

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
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BUILDING A TRAIL ALONG THE CHELATCHIE PRAIRIE RAIL LINE

Clark county, Washington purchased the Chelatchie Prairie road with multiple uses in mind. The vision of the Chinook Trail as shown in the Washington state trails plan follows the route of the Chelatchie Prairie road, and the original Clark county trails plan indicated a trail alongside the rail line. The trail would extend from Vancouver to Yacolt, a distance of some 30 miles.

There is very rapid growth, both residential and industrial, along the rail corridor, and also a very rapidly accelerating population growth pattern established in Clark county, with a number of communities spreading along the rail corridor.

Several schools and communities look forward to the possibility of utilizing the rail corridor for recreational activities. Vancouver and Clark county have received a million dollar grant promoting wellness, and health fitness providers list exercise as a number one component of maintaining a healthy body. Trails near homes provide an inexpensive method of maintaining physical vigor.

Economic development in Clark county is a vital part of planning for the future, and recent designation as a National Recreation Trail of the completed 29 miles of the Chinook Trail will bring users to the county and provide an economic boost to the local economy. Completing the Chelatchie Prairie Trail for its entire length will assist in connecting the Columbia River lowlands with the foothills of the Cascades.

Funding is available to develop alternative transportation corridors such as the proposed Chelatchie Prairie Trail, connecting Yacolt, Battleground, and Vancouver, as well as a number of business and industrial entities. Discovery Trail, Ellen Davis Trail, and Bells Mountain Trail on either side of the proposed Chelatchie Prairie Trail are already completed as part of the Chinook Trail.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs endorses the concept of a trail following the Chelatchie Prairie railroad corridor and urges its prompt completion. The Federation recommends incorporating the vision of the Chinook Trail in developing the BIKE, HIKE, AND EQUESTRIAN option in the Clark county trail master plan.