

Lower Clark Fork Trail System

Concept Plan

June, 2003



The Avista Corporation prepared this report



In cooperation with the lower Clark Fork Trail Advisory Committee

*Prepared with assistance from the
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
of the National Park Service.*



The Rivers and Trails mission is to advocate and assist community based conservation action. We build and support partnerships that conserve natural and cultural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and contribute to economic and social well being.

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INTRODUCTION.....	1
THE PLAN	1
HOW THE PLAN CAME ABOUT	1
THE PLANNING PROCESS	1
PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION	3
VISION AND GOALS.....	5
VISION FOR THE SYSTEM OF TRAILS	5
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:	5
RESOURCES IN THE CORRIDOR	7
GENERAL SETTING.....	7
NATURAL RESOURCES	8
<i>Geology</i>	8
<i>Fish Community</i>	8
<i>Forest Vegetation</i>	10
<i>Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants</i>	10
<i>Wildlife</i>	10
<i>Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Fish and Wildlife</i>	11
Bull Trout	11
Bald Eagle	11
Peregrine Falcon	12
Grizzly Bear.....	12
Gray Wolf.....	12
<i>Other Species of Special Concern</i>	12
Westslope Cutthroat Trout.....	12
Canada Lynx.....	12
Common Loon.....	12
Harlequin Duck.....	13
<i>Wetlands</i>	13
AESTHETIC RESOURCES	13
CULTURAL RESOURCES	14
<i>Cultural History</i>	15
LAND USE.....	15
RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	16
<i>Use Estimates</i>	20
<i>Future Demand and Use</i>	20
SOCIOECONOMIC SETTING	21
<i>Population</i>	21
<i>Employment</i>	22
<i>Income</i>	22
TRAIL GUIDELINES.....	23
GENERAL GUIDELINES.....	23
<i>Type of Use</i>	23
<i>Surfacing</i>	23
<i>Linkage</i>	23
<i>Trailheads and Furnishings</i>	24
Trailheads	24
Trail Furnishings.....	24
<i>Signage</i>	24
<i>Safety</i>	25
<i>Accessibility</i>	25

<i>Liability</i>	26
<i>Resource Management</i>	26
TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES	27
OVERALL CONCEPT	27
TRAIL DESIGN TYPES AND PROPOSED TRAIL LOCATIONS.....	27
<i>Pedestrian Linkage/Transportation Trails</i>	27
1) <u>Thompson Falls to Birdland Bay Bridge via Blue Slide</u>	28
2) <u>Thompson Falls Community Trail</u>	31
3) <u>Trout Creek Community Trail</u>	31
4) <u>Centennial Park to Pilgrim Creek</u>	33
5) <u>Centennial Park to Triangle Pond</u>	33
6) <u>Heron Community-Wide Trail</u>	37
7) <u>Clark Fork to Clark Fork Road</u>	39
8) <u>Highway 200 Bike Path</u>	41
<i>Designated Routes</i>	45
1) <u>Connections to U.S.F.S. Points of Interest</u>	46
2) <u>Heron to Quinn’s Cut</u>	46
3) <u>Heron – Lower River Road Loop</u>	46
4) <u>Clark Fork to the Johnson Creek Recreation Area</u>	46
Potential Partners	47
5) <u>County Road Bike Route</u>	47
<i>Recreational Trails</i>	53
1) <u>PPL Park to the Clark Fork River Loop</u>	55
2) <u>Noxon to Stevens Creek</u>	57
3) <u>University of Idaho to Antelope Lake</u>	59
4) <u>Snowmobile Opportunity</u>	61
5) <u>Big Eddy</u>	61
6) <u>Clark Fork Access Site</u>	61
7) <u>Vermilion Creek Road Horseback Riding Staging Area</u>	63
8) <u>Marten Creek Bay Horseback Riding Staging Area</u>	63
9) <u>Finley Flats Nature Trail</u>	63
10) <u>Bull River Nature Trail</u>	67
11) <u>Cabinet-Noxon Water Trail</u>	67
12) <u>Cabinet Gorge Dam to Johnson Creek Water Trail</u>	67
NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.....	69
<i>Resource Protection</i>	69
<i>Environmental Review and Permitting</i>	69
Wetlands.....	71
Threatened and Endangered Species.....	72
Water Resources (Water Quality and Quantity)	72
Archaeology/Historic Preservation.....	72
MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION	74
MANAGEMENT.....	74
MAINTENANCE	74
LAW ENFORCEMENT/EMERGENCY RESPONSE	75
GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY	75
PET POLICY.....	75
VOLUNTEERS	76
INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION	77
INTERPRETIVE THEMES.....	77
<i>Wildlife, Plants and Habitat</i>	77
<i>Human History and Culture</i>	77
<i>Geology and Hydrology</i>	78
<i>Current Land Use: Industrial, Recreation, and Economic Activity</i>	78
INTERPRETIVE METHODS	78
<i>Site Selection</i>	78

<i>Signs and Exhibits</i>	79
<i>Brochures</i>	79
<i>Guided Walks and Tours</i>	79
<i>Websites</i>	80
<i>Self-Guided Interpretive Loop Trails</i>	80
<i>Information Kiosks</i>	80
<i>K-12 Curriculum Guides</i>	80
NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION	81
NEXT STEPS	81
<i>Future Planning Steps</i>	81
IMPLEMENTATION/PRIORITIZATION	81
<i>Trail Priorities</i>	82
Near Term Projects:.....	82
Mid Term Projects:.....	82
Long Term Project.....	83
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	85
FUNDING SOURCES	85
<i>Federal</i>	85
TEA-21	85
EPA Environmental Education Grants	86
Natural Resources Conservation Service	86
Bureau of Land Management	87
U.S. Forest Service	87
<i>State</i>	88
Land and Water Conservation Fund	88
Montana State Snowmobiles Program	88
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Foundation	88
Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL)	88
<i>Private Businesses and Foundations</i>	89
<i>In-Kind Contributions</i>	90
<i>Non-Monetary Sources of Assistance</i>	90
Volunteers.....	90
Youth Conservation Corps.....	90
<i>Community Fundraising and Donations</i>	90
Fundraising	90
Donations.....	91
INFORMATION SOURCES	91
APPENDIX I: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS	1
OPEN HOUSES IN JUNE 2002	1
PUBLIC MEETINGS IN MARCH 2003	4
APPENDIX II: LIABILITY LAWS	1
IDAHO RECREATIONAL USE STATUTE.....	1
MONTANA RECREATIONAL USE STATUTE	3
APPENDIX III – SAMPLE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT	1

Maps

Map1: Thompson Falls Map 29

Map 2: Trout Creek Area Map 32

Map 3: Noxon Area Map 33

Map 4: Heron 35

Map 5: Clark Fork.....36

Map 6:Overall Corridor-Wide Map 40-41

INTRODUCTION

The Plan

This document presents a concept for the development and management of a system of trails in the lower Clark Fork from Thompson Falls, Montana to Clark Fork, Idaho. It describes the trail segments that make up this system and it explains the planning process used to develop the vision for this trail system. It also portrays the natural and cultural resources in the corridor, trail and facilities design guidelines, operation and management concepts, interpretation and education ideas, funding opportunities, and implementation strategies.

Key components of the plan include a description of the:

- § natural and cultural resources in the corridor;
- § vision and goals for the trail system;
- § the core of the concept including segment descriptions, design considerations, type of proposed use, and ideas for management; and
- § implementation recommendations including prioritization and phasing of development and identification of next steps.

How the Plan Came About

The idea for a trail project originated as part of the consultation process among Avista Corporation and 26 organizations during a four-year planning process to collaboratively develop the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement as part of the relicensing of two hydroelectric projects on the lower Clark Fork River. Finalized in 1999, and incorporated into the Federal Energy Regulatory License in 2001, the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement contains a comprehensive plan for the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish, water quality, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, aesthetic and cultural resources in the lower Clark Fork River. The Clark Fork Settlement Agreement calls for the implementation of the Recreation Resource Management Plan, which is to be used by the stakeholders to guide recreation management and development along the lower Clark Fork corridor into the future. One item identified in the Recreation Resource Management Plan was the need for a trail feasibility study to look at opportunities for trails and trail improvements along the Clark Fork from Thompson Falls, Montana to Clark Fork, Idaho.

The Planning Process

To help facilitate the process of developing a trail feasibility plan, Avista applied for planning assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program of the National Park Service. The grant was approved and technical planning assistance was provided from 2001 to 2003.

In 2001, the Avista Corporation recruited volunteers to participate in the planning process through an advisory committee. The advisory committee was formed to provide advice to the planning team and serve as a link between the community and Avista.

Advisory Committee members included residents; community advocates; government agencies; business owners; homeowner associations; and school districts (see inside front cover for a complete list of the members).

The planning process began with developing a vision for the lower Clark Fork Trail System during the first meeting of the Advisory Committee in early 2002. Planning continued with reviewing the natural and cultural resources in the area and research on how other trails in the country have been developed and managed. During regular meetings, the Advisory Committee brainstormed ideas for trail design guidelines, conceptual trail routes, management and operation ideas, and interpretation and education themes and methods. These ideas began to give shape to a shared vision for the system of trails concept.



Figure 1: The advisory committee brainstorming ideas for trail concepts and guidelines at the April 2002 meeting.



Figure 2: Brian Burky, Avista, discussing trail opportunities with community members at the June 2002 public meetings in Clark Fork.

Two public meetings/open houses were held in June 2002 (one in Thompson Falls, Montana and one in Clark Fork, Idaho) to solicit input and participation from residents in the corridor. The key preliminary concepts of the system of trails were displayed in poster format for citizens to read and a map of the corridor was displayed for citizens to identify their thoughts on trail opportunities. Approximately seventy people attended these meetings (see Appendix I for a

summary of comments received at these meetings).

Armed with the concepts developed by the Advisory Committee and the input received from the public meetings, the planning team (Avista and RTCA) initiated fieldwork in the summer of 2002 to identify potential trail routes. An Advisory Committee member and a couple of community members from Heron joined the planning team in the field during part of the week. Fieldwork involved driving and walking the corridor looking for opportunities and connections to other trails, recreation areas, and communities. Ideas for trail opportunities emerged and a preliminary list of trail segments was prepared. Upon approval of the preliminary list of opportunities by the Advisory Committee, the final task of writing a plan began. The draft plan was released for public review in March 2003. Two public meetings were held (one in Thompson Falls and another in Heron) to share the results of the draft plan and receive feedback from the communities in the lower Clark Valley. Approximately eighty people attended these meetings. The draft document was also available for review during

the forty-five days at the Avista's Noxon Resource Office, Thompson Falls Library and the Sanders County Courthouse. Folks were given approximately six weeks to review and comment on the draft. Overall, the document was well-received (see Appendix I for a summary of the comments received on the draft document).



Figure 3: Brian Burky giving a presentation on the draft plan at the March 2003 open house in Heron.

Public Outreach and Participation

Gathering support and involvement from residents of the lower Clark Fork was necessary to develop a plan that citizens would support and to ensure the success of the implementation phase. The advisory committee played a key role in providing community input into the planning process. Also, as mentioned above, two public forums were held in June 2002 to gather input on the trail system concept. Newsletters were prepared and distributed at key points in the planning process to keep a wider audience of residents informed and engaged in the process. In addition, the news media was invited to all of the work sessions and was continually kept informed throughout the planning process. Further, another set of public meetings was held in the March 2003 after the draft concept plan was released. And a public celebration was planned in June 2003 to celebrate the release of the final plan.

VISION AND GOALS

Vision for the System of Trails

The lower Clark Fork trail system will become a quality regional resource that enriches the lives of residents and visitors and fosters a sense of community. This system of recreational trails allows people to experience the rural and rustic environment, while preserving the corridor for the next generation's enjoyment.

The trail system and support facilities:

- § conserve and promote the natural environment
- § are designed for convenience, accessibility, and sustainability
- § contribute to the health and wellness of residents, the quality of life, and economy of the lower Clark Fork
- § provide an alternative transportation route for walkers, bicyclists, and other users; connect to Forest Service trails; and when feasible utilize abandoned railroads
- § provide an opportunity for people to learn about the environment and interpret the history of the area
- § are the result of a shared effort and managed through partnerships with landowners, Avista, Forest Service, local governments, and volunteers
- § are designed to recognize and accommodate private property ownership and rights

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Expand recreation, alternative transportation, and health enhancement opportunities to residents and visitors of the lower Clark Fork area.

Objectives:

- § Provide close to home recreation trails to promote health and wellness and quality of life near the rural communities in the lower Clark Fork valley (Thompson Falls, Trout Creek, Noxon, Heron, Clark Fork)
- § Promote a continuous bicycle route between Thompson Falls and Clark Fork for alternative transportation and recreation opportunities.

Goal 2: Provide trail opportunities for a diverse set of user groups.

Objectives:

- § Develop multipurpose trails that serve non-motorized users including hikers, runners, bicyclists, roller bladers, and horseback riders
- § Provide opportunities for snowmobilers where appropriate
- § Provide ADA accessible trails where appropriate

Goal 3: Recognize and accommodate private landownership

Objectives:

- § Develop trails along Avista and public-owned lands in areas that will not interfere with adjacent landowners.

Goal 4: Provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Objectives:

- § Plan and develop interpretive/education trails, as part of the system of trails that utilize a variety of themes and methods.
- § Create an “outdoor classroom” coordinated with local school officials

Goal 5: Develop public stewardship for the trail system.

Objectives:

- § Protect sensitive lands and resources
- § Promote stewardship of the trail and natural resources through educational and interpretative opportunities
- § Establish a volunteer program for trail maintenance, management, and construction to increase personal ownership of the trail system
- § Seek partnerships with the Forest Service, local and State governments, and landowners.
- § Seek individual, corporate, and government sponsors through grants to help with the cost of implementation

RESOURCES IN THE CORRIDOR

General Setting

The Clark Fork Projects are located in the Rocky Mountains of Idaho and Montana in an area of rugged topography between the Cabinet Mountains to the north and the Bitterroot Range to the south. These ranges are oriented in a generally northwest to southeast direction, and elevations range from 2,331 feet at Noxon Rapids Dam and 2,175 feet at Cabinet Gorge Dam to peaks exceeding 8000 feet within the surrounding mountains.

The region has a continental climate that is strongly influenced by moist air masses that move through from the Pacific Ocean. These conditions produce relatively abundant rainfall and snow, mild winter temperatures, and generally humid, cloudy conditions (Schassberger and Shelly 1990). This maritime/continental regime is also responsible for occasional extended cold winter periods and several hot summer days. The majority of precipitation occurs as snow and rain from November through January and average annual precipitation is 22.97 inches near Thompson Falls, Montana, and 33.86 inches downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam.

Vegetation in the region is strongly influenced by the maritime/continental weather patterns. Both Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain floral types occur in the area (Daubenmire 1956, Dorn 1984). Forests are dominated by conifers and show zonation patterns in response to elevational and moisture gradients that are typical of the northern Rocky Mountains (Pfister *et al.* 1977). Drier portions of the project area are typically forested with ponderosa pine, whereas more mesic, habitat with a moderate amount of moisture, sites are dominated by Douglas-fir, grand fir, spruce, western hemlock, or western red-cedar. Riparian areas are frequently vegetated by species more typically associated with the Pacific Northwest floral type, such as black cottonwood (DeBell 1980).

Cabinet Gorge Dam was completed in 1952 and creates a 3,200-surface-acre reservoir that has a maximum known depth of 121 feet. The reservoir is approximately 20 miles long and extends into the Noxon Rapids Dam tailrace. Downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam, the Clark Fork River flows approximately nine miles before entering the Clark Fork Delta and Lake Pend Oreille, a large, deep (1,100 feet) lake with water surface levels partially controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (COE) Albeni Falls Project. Albeni Falls can influence the water surface elevation of Lake Pend Oreille by 12.3 feet (BPA 1988).

Washington Water Power (WWP), predecessor of Avista Corp. completed construction of Noxon Rapids Dam in 1959. It creates a 7,940-surface-acre reservoir with a maximum known depth of 200 feet. The reservoir is approximately 38 miles long and extends upstream to PPL Montana's Thompson Falls Dam, which was constructed in 1916.



Figure 4: View of Noxon Dam

The region is rural and sparsely populated and the largest town, Thompson Falls, has a population of about 1,600. Smaller communities of Noxon, Heron, and Trout Creek are located along the reservoirs. Downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam is the town of Clark Fork, Idaho, and the resort community of Sandpoint, Idaho, on Lake Pend Oreille.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages much of the mountainous land surrounding the projects for multiple uses. The remaining lands are characterized by light rural, residential, and agricultural development interspersed among tracts of undeveloped land. Lake-front development is limited by a nearly continuous buffer of Avista Corp. owned lands around the reservoirs, with a number of public-use recreation areas available along both reservoirs. Recreation facilities include USFS campground and day-use areas, Thompson Falls State Park, state and municipally-operated day-use facilities, private resorts and campgrounds, and day-use areas maintained by Avista Corp.

Natural Resources

Geology

The geologic formations and soil series that are observed in the Clark Fork River today are predominantly the result of glacial forces that occurred 12,000 to 20,000 years ago. A lobe of glacial ice advanced down the Purcell Trench in northern Idaho during this time and blocked the Clark Fork River, forming Glacial Lake Missoula. At its maximum advance, the dam was over 2,000 feet high and the lake covered an area of 3,000 square miles. Glacial Lake Missoula drained several times and is believed to have reached a maximum discharge of around 750,000,000 cfs, or about 20 times the flow of all the rivers on earth today (ND&T 1994a).

The soils present in the project area have developed on parent material deposited by glacial activity (lacustrine deposits). Deep riverine or alluvial deposits were made by river flows associated with repeated breaching of the Glacial Lake Missoula ice dam. This resulted in

relatively flat terraces adjacent to the excised river channel (ND&T 1994a).



Figure 5: The Blue Slide, a unique geologic feature in the lower Clark Fork valley.

Bedrock is visible along portions of the reservoirs and consists primarily of bands of metamorphosed sedimentary shale and mudstone. In some areas, such as Blue Slide on Noxon Reservoir, the river bank displays interesting patterns of this material. Other interesting features include Cabinet Gorge, rock formations and cliffs near Rock Island (located just upstream of Noxon Rapids Dam) and at Flat Iron Ridge near the upstream limit of Noxon Reservoir.

Fish Community

At least twenty-nine fish species, representing nine families and 21 genera, are found in the project reservoirs, the Clark Fork River between Cabinet Gorge Dam and Lake Pend Oreille, and the tributaries that enter the project reservoirs. The most common species are pumpkinseed sunfish, yellow perch, northern pikeminnow, peamouth, redbside shiner, and largescale sucker.

Salmonid populations in both reservoirs are small and self-sustaining consisting of westslope cutthroat, rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout, bull trout, lake whitefish and mountain whitefish. The native salmonids are westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout and mountain whitefish. Populations of salmonids in the reservoir tributaries are represented primarily by westslope cutthroat trout, brook trout and mountain whitefish. Bull trout numbers are very limited in the tributaries with the resident life form predominating.

Many factors are responsible for declines of native trout, including the impact of land development on habitat, competition with introduced salmonid and non-salmonid fishes, hybridization with introduced salmonids, angler harvest and hydro development. Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge dams block the historic migratory corridor and have isolated populations, likely selecting against adfluvial (fish that live in a lake environment and migrate to riverine habitats to spawn) life histories in bull trout and cutthroat (WWP 1996b).

In recognition of the habitat available, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Park's (MFWP) current fish management (1980 to present) focuses more on the enhancement of cool and warm water species, mainly largemouth and smallmouth bass (Huston 1985). Largemouth bass were present in the river when Cabinet Gorge Dam was built. Smallmouth bass were introduced in 1982. Both largemouth bass and smallmouth bass fisheries have responded very well in Noxon Reservoir. In response to the current quality of the bass fishery, the 1994 and 1997 Western Regional B.A.S.S. Tournaments have been held at Noxon Reservoir.



Figure 6: Fisherman with a bass on Noxon Reservoir.

In recent years a fishery for brown trout has also developed in the mouth of Pilgrim Creek during spring and early summer, with catches of trophy fish (greater than 5 lbs.) not uncommon (T. Swant, Avista Corp., personal communication). Yellow perch are also harvested from the reservoirs by some individuals, as are rainbow and cutthroat trout. A low intensity fishery for northern pike is also known to occur.

As with the reservoirs, both warmwater and coldwater sport fish are found in the Clark Fork River between Cabinet Gorge Dam and Lake Pend Oreille. Fishing opportunities vary between the more riverine reaches near the dam and the slower-moving waters in the vicinity of the Clark Fork Delta. Coldwater species, including kokanee, rainbow trout, brown trout, bull trout, and westslope cutthroat, are more common in the riverine reaches, whereas warmwater species such as yellow perch and largemouth bass are more abundant in the Delta region (WWP 1995c). Anglers from outside the region are almost exclusively attracted to the area by the popular salmonid fishery in Lake Pend Oreille, and most fishing in the Clark Fork River is by local anglers.

Avista has studied the fish resources in the lower Clark Fork River tributaries as part of a Cooperative Challenge Cost Share Project with the USFS and MFWP (WWP 1996b). These tributaries typically have a coldwater fish community consisting of cutthroat trout (westslope and westslope hybrids), brook trout, brown trout, and bull trout, and offer a wide range of angling opportunities.

In Montana, management of the tributaries for both reservoirs emphasizes maintenance or enhancement of native salmonids, where possible.

Forest Vegetation

Northwestern Montana, with six potential forest communities, is the most diversely forested area in the state (Pfister *et al.* 1977) and extensive coniferous forests cover most of the mountains up to subalpine elevations. Composition of the forests varies depending on elevation, aspect, soils, and other site characteristics.

