base, conducted a petition drive to demonstrate community support, and began working with

Latah County officials to develop a plan to acquire and develop the right-of-way between Moscow and Troy. Right-of-way could not be acquired in a "rails to trails" conversion under Federal law because the railroad use had been abandoned so long ago. Instead, Latah County, with financial support from the Latah Trail Foundation, purchased the railroad's interest, which accounts for most of the right-of-way, and acquired the several remaining property interests directly from owners.

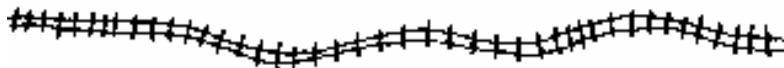


Numerous committees work tirelessly to address every aspect of the project. Latah County's Latah Trail Committee has hosted several landowner forums and continues to advise the Board of County Commissioners on land use and regulatory matters. A National Park Service grant helped local volunteers develop a trail concept plan and educate the public about the Latah Trail. LTF conducts fundraising and public awareness activities and actively supports Latah County in funding and planning efforts.

This document is a glimpse into the Latah Trail, a collective vision born from the efforts of people, like you, dedicated to making the "home" we love an even better place to live. Enjoy!

Ron Landeck, President  
Latah Trail foundation

Andy Grant, Director  
Latah County Parks & Recreation



# Frequently Asked Questions

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Throughout the planning process, members of the planning team and the general public raised several recurring questions. The following questions and answers provide insight into how various issues were addressed.

## **Why not leave the old railroad alone?**

Some people have suggested that the trail just be left alone and not "developed;" they enjoy walking on it as it is right now. They wonder why we can't just leave it that way.

In order for a non-motorized trail to be useful for a wide variety of users, issues of ownership, safety, and public access must be addressed. If the rail bed were just left alone, it is likely that neighboring landowners would treat it as they saw fit for the piece of ground adjacent to them. Some may choose to purchase it and convert the rail bed to a motorized or non-motorized trail past their property; others may convert it into other uses. By maintaining the rail bed as one unified trail between Moscow and Troy, a standard treatment for a trail can be established, and members of both communities will have access to this alternative transportation/recreation corridor. Trail users will be using County-owned land for non-motorized transportation, crossing safe bridges and staying off the highway. More people will reap the benefits.

## **Is this a "rail trail?"**

While this trail is being built upon a former rail bed, it is not considered a rail trail as defined by the federal law that allows for "rail banking." That federal statute requires that provisions for setting aside land for the trail occur within a short period of time after the rail line is

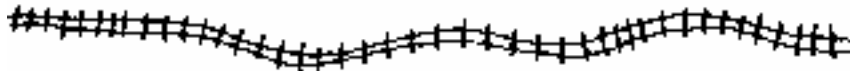
abandoned. Rail banking means that a railroad can come back and convert the trail back into a rail line. This was the case for the Bill Chipman-Palouse Trail. In contrast, the Latah Trail was abandoned in 1984. Trail discussions didn't start in earnest until 1997, about 13 years too late for rail banking protection. Therefore, Latah County purchased much of the rail bed from the railroad salvage company and acquired permanent easements for the remaining parcels from neighboring landowners.

## **Who is going to use the trail?**

The Latah Trail provides non-motorized users a safe route between Troy and Moscow. Many non-motorized users have already started using parts of the trail, including bicyclists, walkers, runners, in-line skaters, wheelchair users, strollers, and cross-country skiers. Equestrians and runners have been involved in trail planning with hopes that a parallel path along portions of the trail could include horses and provide a softer surface for runners. (See the discussion on surfacing below.) Motorized users will continue to use State Highway 8, and/or county roads.

## **What type of surface will be on the trail?**

When the tracks were removed, the railroad salvage company left a variety of surfaces along the route of the trail. Different users prefer different surfaces, but asphalt is a commonly used surface for bicyclists, walkers, runners, in-line skaters, wheelchairs, and strollers. As a surface to accommodate a variety of non-motorized transportation and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, asphalt is the most versatile, because it is firm, smooth, durable, affordable, and available.



