

*August 2009 Review Draft*

# A Concept Plan for City-to- Canyon Trails

A ten mile trail corridor  
along the scenic Yakima  
River connecting local  
and regional trails and  
parks



City-to-Canyon Trails Committee

with technical assistance from  
National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program

Dear Reader: We would appreciate your comments on this draft plan. Some questions to consider are listed below. Please submit your responses and any other comments to Brad Case, via email [caseb@cityofellensburg.org](mailto:caseb@cityofellensburg.org), contact by phone at 509-925-8638 or submit by mail to City of Ellensburg 501 N. Anderson Street, Ellensburg WA 98926 by November 1, 2009.

How would you use sections of the trail?

Are there uses you would prefer did not have access to the trail?

What kind of trail surface do you prefer?

Are there alternative routes we have not considered?

Do you have concerns about the general routes described in the plan?

Are there hazards or sensitive areas that should be avoided or designed around?

What historic or educational themes would be appropriate for each section?

Other Comments:

## Acknowledgements

The City-to-Canyon Trails project gratefully acknowledges the contributions from the following Planning Committee members. Without their time, expertise and passion for connecting the Ellensburg community to key recreation destinations and the Yakima River, this project would not have been possible.

*Brad Case, City of Ellensburg, Parks & Recreation Director*

*Christina Wollman, Kittitas County Department of Public Works*

*Jill Arango, Cascade Land Conservancy*

*Nancy Lillquist, Mayor, City of Ellensburg*

*Sarah Bedsaul, Kittitas County Public Health Department/Shape Up Kittitas County*

*Jeff Graham, Bureau of Reclamation*

*Jason Smith, Washington State Department of Transportation*

*Rebecca Wassell, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group*

*Mark Teske and William Meyer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*

*Sue Abbott, National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program*

IRON HORSE STATE PARK

REECER CREEK TRAIL  
3.50 MILES

CITY PARKS TRAIL  
1.20 MILES

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION TRAIL  
1.30 MILES

SPRAY FIELDS TRAIL  
0.40 MILES

HANSON PITS TRAIL  
0.95 MILES

WETLANDS TRAIL  
1.40 MILES

RIVER WALK TRAIL  
1.60 MILES

CITY TO CANYON TRAIL



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

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HELEN MCCABE STATE PARK

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## **Canyon-to-City Trails: A Partnership Effort**

Support for the City-to-Canyon Trails comes from a strong public-private partnership based on the shared goal of connecting Ellensburg residents and visitors to our area with the Yakima River via a network of connected trails.

### **Vision for a Trail:**

For many years, hikers, bikers, and equestrians in Kittitas and Yakima Counties have dreamed of connecting Ellensburg area trails to the Yakima Greenway trails. For a time, beginning in 1977, the Department of Wildlife maintained a “Yakima Rim Skyline” trail on the west rim above the Yakima River, accessed by Durr Road in three places. The trail has since fallen in disrepair, though it remains in public ownership within the LT Murray Wildlife Refuge and is available to non-motorized users (see “55 Hikes in Central Washington”, by Ira Spring and Harvey Manning, 1997, The Mountaineers). A route through the Yakima Canyon, much of which is bordered by public lands, though physically constrained by steep canyon walls bordering the River and Canyon Road, SR 821, has also been contemplated. SR 821 is currently designated as a bike route by WSDOT (see 2007 Washington State Bicycle Map, WSDOT). In addition, the River is currently a water trail through the Yakima Canyon from Ringer Loop to Roza Dam. The Yakima River is dangerous between Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park and Ringer Loop and boating and floating is not recommended.

### **Bringing the Vision to Life:**

The City-to-Canyon Trails Committee formed in the summer of 2007 when the Cascade Land Conservancy brought potential trail partners together to apply for planning assistance from the National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program. NPS assistance was awarded and regular committee meetings began in January 2008. Partners in trail planning effort include willing public and private entities that own property along the proposed route, and non-profit groups interested in recreation, quality of life issues, and habitat.