In general, two climax communities dominate along the project impoundments and river sections: western hemlock/western red-cedar in the moister, northwestern portion, and Douglas-fir throughout the remainder. Most forest stands, however, are not at climax because of disturbances from residential and agricultural development, timber harvesting, and episodic fires. Rather, most stands are in various stages of succession and contain a mixture of conifers, typically with no clear dominant. Some species that occur in the area include Douglas-fir, grand fir, western larch, lodgepole pine, western white pine, and ponderosa pine. Other species, such as western hemlock, western red-cedar, and Engelmann spruce, are restricted to moister sites found at the northwestern end of the project area (ND&T 1994c). Hardwood stands are uncommon and typically only occur on floodplains along the project reservoirs and river sections. Black cottonwood and quaking aspen dominate in these areas. Although uncommon, these riparian forests represent important wildlife habitat.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants

No Federally-listed threatened or endangered plants were found in the project area during surveys conducted by WWP in 1993 and 1994, but two rare plant taxa—pyramid spiraea and twin clover were found. Six pyramid spiraea (a hybrid) populations and 12 twin clover populations were found in the project area, all within Montana. The spiraea hybrid is known to be rare, but is not officially listed in Idaho or Montana. The twin clover is officially listed by the Montana Natural Heritage Program as an S1 species (five or fewer occurrences).

Wildlife

Surveys conducted between 1993 and 1996 documented a wide variety of wildlife species living in the area:

21 species of butterflies

6 species of amphibians

4 species of reptiles

107 species of breeding songbirds

54 waterbird species (loons, grebes, ducks, shorebirds, and gulls)

10 species of raptors (eagles, osprey, vultures, hawks, and owls)



Figure 7: Osprey nest near Noxon Dam.

28 species of mammals

Principal game species in the vicinity of the projects include elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, black bear, waterfowl, ruffed grouse, and blue grouse. Waterfowl hunting is very popular downstream from Cabinet Gorge Dam and over the last four years estimated hunter days on the opening weekend alone exceed 100 hunter days (IDFG, personal communication). Big game hunting, primarily for elk and deer, is also a popular form of hunting in the project area. Hunting provides important economic benefits to local businesses, guides, and outfitters.

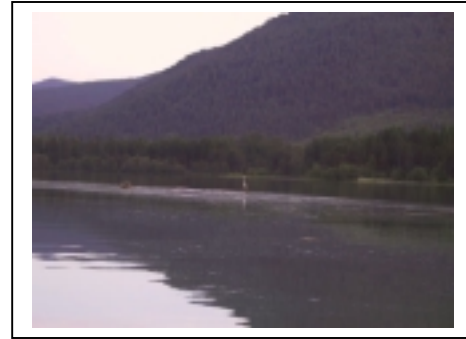


Figure 8: Blue Heron on Noxon Reservoir.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Fish and Wildlife

Rare, threatened, and endangered fish and wildlife species include those listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), USFS listings, and State of Idaho and Montana listings.

Four wildlife species and one fish species—bald eagles, peregrine falcons, grizzly bears, gray wolf, and bull trout—listed under the ESA are known to occur in the vicinity.

Westslope cutthroat have been petitioned for listing. The USFWS announced on June 10, 1998, a 90 day finding for an amended petition to list westslope cutthroat trout as threatened throughout its range. Canada Lynx has been proposed for listing.

Bull Trout

Bull trout are found in the reservoirs, the lower Clark Fork River tributary system, and the lower Clark Fork River and Lake Pend Oreille. Bull Trout in the reservoirs and tributary system exhibit both adfluvial (living in a lake environment and migrating to riverine habitats to spawn) and resident life histories, while those occurring in the lower Clark Fork River are most likely adfluvial in nature.

Bald Eagle

A variety of state, federal, and Avista inventory, monitoring, and management efforts and programs have documented the occurrence of bald eagles along the project reservoirs and downstream waters. The number of active bald eagle nests along the reservoirs and lower Clark Fork River has increased in recent years, to the point where four to five active nests are now observed annually.

Peregrine Falcon

Avista is cooperating with State and Federal agencies trying to establish a breeding population of peregrine falcons along the lower Clark Fork River, and these efforts have resulted in mixed success from hatching sites at Thompson Falls and Clark Fork. Given an abundance of cliff areas along Noxon Reservoir suitable for nest sites, and the species preference for hunting over water and riparian areas, the project area should provide favorable habitat.



Figure 10: Cliffs above triangle pond recreation area near Noxon, potential peregrine falcon habitat.

Grizzly Bear

Grizzlies occur in very low numbers in the mountains surrounding the corridor. Four subadult females have been released into the Cabinet Mountains lying to the immediate north and radio tracking or reported sightings indicate at least occasional occurrence in the general vicinity of the projects. The species is highly mobile with large home ranges and occasionally crosses or occurs close to the Clark Fork River.

Gray Wolf

Several wolf packs, originating from wolves from Canada, are known to occur in northwestern Montana. Wolves have been sighted in the Bull River drainage and the vicinity of Thompson Falls. An experimental, nonessential population of wolves has also been released in central Idaho and individuals have been tracked to northwestern Montana.

Other Species of Special Concern

Westslope Cutthroat Trout

Westslope Cutthroat trout are found in the project reservoirs and the Clark Fork River below Cabinet Gorge Dam. They are the most abundant trout species in the lower Clark Fork River tributaries. Westslope cutthroat trout have been petitioned for Federal listing and are a species of special concern in Montana.

Canada Lynx

In Montana, lynx habitat occurs throughout the primary Rocky Mountains, and is closely associated with areas of high snowshoe hare densities. A Lynx Conservation Strategy developed by the Kootenai National Forest (USFS 1997) defined suitable habitat for home ranges as occurring above an elevation of 4,000 feet.

Common Loon

Common loons typically nest on shorelines, directly adjacent to water. Nesting habitat often includes emergent wetlands and vegetated shorelines with low banks. Common loons occur on the project reservoirs primarily during the spring and fall, but no nests or broods have been observed to date.

Harlequin Duck

Harlequin ducks breed on fast flowing mountain streams in the higher elevations of western Canada and northwestern United States. They are known to breed on tributaries to the reservoirs, including Swamp Creek, Vermilion River, Marten Creek, and Rock Creek and occur on Bull River and White Pine Creek (Reichel and Genter 1993).

Wetlands

Over 200 individual wetlands were mapped in the area through 1994 (ND&T 1995c). Of the 214 mapped wetlands, 119 occur along Noxon Reservoir, 69 along Cabinet Gorge Reservoir, and 26 along the river reach between Cabinet Gorge Dam and Clark Fork, Idaho. Most wetlands (57 percent) are dominated by emergent vegetation (i.e., sedges, grasses, or rushes), less than one acre in size (69 percent), low gradient (63 percent), and shoreline fringe (50 percent). These characteristics are prevalent throughout the project area, with the exception that confined bays are more common than shoreline fringes below Cabinet Gorge Dam. The most common functions and values provided by these wetlands are wildlife habitat, shoreline and streambank stabilization, aquatic diversity/abundance, and production export.

Wetland habitat is also available in the Clark Fork Delta area just upstream of Lake Pend Oreille. The 1987 National Wetland Inventory shows a total of 943 acres of wetland habitat on the six islands within the delta area. Most of the wetlands are timbered (52 percent) or dominated by emergent vegetation (40 percent). The remaining wetlands on the delta islands (8 percent) are dominated by scrub/shrub vegetation.



Figure 11: The Clark Fork Delta located near Clark Fork, Idaho.

Aesthetic Resources

The existing visual quality of the area is typical of narrow, forested, alpine s including extensive forested areas, a meandering river, exposed bedrock, and various depositional and erosional features consistent with a history of glacial and fluvial processes. The underlying geology and regional vegetation provide the dominant color and form. Human modification of the landscape is evidenced by features such as houses, railroad tracks, State Highway 200, transmission lines, timber harvest activities, recreational structures, limited agriculture, and some mining activity.

Visual resources within the project area include views from 40 designated viewpoints including public recreation sites and points along major roads that provide views of project related features. Twenty-one of the viewpoints are in recreation sites. Six viewpoints are located along Highway 200 between Thompson Falls and Cabinet Gorge Dam. Along Blue Slide Road between the towns of Thompson Falls and Trout Creek, sensitive viewpoints exist. The remaining eight viewpoints are located along Forest Road 2229 between the towns of Trout Creek and Heron (EDAW 1998a).

Even though sometimes hidden from view by landforms or trees, the reservoirs and river, along with the surrounding mountains, are the dominant visual features of the valley and are the major

elements in the sense of place or landscape character of the area. The reservoirs have a predominantly natural appearance and much of their shoreline appears undeveloped.

Highway 200 follows the river through the Clark Fork valley from Lake Pend Oreille to Thompson Falls. Views of the project features are limited by the winding nature of the highway and the screening effect of the forest. Cabinet Gorge Dam is not visible from the highway, requiring a side trip via gravel road to a viewpoint provided by Avista Corp. Noxon Rapids Dam is visible from pullouts along the highway and from two Avista Corp. viewpoints, one above the dam providing views of the reservoir, forebay, and upper portion of the dam structure, and one below the structure providing views of the tailrace and turbine structures. The reservoirs and river, along with the surrounding mountains, are the dominant visual features of the valley and are the major elements in the sense of place and landscape character of the area.

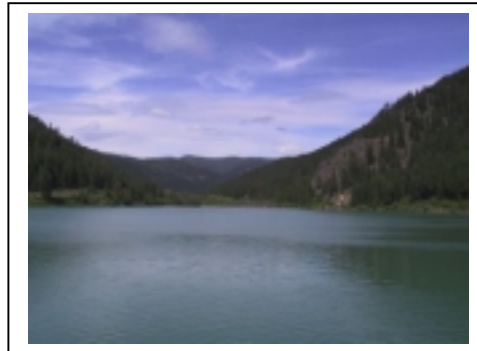


Figure 12: Scenic view of Vermillion Bay from the Blue Slide Road.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are evidence of past human use of an area. Cultural resources may be single artifacts, sites, combinations of sites called districts, modifications of the landscape, landscape features with associated cultural meaning, or traditional use areas and ethno-habitats such as camas grounds and timber stands. Over time the people living in and traveling through lower Clark Fork have hunted, fished and harvested plants (see Section 7.1.1.2 in Cascade 1998). They have made trails, roads, camps, towns and dams. They have come in contact with the spiritual, as well as the physical qualities of this landscape.

All people living in the area depended on the river as a water source, a transportation conduit and a place to bring their families for recreation, as well as fishing. The terraces of the Clark Fork provided camping areas, homestead locations, villages, towns and sawmill locations, berry picking areas, root collecting areas, garden spaces and fish, meat and hide processing areas. People moved through the lower Clark Fork by canoe, steamboat, dog trails, horse trails, wagon roads, railroads and highways.

The entire Clark Fork region is a place of great importance to the Salish-speaking and Kootenai people. It is a location of their creation stories and an area that has been at the heart of tribal territories since people came to the earth. Tribal peoples have a reciprocal, symbiotic relationship with the landscape. The river has sustained the people with fish, game and plants. Tribal elders have always said that this gift from the creator, the Clark Fork, came with responsibilities. The tribes must care for it and protect it for generations to come.

Later in time, Euro-American immigrants, Chinese railroad workers, loggers, dam builders and their descendants formed a culturally meaningful relationship with the lower Clark Fork. They built homes, established businesses, raised their children and buried their dead. The fur traders, explorers, missionaries, lumbermen, railroaders, and homesteaders, formed historic associations with particular resources and aspects of the lower Clark Fork landscape. This relationship has

been primarily expressed in terms of the use of the natural resources of the area for subsistence and commercial endeavors.

Cultural History

In the Clark Fork River and western Montana in general, a high prehistoric site density is associated with lacustrine terraces, a south to southwest aspect and areas more than 300 meters from the nearest permanent water. In the Clark Fork River, high historic site density is associated with trails, roads, highways and railroads through the and the communities that grew up around these transportation conduits.

Throughout time the topography of the project area has channeled the activities of both the tribal and non-tribal peoples. The earliest Indians sited their pedestrian trails making the best use of the available landforms. Later these trails were used by both historic tribal and non-tribal peoples who traveled with the aid of horses. Later still, sections of the prehistoric trails became wagon and automobile roads, railroad beds and, in some cases, interstate highways.

Western Montana has probably been inhabited for at least 8,000 years. During the earliest periods, people lived at high elevations along the terraces of glacial lakes. Later in time, people shifted to mid-elevation and river terraces. People in the earliest periods probably moved often, used a large hunting territory and lived together in larger groups only in the winter. Later, the ancestors of the modern tribal peoples, although still hunting, shifted more of their efforts to fishing and plant harvesting. As the food supply became more diversified and predictable, people joined together in larger groups during several seasons, the population increased and people used smaller hunting territories.

The horse reached the Indian peoples of the area in the mid-1700s. In the early 1800s, David Thompson and other traders, trappers and explorers traveled through the area. By the late-1800s, the area was traversed by wagons, railroads, ferry boats and steam ships. Chinese and later Japanese contract workers were employed on the railroad and lived in railroad camps in the project area. Euro-Americans also came with the railroads and found work as miners, lumbermen and farmers.

Land Use

The lower Clark Fork River is characterized by low density rural residential development interspersed among tracts of agricultural and forested land. Noxon and Cabinet Gorge reservoirs represent approximately 11,000 acres of water over 130 miles of shoreline.

This portion of the Clark Fork River is narrow and surrounded by the timbered and mountainous lands managed by the Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai¹, and Lolo National Forests where lands are managed for multiple use. Activities within the forest range from backpacking in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness to commercial mining and logging. Land use outside the forest boundaries include timber harvesting on private lands, light industry, agriculture, and recreation. The Montana

¹ Some of this land lies on the Kaniksu National Forest which is administered by the Kootenai National Forest.

Rail Link Railroad, utility lines, and State Highway 200 follow the Clark Fork River for the entire length of the projects.

Lands within the Clark Fork River bottom are predominantly private, with rugged topography largely confining agriculture, towns and residences, and energy and transportation corridors to the floor. The current land use trend is for subdivision of larger private parcels and subsequent recreational and residential development by private individuals.

Descendants of the original inhabitants of the area continue to use it for traditional cultural purposes such as hunting, fishing and plant collecting. In addition, this includes locations suitable for private cultural observances such as sweats, prayer, making offerings and vision quests. Traditional cultural use of the area is ongoing but cannot be quantified due to its highly individualistic nature.

USFS, MFWP, Avista Corp., and private business operators currently provide recreational and land use opportunities associated with project lands. WWP has provided recreational access and facilities since project construction and Avista Corp. continues to work with local, State, and Federal partners as new demands and needs arise.

Recreational Opportunities

The USFS is a major land manager in this region. Recreational activities are not only allowed but are actively encouraged where appropriate, with recreation facilities provided on many forest lands. The USFS provides areas, staging facilities, trails, interpretive and informational materials, and other opportunities for dispersed and developed recreation activities.

Most USFS lands are managed under the concept of "multiple use"; not only are these lands open to recreation activities, they also are open for uses such as wildlife management, timber production, watershed protection, research, livestock grazing, and other uses. In addition, some areas are designated as "special use areas." In some of these areas, recreation is the predominant, if not exclusive use. These areas range from developed picnic sites and campgrounds, where a relatively small area may be intensively used for recreation, to larger designated wilderness areas, or federal Wild and Scenic River areas that may be undeveloped. In some special use areas, however, restrictions or prohibitions on public recreation use may apply. For example, public use restrictions may be in place during certain seasons to protect wildlife, or uses may be restricted due to exclusive uses by the military.

The Lolo NF offers 29 campgrounds and/or picnic areas comprising approximately 343 acres. In addition, there are 3 downhill ski areas (664 acres) - Marshall, Snow Bowl, and Lookout Pass. The Forest Plan for the Lolo NF indicates that 17,226 acres on the forest "receive concentrated public use" and will continue to be managed for these uses. These areas offer numerous opportunities, some of which are recreation-related, and include developed and dispersed recreation areas (such as fishing



Figure 13: Entrance to the Bull River campground, a U.S.F.S managed site.

areas, summer home, resorts, nature and hiking trails). Other uses in this category receiving concentrated public use on the Lolo NF are also used for military purposes, such as the Fort Missoula Military Reservation (USFS 1986).

The Lolo NF also has substantial wilderness and other dispersed recreation areas. There are approximately 363,300 acres currently classified or proposed as wilderness areas, and an additional 25,010 acres (non-designated wilderness) in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area (USFS 1986).

The Kootenai NF has 54 developed recreation sites, including 28 campgrounds, 7 developed picnic areas, 1 winter sports area, and 18 boating sites according to the 1987 Forest Plan (USFS 1987b). The USFS estimates that approximately 2,320 acres were occupied by these facilities. The NF also includes 358,000 acres of lands available for roadless recreation; 1,728,000 acres for roaded recreation; and 160,000 acres for wilderness recreation (USFS 1987b).

In the Cabinet Gorge Ranger District there are 64 trails (USFS 1997a) with a total trail distance of 290 miles. Of these 64 trails, only 5 trailheads or trail segments are near to Cabinet Gorge or Noxon reservoirs. These trails generally do not offer direct recreational access to the water and reservoirs. Trailhead for three of the trails, however, the Big Eddy Trail (#998), the Water Hill Trail (#845), and the Kismet Creek Trail (#811) are near existing recreation areas. The 5 designated trails nearest the reservoirs are described below.

- Trail 998 - Bid Eddy Trail - Big Eddy Trail is a 4.8-mile trail with a trailhead at Big Eddy Road near Big Eddy Recreation Area. The trail affords access to Squaw Peak; at Squaw Peak it intersects with 3 other trails that lead to the upper reach of the Bull River (#1016- Star Gulch Trail, #1035 - Napoleon Gulch Trail, and #1036 - Pillick Ridge Trail). Spectacular views of Lake Pend Oreille, Noxon Reservoir, and the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness are found at the summit of Squaw Peak.
- Trail 997 - Blacktail Creek Trail - Blacktail Creek Trail is a short trail in heavy woods. The trailhead is off of Highway 200, about 10 miles west of Noxon. This 2.2-mile hiking trail accesses Pillick Ridge. The top portion of the trail offers a limited view of the Lower Clark Fork River (and probably some views of the reservoir). The trail does not intersect or access any other trails or trail systems.
- Trail 811 - Kismet Creek - Kismet Creek Trail begins near Marten Creek Bay and provides access to the Kismet and Stevens Peak areas. This 3.3-mile long trail connects with trails #1083 (Stevens Ridge) and #1099 (Stevens Creek).
- Trail 845 - Water Hill - Water Hill Trail is 12.9 miles in length and begins where Highway 200 crosses the Vermilion River. This trail provides access to several other trails, including #847 (Cataract Creek), #842 (West Fork Cataract), and #848 (Grouse Ridge).



Figure 14: Entrance to Water Hill Trail.

- Unnumbered - Burr Knob Vista - Burr Knob Vista is a 1 /4 mile trail to a viewpoint that overlooks the Lower Clark Fork River and offers views of Noxon Reservoir and the Cabinet Mountains. The trailhead is just off of USFS Road 2229.

It is unlikely that any recreation users are currently using these trails for reservoir access (pers. comm. B. Haflich, Recreation Planner, USFS, Trout Creek, Montana, September 23, 1997). Burr Knob Vista attracts very little use at this time, partly because of a need for clearing and maintenance on the trail.

However, there is some potential for developing additional access to these trail systems. One such potential is Big Eddy Trail (#998) and Blacktail Creek Trail (#997). If topography and land ownership issues did not preclude development, a 2-mile trail along the water could interconnect the Blacktail Creek Trail (# 997) with the Big Eddy Trail (#998), which would then continue on and connect with the trail system that accesses Squaw Peak.

A number of other trails on the Cabinet Ranger District provide potential views of the reservoirs or of project facilities, depending on the amount of tree cover (pers. comm. B. Haflich, Recreation Planner, USFS; Trout Creek, Montana, September 23, 1997):

#898	Twenty Peak Trail
#763	Black Peak Trail
#811	Kismet Creek Trail
#921	Goat Ridge Trail
#998	Big Eddy Trail
#1036	Pillick Ridge Trail
#932	Engle Peak Trail
#1070	Loveland Peak Trail

The USFS manages a trail-related program that allows private individuals and small groups to rent cabins and fire lookout towers that are no longer used, or are only occasionally needed for administrative uses. Available rental sites include 5 on the Kootenai NF, 4 on the Lolo NF, and 3 on the Idaho Panhandle NF. While these sites do not provide direct access to WWP facilities, there are some views of the reservoir and/or dam facilities that are available from some of these sites (USFS 1997b).

Two lookout towers are available for rental on the Cabinet Ranger District: Gem Peak Lookout and Six Peak Lookout. Both of these lookouts have primitive roads leading to sites, and each will accommodate up to 6 visitors. These sites are basic shelters with no facilities or conveniences provided. Visitors to these shelters bring all necessary supplies for cooking, sleeping and lighting.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages recreation facilities at 2 sites within the regional area: Albeni Falls/Lake Pend Oreille and Libby Dam/Lake Koocanusa. The Albeni Falls Project on Lake Pend Oreille is located downstream of the Cabinet Gorge Project, where the project's pool level backs up into the river delta and Lower Clark Fork River. Lake Pend Oreille has a full-pool surface area of approximately 94,600 acres, with about 226 miles of shoreline. The

COE manages approximately 150 acres of recreation lands on Lake Pend Oreille. The 6 recreation areas (Albeni Cove, Vista Area, Priest River, Riley Creek, Springy Point, and Trestle Creek) offer a total of 145 campsites and a variety of other recreation facilities, including boat launches, interpretive displays, drinking water, swimming areas, restrooms, and picnic areas. Johnson Creek Recreation Area, a recreation site in the river delta and in the project area, is a joint COE/IDFG managed recreation area.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game manages 2 recreation sites on Lake Pend Oreille, the natural and man-made reservoir that is part of the COE Albeni Falls Hydroelectric Project. In addition, the Cabinet Gorge Kokanee Fish Hatchery is located immediately downstream of Cabinet Gorge Dam on the Clark Fork River. One of the recreation sites in the lower Clark Fork Delta/Lake Pend Oreille area, Johnson Creek Recreation Area. The 10-acre site is located approximately 8 miles below Cabinet Gorge Dam.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MDFWP), through the Montana Parks Division, manages 42 State Parks throughout the state. In addition to these state park sites, the Parks Division manages a number of fishing access areas. Flat Iron Ridge FAS is an MFWP site in the project area that offers ADA-accessible fishing, picnicking, parking, a boat launch, a boat dock, and restroom. This popular site is easily accessible off of State Highway 200 about 3 miles from Thompson Falls.



Figure 15: Entrance to Thompson Falls State Park, managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Thompson Falls State Park is located on the shores of Noxon Reservoir approximately 1.5 miles from Thompson Falls, Montana. The only Montana state park within the study area, facilities include 33 campsites (up to 30' in length), day use picnic shelters, tables, vault toilets, and a gravel boat launch. Activities at Thompson Falls State Park include fishing, boating, camping, and picnicking (MFWP undated).