### **Will there be a dirt or natural surfaced path?**

Although the most desired surface was asphalt, the community survey demonstrated that a sizeable minority of the community would like to see a second parallel path adjacent to the asphalt one. This path could potentially allow for trail running, equestrian use, and mountain biking. However, issues of parking (for horse trailers) and potential user conflicts still need to be worked out. After considerable discussion, the planning team decided that the best course of action would be to construct the asphalt trail and then hold some planning meetings and field trips to determine the feasibility of a dual path.

### **Who is paying for the trail?**

Major funding for this trail has been provided by the Idaho Transportation Department, with local match from Latah County and private contributions secured by the Latah Trail Foundation. Additional funds have been awarded through the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, with matching funds from the Latah Trail Foundation and the City of Troy.

The Idaho Transportation Department money is made available from the Federal Highway Administration for the purpose of improving non-motorized transportation. For this enhancement project, federal regulations required that the state of Idaho spend at least 0.25% (one quarter of one percent) of its budget on alternative transportation. Every year, through an application process, towns from Idaho have competed for these funds. (As of this writing, similar funding for future projects is uncertain.) If the Latah Trail had not received these funds, another community in Idaho would be using the funds for a different project.

Money from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is made available for non-motorized recreation purposes from fees collected by the department. County money comes from the County general fund.

The Latah Trail Foundation has raised over \$100,000 in private donations from the area. That money has been used for acquisition of right-of-way and matching funds for construction, but future donations will help pay for amenities such as rest areas, benches, drinking fountains, and trees. Our trails system is beginning to take form, but it needs your continued support.

### **When will the trail be built?**

The trail is being constructed in sections based on availability of funds. The City of Moscow recently paved the Paradise Path from Blaine to the beginning of the Latah Trail near Carmichael Road. Thanks to an Idaho State Parks Department grant, the first mile of the Latah Trail, beginning at Troy City Park, was paved in September 2002, and the second mile should be paved in September 2003. Paving the section from Moscow's city limits to Eastman Acres will begin in the summer of 2004. The final section, connecting the two ends of the Latah Trail, is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2005.

Our county officials deserve thanks for their efforts to keep the Latah Trail project on schedule. After the environmental study was approved, engineering for the right-of-way plan was completed, land was appraised, and rights-of-way were acquired from adjacent landowners.

### **How will the trail affect farming practices and private property issues?**

Historical approaches across the trail will be preserved so that farmers can easily access their fields on both sides of the trail. Farmers who apply pesticides to their crops will continue to abide by the current laws requiring a buffer zone.

Regulatory signage will alert trail users to trail boundaries and remind them of the importance of respecting private properties adjacent to the



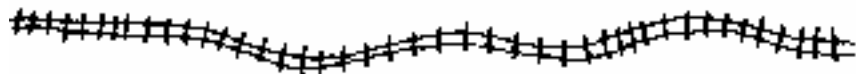
trail. Revegetation and vegetative screening with shrubs and trees will ensure that neighbors retain their privacy. In some areas, fencing may be considered. Permission is required to hunt or hike on private property. There will be no hunting or shooting on the trail itself.

**How can volunteers help?**

We continue to be moved by the enthusiasm of individuals, groups, and businesses that donate their time, energy, and resources. In spring 2002, thanks to a \$2,250 grant from Latah County's Community Forest Program, the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute organized a planting of 680 native trees and shrubs along the Latah Trail at Eastman Acres; volunteer groups included the University of Idaho's

Saturday of Service, WSU's Community Service Learning Center, and the Latah Trail Foundation.

In addition to plantings, volunteers assist the Latah Trail Foundation with planning and organizing fundraising events, staff the Latah Trail booth at the Moscow Farmer's Market on Saturdays, research grant opportunities, and help build community awareness about the Latah Trail. Volunteers created the Latah Trail Foundation web site <[www.latahtrailfoundation.org](http://www.latahtrailfoundation.org)> and have helped plan and design the trail. If you wish to volunteer, contact the Latah Trail Foundation at <[latahtrail@moscow.com](mailto:latahtrail@moscow.com)> or P.O. Box 9344, Moscow, Idaho 83843.