Ellensburg’s 2006 Comprehensive Plan supports non motorized transportation, with major goals of providing multi-modal transportation and increasing the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving. It proposes trails and linear parks and pathways for recreation and transportation purposes. The City of Ellensburg’s 2008 Non Motorized Transportation Plan identifies the City to Canyon Trail proposal from Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park to Helen McCabe State Park, and establishes a goal of engaging other jurisdictions and private partners to plan a network of multipurpose trails throughout lower Kittitas County. The 2002 City of Ellensburg Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan included an analysis of existing trails in comparison to national standards, and recommends adding 50 miles of new separated

multipurpose trails for hiking, biking and equestrian use. This plan also specifically references a Yakima River trail from the Thorp Mill to the John Wayne Trail to Helen McCabe State Park. The City of Ellensburg owns several parcels along the Yakima River, including Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, a parcel dedicated to a dog park, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant property, some of which is leased to Twin City Foods for spray fields. East of I-90, the City's Rotary Park and land dedicated for floodplain will provide an essential trail link to the John Wayne Trail Alder Street trailhead via 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue through downtown, and to the John Wayne Trail near Faust Road through the West Interchange retail area following Reecer Creek.

The 2008 Kittitas County Long Range Transportation Plan recognizes the importance of non-motorized routes and also specifically references the proposed trail from Thorp Mill to Helen McCabe State Park. The Kittitas County Health Department sponsors Shape Up Kittitas County, a program that promotes active living, including biking and walking, to prevent the many diseases associated with obesity and allow residents access to low cost or free recreational opportunities. Kittitas County owns the Hanson Pit ponds, an important section of the proposed trail, and another parcel south of Umptanum Road that may be utilized.

State landowner partners in this proposed trail include Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks). WDFW manages a boat launch on the Yakima River on Ringer Loop Road, and also owns a parcel on Woodhouse Loop managed for wetland habitat. Public access and environmental education are part of WDFW's mission. WSDOT also owns parcels along Woodhouse Loop, previously used as sand and gravel sources for building I-90 and I-82. WSDOT's policies support non motorized multipurpose trails. State Parks manages the John Wayne Pioneer Trail, an important cross-state east-west trail that the City to Canyon trail hopes to connect with. State Parks also owns Helen McCabe State Park, the southern anchor for the proposed trail. Helen McCabe State Park is managed by the nonprofit Kittitas Environmental Education Network, which has received a Scenic Byway grant to construct visitor facilities at the park.

Federal landowner partners in this proposed trail include the United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BOR purchased land along the Yakima River as part of a mitigation program for fish. It plans to redesign levees and enhance salmon rearing habitat on the property. The BLM currently manages land along the river on Ringer Loop Road with existing trails and a trailhead.

Private landowners north of Dolarway Road to the John Wayne Pioneer Trail have agreed in principle to facilitate a multipurpose trail through their properties as those properties are developed. Nonprofit partners in the trail development include the Cascade Land Conservancy, whose mission to conserve working farms and forests and create vibrant, livable cities

recognizes the importance of multiuse trails to improving the quality of life for communities. The trail will support the outreach and education goals of the 2008 Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan, a document which addresses the actions necessary to recover steelhead stocks in the Yakima Basin.

In the interest of developing a trail system that can be developed within the next several years, the Committee also focused their planning efforts on trail routes and connections located on public lands or on private lands with willing landowners. A more extensive trail network that includes routes on private lands will be explored as opportunities arise with willing landowners.

#### Vision

The City to Canyon trail will link the John Wayne Pioneer Trail to the Yakima River Greenway, connecting parks, supporting wildlife corridors, and providing access to the scenic Yakima River.

#### Planning Committee Mission

Build a non motorized trail between Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park and the mouth of the Yakima River Canyon at Helen McCabe State Park using existing public lands.

#### Goals

1. Promote health and wellness for all community members with a non motorized trail system.
2. Improve the local economy by expanding and connecting recreational opportunities in our community.
3. Collaborate and plan with all landowners along trail corridors.
4. Provide a connection to the unique natural beauty and historic culture of our community.
5. Establish strong community partnerships for management and operation of the trails.

## **Planning and Implementation Process Steps:**

1. Collaborate with public landowners, local leaders, and other trail partners to identify trail routes and access-points on public lands.
2. Create a Concept Plan for the City-to-Canyon Trails based on community and trail partners' input.
3. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding and inter local agreements for trail management.
4. Identify and secure funding sources for site planning and design, construction and maintenance.
5. Include the City to Canyon Trails Plan into the City and the County Comprehensive Plan, as well as other trail partners' management plans.
6. Construct the trail, along with trail amenities such as wayfaring signs, interpretive displays, trailhead parking, litter bins, benches, etc.
7. Promote the City-to-Canyon Trails Plan and seek champions/volunteers to care for the trail from non-profit and community organizations, neighborhoods, and schools.