The Mt. Silcox Wildlife management Area is a 1,550-acre area 2 miles east of Thompson Falls, Montana and north of State Highway 200. It is open April 15 through November 30, with peak use occurring during the rifle hunting season (end of October to the Sunday after Thanksgiving). Facilities include a parking lot with a horse loading ramp and a 1/2-acre parking lot accommodating 12 to 15 vehicles.

The Clark Fork provides a near natural, relatively undeveloped setting for natural resource and water-based recreation activities. Flat water fishing, motor boating, water skiing, swimming, camping, sightseeing, windsurfing, canoeing, walking, tubing, sunbathing, kayaking, ice fishing, big game and waterfowl hunting, and golfing are some of the recreation activities available in the project area. Group activities include organized softball tournaments, fishing tournaments and



Figure 16: A couple fishing on the innerbay of Marten Creek.

horse shows.

The valley is characterized by a mix of undeveloped and developed recreation areas, with virtually all of the recreation development located along the shores of the reservoirs and river. There are 24 developed and 24 undeveloped recreation sites in the project vicinity, including 15 day-use sites and 15 boat ramps.

Use Estimates

Annual visitation for the Clark Fork Projects is estimated at 103,000 visitors. This estimate was derived from visitor days from previous surveys (ND&T 1994b and 1995d) and was adjusted to account for special group events, poorer than normal weather and climate conditions during the summer of 1994, and sites previously not monitored (EDAW 1998a).

Use estimates by activity indicate that camping and relaxing are the most popular activities at the Clark Fork Projects, accounting for 28 and 27 percent of total use respectively. Angling from shore and from boat accounts for approximately 17 percent of total use. Other activities such as canoeing and kayaking, golfing, and group activities are observed in smaller numbers (EDAW 1998a).



Figure 17: Children swimming in the popular Trout Creek Recreation Area.

Trout Creek Recreation Area is frequently the busiest public shoreline recreational facility in the project area with 4,312 estimated annual visits. Flat Iron Ridge Fishing Access Site and day use area, with 18,820 estimated annual visits, is often the busiest boat ramp. Cabinet Gorge Dam overlook, with its views of the dam and gorge and an estimated 18,901 annual visits, receives two to three times the estimated use that Noxon Rapids Dam overlook receives with 8,483 annual visits (EDAW 1998a).

In an on-site survey conducted by WWP in 1994, 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they fished in the project area at least once during the previous 12 months. Thirty-four percent had camped in the area in the previous 12 months, 36 percent had picnicked, 36 percent had been sightseeing, and 27 percent had been motorboating. Activities such as

canoeing and kayaking, windsurfing, using personal watercraft, and nature study were observed in very low numbers.



Figure 18: Folks enjoying fishing and boating near Triangle Pond.

Future Demand and Use

Population growth in northern Idaho and northwestern Montana is likely to result in increased numbers of people using project area recreational facilities in the future. In 1994 the total visitation to the Clark Fork Projects was 103,000. The projected visitation in the year 2030 is 164,136 (EDAW 1998a).

Respondents to WWP's on-site survey in 1994 overwhelmingly reported that existing public



Figure 19: Popular baseball field at Pilgrim Creek Park near the town of Noxon.

access to the project area for the purpose of engaging in recreation activities was "excellent" or "good" (82 percent of respondents). Respondents identified restrooms, picnic areas, and campsites as the facilities that they found most desirable. Respondents also indicated an unwillingness to pay to use recreation facilities such as boat launches, day-use areas, swimming beaches, and even campgrounds. Additionally, WWP's survey documents the users' expectations that primitive camping will be available without a fee. Free camping is available at USFS sites at Marten Creek and Big Eddy, as well as at undeveloped sites such as Nurreaux Flats and Stevens Creek.

It should be noted that a potential survey bias exists in WWP's on-site survey. If a type of access or recreation facility is not present in an area it is likely that the recreationist seeking that type of recreation would not be present to participate in a survey, therefore inadequately representing that type of recreation (USFS personal communication).

Socioeconomic Setting

Population

Sanders County is rural and generally sparsely populated. Population estimates for 1996 are 10,140 people. This translates to approximately four people per square mile, considerably less than the average for Montana of six. The most populated city in Sanders County, and county seat, is Thompson Falls, with approximately 1,600 residents. The only other incorporated places in the county are the small communities of Hot Springs and Plains, with populations of 992 and 411, respectively. (U.S Bureau of the Census 1997).

Bonner County, although smaller in geographical size than Sanders County has more than three times the population; 33,976 people. This translates to approximately 20 people per square mile, slightly above the state average for Idaho of 16. The popular year-round resort community of Sandpoint lies 30 miles downriver from Cabinet Gorge on Lake Pend Oreille. With a population of 5,203 it is the largest town in the county. There are eight other incorporated communities in the county with populations ranging from 99 in the city of Hope to 1,560 in the city of Priest River. (U.S Bureau of the Census, 1997 and 1991).

Both Sanders and Bonner counties are experiencing significant and rapid population and economic growth associated with the immigration of people drawn to the area by its recreation, scenic and rural attributes (MDEQ 1999). From 1970 to 1997 Sanders County population grew from 7,100 to 10,250 (44 percent) and Bonner County grew from 15,550 to 34,800 (225 percent). This immigration is driving shifts in area employment, earned income, housing costs and land use (MDEQ 1999).

Employment

According to Bureau of Economic Analysis data the local economy is growing rapidly (26 percent). The local economy is shifting to greater numbers of self-employed and retirement type employment. The region's economy has shifted from relying heavily on resource extraction, particularly timber, to a predominance of services and trade. The major economic sectors for Bonner and Sanders Counties respectively include: retail trade (23 and 15 percent), services (23 and 26 percent), and government (13 and 17 percent) (MDEQ 1999).

Though the area is experiencing a tourism industry boom the unemployment rates in the region have been consistently higher than those for the states of Montana and Idaho and the United States overall since at least 1980. Yearly averages have ranged between 9.3 and 13.2 percent in both Sanders and Bonner Counties (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1997).

Income

In 1995, per capita income was \$13,499 in Sanders County and \$15,909 in Bonner County. These figures are considerably below the states' averages of \$18,450 in Montana and \$18,885 in Idaho, and a national average of \$23,194. Personal income has been rising, however, just ahead of inflation at four to five percent per year in Sanders and Bonner counties (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1997). This economic data does not report retirement pensions and benefits received by retirees, and therefore may misrepresent the actual income situation in the local communities in the project vicinity (MDEQ 1999). It is estimated that one quarter to one third of total personal income in Bonner and Sanders counties is from retirement pensions and benefits (MDEQ 1998).

Sanders and Bonner counties have more people per capita living below the poverty level than the states' or national averages. Almost 20 percent of all people in Sanders County and 16 percent of Bonner County residents were living below the poverty level in 1989. Some feel this data may be an artifact of the data reporting method. Many of those reported by the data as having poverty-level incomes may actually be retirees with additional pension and benefits not reflected in the data (MDEQ 1999).

TRAIL GUIDELINES

General Guidelines

Type of Use

The lower Clark Fork trail system will be designed primarily for non-motorized users for recreation, fitness, and transportation, including walking, jogging, bicycling, horseback riding, and roller blading during the summer months and cross country skiing and snowshoeing during the winter months. Although the primary use of the system is non-motorized, where appropriate, snowmobiling may be allowed during the winter months in designated segments of the trail system. The trail system will be designed to accommodate a broad range of users of all ages and levels of ability. The trail system will also consist of short loops that will provide interpretive and educational opportunities. Numerous opportunities exist for interpretive and educational themes (see Interpretation and Education chapter).

Surfacing

The trail system will consist of a combination of surfacing depending on the landscape and gradient the trail traverses as well as the trail segment's proximity to town centers and the highway. The surfacing of the trail system will be designed for low cost and minimal maintenance. Dual pathways, with harder surfaces for bicyclists and rollerbladers and softer surfaces for horses and pedestrians, will be designed to accommodate multiple users where possible and appropriate. Horses have a hard time with large (2 inch) gravel and prefer woodchips, hardened soil, or smaller gravel (3/4 inch). Surfacing will consist of a combination of asphalt paving, hardened dirt, woodchips, and possibly gravel with binder. Trail segments located along the highway, old railroad bed, and in towns would be paved asphalt, while trails located in more rural rugged terrain would consist of hardened dirt or gravel surfaces.



Figure 20: Compacted dirt trail on the PPL Island Park.

Linkage

Trails provide pedestrian linkage between places and destinations whether being used for recreation or transportation purposes. The lower Clark Fork trail system will be designed, where possible, to link and connect neighborhoods and residential areas to town centers, other communities, parks, campgrounds, day use areas, Forest Service trailheads, scenic views, and wildlife areas. Opportunities have been sought to link trails on either side of the reservoir across existing bridges and road crossings.

Trailheads and Furnishings

Trailheads

Trailheads are improved areas where people can access the trail system. Advisory committee members indicated a desire to keep development at trailhead areas to a minimum (sparse facilities) to avoid a large maintenance obligation and to avoid people congregating at trailheads. A preliminary list of elements for consideration at trailheads include: parking (for single cars and vehicles with trailers); hitching posts; bike racks; unloading ramps; vault toilets; horse turnarounds; trashcans; and minimal regulatory signage. Drinking water was specifically excluded from this list because of maintenance considerations.



Figure 21: Trailhead parking for the Yakima Greenway in Washington.

Trail Furnishings

Trail furnishings refer to facilities along the trail that serve to enhance the trail users experience. A preliminary list of trail furnishing elements developed by the advisory committee include: resting areas and benches along the trail; small, primitive camping areas (in appropriate locations); interpretive signs; and short loop trails off the main trail.

Signage

Signs can be useful for many purposes, but development of a sign plan is strongly encouraged to avoid clutter and to help create a trail identity. Advisory committee members indicated a desire to limit the number of signs on the trail and to use natural materials in their design and construction. Elements to include in the sign plan are: establish and use a consistent logo to identify the trail; standardize construction materials; and create a ‘family’ of sign designs. Following is a preliminary list of the various types of signs to include along the Lower Clark Fork trail system:

Trail Identifier: Identify the lower Clark Fork trail system in name and with a graphic logo. This should be posted at trailheads and other access points.

Property Boundaries: Use to keep people on the trail and away from private property.

Transition Points: Directional signage to inform trail users about the location of the trail. For instance, at a ‘T’ intersection, a directional arrow may be needed to inform the user which way the trail goes.

General Information: Basic trail information will be needed at trailheads and primary trail facilities. This will include an overall trail system map showing locations of trailheads, restrooms, parking, etc.



Figure 22: Trail sign made from wood for the Yakima Greenway.

Other information to consider includes hours of operation, accessibility information, and who to contact in emergency situations.

Trail Etiquette: General guidance about using and sharing the trail system (e.g., Stay on Trail, Pets on Leash, Pack It In/Pack It Out) should be provided at trailheads and primary trail facilities.

Trail Rules and Regulations: Post rules and regulations (e.g., speed limits; illegal use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms; fireworks; prohibited vehicles; hours of operation; etc.)

Interpretation/Education: (see Interpretation/Education chapter.)

Safety

Trail safety is a subject that will receive close attention in both the design and development of management policy for the lower Clark Fork trail system. Physical safety issues will be addressed in the following areas: grade and cross-slope; line of sight around corners; brush clearance; directional and warning signs; at-grade crossings and intersections; guard rails; speed limits; conflict management among multiple users; one-way lane striping; and emergency vehicle access (police, fire, medical).

Accessibility

The lower Clark Fork trail system will be designed to be accessible for all users wherever possible, including people with mobility and visual impairments. All applicable laws governing the design and construction of public facilities will be followed. The benefits from providing accessible facilities are safer and better conditions for all visitors, not just those with disabilities, and the increased possibility for persons with disabilities to not only have access, but to do so along side their non-disabled family and friends.



Figure 23: Friends enjoying a stroll on an ADA accessible trail.

It should be noted that since passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act an advisory committee has been working to develop recommendations to the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board for making recreation facilities and outdoor developed areas (including paths and trails) accessible. That committee submitted a final report in September, 1999, but as of this writing, no standards have been formally adopted. Until final standards are available it is recommended that the 1999 report be utilized as a common sense guide for addressing accessibility issues in trail design and construction. An additional resource to follow is a best practices design guide published by the Federal Highway Administration, “Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access”, parts I and II.

It should also be noted that while standards have not been adopted for paths and trails, guidelines and standards do exist and must be followed for developed areas such as parking areas, accessible routes, restrooms, and building entrances.

Liability

Most states, including Idaho and Montana, have statutes that remove the liability from landowners that allow the general public free access to their property for recreation. It is envisioned that all portions of this trail will be open to the public at no charge, including those portions that are on Avista Corporations' private property. All other areas of proposed trails are on public property or public right of way. The Idaho and Montana Recreational Use Statutes are attached for informational purposes in Appendix II.

Resource Management

A goal of the trail system is to carefully design pathways to avoid impacting sensitive resource areas including wetlands, riparian vegetation, and cultural resources, yet provide appropriate access to such sites. Many design techniques exist to minimize resource impacts while still providing public access and enjoyment. One way to minimize impacts is to install bollards or other blockades to keep unauthorized motorized use off trails. Another is the use of elevated boardwalks and viewing blinds to access the edges of wetland areas for wildlife viewing. Construction techniques utilizing native vegetation and natural materials can be used to keep people on paths and away from sensitive areas. Some trails will be designed to enhance wildlife viewing opportunities (bird homes, nesting homes, snags, etc.).

TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Overall Concept

The overall concept is to provide a system of trails for residents and visitors in the lower Clark Fork valley. There are a number of remarkable opportunities to expand upon the existing recreational experiences available in the area.

Keeping in mind the vision and goals for this trail system, several key points were considered during the development of the proposed trail opportunities. These key elements included looking for opportunities that:

- (1) provided interpretation and education (to tell residents and visitors about the natural and cultural resources of the lower Clark Fork);
- (2) provided close-to-home recreation trail opportunities for the towns and communities in the area (Thompson Falls, Trout Creek, Noxon, Heron, and Clark Fork);
- (3) provided opportunities for diverse group of users;
- (4) were located on Avista-owned and public land;
- (5) avoided Avista-owned land that is between the Clark Fork river and homes of private landowners and leaseholders; and
- (6) avoided sensitive natural and cultural resources.

The proposed system of trails is at a conceptual stage. Additional planning, design, engineering, and permitting needs to occur to determine if these potential trails are technically, environmentally, economically, and legally feasible. Avista is the lead organization in this effort and has a modest amount of funding for trail implementation. However, Avista does not have funding to implement all of these trail ideas. Avista is committed to seeking grants and partnerships to help fund, build, and manage these remarkable opportunities for trails in the lower Clark Fork, but they should not do it alone.

Trail Design Types and Proposed Trail Locations

The lower Clark Fork trail system is envisioned to consist of a number of trail segments that have varying degrees of development, surfacing, location, setting, and levels of accessibility that support diverse uses. Three ‘trail type’ categories (pedestrian linkage/transportation, designated routes, and recreation) were developed based on discussions and input from the advisory committee. These categories are described below, followed by a description of the proposed trail segments that fit each type. Maps of these proposed trails are located at the end of the document.

Pedestrian Linkage/Transportation Trails

The primary purpose of these trails is to provide a safe pedestrian transportation connection, with recreation use a secondary benefit. Many of the trails in this trail type are on or along side county roads, highways, or railroad access roads. Another purpose of this trail type is to connect community neighborhoods and destinations with pedestrian pathways. The trails will be designated for bicyclists, walkers, runners, and in some cases wheelchairs. In addition, where appropriate, trails would be available for cross country skiers and snowmobilers in the winter. This may include safe pedestrian crosswalks, as needed. The recommended width is 15-foot and

a minimum of 10-foot. Vertical clearance should be 8-feet. The surfacing would be paved or hardened-compacted soils that would accommodate bicyclists. There may be a dirt path along side of the main trail for walkers. In addition, where appropriate, the trail advisory group may recommend a reduction in the speed limits to the appropriate County or State officials.

Following are proposed pedestrian/transportation routes in the lower Clark Fork valley:

1) Thompson Falls to Birdland Bay Bridge via Blue Slide

A loop trail from Thompson Falls along side highway 200 to the Blue Slide Road. The path would follow the Blue Slide Road to Birdland Bay Bridge and then back out to highway 200 (see map 1). The trail would then follow highway 200 back to Thompson Falls, approximately 6 miles. A spur trail, approximately 1-mile, would lead west from the intersection of Highway 200 and the Birdland Bay Road to Flat Iron Fishing Access Site. If necessary this would include a safe pedestrian crosswalk across Highway 200. The trail is envisioned to be a hard surfaced multi-use trail for bicycles, hikers, and roller bladers.

Concepts, Opportunities and Constraints:

- § Connects Thompson Falls to Thompson Falls State Park
- § Spur trail would connect to Flat Iron Recreation Area
- § Provides close-to-home recreation opportunities for Thompson Falls
- § A separate trail for pedestrian access along the Hwy 200 bridge will be a long term goal.

Potential Partners:

- § Montana Department of Transportation
- § City of Thompson Falls
- § Birdland Bay
- § Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department
- § Sanders County



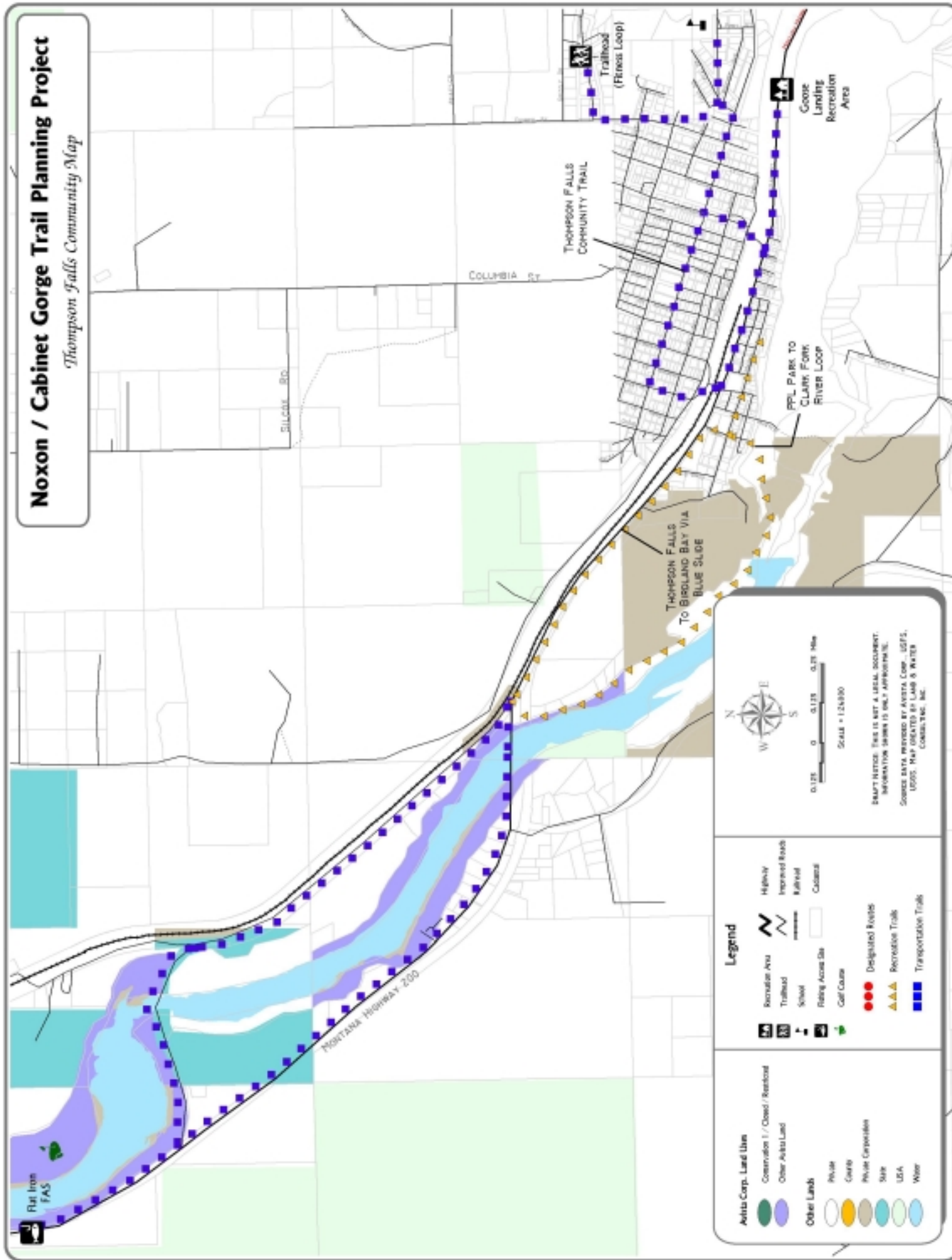
Figure 24: A spur trail could connect to Flat Iron Recreation Area.



Figure 25: The proposed trail would follow the Blue Slide Road, shown above, and connect Thompson Falls to Thompson Falls State Park.

Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Thompson Falls Community Map



Legend

Avista Corp. Land Use - Conservation / Open / Recreational - Other Avista Land Other Land - Private - County - Private Corporation - State - USA - Water	Designated Routes - Trailhead - School - Riding Access Site - Camp Course - Designated Routes - Recreation Trails - Transportation Trails	Scale 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles Scale = 1:24,000 Disclaimer BLANK NOTICE: THIS IS NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT. INFORMATION SHOWN IS ONLY APPROXIMATE. SOURCE DATA PROVIDED BY AVISTA CORP., USFS, USGS. MAP CREATED BY LAR & WATER CONSULTING, INC.
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2) Thompson Falls Community Trail

The concept behind this idea is to create a system of sidewalks, trails, and safe crossings that connect schools, and neighborhoods, and local businesses. The primary purpose of these trails is to create safe pedestrian friendly connections within the communities for residents. This trail system will connect the existing 3-mile fitness trail loop, Thompson Falls High School, Main Street, Aensworth field, Wild Goose Landing and other proposed trail opportunities (e.g., the Blue Slide Road and Preston Road) (see map1).