# Public Planning Process

## National Park Service Assistance

Community involvement in planning the Latah Trail has been emphasized throughout the design process. Before beginning project planning, Latah County applied for and received assistance from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program of the National Park Service in Seattle, WA. RTCA's primary role has been to facilitate a fair and open planning process actively involving the general public and key stakeholders (groups, people, and entities that have direct interests in the trail).



*Charette team discusses a draft design*

staff from the University of Idaho and Moscow High School, the Latah Trail Foundation, and other interested parties. This group acted as the primary planning body that worked to develop the concept plan. The planning team met monthly for over a year to

## Planning Team

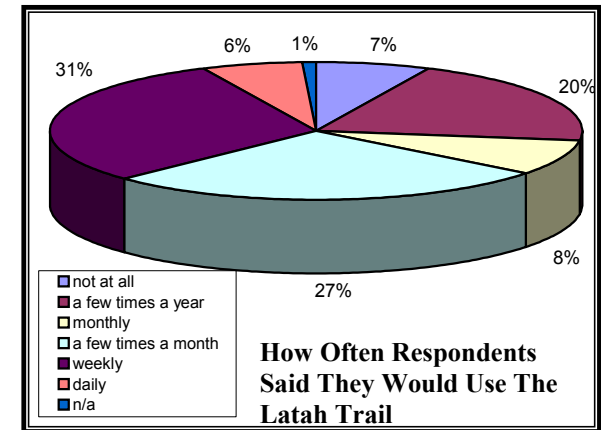
The first step taken toward developing the trail was the formation of a key stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the Cities of Moscow and Troy, adjacent land owners, prospective trail users, students and

help plan the trail. Decisions were based on public input from the survey and open house, direction from the County's Parks and Recreation Department on the feasibility of alternatives, and the planning team's firsthand knowledge of the trail corridor.

## Public Input

Throughout the planning process, newspaper articles and electronic updates kept community members informed and invited them to participate. An information-gathering

questionnaire was distributed through two area newspapers and at an open house held at the Moscow Farmers' Market. Information from over 250 questionnaires helped the team make more educated decisions. Many amenities that have been incorporated into the design of the trail were included because of the public's desires expressed through the survey. Some noteworthy results from the questionnaire include: 72% of respondents said they would use the trail one or more times a month; 93% of respondents said they would use the trail at least several times a year; mountain biking, walking, road cycling, cross country skiing, and running were the



top five activities listed by respondents as probable uses for the trail. In another study, University of Idaho students from the Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism conducted a user intercept survey along the Bill Chipman-Palouse Trail, a rail-trail project between Moscow and Pullman. That study provided additional insights to the needs and preferences of potential Latah Trail users.

In 2002, University of Idaho students in the Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism conducted an unsolicited study of perceived benefits of the Latah Trail. They began by interviewing 140 randomly selected members of the general public in the Moscow-Troy corridor to become familiar with attitudes, perceptions, and overall feelings about the trail. Based on analysis of those interviews, they developed a questionnaire and administered it to 199 randomly selected residents in the Moscow-Troy area. Ages of respondents ranged from 17 to 90 years, with an average of 33.5 years. Fifty-two percent were male and 48% were female. 89% of respondents agreed that, by getting bicyclists off the highway, the Latah Trail would create a safer environment for people who drive on the Troy-Moscow highway. For a full report of this study, visit the Latah Trail Foundation Web site <[www.latahtrailfoundation.org](http://www.latahtrailfoundation.org)>.

## Inventory

The planning team conducted an intensive inventory of the rail corridor. The inventory consisted of researching the cultural and historical resources of the area, an assessment of the trail's natural resources, and a section by section analysis by a University of Idaho (UI) Landscape Architecture class.