## **Trail Committee Obligations:**

The City-to-Canyon Trails Committee will continue to seek grant applications for trail easement agreements between willing parties and will work with local legislators and economic development groups to move the trial project forward. The committee will work to secure additional agreements from public landowners and easements to broaden the trail route and connection possibilities. Partner resources will be dedicated to creating printed outreach materials and a website for the trails network and committee members will improve safety features along trail routes.

**Public/Community Involvement:**

Public review and input was inherent in the City and County documents that are precursors to this concept plan. Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan, Non motorized Transportation Plan, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and Kittitas County's Long Range Transportation Plan, which all support the establishment of off-street non motorized facilities generally, and the City to Canyon trail specifically, received public comment in open houses, SEPA processes, and public hearings.

The Draft Concept Plan will be considered by the Ellensburg City Council in a regular televised public meeting September 8 and will be shared with County Commissioners during a study session August 24. A Summary of the Concept Plan will be distributed to agencies, commissions, clubs, and individuals community wide. The full text will be available on the City of Ellensburg website as well as on Shape Up Kittitas County's website. In addition, the Concept Plan maps and summary and opportunity to comment will be displayed at public venues including City and County buildings. An Open House is scheduled for September 29 where trail committee members will be available to answer questions and take comments. Comments are/were solicited on all aspects of the draft Concept Plan.

As trail sections are designed and on-the-ground projects proposed, each public landowner will provide for public participation through their respective SEPA process.

## **Trail Benefits:**

Examples from other communities have shown that non-motorized trails increase the livability of a community and provide many benefits. Easy access to safe trails for walking, biking and enjoying nature and the outdoors enhances recreational experiences for residents. Trail networks also provide an attraction for tourists, and an incentive for visitors to extend their stay in the area.

### Health

Trails can help improve the health of residents. Studies have shown that exercise associated with walking, biking and skating helps people control their weight and lowers their risk of heart disease, type-two diabetes, and osteoarthritis. Easy access to a trail increases participation in those activities. In addition, by providing physical activity in a natural setting, use of trails can be uplifting for people suffering from depression and anxiety.

### Transportation

The City-to-Canyon Trails will provide an alternative, non-motorized transportation option for Ellensburg neighborhoods to access the city. When residents choose to leave their cars at home, traffic congestion is reduced, and air and water quality benefits are achieved. The City of Ellensburg has a relatively high number of walkers, joggers and bikers according to the 2000 U.S. census, probably owing to the presence of Central Washington University and relatively flat topography.

### Educational Opportunities

Passing through a variety of ecosystems, the City-to-Canyon Trail will provide hands-on environmental learning about the Yakima River, the habitat needs of salmon, and the function and values of floodplains and wetlands. Within the restoration sections of the trail, people will be able to track the environmental changes created by the restoration efforts. The trail will connect residents not only to nature, but to the area's heritage, by highlighting historic activities such as the Schaake meat packing operations and the sand and gravel mining pits used for constructing two major freeways and various County roads. Current economic activities of regional importance, such as the Twin City Foods spray-field operations, will also be highlighted, and may serve as a popular destination for both school kids and out-of-town visitors. The development of an interpretive center at Helen McCabe State Park has been proposed by KEEN to interpret the Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway and the shrub-steppe environment of central Washington. As the anchor for the City-to-Canyon Trail system, the center and surrounding park will offer not only a convenient starting/ending place but also varied learning opportunities for the community.

### Economic Boost

Typically, real estate values near trails—and within towns that support extensive trail systems—increases as buyers recognize the attractiveness of living near a highly sought after recreational amenity. As trail use increases, new business opportunities such as equipment rental and repairs, shuttle services, and food and lodging services may arise.