Figure 26: The proposed trail would connect to the fitness trail shown above.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Connects to the fitness trail and proposed new trails
- § Connects to the high school and businesses on main street

Potential Partners:

- § Thompson Falls
- § Sanders County
- § Community Beautification Group
- § Community Tourism Assessment Program
- § Chamber of Commerce

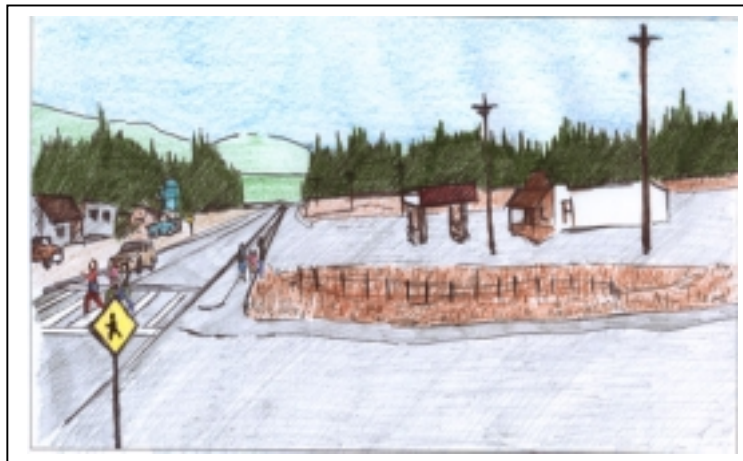


Figure 27: Artist Rendering of Trout Creek Trail highway crossing

3) Trout Creek Community Trail

A paved loop trail (or system of sidewalks) is envisioned within the town of Trout Creek that connects the business district to the senior center, school, and the fairgrounds. A spur trail would extend from the Town of Trout Creek along side Highway 200 to the Trout Creek Recreation area, about 1/8 of a mile. This trail would provide safe passage for children and adults alike traveling from Trout Creek to this popular swim, picnic area, and boat launch area. This would have to include provision of a safe pedestrian crosswalk across Highway 200 in Trout Creek.

Concepts, Opportunities and Constraints:

- § Provides safe passage to the Trout Creek Recreation area

- § Connects the community of Trout Creek through a pedestrian pathway

Potential Partners:

- § Town of Trout Creek
- § Senior center
- § Trout Creek school
- § Business owners
- § Trout Creek Community Improv. Association
- § Bass Club



Figure 28: The proposed route would provide safe passage for students traveling from the school shown above to the popular Trout Creek Recreation Area.

4) Centennial Park to Pilgrim Creek

A paved trail about 1 mile long, on the abandoned railroad from Centennial Park in Noxon to Pilgrim Creek Park (see map 3.) (Note: the area on the abandoned railroad west of Centennial Park is being used as an airport. The final trail design will need to include a buffer between the trail and the airport for safety purposes.)

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Rail-to trail opportunity
- § Links two popular parks
- § Close-to-home recreation opportunity for the community of Noxon
- § The failed bridge that is out will have to be replaced with a pedestrian bridge

Potential Partners:

- § Noxon
- § Sanders County
- § Noxon Elementary School



Figure 29: The proposed trail route would follow the abandoned railroad and would include replacing the bridge shown above.

5) Centennial Park to Triangle Pond

This proposal is a continuation of the route described above. It would continue west at Centennial Park along side the County Road and be routed out to Triangle Pond. This trail would be paved and approximately 3.5 miles in length (see map 3).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

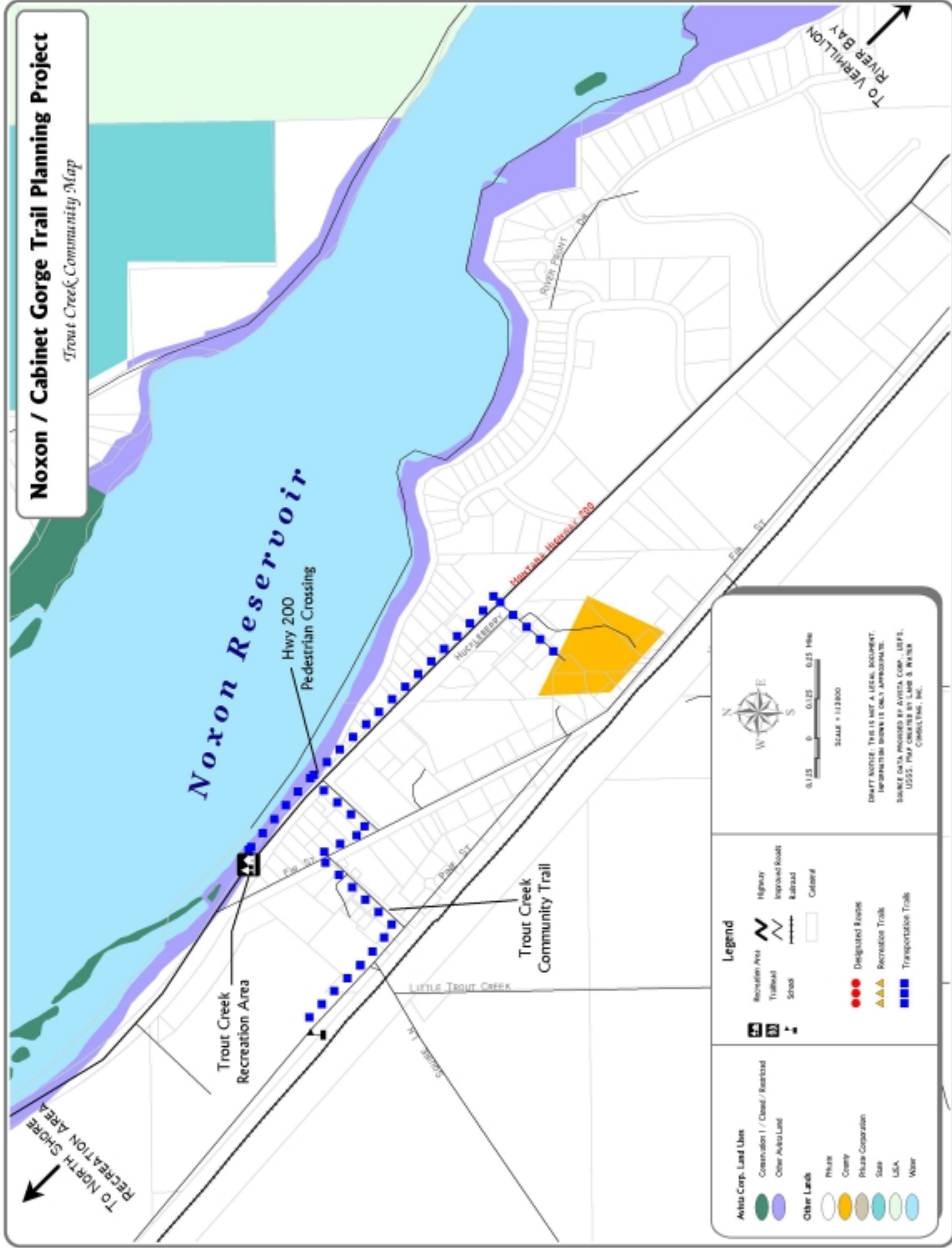
- § Connects Centennial Park to Triangle Pond
- § Close-to-home opportunity for the town of Noxon

Potential Partners:

- § Noxon
- § Sanders County
- § Noxon Elementary School

Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Trout Creek Community Map



Avista Corp. Land Use

- Construction / Closed / Restricted
- Other Avista Land

Other Lands

- Private
- County
- Phuse Corporation
- State
- USA
- Water

Legend

- Recreation Area
- Trailhead
- School
- Highway
- Improved Roads
- Railroad
- Canal
- Designated Route
- Recreation Trails
- Transportation Trails

Scale

Scale = 1:12,500

0.125 0 0.125 0.25 Mile

North Arrow

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Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Noxon Community Map

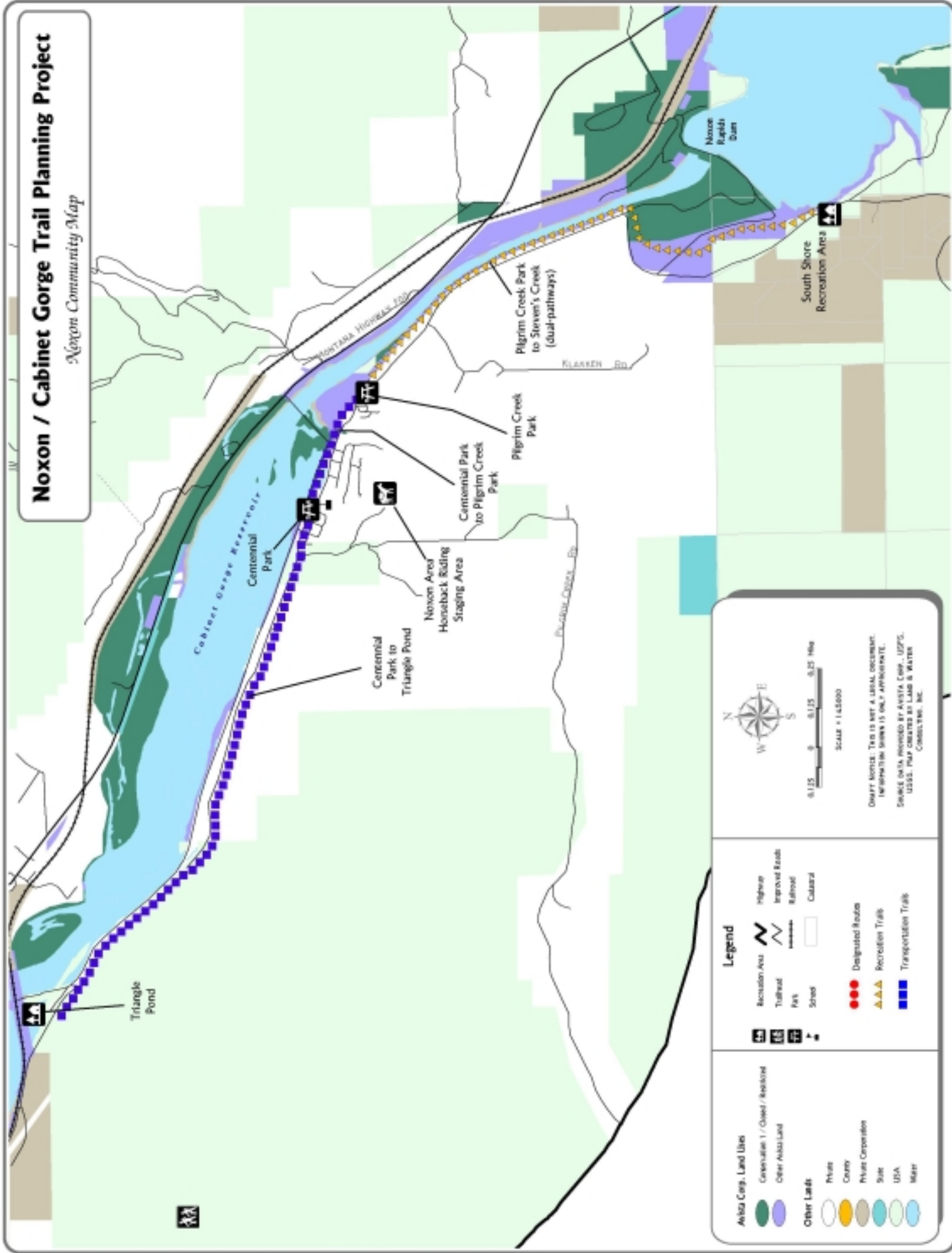




Figure 30: Centennial Park



Figure 31: Triangle Pond

6) Heron Community-Wide Trail

A community wide trail connecting Heron's community center and the two park parcels in town. This trail would be system of sidewalks, trails, and safe crossings that connect community centers, recreation areas, and local businesses (see map 4).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Connects the community to its parks through a pedestrian pathway

Potential Partners:

- § Heron
- § Business owners



Figure 32 &33: The proposed community trail in Heron would connect the two parks shown above.

7) Clark Fork to Clark Fork Road

A trail from the town of Clark Fork to Clark Fork Road. The town of Clark Fork is proposing building a new vehicle bridge and then using the existing vehicle bridge for pedestrian use. This trail would access that pedestrian bridge (see map 5).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Pedestrian connection for the residents of Clark Fork

Potential Partners:

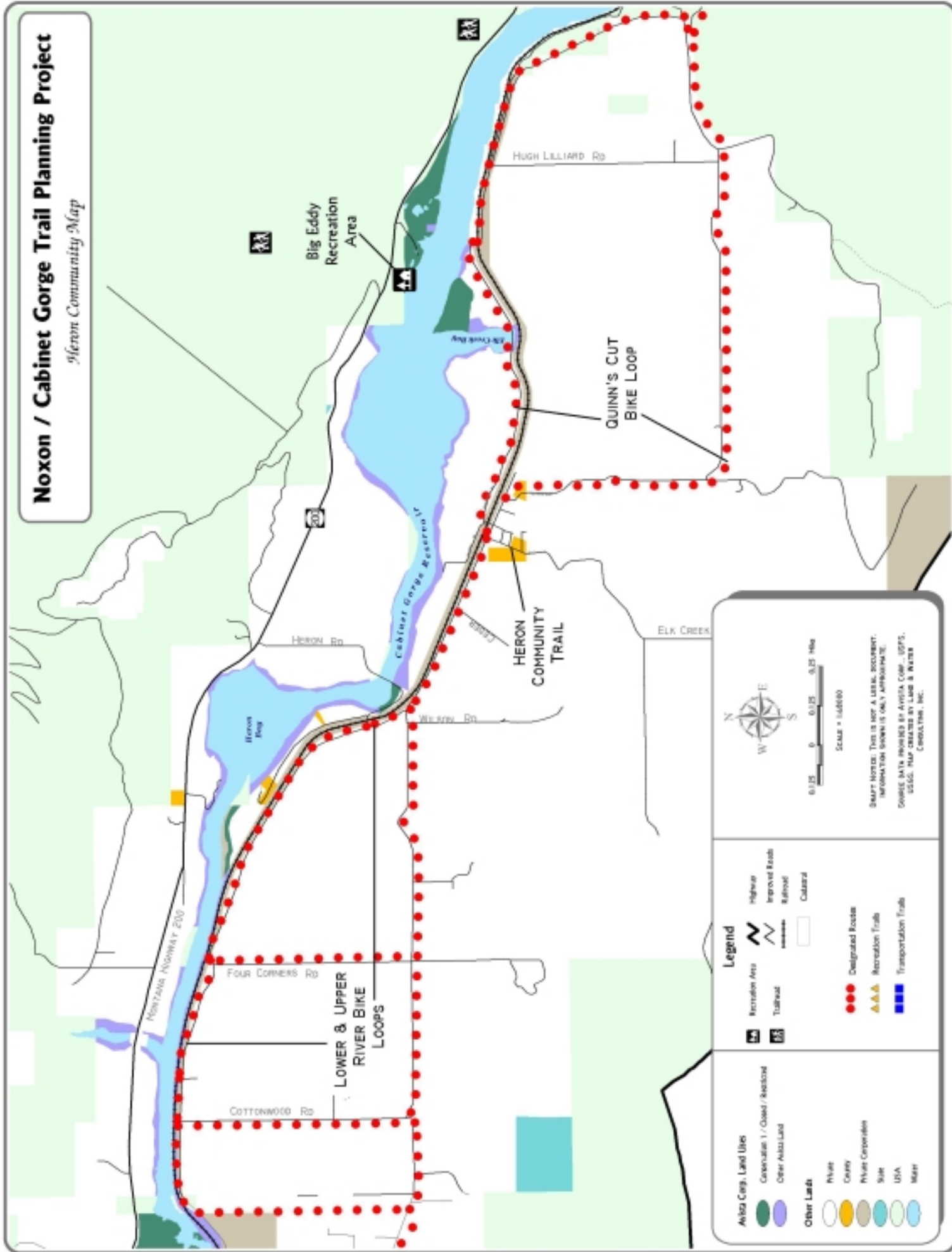
- § Clark Fork
- § Bonner County



Figure 34: The bridge shown above will be converted from a vehicle to pedestrian bridge.

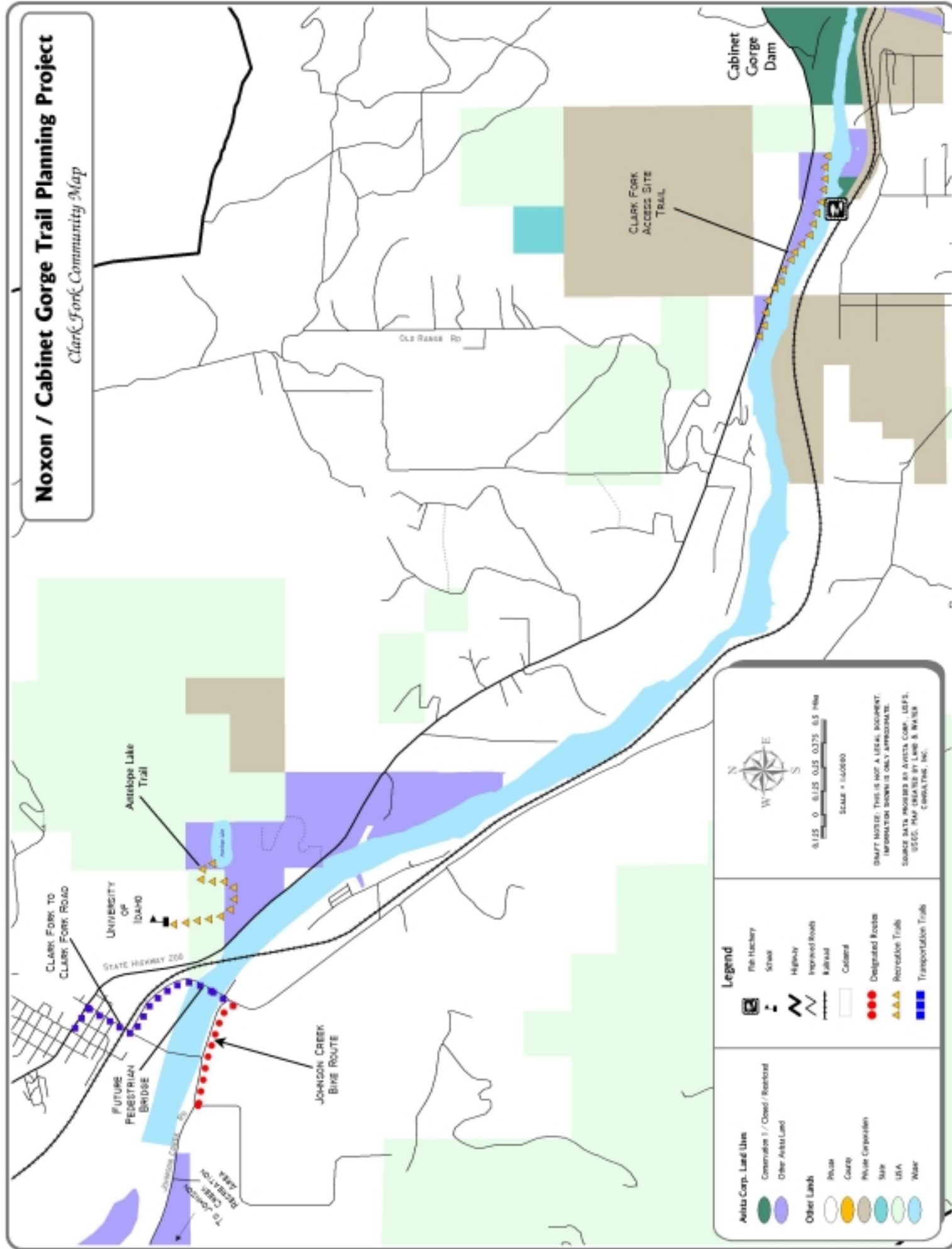
Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Heron Community Map



Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Clark Fork Community Map



Avista Corp. Land Use

- Conservation / Closed / Railroad
- Other Avista Land

Other Land

- Private
- County
- Private Corporation
- State
- USA
- Water

Legend

- Fish Hatchery
- School
- Highway
- Improved Roads
- Railroad
- Cultural
- Designated Routes
- Recreation Trails
- Transportation Trails

Scale

0 0.125 0.25 0.375 0.5 Miles

Scale = 1:60,000

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8) Highway 200 Bike Path

A separate, paved pedestrian corridor along side highway 200 from Thompson Falls to the Clark Fork Access Site, approximately 52 miles, would serve as a safe alternative transportation route for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists (see map 6). This type of corridor would take a long time to achieve and would likely be initiated, as modifications along the highway are needed. Additional research is required to determine if a pedestrian corridor is feasible in certain sections. In addition, where feasible, pedestrian lanes across bridges will be considered in the design phase.

A Highway 200 Bike Path corridor connecting to Clark Fork was initially considered, however, preliminary discussions with the Idaho Transportation Department (IDT) indicated that they have determined that the physical constraints of portions of this stretch would prevent creating a feasible pedestrian path in this section. Therefore, the Highway 200 Bike Path would terminate at the Clark Fork Access Site but provisions would be made at Heron to connect the proposed County Road Bike Route, thereby providing a continuous route to Clark Fork for bicyclists.

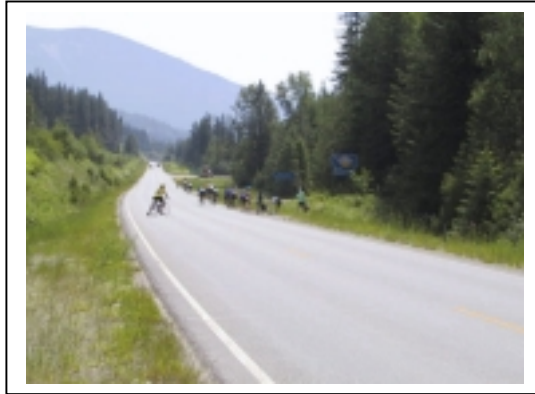


Figure 35: Bicyclists riding along Highway 200.