*Open house at the Farmers' Market*

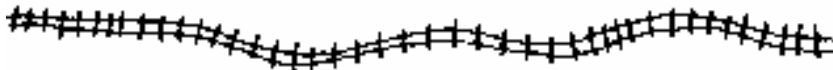
## Open House

The first open house was hosted at the Moscow Farmers' Market, frequented by people representing diverse segments of the community. Over 250 people stopped by the open house and looked at results from the inventory and analysis, filled out surveys, voted for one of several trail logos created by graphic

design students from the UI, asked questions, received information about the trail and the design process, and were able to engage in discussions with members from the trail planning team.

## Site Visits

After the inventory and public input phases of the planning process, the planning team conducted several organized trail hikes designed to elicit recommendations on a site by site basis. Four hikes took place over a period of two months, with meetings following to discuss recommendations. Trail access points, rest stops, trail



crossings, and other important features for the Latah Trail were discussed. The team created a preliminary concept map with design recommendations.

### **Design Charette**

Graphic designs and visual renderings of trailheads, rest-stops, trail crossings, bridges, vegetative screening and other areas needing special design consideration were generated in an intensive design

workshop, or *charette*. The charette partnered landscape architects, park planners, and artists from UI and the professional community with members of the trail planning team. Sites to receive design attention were selected from recommendations generated through the planning team site visits. Designs were developed to incorporate input from the community survey, questionnaires and open house.



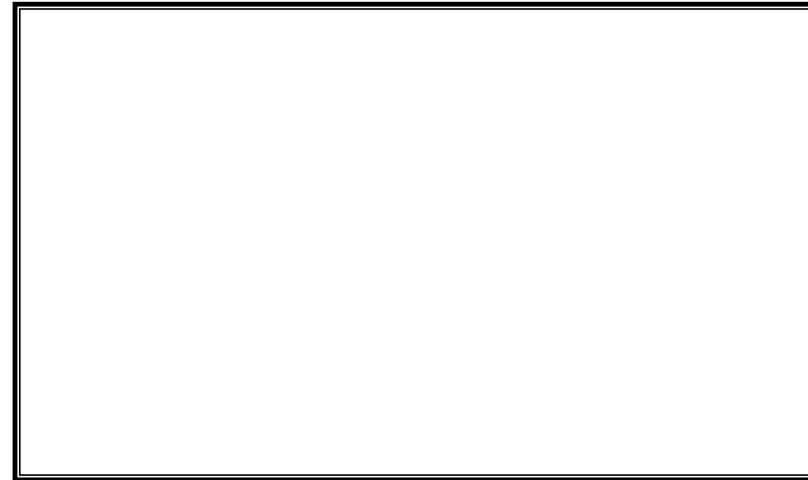
# Historical & Cultural Resources

## Pre-Settlement History

By the time American and European settlers first moved westward to the Palouse, Native Americans sparsely populated the area through which the Latah Trail winds. It is believed that the Nez Perce Indians camped near what is now the Elks Golf Course to harvest camas roots. In accordance with the rhythm of the seasons, moving south to the valley of the Clearwater River in the winter and north to the mountains surrounding Lake Coeur d'Alene in the fall, the Nez Perce followed the thousand-year-old Great Nez Perce Trail, starting near what is now Lapwai. The Great Nez Perce Trail cut through the southeastern edge of Latah County near Tomer Butte, then turned north toward Coeur d'Alene and Spokane.

In 1937, Cornelius J. Brosnan, a professor of History at the University of Idaho, led an expedition of students to discover evidence of the ancient trails used by the Nez Perce, who referred to the area as "Tatkinmah," the place of the young or spotted deer. He concluded that the Nez Perce followed two primary trails through the area: the Nez Perce Trail (also known as Red Wolf Trail, Black Hawk Trail, or Stevens Trail) and the Great Nez Perce Trail. In 1938, a group of citizens known as the Worthwhile Club erected a monument at the intersection of these two trails. The monument, a plaque affixed to a large boulder on top of a block of concrete, still exists and may be found at the junction of Lenville and Mill Roads.

