



CASCADE RAIL FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 462
South Cle Elum, WA 98943



Remembering the Milwaukee Road in Washington
www.milwelectric.org

March 31, 2016

Randy Kline, Parks Planner
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
P.O. Box 42650
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Mr. Kline:

Cascade Rail Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the history of the Milwaukee Road railroad in Washington State. Our primary activities include developing and operating the South Cle Elum Rail Yard in cooperation with Washington State Parks, preserving and providing access to archival materials related to the Milwaukee Road in Washington, and engaging people in the history of the railroad here through public outreach.

Between our overall mission of sustaining the history of the Milwaukee Road here in Washington and our work with State Parks to develop and operate the South Cle Elum Rail Yard, we have a long standing interest and involvement in the development of the John Wayne Pioneer Trail. We are pleased to be participating as a member of the Advisory Committee supporting the current planning process for the trail and have some comments for consideration by Washington State Parks.

Our organization wholeheartedly supports the development of the John Wayne Pioneer Trail as a publicly accessible, contiguous route between Cedar Falls and the Idaho state line, using as much of the former Milwaukee Road rail bed as possible. We strongly support actions that increase the use and enjoyment of the trail. We also would like to see State Parks receive the resources necessary to be a good neighbor to adjacent property owners along the length of the trail.

Public access to the eastern portion of the trail should be managed in the same manner as the segment west of the Columbia River. Steps should be taken to remove the requirement for use permit.

Detours from the rail bed should be systematically removed or reduced in length, whether this means opening existing bridges for public use or real estate transactions (acquiring right of way or easements).

State Parks should establish prioritize these projects, accounting for the projected cost and benefit of each project.

To increase use of the trail, Washington State Parks should also develop and implement projects to create connections with other trails either by itself or in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies. A connection with the Columbia Plateau Trail should be a priority.

Marketing the trail to potential users would be aided by a consistent name and brand development for the whole corridor between Cedar Falls and Idaho. If there is any change to the name of the trail, we strongly encourage that the new name make it more obvious that the trail was once a railroad. For instance, a minor tweak to the current name could be “John Wayne Pioneer Rail Trail”.

As development of the John Wayne Pioneer Trail continues, Cascade Rail Foundation stands ready to assist Washington State Parks with the historic interpretation of the trail. We have extensive collections of photos and other documentation available to support these efforts and a network of knowledgeable supporters willing to contribute their expertise and material from their private collections.

We are also willing to support private fundraising efforts that can leverage limited state funds for the work needed to allow the trail to reach its full potential as a recreational and cultural resource for the citizens of Washington and guests from elsewhere.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul Krueger
Secretary
Cascade Rail Foundation

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