Concepts, Opportunities and Constraints:

- § Provides for a long thru route from Thompson Falls to the Idaho/Montana State Line.
- § Provides safe passage for the many bicyclists who currently ride on the highway
- § This trail corridor will be expensive to build and will take a long time to accomplish. Trail work would likely be done in conjunction with major road work needed

Potential Partners:

- § City of Thompson Falls
- § Sanders County
- § Montana Department of Transportation
- § Trout Creek
- § Noxon
- § Heron
- § Bicycle Clubs in Spokane and Seattle

Designated Routes

Trails in this category are routes specifically identified, designated and signed along existing roads and streets. Designating a route along existing roads creates an awareness of the route for driver safety and assists in route finding for people unfamiliar with the area. A key component of this trail type is signing existing roads that are currently used by pedestrians and bicyclists for transportation and recreation purposes. Signing the routes creates an awareness among motorized users that non-motorized users are present. In some cases, a reduced speed limit may be necessary. Signs also help trail users find their way between two points of interest. Other work under this category may include developing a brochure with a map that identifies these points to create awareness and publicity for these opportunities. There are a number of existing

opportunities that are under utilized due to lack of awareness. Trails in this category can usually be accomplished quickly and cheaply. Over time a separate trail can be planned and built along the designated route as other road work is performed. Users would include bicyclists, walkers, and joggers. If a separate trail were built over time, trails would be designed similar to the Pedestrian Linkage/ Transportation trail type. In addition, where appropriate, trails would be available for cross country skiers and snowmobilers in the winter.

Following are ideas for designated routes in the lower Clark Fork valley:

1) Connections to U.S.F.S. Points of Interest:

Designate and sign alternative routes and spur connections from the proposed County Road Bike Route to U.S.F.S trailheads and other points of interest such as the Graves Creek Waterfall Overlook (see map 6). These trail connections are envisioned to be used by bicyclists and horseback riders.



Figure 36: Graves Creek Falls

Concepts, Opportunities and Constraints:

- § Connects to Forest Service Roads and Trails
- § Connects to a Scenic Waterfall Overlook

Potential Partners:

- § City of Thompson Falls
- § U.S. Forest Service
- § Sanders County

2) Heron to Quinn's Cut

A signed and designated bicycle loop from Heron to Quinn's Cut and back on the upper river road, approximately 9 miles (see map 4).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Close-to-home recreation opportunities for the community of Heron
- § Connects to Quinn's Cut recreation area

Potential Partners:

- § Heron
- § Sanders County

3) Heron – Lower River Road Loop

A signed and designated bicycle loop from Heron to the lower river road that then loops back on the Clark Fork County Road. There are several connections that can be made with a variety of total distances ranging from about 7 to 11 miles (see map 4).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Close-to-home recreation opportunities for the community of Heron

Potential Partners:

- § Heron
- § Sanders County

4) Clark Fork to the Johnson Creek Recreation Area

A bicycle trail along the south side of the river to the Johnson Creek Recreation Area (see map 5).

Walkers and joggers could also use this trail. The first step for this trail would be to

designate and sign a route along the existing roads. If use levels and community interest for this route warrant, a separate path may be developed in the future.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Provides close-to-home recreation opportunities for the residents of Clark Fork.
- § Connects to Johnson Creek Recreation Area

Potential Partners

- § Clark Fork
- § U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- § Bonner County



Figure 37: The proposed trail would end at the Johnson Creek Recreation Area shown above.

5) County Road Bike Route

An alternative to bicycling along Highway 200 already exists and could be readily achieved by simply designating and signing a bike route along existing county roads from Clark Fork, Idaho to Thompson Falls, Montana, approximately 65 miles (see map 6). The route would use the Clark Fork County Road and then cross over to the Blue Slide Road and follow this to Thompson Falls. Signing these roads as a bike route would make it easier for bicyclists to follow and would improve safety by making motorists aware that bicyclists may be on the road. In the future as modifications are being made to the roads, it may be possible to add a separate bicycle path along side these roads in many areas. Coordination with the counties is needed to see if this is feasible. Business leaders in Heron would like to promote bicycling in the area and the first step to doing this is to encourage organizations that produce bicycling guides to promote the routes through Heron.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Thru pedestrian connection from Thompson Falls to Clark Fork
- § Provides an alternative route for bicyclists traveling on highway 200

Potential Partners:

- § Thompson Falls
- § Trout Creek
- § Noxon
- § Heron
- § Clark Fork
- § Sanders County
- § Bonner County

Noxon / Cabinet Gorge Trail Planning Project

Corridor Map - Sheet 1

Avista Corp. Land Uses

- Conservation 1 / Closed / Restricted
- Other Avista Land

Other Lands

- Private
- County
- Private Corporation
- State
- USA
- Water

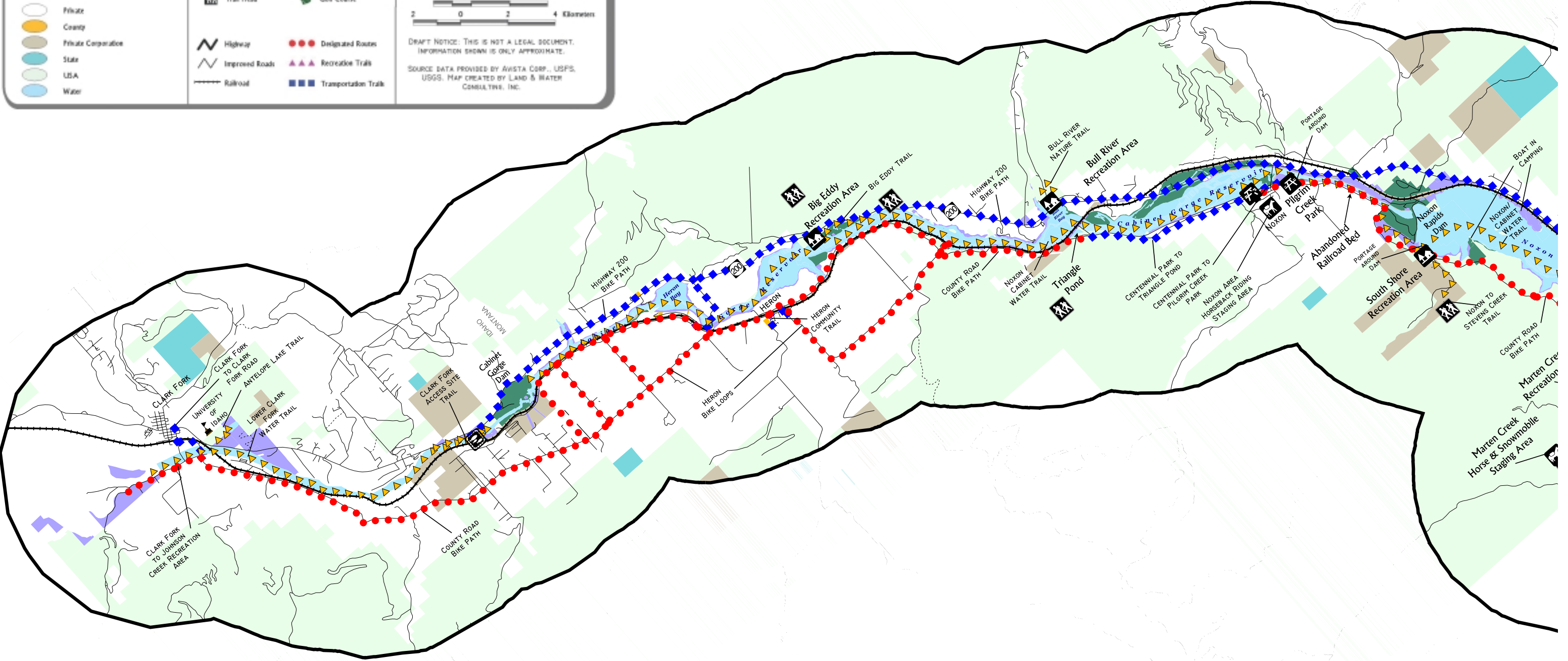
Legend

Recreation Area	Fishing Access Site
Park	Fish Hatchery
Horse Staging Area	School
Trail Head	Golf Course
Highway	Designated Routes
Improved Roads	Recreation Trails
Railroad	Transportation Trails

1 0 1 2 Miles
2 0 2 4 Kilometers

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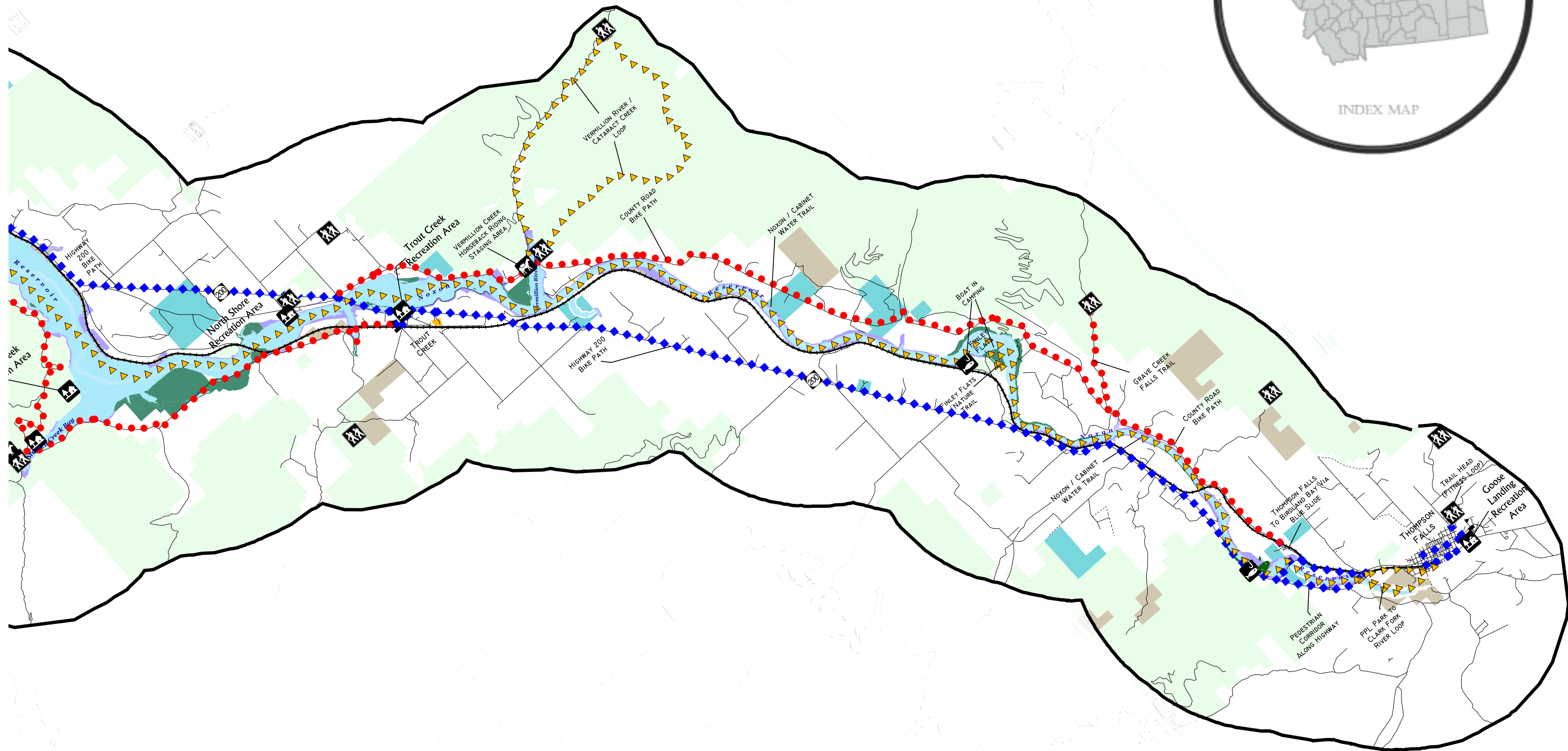




Figure 38: A sketch of the County Road Bike Path along side Blue Slide Road near the turnoff for Graves Creek.

Recreational Trails

The primary purpose of this trail type is recreation, although it may also serve a transportation linkage function. There are four sub-categories of recreation trails: multi-use trails, horseback riding staging areas, nature trails, and water trails. Each of these are described below:

- § Multi-use trails will be designed to accommodate for various users such as hikers, bicyclists, joggers, rollerbladers, and in some cases equestrians and cross country skiers and snowmobilers in the winter. In many cases these trails will be highly accessible for wheelchair users. Trail widths will vary depending on the type of users. Dual pathways may be provided in some locations to accommodate both horseback riders and bicyclists. A paved or hardened surface of about 10-foot for bicyclists along-side a 6-foot hardened soil or woodchip path for equestrians is recommended. For trails with only hikers and bicyclists, the recommended width is 15-foot, with a 10-foot wide paved path for bicyclists, and a 2.5-foot wide hardened dirt path on either side for walkers. However the width may be smaller in some areas where topography or other natural constraints exist. The minimum recommended width is 10-feet. Trees, vines, and other vegetation should be trimmed to achieve an 8-foot vertical clearance for bicyclists and walkers and 10-feet to accommodate horseback riders.
- § Horseback riding staging areas involve creating staging areas for equestrian users to access existing trails. This will involve creating parking and turn around areas large enough to accommodate horse trailers. These areas may also include hitching posts; unloading ramps; vault toilets; trashcans; and minimal regulatory signage. These staging areas would be located near existing Forest Service or other equestrian trails. New trail development is not proposed for horseback riding. These staging areas, where appropriate could be used for cross country skiers and snowmobilers in the winter.

- § Nature Trails are short loop trails that are located in settings that are suitable for wildlife viewing, interpretation, and education. Users would include walkers and hikers. These trails provide a unique opportunity for residents and children to learn about their surroundings and environment. Several themes and methods have been identified that would be suitable for the lower Clark Fork valley (see the Interpretation and Education chapter for more information on methods and themes). Trail surfacing may include hardened compacted soil or woodchips. Recommended trail width is five-feet, with vertical clearance of 7-feet. Habitat enhancement projects in these areas will be emphasized to improve opportunities for viewing wildlife (e.g., nesting boxes for birds, dead snags for woodpeckers, and cavity nesting wildlife, etc.)
- § Water Trails are a stretch of water that has been mapped out with the intent to create a scenic experience for recreational canoers and kayakers. Water trails usually consist of access points for parking and launching, designated day-use picnic areas and campsites, and may include portage trails around major obstacles including dams. Many cases existing recreation areas can be used as access points for the water trail. A key component to developing water trail opportunities is to prepare a map that identifies public access points and campsites, portage areas, local facilities (restaurants, motels), points of natural or cultural interest, wildlife viewing areas, and land-based trails.

Following are ideas for recreation trails in the lower Clark Fork valley:

1) PPL Park to the Clark Fork River Loop

A multi-use loop trail of 3 miles from the PPL Island Park along Maiden Lane to PPL Power Park, then along the Clark Fork River to the Hwy 200 bridge, back to town along highway 200, and returning to the park (see map1). This trail is envisioned to be a paved multi-use hiking, biking, rollerblading, and wheelchair accessible path.

A spur trail would connect Island Park to the south side of the river by rehabilitating the existing bridge. This will create a pedestrian connection from the town of Thompson Falls to public property (county, state and federal) across the river with various hiking and biking trails.

Concepts, Opportunities and Constraints:

- § Provides river access
- § Connects the PPL Island Park with the PPL Power Park
- § Provides access to public lands with numerous trail opportunities
- § Provides close-to-home recreation opportunities for Thompson Falls

Potential Partners:

- § City of Thompson Falls
- § Community Beautification Group
- § Community Tourism Assessment Program
- § Chamber of Commerce



Figure 39: The PPL park shown above could serve as a trailhead for the proposed trail.



Figure 40: Artist rendering of the proposed trail along side the river near the PPL Park.

2) Noxon to Stevens Creek

This trail opportunity is along an abandoned railroad bed. Communities throughout the country are utilizing their old railroad beds as trails. This is one of two potential rail-to-trail conversions in the lower Clark Fork valley. Dual pathways (paved and unpaved) are envisioned continuing east from Pilgrim Creek Park along the abandoned railroad grade to good viewpoints of Noxon Dam and continuing on to the South Shore dispersed area to Forest Road #2746 and up to Stevens Creek, about 9 miles long (see map 3). From Road #2746, trail users can connect to a number of Forest Service trails. One potential 8-mile loop is to connect to trail #1099 up to Stevens Peak and then back down to Tusker Hill on trail #1083 and then back to road #2746. A staging area and parking for horse trailers could be established near the town of Noxon. These dual pathways are envisioned to serve multiple users including horseback riders, bicyclists, and hikers.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Rail- to-Trail Opportunity
- § Connects to Forest Service Roads and Trails
- § Provides great views of the reservoir and Noxon Dam
- § Connects to two peaks
- § Close-to-home opportunity for the town of Noxon Potential Partners:
- § Noxon
- § Horseback Riding Groups
- § Sanders County



Figure 41: Artist Rendering of the trail from Noxon to Stevens Creek

3) University of Idaho to Antelope Lake

A multi-use trail connection from the University of Idaho (U of I), Field Campus to Antelope Lake (see map 5). The total one-way trip is approximately 2 miles. There is an existing trail that leads to Antelope Lake, but the proposal suggests signing and promotion of the trail by developing a map or brochure. The proposal may also include improved sanitation conditions.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Connects to a Forest Service Trail
- § Connects to the U of I field campus
- § Creates awareness of existing trail resources in the area

Potential Partners:

- § Clark Fork
- § University of Idaho
- § U.S. Forest Service



Figure 42: Antelope Lake

4) Snowmobile Opportunity

Create awareness of existing snowmobile opportunities in areas such as Minton Peak, Bloom Peak, Marten Creek, and Bottle Peak area (see map 6). Snowmobilers using these areas can access over a hundred miles of groomed and ungroomed trails. Work under this opportunity may include building a warming hut in the area of Bloom Peak or Gem Peak. Improved parking is also needed. This may include dual use of the proposed horse trailhead near Marten Creek and/or improved parking on Minton Peak Road. Other work may include creating a brochure with a map of this area, and signage of the trails in the area.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Creates awareness of existing trail resources in the area
- § Improves parking and trail facilities

Potential Partners:

- § Snowmobiling Groups
- § U.S. Forest Service

5) Big Eddy

There is a 1-mile long multi-use trail opportunity along the reservoir east of the U.S.F.S Big Eddy Recreation Area to Highway 200 (see map 6). This short trail provides great views of the reservoir. There is also potential to connect to trail #866 that goes to Squaw mountain and/or Black Tail trail. Hikers, joggers, and bicyclists could use this trail. This trail would be paved or hard surfaced and accessible for wheelchairs. It could become a short diversion off the proposed Highway 200 bike path in the long term future. Last, it would provide a short hiking opportunity for weary road travelers at a highway rest stop.



Figure 43: An informal trail near Big Eddy with the reservoir behind it.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Provides great views of the reservoir
- § Connects to Big Eddy Recreation Area

Potential Partners:

- § U.S. Forest Service
- § Sanders County

6) Clark Fork Access Site

After Highway 200 is moved near the Overman Quarry site, there will be an opportunity for a multi-use trail approximately one-mile long starting downstream of the Cabinet Gorge Dam access point to the Overmen Quarry Veterans of Foreign Wars site (see map 6). Hikers, joggers, and bicyclists could use this trail. This trail would be paved or hard surfaced to accommodate bicyclists. This trail could become a short diversion off of the highway 200 bike path in the long term future and could offer a short hiking opportunity for weary road travelers at a highway rest stop.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Provides nice views of the water

Potential Partners:

- § Sanders County

7) Vermilion Creek Road Horseback Riding Staging Area

A trailhead supporting equestrian users could be established near the intersection of Blue Slide Road and Vermilion Creek Road to encourage connection with the Forest Service trails (see map 6). Trail users including horseback riders and hikers could access a loop trail that would start on the Blue Slide Road and go up Vermilion Creek Road and connect to the Cataract Creek trailhead (#847) to West Fork trail (# 842) and then to Water Hill trail that connects back to Blue Slide Road, (approximately 15 miles).

Another connection that could be accessed via this staging area is a trailhead three miles up Vermilion Creek Road (#892). This trail runs along side the west fork of Canyon Creek and goes to Canyon Peak and Twenty Peak, and from there it connects on to Silver Butte Mountain and alpine lake.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Connects to Forest Service roads and trails
- § Connects to a number of lakes

Potential Partners:

- § Horseback riding groups
- § U.S. Forest Service



Figure 44: U.S.F.S. Water Hill Trail



Figure 45: An informal recreation site near Vermilion Creek Road & Blue Slide Road, a possible site for a trailhead.

8) Marten Creek Bay Horseback Riding Staging Area

There is potential to build a trailhead supporting equestrian users near Marten Creek Bay. This would allow access to and encourage use of several Forest Service trails in this area. This staging area could also be utilized as a snowmobile staging area in the winter.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Connects to Forest Service roads and trails

Potential Partners:

- § Horseback riding groups
- § U.S. Forest Service
- § Snowmobile Groups



Figure 46: View of Marten Creek Bay.

9) Finley Flats Nature Trail

Finley Flats is designated conservation 1 in Avista’s Land Use Management Plan and is managed for fish and wildlife resources. This area would be a great place to create an interpretive watchable wildlife area, where visitor’s could learn about the rich fish and wildlife resources around them. There is also an excellent view of the Blue Slide from Finley Flats and this unique geologic feature could also be interpreted (see map 6). This trail is envisioned to be an unpaved hiking, interpretive loop trail.



Figure 47: View of Finley Flats from the Blue Slide Road.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Opportunity to create an outdoor classroom
- § Opportunity to learn and view unique natural resources
- § Opportunity to enhance wildlife habitat and develop a ‘watchable wildlife’ area.