In 1855, Issac Stevens, governor of the Territory of Washington, explored the watershed of the Palouse River as a possible railroad route over the Bitterroot Mountains. Stevens



*Early Combine. Moscow*

was not the first white man in the area; he was preceded by

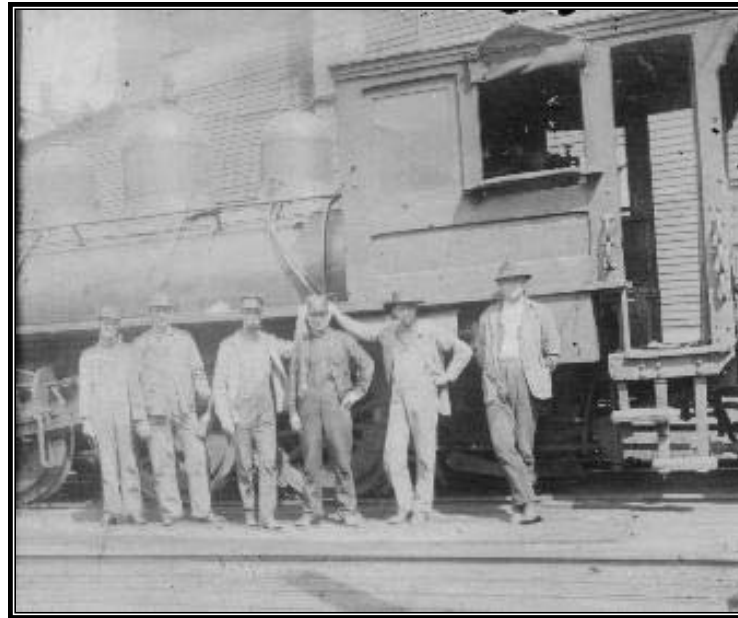
trappers of the North West Company as early as 1810 and by missionaries Father Joseph Cataldo and Reverend Henry Spalding, around 1830. In the late 1860's, gold miners prospected the Hoodoo mining district in the northeastern part of Latah County, and although it is reported that over a million dollars worth of gold was taken from the Hoodoos during the 1880s, another sort of gold attracted a different sort of settler to the area in the late 1870's and early 1880's.

Spurred by the Homestead Act of 1864, homesteaders were attracted by Latah County's vast fields of grassland and stands of timber. The area's first permanent white settlers were brothers Asbury and Noah Lieuallen who arrived in 1871 from the Walla Walla, Washington area. The brothers homesteaded



in the area north of what is now the Elks Golf Course on State Highway 8 just east of Moscow. J. Wesley Seat was the first

person to homestead in the heavily forested northeastern part of Latah County, near what is now Troy. Although the first homesteaders practiced subsistence farming, growing vegetables, fruit and animals for their own use, around 1877, farmers discovered that the rich loess soil of the steep Palouse hills produced bumper crops, especially wheat. Extension of rail service to the area in the late 1880's proved to be of particular significance to the farmers. The area's first rail link came via the tracks of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company in 1885. The Northern Pacific arrived in 1890, linking the area to Spokane. By 1897, the Northern Pacific had built another line, which ran to Troy, then southeast into the Potlatch Canyon, and on to Kendrick. The community of Joel was formed in 1890, when the Northern Pacific extended its line eastward from Moscow and bypassed the established community of Cornwall because it lacked the "running start" needed to climb the steep grade to Troy.



Moscow merchant William Kaufmann donated the land once the railroad agreed to name the station after his son, Joel. The Northern Pacific also placed a depot in the community of Howell, approximately four miles northeast from Joel. In the latter half of the twentieth century, freight and passenger rail service gradually declined on lines throughout the nation. The Northern Pacific discontinued passenger service in 1966 and freight service in 1986.

During the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as service to the area's farmers and loggers became increasingly centralized in Moscow, several small, once thriving communities in Latah County fell upon hard times. Joel, Cornwall, and Howell, communities along the rail line, have all but disappeared, and Troy, at the easternmost end of the Trail, serves as a bedroom community to Moscow. The property along the Trail is now a mixture of large family farms and "hobby farms," and several pockets of rural residential development have emerged over the past twenty years. The area immediately east of Moscow is in transition, moving away from agricultural to more urban uses.