Potential Partners:

- § U.S. Forest Service
- § School Districts
- § Sanders County
- § Audubon Society or other conservation groups
- § Green Mountain Conservation District

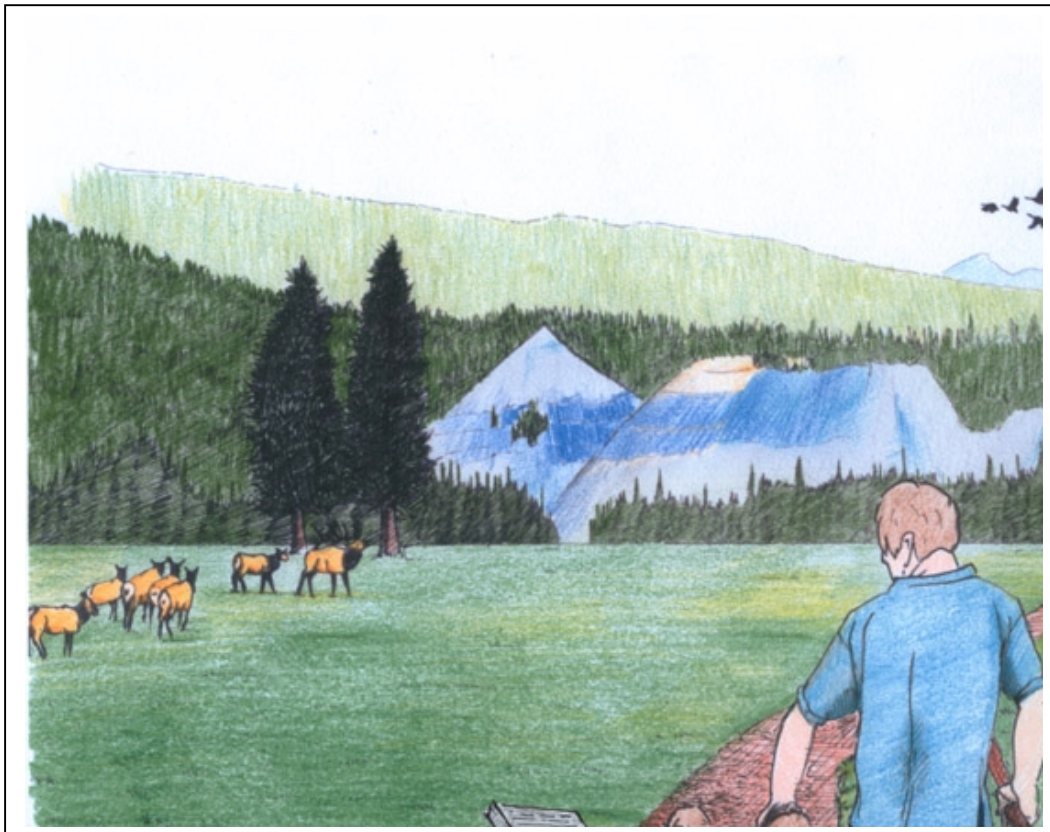


Figure 48: Artist rendering of Finley Flats Nature Trail

10) Bull River Nature Trail

There is an opportunity for a short interpretive loop trail in the U.S. Forest Service Bull River day-use area (see map 6).

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Opportunity to educate users on natural and/or cultural resources

§ U.S. Forest Service

§ Bull River Outdoor Education Association

Potential Partners:

11) Cabinet-Noxon Water Trail

A water trail is envisioned along both the Noxon and Cabinet Gorge reservoirs (see map 6). Currently some recreationists kayak or canoe from Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park to the Flathead river to the confluence of the Flathead river and the Clark Fork near Dixon and then on to Thomson Falls and finally to Lake Pend'Oreille. The water trail in the Cabinet and Noxon reservoirs would consist of designated put in and take out sites, designated campsites (for day and overnight use), and public areas to portage around the dams. In addition signs and informational materials would be developed to inform users of these opportunities.



Figure 49: Campsite on the north shore that could be used as a boat-in site for water trail users.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Provides a unique water-based trail opportunity for the lower Clark Fork

Potential Partners:

- § Thompson Falls
- § Noxon
- § Trout Creek
- § Heron
- § Sanders County
- § Bonner County

12) Cabinet Gorge Dam to Johnson Creek Water Trail

This trail opportunity consists of promoting and signing a water trail along the lower Clark Fork River from just below Cabinet Gorge Dam to Johnson Creek Recreation Area (see map 6). This trail would connect to the Clark Fork Delta water trail system at the Johnson Creek Recreation area. This would require development or designation of put-in and take-out sites as well as appropriately spaced stopping places for camping and picnicking.

Concepts, Opportunities, and Constraints:

- § Encourages and directs non-motorized boating use in the lower river
- § Creates opportunity for day-use float trips

Potential Partners:

- § Clark Fork
- § Bonner County
- § U.S. Corps of Engineers



Figure 50: Sketch of a water trail campsite just above Noxon Dam.

Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Review

Resource Protection

A goal of the trail system is to encourage public stewardship of trails. Some objectives to meet this goal are (1) protect sensitive lands and resources and (2) promote stewardship of natural resources through education and interpretation.

Natural resource protection will be a major component in the design of the trail system. Trail routes will be chosen that avoid impacts to natural and cultural resources and pathways will be carefully designed to avoid sensitive areas including wetlands, riparian vegetation, and cultural resources, yet provide appropriate access to such sites. Many design techniques exist to minimize resource impacts while still providing public access and enjoyment to sensitive areas. Education and interpretation opportunities will also be provided through the trail system. This will help inform users about sensitive resources and they can do to protect them. This is an effective way to create stewardship for the trail segments and the resources.

Environmental Review and Permitting

During the planning process that Avista and twenty-six agencies and organizations undertook for the relicensing of the two dams, extensive environmental information was gathered about

aquatic, terrestrial, and cultural resources in the lower Clark Fork. This information was considered during the development of the conceptual trail routes, and the routes avoided sensitive habitat and cultural areas. The level of trail development (i.e. surfacing, use) for each segment was planned to be consistent with Avista's existing land use categories identified in the Land Use Management Plan. Avista has classified land holdings into 'best use' categories in order to balance development with resource protection. The level of activity allowed varies from category to category. The 'best use' categories are described below:

- Conservation 1: Lands with high resource values. Trails typically not permitted.
- Conservation 2: Lands with resource values that are compatible with public use. Trails may be permitted.
- Public Recreation: Lands with recreation facilities that are open to the public. Trail are permitted.
- Commercial Recreation: Lands with commercial recreation facilities that are operated by a private party. Trails may be permitted.
- Private Recreation: Lands that are available for recreation use by adjacent landowners and allow public access. Trails may be permitted.
- Private Residential: Lands with private homes. Trails may be permitted.
- Closed / Restricted: Lands that are not open to the public. Trails not permitted.
- Non-hydro project property: Avista property not associated with the Clark Fork Hydroelectric Project. Trails may be permitted.

In addition to the proposed trail opportunities avoiding critical resource areas and being consistent with existing land use categories, the preliminary trail routes were also reviewed by resource experts from Avista to identify potential conflicts with natural and cultural resources. No conflicts were identified at this phase in the planning process. Proposed trail segments will also be reviewed by the Cultural Resource Management Group consisting of experts from the Montana and Idaho State Historic Preservation Offices, Avista, Native American Tribes, and the U.S. Forest Service to identify any potential conflicts. In addition, further environmental review and permitting will likely be needed before any trail segment is implemented. Final approval by the Management Committee of the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement will be required for all projects.

Following is preliminary information on topics that may be subject to environmental review during the planning and construction phases of the trail system.

Wetlands

Wetlands are important ecosystems that provide unique habitat and in some cases bank stabilization. Wetland areas were disappearing in the United States at an alarming rate prior to the enactment of laws designed to protect these resources. Therefore, development proposals are now required to obtain a permit that demonstrates how any proposed impacts to wetlands would be mitigated.

Portions of the lower Clark Fork trail system, (i.e. Finely Flats Interpretive Trail), may be located near some wetland areas, and will be designed in a way that allows people access that will not have direct negative impacts. However a permit may be required from the States of Montana or Idaho Departments of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Threatened and Endangered Species Act was passed by Congress to identify, list and protect species of plants or animals considered to be threatened or endangered with possible extinction. Most states also have laws that protect rare, threatened, and endangered species. Protecting species habitat provides a home for these plants and animals to live and it is the most common and effective way of protecting species.

As stated in the resource inventory, recent surveys found several threatened and endangered species that exist within the project area. Wildlife and fish species include bald eagles, peregrine falcons, grizzly bears, gray wolf, and bull trout. Two rare plant species – pyramid spiraea and twin clover - were also found.

All trails will be designed to minimize any impacts to plant and animal populations. Many of the trail opportunities identified in the planning process are along or next to existing roads, and therefore no impact to species habitat is expected. However, some trail opportunities including Finley Flats will require new trail development in a habitat rich area. Therefore, consultation with wildlife managers may be necessary. As stated above, preliminary discussions with Avista biologists did not reveal any potential conflicts with sensitive habitat for the threatened and endangered species in the lower Clark Fork.

Water Resources (Water Quality and Quantity)

A number of laws have been passed to protect clean water and our nation's rivers and wetlands from development projects that are not in the public's interest. Now, any project that involves dredging or filling in the "waters of the United States", is required to obtain a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The State Departments of Environmental Quality are also often involved in commenting on the permits issued by the Corps or in some cases have their own permitting process.

Most of the trail opportunities identified for the lower Clark Fork would not involve dredging or filling in bodies of water. However, there are a couple of opportunities that may require a permit from the Corps. These opportunities include the trail from Centennial Park to Pilgrim Creek Park, which would require replacement of an old railroad bridge over a creek and the nature trail at Finley Flats that may involve a trail along wetland areas. The trails will be developed to minimize impacts and obtaining a permit is not expected to be an issue.

Archaeology/Historic Preservation

Archaeology and historic preservation laws exist to protect against unnecessary and unauthorized disturbance of historical and/or pre-historical artifacts and/or human remains. Impacts to any historic buildings or structures are not likely. Many of the trail opportunities are located near or along existing roads and therefore have been subject to construction and are in previously disturbed areas; therefore impacts are expected to be minimal. Prior to completion of this concept plan, the trail opportunities will be reviewed by the Cultural Resource Management Group to identify any potential conflicts.

Avista and its partnering groups and agencies will take all reasonable and customary precautions to avoid impacting archaeological sites, and in the event human remains or artifacts

are uncovered during construction, will immediately cease construction activity, secure the area, and initiate consultation with the Cultural Resource Management Group and the State Historic Preservation Office(s).

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION

Management

The lower Clark Fork trail system is envisioned to be a system of trails that is located on lands owned by Avista Corporation as well as lands in public ownership between Thompson Falls, Montana and Clark Fork, Idaho. It will be jointly developed and managed in partnership with agencies that own or manage lands that segments of the trail system cross. The Avista Corporation will serve as the lead or anchor organization in this partnership. Potential partners identified include Avista, the Idaho and Montana state highway departments, the Department of Natural Resources Conservation, the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department, city and county government, the U.S. Forest Service, Montana Rail Link, and school districts in Montana and Idaho.

It is anticipated that a number of 'Memorandums of Agreement' will be signed for various trail segments with Avista and other partners for sharing development, maintenance and operation costs, and implementing operational procedures for the trail segments (see Appendix III for an example agreement). It is likely that different partners will be interested in various trail segments. Close and regular coordination between management officials of all partnering agencies is crucial to ensuring that the system of trails is designed, developed, and managed in a cohesive manner. The partners will all use standards adopted for the trail system for signs, materials, colors, amenities and interpretation that will give a unified identity to all segments of the system.

Maintenance

The lower Clark Fork trail system is intended to be a low maintenance trail system, and minimal, regular work should be required to maintain it. Some tasks will be needed at more frequent intervals including trash collection and disposal, toilet cleaning, litter removal, horse manure and dog scat clean up, sweeping, and when and where appropriate during the winter season plowing the parking lots. Other maintenance requirements including trail surface and sign repair and replacement as well as tree and vegetation management (i.e. tree pruning, spraying weeds, removing hazardous or fallen trees) may only be needed once every year or two. Maintenance requirements may also include watching for and cleaning up any vandalism that may occur within the trail corridor. Damage from unpredictable natural events, such as fire or flooding will require repairs and restoration as they occur.

To keep the trail segments in good working condition, establishing and funding a maintenance budget and schedule, including an emergency fund for unusual occurrences is appropriate. It is anticipated that maintenance will be shared among the various partners. A funding budget could be established by contributions from all of the landowners and managers or each partner could contribute time and resources for maintenance crews. Crews could include staff from the following organizations: Avista, the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department, the U.S. Forest Service, the Idaho and Montana State Departments of Transportation, and city and county agencies. Maintenance could also be carried out through a summer hire program for local youth and/or through a volunteer program.

Law Enforcement/Emergency Response

The lower Clark Fork trail system will likely be located within the jurisdictions of the Sheriff Departments in Sanders County, Montana, and Bonner County, Idaho. It is anticipated that agreements will be arranged with both Sheriff Departments for regular patrol and drive-by surveillance of the trail segments, particularly trailheads and parking lots. A payment system may need to be established to support the sheriff's patrol. In addition, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MDFWP) has a paid ranger that could spend part of his/her time patrolling the trail system. Upon implementation of the trail system, if additional patrolling besides the Sheriff's office and MDFWP is needed and funding is available, additional patrol staff may also be hired.

Another effective tool is to implement a neighborhood watch or community "adopt a trail" program in which neighbors and local residents become the 'eyes and ears' for the management agency. The trail system is intended to be a

community asset and getting local residents involved in its care, management and operations will keep it safe and secure.



Figure 51: Volunteer Patrol on the El Dorado trail in California.

In case of serious accidents or health problems that may occur, emergency vehicles will have access to the trail system in areas that can accommodate a motorized vehicle. Since recreational motorized use will not be allowed, removable posts (called bollards) will be located at points where trail segments intersect road corridors. Emergency personnel will have a key allowing them to remove the bollards and drive down the trail segments. In more rural trail segments emergency personnel access may be limited to foot traffic similar to a national forest.

Good Neighbor Policy

Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with landowners and leaseholders located near segments of the trail is a high priority. It is important that everyone living near the trail system know whom to contact with questions, suggestions, or concerns. An on-going advisory/management committee will be established to oversee the design, development, and management of the trail system and address any future concerns or opportunities that may arise in the future. Nearby landowners and leaseholders could serve as a community watch group to monitor the trail segments and alert the managers about maintenance, safety, and other operational matters of concern.

Pet Policy

Pets will be allowed on the trail system. Pet owners will be encouraged to keep their pets on a leash and clean up after their pets through the use of signs. In places where segments of the trail

pass through Montana State property or near private residents, pets will be required to be kept on a leash. To protect wildlife, where appropriate, pets may be restricted from certain segments of the trail that may cross sensitive wildlife areas.

Volunteers

It is recommended that the managers develop and implement a volunteer program that allows local residents to get involved with the construction as well as day-to-day operations and management of the trail system. This would develop public stewardship and ownership of the trail system. Volunteer sources include school groups; friends of the trail; 4-H; boy and girl youth organizations; civic organizations; and bicycle, ski, equestrian and hiking groups. To use volunteer assistance most effectively, a volunteer program should be established. Components of a successful volunteer program include (1) a full-time volunteer coordinator, (2) task identification, (3) training and recruitment, and (4) rewards and recognition. Volunteers may:

- § Adopt a section of the trail and take responsibility for litter patrol, monitoring, and light maintenance work
- § Help install and maintain trail amenities, such as benches, picnic tables, and signs
- § Patrol the trail and provide visitor information and assistance



Figure 52: Volunteers helping to build a trail in Ashland, Oregon.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Interpretation refers to a program designed to provide informative and educational material to people on a variety of topics that are directly related to a specific area or region. These topics are usually related to the areas natural and cultural resources, but can include other topics such as local industry and economic activity. This information can be presented utilizing a variety of media such as signs and displays, brochures, guided walks and tours, web sites, audio signs, self-guided interpretive loop trails, audio guides, information kiosks, and K-12 curriculum guides.

Interpretation and education along the lower Clark Fork trail system will highlight areas that are rich for their wildlife, plants, and scenic beauty; illustrate hydrologic and geologic processes; offer glimpses into past human history, land use, and folklore within the lower Clark Fork watershed; and explain/educate about current industrial, recreational, and economic activity in the region (e.g., dams and hydropower production; forest practices; fishing; boating; etc.).

Interpretive Themes

There are literally hundreds of topics that could be interpreted within the lower Clark Fork watershed. However, when developing an interpretive program, it is important to carefully select a few primary themes and keep to them. Some programs try to do too much and end up diluting the message.

Following are the recommended themes for developing an interpretive and education program for the lower Clark Fork trail system.

Wildlife, Plants and Habitat

There are abundant opportunities to teach people about various habitats and the wildlife and plants that utilize different areas. Examples include the river, reservoir, streams, sloughs, and tributaries; wetlands; riparian areas; and dry forested uplands. These types of areas provide unique and special habitat that is better suited to the specific needs of some plants and animals over others. Many people enjoy having the opportunity to learn about different plants and wildlife they can see and observe in specific areas.

Human History and Culture

Human use and occupation of the lower Clark Fork River extends back at least 8,000 years. Over time people living in and traveling through the area have camped, hunted, fished, harvested plants, timber and other forest products, built trails, railroads and roads, established towns, and constructed dams. The first inhabitants were the ancestors of the present day Salish-speaking and Kootenai people and the entire Clark Fork region is a place of great importance to them. It is the location of their creation stories, folklore and history. Later in time, Euro-American and Chinese immigrants settled in the region. These fur traders, explorers, missionaries, lumbermen, railroaders, and homesteaders formed historic associations with particular resources and aspects of the lower Clark Fork landscape. These themes and stories are of great interest to residents and

visitors to the region and there are many locations in the corridor where these stories could be told.

In the early 1800's trapper and geographer David Thompson traveled through the lower Clark Fork valley. Both the town of Thompson Falls and the Thompson River are his namesake. It was in this area that Thompson established the Saleesh House in 1809. The Saleesh House was used by trappers and traders until the 1820 when it was abandoned. Many facets of this story could be told through interpretation.

Geology and Hydrology

The geologic and hydrologic history of the lower Clark Fork River is an obvious choice for interpretive and educational programs. The geologic formations and soil series that are observed in the Clark Fork river today are predominantly the result of glacial forces that occurred 12,000 to 20,000 years ago. Huge ice dams formed in northern Idaho during this time and blocked the Clark Fork River, forming Glacial Lake Missoula. At its maximum advance, the dam was over 2,000 feet high and the lake covered an area of 3,000 square miles. Glacial Lake Missoula drained several times and is believed to have reached a maximum discharge of about 20 times the flow of all the rivers on earth today.

Current Land Use: Industrial, Recreation, and Economic Activity

Current land use in the region is also a topic of interest to residents and visitors alike. The major subject relates to dams and hydropower production, but other topics include forest practices, recreation, and local economic activity. This topic provides an opportunity to include business, industrial, and economic interests in trail planning and management.

Interpretive Methods

Site Selection

The success of interpretive efforts is strongly influenced by the location chosen for the effort. Good site selection will insure that there is a compelling story at that specific site directly related to the subject matter of the interpretive material. By planning and coordinating location sites, interpretive theme's can be fully explored without over producing or cluttering the landscape.

Several questions should be considered when considering sites:

What are the best sites for telling the selected stories?

Will sensitive natural and/or cultural resources be affected by attracting visitors to the site?

Why are visitors there? What are they interested in learning about?

What construction is involved? Will it require a side trail, a roadside pulloff, clearing?

How accessible is the site?

Are there safety hazards?



Figure 53: Interpretive sign along the Millrace loop trail in Springfield, Oregon.

Signs and Exhibits

The purpose of interpretation is to enhance a person's experience of a site and to introduce its stories. To be most effective, signs and exhibits should be unified, uncluttered, and compatible with the site.

The development and use of a common and consistent 'family' of signs that is recognizable as one system creates a sense of unity among the sites and various interpretive methods. Uniformity in colors, text style, size and the use of a common layout style help achieve this goal. Other tips to consider when developing interpretive signs are:

- § Utilize high quality graphics to add interest and variety to interpretive materials.
- § Keep text to a minimum
- § Provide enough graphics to support the subject
- § Do not overload the panels – each panel should tell one story
- § Keep it visually simple and uncluttered. Visitors want to experience the site, and they will ignore long, complex messages



Figure 54: An interpretive display along the Boise Greenbelt in Idaho.

Brochures

Brochures are an inexpensive and effective way to provide interpretive and educational material and they offer a great deal of flexibility in their design and use. For example, a series of brochures could be produced on different subjects and made available through the mail, at trailheads, or on a website. Another use of brochures is to develop self-guided interpretive loop trails and make brochures available at the trailhead. Visitors could be asked to return the brochure at the end of the trail, purchase the brochure at a nominal price, or download their own copy from a website.

Like signs, brochures should be kept simple and utilize high quality graphics to support the subject matter. Do not attempt to put too much information into brochures or people won't read them.

Guided Walks and Tours

Developing a program to bring in speakers and guest lecturers to lead guided walks or to speak at organized events, meetings, and other occasions is an excellent way to provide interpretive and educational material. Interpretive walks along trails could be organized on numerous subjects such as bird watching, Clark Fork fisheries, wetland habitat, reptiles and amphibians, bugs, snakes and spiders, and Native American folklore to name a few.

Websites

Developing and maintaining a website about the trail system could include a section devoted to providing interpretive and educational materials. This site could:

- § provide detailed information on the natural and cultural resources of the lower Clark Fork river
- § contain brochures and fact sheets that are easily downloaded
- § include a curriculum guide developed jointly with local school district educators to compliment their specific curriculum requirements

Self-Guided Interpretive Loop Trails

There are numerous locations and opportunities where it would be possible to develop short self-guided interpretive loop trails that connect to the main trail system. Self-guided trails are designed to lead people along a path containing interpretive signs and/or displays at frequent intervals. Typically these explain about the plants, wildlife and habitat found along the trail and reveal some of nature's marvelous secrets. These might also lead the visitor to a rewarding view or observation deck

Information Kiosks

A series of information kiosks could be designed and located at trailheads and other prominent areas in the trail corridor. These could be used to provide information on rules and regulations as well as to provide interpretive or educational material.

K-12 Curriculum Guides

Coordinating the development of a curriculum guide in partnership with local school educators is another opportunity for developing an interpretive and education program. It is strongly recommended this be coordinated jointly with local school officials so that it can compliment their specific curriculum requirements. Such a document could contain ideas for classroom activities and lessons that culminate in a field trip out on the trail in a 'living' classroom. Curriculum guides can also be posted on a local trail website where teachers and students can easily access the information.

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Next Steps

Future Planning Steps

This document proposes a system of trails at a conceptual level. Further planning and coordination is needed to determine if these proposed trails are technically, environmentally, economically, and legally feasible.

Before any trail in the system is implemented additional planning work will be needed. Each trail is unique and different levels of work will be needed depending on each individual project. Key components to the planning work required for many of the trail projects include:

- § Detailed engineering and design work
- § Environmental review and permitting
- § Identifying funding opportunities
- § Coordination and building partnerships

Some projects, like promoting and signing a bike route along existing county roads would require very little work, while others such as constructing a new bike trail along highway 200 would take an extensive amount of engineering and environmental documents to determine the feasibility. In addition, the types of grants that may be acquired would also likely require certain levels of design and environmental work, for example if a federal grant is attained a National Environmental Policy Act documents would need to be prepared and additional permits would need to be acquired.

Implementation/Prioritization

An important piece to the implementation of the lower Clark Fork system of trails is finding and securing grants. Avista has a limited amount of funding and will be working with other partners to look for additional funding sources. The funding section of this document identifies a list of key programs that fund trail and environmental education projects. Another important element to the implementation process is partnerships. Avista will be looking to the communities in the valley to work in partnership to implement the trail system.

Since implementation is largely dependent upon the availability of funding opportunities and the development of partnerships and readiness of the communities in the valley, Avista intends to be opportunistic and flexible while working towards implementing the trail system. The planning team has identified an initial list of priorities and this list is intended to establish a framework for initiating the implementation process. However, Avista and its partners fully intend to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves and be responsive to the communities in the area, so therefore the actual implementation may be quite different from this conceptual framework.

Another component of the implementation and management of the trail system is continuing a trail Advisory Committee. This committee could meet once or twice a year to evaluate the implementation process and priorities. The committee, who would serve as a link to the communities in the valley, could also help form partnerships and identify sources of funding and volunteer groups to help with the implementation.

Trail Priorities

The trail concepts discussed in this trail plan can be placed into one of the following three categories used to describe the time frame in which they might be implemented.

- 1) **Near Term Projects** typically fill an immediate need and / or have one or several organizations that are available to partner on project implementation. Near-term project can also be projects that are quickly and easily implemented. These projects are great opportunities that allow the trail system to get started right away and they allow the residents and visitors of the lower Clark Fork to start enjoying the benefits of trails.
- 2) **Mid Term Projects** can be more complex with longer time frames for implementation. Often these projects can be phased in over a period of years as public interest dictates.
- 3) **Long Term Projects** reflect an ultimate goal over time. These projects are more involved and can be phased in over a period of years or even decades, as opportunities become available.

The trail categories are intended to act as a general guideline for trail implementation. As discussed above, priorities can change to take advantage of new opportunities and ideas. Project priority can also change depending on support from the public and the availability of potential partners.

Near Term Projects:

- Thompson Falls to Graves Creek
- Noxon to Stevens Creek loop
- Pilgrim Creek Park to Centennial Park
- Heron to Quinn's Cut
- Heron – Lower River Road Loop
- Clark Fork to Clark Fork Road
- University of Idaho to Antelope Lake
- Cabinet Gorge Dam to Johnson Creek Water Trail
- Cabinet – Noxon Water trail
- County Road Bike Route

Mid Term Projects:

- Thompson Falls to PPL Park to the Clark Fork River Loop
- Thompson Falls to the Birdland Bay Bridge via Blue Slide Road
- Thompson Falls Community-Wide Trail
- Trout Creek Community Trail
- Centennial Park to Triangle Pond

- Heron Community Wide Trail
- Clark Fork to Johnson Creek bike route
- Finley Flats Nature Trail
- Bull River Nature Trail
- Marten Creek Bay Horseback Riding Staging Area
- Clark Fork Access Site
- Snowmobile Opportunity

Long Term Project

- Vermilion River Horseback Riding Staging Area
- Big Eddy
- Highway 200 Bike Path

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding Sources

Federal

TEA-21

The most significant funding source for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). It provides for planning, design, and construction and reconstruction of the nation's transportation facilities.

TEA-21 contains several different designations of money for specific program areas. Each state is required to set aside 10 percent of its annual Surface Transportation Program funds for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs). The Surface Transportation Program was funded for \$33 billion for six years. The program will be up for reauthorization of funding in October 2003. This program has already had profound trail benefits for communities across the country and its potential cannot be understated. Eligible funding categories include:

- § pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- § pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities; and
- § conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails

Other programs of TEA-21 include the National Scenic Byways Program which may be used for "construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists" and the National Highway System funds which may be used to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities on land adjacent to a highway that is part of the National Highway System. For more information see www.byways.org and www.scenic.org.

Contacts

Montana: Montana Department of Transportation – Mike Davis, (406) 444-4383

Idaho: Idaho Transportation Department - Patti Rainio, (208) 334 8209

Another program of interest in TEA-21 is the Recreation Trails Program that provides funding for construction and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized trails. States must establish a recreational trails advisory committee that represents motorized and non-motorized user groups to assist in developing criteria for awarding and distributing these funds. Of funds distributed to a state, 30 percent must be used for motorized use, 30 percent for non-motorized use, and 40 percent must be used for diverse trail uses of any combination. For more information on this go to www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrail.htm.

Contacts for Recreation Trails Program

Montana: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks - Bob Walker,

(406) 444-4585

Idaho: Idaho Parks and Recreation - Brian Miller, (208) 334-4180

EPA Environmental Education Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers a grant program for environmental education projects. Grants of under \$5000 are encouraged, but can be higher. Contact: Sally Hanft 206 553-1207 or 1-800 424-4EPA

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has two relevant grant programs.

- § Resource Conservation and Development Program. This program funds projects that include natural resource improvements, community improvement, recreation, information/education, forestry, economic development, and fish & wildlife. Local governments and nonprofit organizations can apply. The project must be located in an area that is a designated Resource, Conservation and Development (RC&D) area. The grant funds up to twenty-five percent of the total project costs, with a limit of \$50,000 per project. The deadline for grant submission is October 1st.

Contacts:

Montana: North Central Montana RC&D, Telephone: (406) 434-9161 <http://plrcd.org/>
Idaho: Idaho RC&D (208) 762-4939, ext. 193 or kdingman@plrcd.org
National Coordinator: Terry D'Addio, National RC&D Program Manager, 202-720-0557 or terry.d'addio@usda.gov.

- § Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program. This program provides technical and financial assistance for a wide range of watershed protection and improvement projects. A watershed plan must be completed and approved before grants are issued. The watershed area must be not exceed 250,000 acres. State, local governments, and non-profits may apply. Cost share percentages vary depend on the type of project. Recreation features have a 50/50 percent cost share ratio.

Contacts:

Montana: North Central Montana RC&D, Telephone: (406) 434-9161 <http://plrcd.org/>
Idaho: Idaho RC&D (208) 762-4939, ext. 193 or kdingman@plrcd.org
National Coordinator: Bruce Julian, National Policy Coordinator, Water Resources, 202-720-3042 or bruce.julian@usda.gov.

For more information about these programs, see the Natural Resources Conservation Service's website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has two programs that provide funding for projects on BLM land.

- § Cultural Resource Management Program provides grants to increase public awareness and appreciation of cultural resources; projects can include interpretive signage. Grants are usually around \$10,000.

Contact: BLM, Group Administrator, Cultural and Recreation Group, (202) 452-0330

- § The other program is Recreation Resource Management, which provides grants to increase public awareness and appreciation of recreation values. Projects include partnerships in Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace, interpretive programming, recreational fishing, and river corridor trail management.

Contact: BLM, Group Manager, Recreation Group, (202) 452-5041

U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service has two applicable grant programs under their Economic Action initiative.

- § Rural Community Assistance Program provides technical and financial assistance to rural communities located in or near National Forests and Grasslands that have become economically disadvantaged due to public land management decisions. Grants are provided on a competitive basis to eligible communities, counties, and tribes for development of strategic action plans and for funding projects contained in those plans.

Contact:

USFS Rural Community Assistance Program Manager, Ron Saranich at rsaranich@fs.fed.us or 503/808-2346.

- § Rural Development – Technical and financial assistance is provided to help strengthen and diversify local economies, especially those experiencing long term economic problems. Communities need not be dependent on Federal lands to be eligible. Grants provide technical assistance and matching funds for natural resource -related projects designed to stimulate economic and social improvements for rural residents.

For more information see the USFS website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/coop/programs/rca/>.

Contacts:

USFS Rural Development Program Manager Bill von Segen at wvonsegen@fs.fed.us or 503/808-2348.

State

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) was enacted by Congress in 1964 to establish a funding source for grants to state and local governments for land acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program is managed by the National Park Service but administered in each state through a governor-appointed state agency responsible to the National Park Service (i.e. federally funded/state administered program). L&WCF grants require a 50% match from state or local funds. Eligible applicants include cities, counties, and recreation and park districts authorized to provide public park and recreation facilities. Areas funded through L&WCF grant assistance are required to be dedicated in perpetuity for public recreation. In Montana, L&WCF is managed by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and in Idaho it is managed by Idaho State Parks

Contacts:

Montana: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks – Walt Timmerman, (406) 444-3753

Idaho: Idaho State Parks and Recreation, Jim Poulsen, (208) 334-4180 ext. 235

Montana State Snowmobiles Program

The State of Montana has a grant program that funds the grooming of snowmobile trails. The program has a total of \$300,000 annually. Any local group, non-profit, local, state, or federal government is eligible to apply. Matching funding is not required.

Contact: Montana Department of Fish and Wildlife – Walt Timmerman, (406) 444-3753

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Foundation

This Foundation provides support for “ensuring the protection of Montana’s natural, cultural and recreational resources for future generations.” The organization was recently established in 1999. Projects are selected by the Board of this Foundation. For more information, please see their website, <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/foundation>.

Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL)

§ The purpose is to fund projects that conserve, develop, manage and preserve water and other renewable resources; preference is given to projects that support the state water plan. In addition to construction/rehabilitation of water supply systems and wastewater systems, the program funds educational efforts and the enhancement of renewable resources such as recreation. Grants are for up to \$100,000. State agency or local governments must sponsor the proposal; grant applications are due in May of every even numbered year.

§ Under the RRGL program there is also a Renewable Resource Project Planning Grants Program that provides funding for preliminary engineering and feasibility analysis for projects that conserve, manage, develop or protect Montana's natural resources. (Same guidelines and criteria as RRGL.) Grants are for up to \$10,000 and can be applied for at any time. More information about both of these grants can be found at <http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us>.

Contact: State of Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation – Bob Fischer
rfischer@state.mt.us or (406) 444-6668.

Private Businesses and Foundations

There are a number of private businesses and foundations that provide small grants for trails and environmental education projects. The grants given through these organizations are harder to track because in any given year some of the grant opportunities will have been discontinued and new opportunities from other organizations will have appeared. A sample of the type of grants offered is listed below. However due to the frequent changes, the best way to capitalize on these types of grants is to research grant opportunities close to the time of implementation through libraries and the Internet. See the Information Sources section, located in this chapter, for publications/sites to look for while completing this research.

The Phillips Petroleum Environmental Partnership Awards program gives grants between \$500-\$5,000 to community organizations doing environmental projects like stream restorations. Grants tend to be given to educational projects with schools or groups working with schools. Matching funds are required. Contact: Patricia Marshall, (918) 661-5139.

The Give to the Earth Foundation funds a variety of small environmental projects. Applicant organization must have minimal administrative overhead and results must be tangible. Typical grant size is \$2,500. Contact: Ellen Liberatori, (800) 933-9628.

The Wiburforce Foundation funds wildlife and habitat protection and environmental education projects. Contact: Timothy Greyhavens, (206) 286-4544.

The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program provides small grants (from \$500 to \$2,500) for greenway and trail projects throughout America. Contact: Denise Swol at The Conservation Fund, (703) 525-6300 or dswol@conservationfund.org.

The Bikes Belong Coalition awards grants of up to \$10,000 each to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects that will be funded by TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Contact: Bikes Belong Coalition, (617) 734-2800 or mail@bikesbelong.org.

Recreation Equipment, Inc. (REI) focuses support on projects that protect outdoor places for recreation (Conservation Grant Program) and help increase participation in outdoor activities (Outdoor Recreation Grants Program.) An REI employee must nominate a potential project. For more information check their website at www.rei.com; follow link to REI Gives.

In-Kind Contributions

Many grant programs require a local match to help demonstrate the community's commitment to the project. Often this 'match' requirement can be met with what is referred to as an 'in-kind' contribution. In-kind contributions are non-monetary donations of labor, equipment and materials to the overall cost of completing a project that can be translated to a dollar value used to meet the matching requirement. Volunteer labor for tasks such as clearing, grading, and construction can go a long way towards meeting local match requirements when applying for grants.

Non-Monetary Sources of Assistance

Volunteers

Individuals, community organizations, corporations and businesses may volunteer for many of the tasks required for development and maintenance of the trail. A few possible volunteer sources include youth groups such as the boy and girl scouts; historical societies; the arts community; senior citizen groups; the Spring Creek Alternative School, service clubs and organizations (e.g., Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis); church groups; and business and/or employee associations. High school and college students seeking internships with recreation or conservation projects may be recruited, too. Reference the earlier 'Operations' chapter pertaining to volunteers for ideas regarding establishing a volunteer program.

Youth Conservation Corps

Youth corps work groups can provide assistance either free of charge or at significantly reduced costs and can support a variety of labor-intensive projects such as trail construction, streambank restoration, habitat improvement, and tree planting.

Prison Crews/Juvenile and Adult Offenders

Prison crews and juvenile and adult offenders required to perform community service are another potential source of assistance for Heritage Trail projects at significantly reduced costs. This can be a win/win situation because many social workers believe that positive work experiences involving conservation and recreation projects play an important role in juvenile rehabilitation programs.

Community Fundraising and Donations

Fundraising

Service clubs and organizations can be encouraged to organize and conduct a wide range of activities to generate revenue for construction and maintenance. Car washes, bake sales, rummage sales, are all possibilities. One idea for an organization, like a scout troop, is a 'Recycle for the Trail' project: collection boxes are conveniently located throughout town and at trail heads encouraging people to donate their recycled cans and bottles to the trail. The organization would regularly collect contributions and deposits the proceeds into an account set up to support trail construction and maintenance.

Donations

Donations are often a big part of funding a trail project. Combined individual and corporate sponsors can potentially contribute thousands of dollars through direct contributions, endowments, or employee challenge/match programs, or donations of necessary construction materials and maintenance supplies.

Information Sources

The best source of information for all federal grant programs is a publication called the “Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.” The catalog is a compendium of federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. It contains information on programs administered by various departments and establishments of the federal government organized by agency, function, subject, and applicant eligibility. The catalog is available at most libraries and is sold on a subscription basis by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. There is a recent website that has been developed that describes Federal Assistance Grants, it is called e-grants and the website is www.grants.gov. A copy of the “Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance” can be found there.

The 1996-97 Pacific Northwest Grantmakers Forum Member Directory lists more than fifty major foundations in the Pacific Northwest. It is available from the Forum at (206) 624-9899, or you can contact a local or regional public library.

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse operates a computer bulletin board that lists grant and loan opportunities, and provides information on funding alternatives, highlights of successful funding methods, and referrals to financing experts. Contact: Brad Maust, (800) 624-8301.

The ‘Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse’ provides technical assistance and information about creating trails and greenways. The clearinghouse is jointly sponsored by the ‘Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’ and ‘The Conservation Fund’. Contact Betsy Goodrich, Manager, Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, 1100 17th Street, NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC, 20036. Call: (202) 974-5123. www.trailsandgreenways.org.

APPENDIX I: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Two series of open houses/public meetings were held during the planning process. The purpose of these meetings was to share the results of the planning effort and listen to the community's thoughts and ideas.

One set was held about half way through the planning process at a point where the planning team had gathered information on natural and cultural resources and had worked with the Advisory Committee on some guidelines for trail use, design concepts, management options, and ideas for interpretation.

The second series was held in conjunction with the release of the draft plan in March 2003. At these meetings the results of the trail opportunities identified in the draft plan were summarized and the community was offered a chance to comment on these opportunities.

Open Houses in June 2002

Two open houses were held one in Thompson Falls on June 17, 2002 and the other in Clark Fork on June 18, 2002. A total of approximately 70 people attended the meetings and some great input was received on where folks would like to see trails and where they do not want trails to go.

Suggestions for trail opportunities include:

- Thompson Falls Dam to highway 200 along the river and back to town along the highway
- Thompson Falls to Birdland Bay Bridge along the Blueslide, back to town along highway 200
- Interpretive loop at or near Finely Flats
- Water trail on both reservoirs and the lower river
- Marten Creek Road from Trout Creek to Noxon to Heron to Clark Fork
- Railroad Bed from Noxon Dam to Triangle Pond.

The Advisory Committee also suggested the following opportunities:

- Along Highway 200
- On Avista lands along the reservoirs
- The abandoned railroad grade from the Town of Noxon to the dam
- The back-side of the reservoir, (Avista land designated as 'Conservation 2')
- The old highway on the south side from Heron to Clark Fork
- Connections to Thompson Falls State Park
- From the State Park to Thompson Falls Dam
- The county road on the south-side of the reservoir from Martin Creek to Noxon

The primary concerns that were voiced about the trail study were (1) concerns that trails would be located near private property, (2) the cost of building any proposed trails would be high, and

(3) that one of the trail segments (Centennial Park to Triangle Pond) would interfere with the current airstrip landing use on the old abandoned railroad.

Based on concerns/comments received the following areas were identified as areas to avoid:

- Avista property from hwy 200 bridge near Thompson Falls to Thompson Falls State Park
- Avista property downstream from golf course to Graves Creek
- Avista property approximately ½ mile downstream from Flat Iron to railroad trestle
- Avista property upstream from Finely Flats to railroad
- Avista property near Deep Creek
- Avista property on Vermilion Point
- Avista property from Trout Creek upstream to railroad trestle road
- Avista property from Northshore Campground upstream to hwy 200 bridge
- Avista property and railroad property opposite shore from Marten Creek Bay
- Railroad bed used for a landing strip in front of town of Noxon

At all public meetings and open houses for the Lower Clark Fork Trail Study members of the public had the opportunity to comment on the draft trail concepts. Attendees were offered the option of commenting at the meeting or mailing back their thoughts on a comment form. The draft trail concepts were modified to reflect the public input received at the meetings and through the mail.

The majority of attendees commented at the public meetings and open houses, however 13 comment forms were received in the mail. Those comments are summarized below.

- 1) Do not locate the trail along the river near Island Park Subdivision. This would increase access to our homes and could increase vandalism and crime. I am also concerned as to how these trails will be paid for and maintained.
- 2) A good trail location is between Marten Creek and Noxon on Forest Service and / or County property.
- 3) Do not put trails on Avista Corp property between private residences and the reservoir. This could decrease privacy and increase vandalism.
- 4) Put a trail from the PPL dam in Thompson Falls to the Rim Rock Lodge. This would provide needed recreation for families and adults. Fitness stations could be incorporated on this trail.
- 5) Do not put a trail in front of the Noxon store (Section 24) on the old railroad grade. That area is used for landing planes.
- 6) Create water trails within the reservoirs and Lower River. These trails could connect to land based trail opportunities, such as Forest Service Trails.
- 7) (4 similar comments are summarized here together) Do not put trails on Avista Corp. property between the water and private residences from Graves Creek east to the Golf Course. A trail in this area will decrease our privacy, could cause problems with crime and will interfere with the homes in the area. Many of the families in this area have small children and do not want a trail near the river. This area also floods sometimes during run off.
- 8) Money spent on this trail could be better spent somewhere else.
- 9) Please consider an audio tour trail for cars.
- 10) Please do not put this trail in my back yard (along the water near Island Park Subdivision).

Articles on the open houses were featured in The River Journal, Sanders County Ledger and the Bonner Daily Bee.

Public Meetings in March 2003

Two public meetings/open houses were also held in March 2003 in conjunction with the release of the draft plan. People were given about six weeks to review the plan. No additional comments were received during this review period, even though, the draft plan was checked out quite often from the library.

Following are the comments received at the public meetings when the draft plan was released and responses to those comments:

Comment:	Response:
1. Create pedestrian lane across Hwy 200 Bridge over the river at Thompson Falls.	This comment was incorporated into the trail opportunities chapter.
2. Remove trail along N. side of railroad near golf course.	This comment was incorporated and the trail was removed from the list of opportunities.
3. Have paid staff to patrol trails – local jobs for the economy.	This comment was incorporated into the maintenance and management chapter.
4. At Elk Creek Bay create a nature/interpretive trail on the conservation lands. Create a picnic area and non-motorized boat ramp on Avista land near conservation area.	This idea was considered, but not incorporated. due to very difficult public access and environmental issues.
5. Develop other recreation opportunities near Heron.	This comment was passed onto the Recreation Subgroup of the settlement agreement. The planning team recognizes that trail proposals in the Heron area are modest. However, no other viable proposals were suggested. If viable options for this area come up during the implementation phase, Avista and the Recreation subgroup will continue to be open to suggestions.
6. Safety concerns regarding speed limits on upper river road near Heron bike route.	This comment was incorporated into the trail type discussion for both designated routes and pedestrian/transportation. It is a concern for areas in Heron and other areas on or along side roadways.
7. Overnight camping will require management – law enforcement and clean up.	Clean up and law enforcement issues were covered in the maintenance and management chapter of this plan.
8. Try to stay away from FS road for horseback riding.	The planning team will attempt to locate horseback riding staging areas strategically to limit horse trail connections on Forest Service roads. When no other alternatives are available attempts will be made, where feasible, to

	widen roads or create a separate lane to limit congestion on these roads.
9. Groom lowland trails for cross county skiing in the winter.	This comment was incorporated into the document in the trail opportunities chapter.
10. Address sanitary condition at antelope Lake.	This comment was incorporated into the document in the trail opportunities chapter.
11. Add bike route on south side near Cabinet Dam.	This comment was incorporated into the trail opportunities chapter.
12. Include interpretation of the geology of the area.	The interpretation and education chapter of the plan discusses geology as a theme for interpretation. In particular, the plan recommends interpretation of the geology of the Blue Slide at Finley Flats.
13. Include Johnson Creek Island on the water trail.	This concept was included in the trail opportunities chapter.

Articles on the public meetings were highlighted in The River Journal, Sanders County Ledger and the Bonner Daily Bee.

APPENDIX II: LIABILITY LAWS

Idaho Recreational Use Statute

FISH AND GAME CHAPTER 16

RECREATIONAL TRESPASS LANDHOLDER LIABILITY LIMITED

36-1604. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY OF LANDOWNER.

(a) Statement of Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to encourage owners of land to make land and water areas available to the public without charge for recreational purposes by limiting their liability toward persons entering thereon for such purposes.

(b) Definitions. As used in this section

1. "Land" means private or public land, roads, trails, water, watercourses, irrigation dams, water control structures, headgates, private or public ways and buildings, structures, and machinery or equipment when attached to or used on the realty.
2. "Owner" means the possessor of a fee interest, a tenant, lessee, occupant or person in control of the premises.
3. "Recreational Purposes" includes, but is not limited to, any of the following or any combination thereof Hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, rafting, tubing, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, nature study, water skiing, animal riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, recreational vehicles, winter sports, and viewing or enjoying historical, archeological, scenic, geological or scientific sites, when done without charge of the owner.

(c) Owner Exempt from Warning.

An owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry by others for recreational purposes, or to give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes. Neither the installation of a sign or other form of warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity, nor any modification made for the purpose of improving the safety of others, nor the failure to maintain or keep in place any sign, other form of warning, or modification made to improve safety, shall create liability on the part of an owner of land where there is no other basis for such liability.

(d) Owner Assumes No Liability. An owner of land or equipment who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such property for recreational purposes does not thereby

1. Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose.
2. Confer upon such person the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed.
3. Assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act of omission of such persons.

(e) Provisions Apply to Leased Public Land. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the provisions of this section shall be deemed applicable to the duties and liability of an owner of land leased to the state or any subdivision thereof for recreational purposes.

(f) Owner Not Required to Keep Land Safe. Nothing in this section shall be construed to

1. Create a duty of care or ground of liability for injury to persons or property.
2. Relieve any person using the land of another for recreational purposes from any obligation which he may have in the absence of this section to exercise care in his use of such land and in his activities thereon, or from legal consequences or failure to employ such care.
3. Apply to any person or persons who for compensation permits the land to be used for recreational purposes.

(g) User Liable for Damages. Any person using the land of another for recreational purposes, with or without permission, shall be liable for any damage to property, livestock or crops, which he may cause while on said property.

Montana Recreational Use Statute

MONTANA CODE

TITLE 70 PROPERTY

CHAPTER 16 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS INCIDENTAL TO OWNERSHIP IN REAL PROPERTY

Part 3 Gratuitous Permittee for Recreation

70-16-301. Recreational purposes defined

"Recreational purposes", as used in this part, includes hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, water skiing, camping, picnicking, pleasure driving, biking, winter sports, hiking, touring or viewing cultural and historical sites and monuments, spelunking, or other pleasure expeditions.

70-16-302. Restriction on liability of landowner

(1) A person who uses property, including property owned or leased by a public entity, for recreational purposes, with or without permission, does so without any assurance from the landowner that the property is safe for any purpose if the person does not give a valuable consideration to the landowner in exchange for the recreational use of the property. The landowner owes the person no duty of care with respect to the condition of the property, except that the landowner is liable to the person for any injury to person or property for an act or omission that constitutes willful or wanton misconduct. For purposes of this section, valuable consideration does not include the state land recreational use license fee imposed under 77-1-802.

(2) As used in this part, "landowner" means a person or entity of any nature, whether private, governmental, or quasi-governmental, and includes the landowner's agent, tenant, lessee, occupant, grantee of conservation easement, water users' association, irrigation district, drainage district, and persons or entities in control of the property or with an agreement to use or occupy property.

(3) As used in this part, "property" means land, roads, water, watercourses, and private ways. The term includes any improvements, buildings, structures, machinery, and equipment on property.

(4) The department of fish, wildlife, and parks, when operating under an agreement with a landowner or tenant to provide recreational snowmobiling opportunities, including but not limited to a snowmobile area, subject to the provisions of subsection (1), on the landowner's property and when not also acting as a snowmobile area operator on the property, does not extend any assurance that the property is safe for any purpose, and the department, the landowner, or the landowner's tenant may not be liable to any person for any injury to person or property resulting from any act or omission of the department unless the act or omission constitutes willful or wanton misconduct.

APPENDIX III – SAMPLE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT FOR SHARING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION
COSTS, AND IMPLEMENTING OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES
FOR THE PALOUSE TRAIL

SAMPLE

RECITALS

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into by the City of Pullman, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington (hereinafter referred to as "Pullman"); City of Moscow, a municipal corporation of the State of Idaho (hereinafter referred to as "Moscow"); Whitman County, Washington, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington (hereinafter referred to as the "County"); Washington State University, an institution of higher education of the State of Washington (hereinafter referred to as "WSU"); and the University of Idaho, a state educational institution and body politic of the State of Idaho (hereinafter referred to as "UI") and hereinafter jointly referred to as the "Entities".

WHEREAS, the "Entities" believe that the establishment and availability of a diversified mix of facilities for outdoor recreation within their respective, adjoining, and neighboring jurisdictions provide an attractive enhancement to living in the Palouse region; and,

WHEREAS, multiple types of outdoor recreation can be enjoyed by participants on paths and trails established and designated for appropriate outdoor recreational uses; and,

WHEREAS, the "Entities" desire to the extent possible and appropriate to coordinate the establishment, governance, use, and maintenance of an integrated outdoor recreational trail within and between their respective jurisdictions; and,

WHEREAS, the Palouse Trail (hereinafter referred to as the "Trail") is in the process of being secured as a portion of a railroad right of way corridor being secured under a "Rail Banking Contract" entered into by "Pullman", "Moscow", and "County", and the Palouse River-Railroad Company, a copy of which is Attachment "A" to this Agreement; and,

WHEREAS, it is contemplated that development of the "Trail" will begin in 1997, and that the "Trail" will include a 10 to 12 foot wide path between City Playfield in Pullman and Line Street in Moscow and will be approximately 7.45 miles in length; and,

WHEREAS, the "Trail" will require an on-going operation and maintenance effort to assure a positive image and recreation experience to "Trail" users, adjacent neighbors and businesses, and residents of the area; and,

WHEREAS, the "Entities" desire that the "Trail" facility be operated and maintained on a consistent basis to satisfy "Trail" users of the region, and to protect both the natural environment and the "Trail" facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the location of "Trail" between the cities of Pullman and Moscow and connecting with "WSU" and "UI" will provide a separate and alternative transportation route, as well as a recreational path for all residents thus making a shared financing arrangement advisable for the operation and maintenance of the "Trail"; and,

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that activities inherent in and associated with the existence of "WSU" and "UI" will generate a majority of the transportation and recreational usage of the "Trail"; and, "WSU" and "UI" consider the "Trail" appropriate and consistent with university goals and missions and will participate in sharing the cost of operating and maintaining the "Trail" facility; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Sections 35A.67.010 and 36.68.090 of the Revised Code of Washington, "Pullman" and "County" are authorized to enter into an agreement with each other and with "Moscow", "WSU", and "UI" to share the costs of operating and maintaining the "Trail" facility; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Sections 50-301, 50-303, and 50-322, Idaho Code, "Moscow" is authorized to enter into

SAMPLE

an agreement with "Pullman", "County", "WSU", and "UI" to share the costs of operating and maintaining the "Trail" facility; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28B.30.150 of the Revised Code of Washington, "WSU" may enter into contracts to provide services for university purposes such as providing for the availability of services which are consistent with the mission of "WSU"; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Sections 33-2804 and 33-2806, Idaho Code, "UI" may enter into contracts to provide services for university purposes such as providing for the availability of services which are consistent with the mission of "UI"; and,

WHEREAS, operation and maintenance of the area of the "Trail" which lies in Whitman County and which connects the cities and universities is critical to ensure the viability of the "Trail"; and,

WHEREAS, it now seems appropriate, desirable, and in the public interest to form and empower an intergovernmental advisory committee consisting of representatives of the "Entities" to work jointly and cooperatively on issues and problems inherent in the establishment, governance, use, operation, and maintenance of an integrated outdoor recreational trail within and between their respective jurisdictions; now, therefore,

IT IS HEREBY AGREED between the parties hereto being now "Pullman", "Moscow", "County", "WSU", and "UI" as follows:

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

1. Definitions.

1.1 As used in this Agreement the following words shall have the following meanings:

1.1.1 "capital assets" means those assets resulting from the expenditure of capital costs as defined in 1.1.2.

2/19/2013

1.1.2

"capital costs" means those initial costs associated with the design and construction of capital improvements to the "Trail" such as, but not limited to: the construction and surfacing of trail bed; rest facilities; water and sanitation facilities; signage; lighting; fencing; barriers; landscaping; and bridge removal, replacement or construction.

1.1.3

"Entity" or "Entities" means either the city of Pullman, the city of Moscow, Whitman County, Washington State University, the University of Idaho, or any combination thereof as the context of the usage of the term indicates.

1.1.4

"jurisdictional boundary" means the physical portion of the "Trail" (as defined in Attachment "A") which lies within the geographical and political boundary of an "Entity" which is "Pullman", "Moscow", and "County" respectively.

1.1.5

"maintenance and operation costs" means the costs of maintaining and operating the assets of the "Trail" to a level of condition acceptable for the uses of the "Trail".

1.1.6

"member" means the representative of an "Entity" representing that "Entity" on the Palouse Trail Committee (PTC).

1.1.7

"Trail" means improvements and facilities to be constructed, maintained, and operated under the terms of this Agreement within the railroad right-of-way, as well as the entire railroad right-of-way formerly controlled by the Palouse River Railroad Company from City

SAMPLE

Playfield in Pullman to Line Street in Moscow as illustrated in Attachment "B" and the additional segments as shown in Attachment "B". Connections of paths or recreational trails with the "Trail" outside the area illustrated in Attachment "B" are not a part of the "Trail" which is the subject of this Agreement. Connections of paths or recreational trails which are located in the railroad right-of-way secured under Attachment "A" are a part of the "Trail" and are the responsibility of the jurisdictional entity on whose property they exist.

2. Establishment of Palouse Trail Committee.

2.1 Committee Established. In order to carry out the purposes of this Agreement, the "Entities" hereby establish a committee to be known as the Palouse Trail Committee (PTC). This Agreement does not create a new legal or administrative entity. Property provided by the "Entities" to accomplish maintenance and operation services to the "Trail" shall remain the property of the "Entity" providing the property.

2.2 Membership. The PTC shall consist of five members with one member representing each of the following Entities: the City of Pullman, Washington; the City of Moscow, Idaho; the County of Whitman, Washington; the University of Idaho; and Washington State University.

2.3 Purposes. The purposes of the PTC are to:

2.3.1 the extent possible and appropriate coordinate the planning, establishment, governance, use, operation, and maintenance of paths within their respective jurisdictions into a

recreational trail among and between the "Entities".

2.3.2

inform and advise the "Entities" on problems and issues of mutual interest concerning the establishment, governance, use, operation, and maintenance of paths within each jurisdiction which are planned to be or are a part of the system of paths within each jurisdiction which paths as a whole form a recreational trail integrated within and among the "Entities".

2.3.3

encourage and receive input and funding from and work with citizens and citizen groups in the planning, establishment, governance, use, and maintenance of an integrated recreational trail system.

2.3.4

act as liaison with other governmental agencies or any private entity or person in the planning, establishment, governance, use, operation, and maintenance of paths within each "Entity's" jurisdiction which paths as a whole form a recreational trail integrated within and among the "Entities".

2.4 Powers. The PTC shall have the power to:

2.4.1

collect and disseminate information.

2.4.2

allocate expenditures of money contributed to the Palouse Trail Fund referred to in 5.1 by the "Entities" and other sources to carry forth the purposes of this Agreement with priority given to maintaining a connecting path between the corporate limits of Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington.

SAMPLE

- 2.4.3 recommend one of the "Entities" or other designee as a depository for money contributed in accordance with 2.4.2 to the Palouse Trail Fund established pursuant to 5.1 and for the administration thereof.
- 2.4.4 recommend contracts for services, and the hiring of personnel who will serve at the pleasure of, and whose duties will be determined by, the "Entity" or "Entities" assuming the obligation to contract or hire.
- 2.4.5 promulgate standards of construction, maintenance, and operation of the "Trail" to assure consistency of service and use among all "Entities" within their respective jurisdictional boundaries.
- 2.4.6 recommend that appropriate grants and other funding opportunities be applied for, and if received assist in the administering of grants or awards.
- 2.4.7 undertake fund-raising activities determined to be appropriate by the PTC.
- 2.4.8 if the PTC determines it appropriate to establish a budget, it shall be established in sufficient time to allow each "Entity" to include its contribution in its budget for the ensuing operating year, if it chooses to do so.
- 2.4.9 Annual Report. The PTC shall report on its activities to each "Entity" on an annual basis by February 15th for the prior year.
- 2.4.10 By-Laws. The PTC may adopt, amend, or repeal by-laws, in whole or in part which are

3. J. P. M. M. V.

consistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement, by a majority vote at any regular or special meeting of the PTC. A majority vote for the purposes of adopting, amending, or repealing by-laws means a majority of all members of the PTC and not a majority of a quorum.

2.4.11 Provided, however, that in carrying out the powers set forth in 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 2.4.6, 2.4.7, and 2.4.8 the PTC shall not have the power to obligate any "Entity" or "Entities" in matters of policy, administration, or finance; such obligations if undertaken by an "Entity" or "Entities" shall be the sole decision and obligation of the "Entity" or "Entities" undertaking the obligation.

2.5 PTC Officers and Voting.

2.5.1 One member shall serve as Chairperson, one member shall serve as Vice Chairperson, and one member shall serve as Secretary. One member may serve as Treasurer and the office of Treasurer may be combined with the office of Secretary if the PTC so chooses.

2.5.2 Each member of the PTC shall have one (1) vote. In the event of a tie vote, the issue shall fail.

2.5.3 The "Entities" may designate alternate members in a manner considered appropriate by the designating "Entity". In the event that an appointed member of the PTC will be unable to attend a meeting of the PTC, the "Entity" represented by that appointed member may be

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represented by the alternate member. Alternate members representing absent appointed members shall have the same privileges as appointed members; provided, however, that no "Entity" shall have more than one vote on the business coming before the PTC.

2.6 Meetings, Election of Officers, and Quorum.

2.6.1 The PTC shall hold meetings at such times and places as set forth in its by-laws.

2.6.2 The PTC shall annually elect its officers as set forth in its by-laws.

2.6.3 The quorum necessary for the PTC to transact business or elect officers shall be constituted when at least four members or their alternates are present at the meeting.

2.7 Withdrawal, Dissolution, and Disbursement of Funds.

2.7.1 Any "Entity" may automatically withdraw from the PTC by submitting a written statement to the remaining "Entities" setting forth its intent to withdraw at least sixty (60) calendar days prior to the effective date of its withdrawal; provided, however, that any funds contributed by the "Entity" shall not be returned.

2.7.2 The PTC may be dissolved by written agreement approved by a majority of the "Entities"; or, by the withdrawal of three of the participating "Entities".

2.7.3 Any unobligated money remaining at the time of dissolution shall be returned to the "Entities" in the proportion to the amount of

2/19/11

money each "Entity" had contributed to the PTC budget prior to the dissolution.

2.8 Real Property. The PTC may neither acquire nor hold real property.

3. Relationships among the "Entities".

3.1 Ownership and control. Ownership of the right to the use of the railroad right-of-way is defined in the Railbanking Contract (Attachment "A") and is vested in "County", "Pullman", and "Moscow" according to that Contract. "Entities" with ownership interests shall have exclusive control of the design, construction, furnishing, maintenance, and operation of that part of the "Trail" within the railroad right-of-way in their respective jurisdictional boundaries consistent with the standards promulgated by the PTC. These "Entities" are "County", "Pullman", and "Moscow".

3.2 Maintenance and operation. Maintenance and operation decisions pertaining to the "Trail" within the railroad right-of-way and in their respective jurisdictional boundaries, including decisions regarding maintenance and operation budget control, shall be made by the "Entities" having ownership and control ("County", "Pullman", and "Moscow") in consultation with "WSU" and "UI" each of which shall contribute financially to the payment of maintenance and operation costs. Consultation shall occur through the deliberations of the PTC.

3.3 Future capital expenditures. From time to time there may be the need to expend funds for (such things as bridge maintenance or replacement, path reconstruction, or renovation) "capital costs" that exceed the amount available from annual contributions. In these cases, each "Entity" may be approached with a request from the

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PTC for additional contributions and may participate on a case-by-case basis.

4. Responsibilities of the "Entities".

4.1 Construction, operation, and maintenance costs.

"Pullman", "Moscow", and "County" shall be responsible for the payment of the construction, operation, and maintenance costs of the capital assets of the "Trail" located within the railroad right-of-way and in their respective jurisdictional boundaries. Such costs may be offset by the allocation by the PTC of contributions to the Palouse Trail Fund referred to in 5.1. Each "Entity" may apply annually to the PTC for monies from the Palouse Trail Fund to be spent in that "Entity's" jurisdiction for the benefit of the "Trail". Priority for expenditures from this fund shall be given to maintenance and operation of the area of the "Trail" between the City of Pullman, Washington and the City of Moscow, Idaho corporate city limits to standards promulgated by the PTC and approved by the PTC.

4.2 Law enforcement, emergency services. "Pullman", "Moscow", and "County" shall be responsible for providing law enforcement and emergency services within their respective jurisdictional boundaries in the manner and to the extent deemed necessary by such "Entity".

5. Financing.

5.1 Fund established. There shall be established a fund to be known as the Palouse Trail Fund, or by some similar designation (hereinafter referred to as the "Fund"), which shall be administered by an "Entity" or other designee as approved by the PTC, with oversight by the PTC and subjected to state audit, until otherwise changed by agreement of the PTC and the "Entity" assuming this

2/10/1992

administrative responsibility. Any "Entity" shall also have the right to audit the "Fund".

5.2 Purpose of "Fund". The purpose of the "Fund" is that it be a source for the receipt of funding for the payment of costs consistent with the provisions of 4.1 of this Agreement.

5.3 Contributions to "Fund". Each "Entity" shall contribute each calendar year by February 15th of each year an equal amount, as recommended by the PTC, to the "Fund". The obligation of each "Entity" to contribute its share to the "Fund" shall be, in the sole discretion of each contributing "Entity", subject to the availability of adequate financial resources for this contribution. Any "Entity" not making its full requested annual contribution or not making a contribution at least equal to the other "Entities'" equal share contributed shall not be entitled to vote in the affairs of the PTC for that period. The PTC may receive contributions from sources other than the "Entities" and deposit them in the "Fund".

5.4 Disbursements from "Fund". The governmental "Entity" administering the "Fund" shall make disbursements from the "Fund" only as authorized by the PTC. Unrestricted and restricted donations to the "Fund" from sources other than the "Entities" or to and through an "Entity" for credit to the "Fund" shall be authorized by the PTC for disbursement in accordance with the donor's wishes where practicable and consistent with the purposes of this Agreement and in accordance with applicable law. The balance in the "Fund" need not be expended each calendar year and may accumulate for future expenditures consistent with the purpose of the "Fund" as set forth in 5.2 of this Agreement, or a donor's wishes.

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5.5 Anticipated "Entity" contributions. For the first calendar year or any part thereof in which the "Trail" or any portion thereof operates within any jurisdictional boundary after the securing of the "Trail" as provided for in Attachment "A", each "Entity" will contribute to the "Fund" the anticipated sum of \$7,500.00. It is further anticipated that thereafter the equal share annual contribution of each "Entity" will not be less than \$7,500.00 and the amount of such equal share contributions shall be recommended by the PTC in sufficient time to allow each "Entity" to budget its contribution if, in its sole discretion, it chooses to do so.

6. Defense of claims.

6.1 "County", "Pullman", or "Moscow" shall be fully and solely responsible for the defense and payment of all claims for damage or injuries which (a) arise out of the construction, maintenance, operation or use of the "Trail", and (b) occur within their respective jurisdictional boundaries as defined in 1.1.4 of this Agreement. No other "Entity" shall have any responsibility for any such claim, but shall instead look to the responsible "Entity" to handle and dispose of the claim as it may deem appropriate. These provisions, however, shall not apply to the extent that any such claim arises from the negligence of any other "Entity" (including specifically but not limited to "WSU" and "UI"). In such case, the negligent "Entity" shall be responsible to the full extent of its negligence.

Nothing in this Agreement shall expose an Idaho "Entity" to liability greater than the limits of the Idaho Tort-Claims Act (Title-6, Chapter 9 Idaho Code), or the Recreational Trespass Act (Title 36, Chapter 16 Idaho

3. AMING

Code) as now stated or later amended, or any other Idaho law intended to limit the liability of an Idaho public entity.

Nothing in this Agreement shall expose a Washington "Entity" to liability limited by Sections 4.24.200 and 4.24.210 of the Revised Code of Washington as now stated or later amended, or any other Washington law intended to limit the liability of a Washington "Entity".

7. Effective date and Termination.

7.1 Effective date. This Agreement shall be effective when the last signatory approves or ratifies and executes this Agreement.

7.2 Termination. Once effective, this Agreement shall remain effective until: (i) the Rail banking Contract between "Pullman", "Moscow", "County", and Palouse River Railroad Company is terminated; or, (ii) by agreement or action of the parties as provided in 2.7.2.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties to this Agreement have caused it to be executed to be effective as set forth in 7.1, and each signatory represents that he or she is authorized to sign this Agreement.

CITY OF PULLMAN, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington

By [Signature]
Mayor

Date: 3/12/97

ATTEST: [Signature]
Finance Director

CITY OF MOSCOW, a municipal corporation of the State of Idaho

By [Signature]
Mayor

Date: 2/24/97

ATTEST: [Signature]
Clerk



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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY,
an institution of higher
education of the State of
Washington

By *James N. Hill*
Vice President for Business
Affairs

Date: 2/27/97

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, an
institution of higher education
in the State of Idaho

By *James N. Hill*
Vice President for
Finance and Administration

Date: 2/26/97

WHITMAN COUNTY, a municipal
corporation of the State
of Washington

By *Don Wigan*
Commissioner

By *Thom McFadden*
Commissioner

By *Hollie Jamison*
Commissioner

Date: 3/10/97

Approved as to Form:

Don R. Hill
Pullman City Attorney

[Signature]
Assistant Attorney General
representing Washington State
University

[Signature]
Whitman County Prosecuting
Attorney

ATTEST: *Marilyn J. Becker*
Clerk of the Board

[Signature]
Moscow City Attorney

[Signature]
Attorney for the Regents of
the University of Idaho