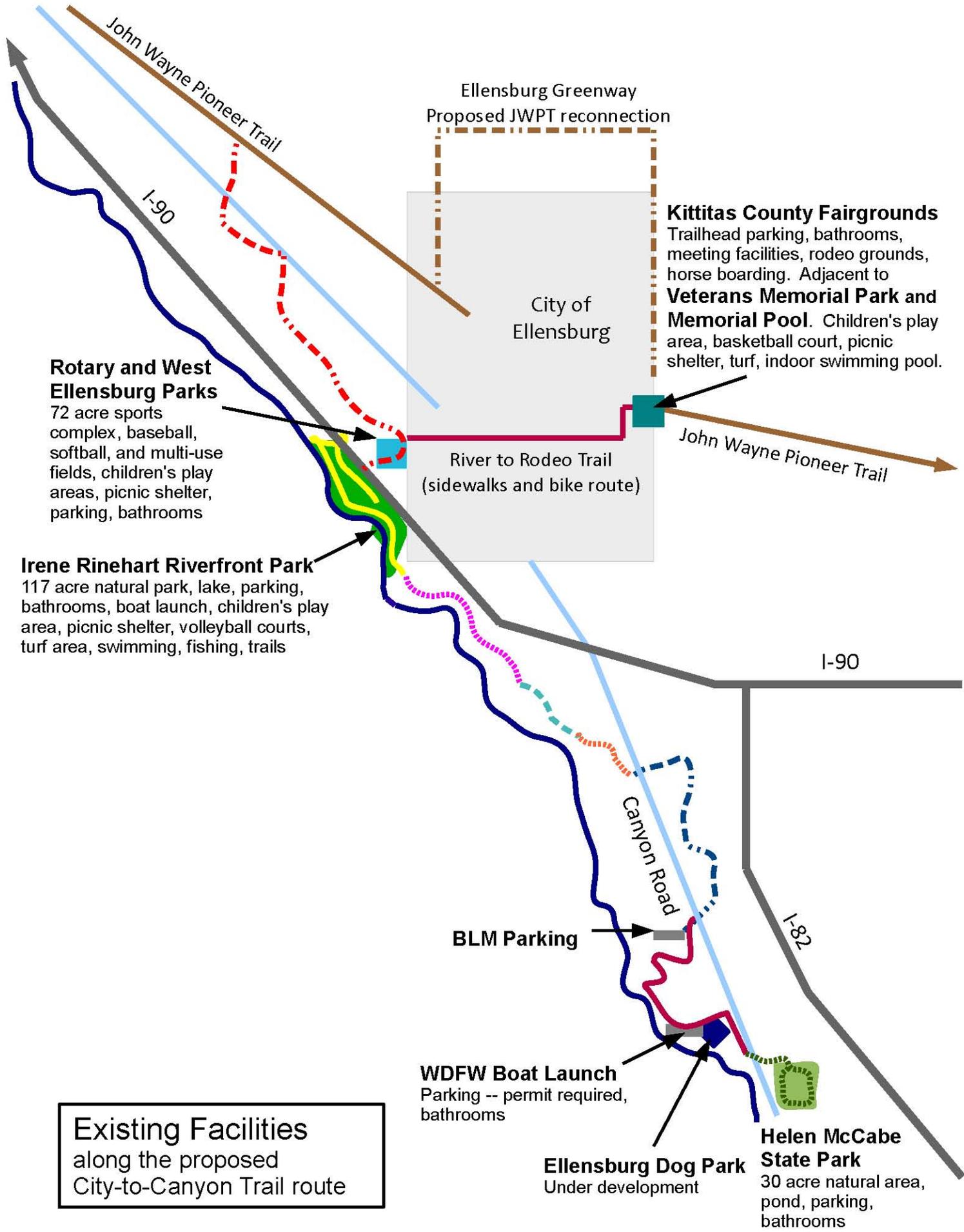
## **City-to-Canyon Trails; The Concept:**

The City-to-Canyon Trails will provide approximately ten miles in a corridor along the Yakima River from the John Wayne Pioneer Trail connection north of the city to Helen McCabe State Park near the mouth of the Yakima River Canyon at the beginning of the Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway. Eventually, the Trail Committee envisions the City-to-Canyon Trails system connecting with the Yakima Greenway, providing a safe and scenic thirty mile trail extension through the canyon. The proposed trail system outlined in this plan is located primarily on lands owned by public land managers. The bigger vision is to expand the system of trails as private lands become available through donations, easements, and potential fee simple purchases.

Eight distinct trail segments are recommended for connecting the north and south anchor points—John Wayne Pioneer Trail at Faust Road and Helen McCabe State Park, respectively-- with several local, regional and state recreation sites along the route. The City-to-Canyon Trails network will also provide a direct link to Ellensburg neighborhoods, the Central Business District, the Central Washington University campus, the John Wayne Pioneer Trailhead north of the County fairgrounds via the River to Rodeo Trail connection at Rotary Park, and to the John Wayne Pioneer Trailhead near Faust Road via the West Interchange retail area and neighborhoods.

Much of the proposed north-south trail corridor near the Yakima River is publicly owned. There is currently very little public access to the river between city-owned Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park (IRRP) and the state and federal lands further south. The City-to-Canyon Trails will provide additional public access to a part of the river experienced now only by boaters and fishermen.

The river corridor already provides significant wildlife habitat for many species along its meandering riparian course, and restoration plans are underway or will be created along some stretches of the proposed trail route. Connecting Ellensburg residents and visitors to nature and history is one of the plan's key goals.



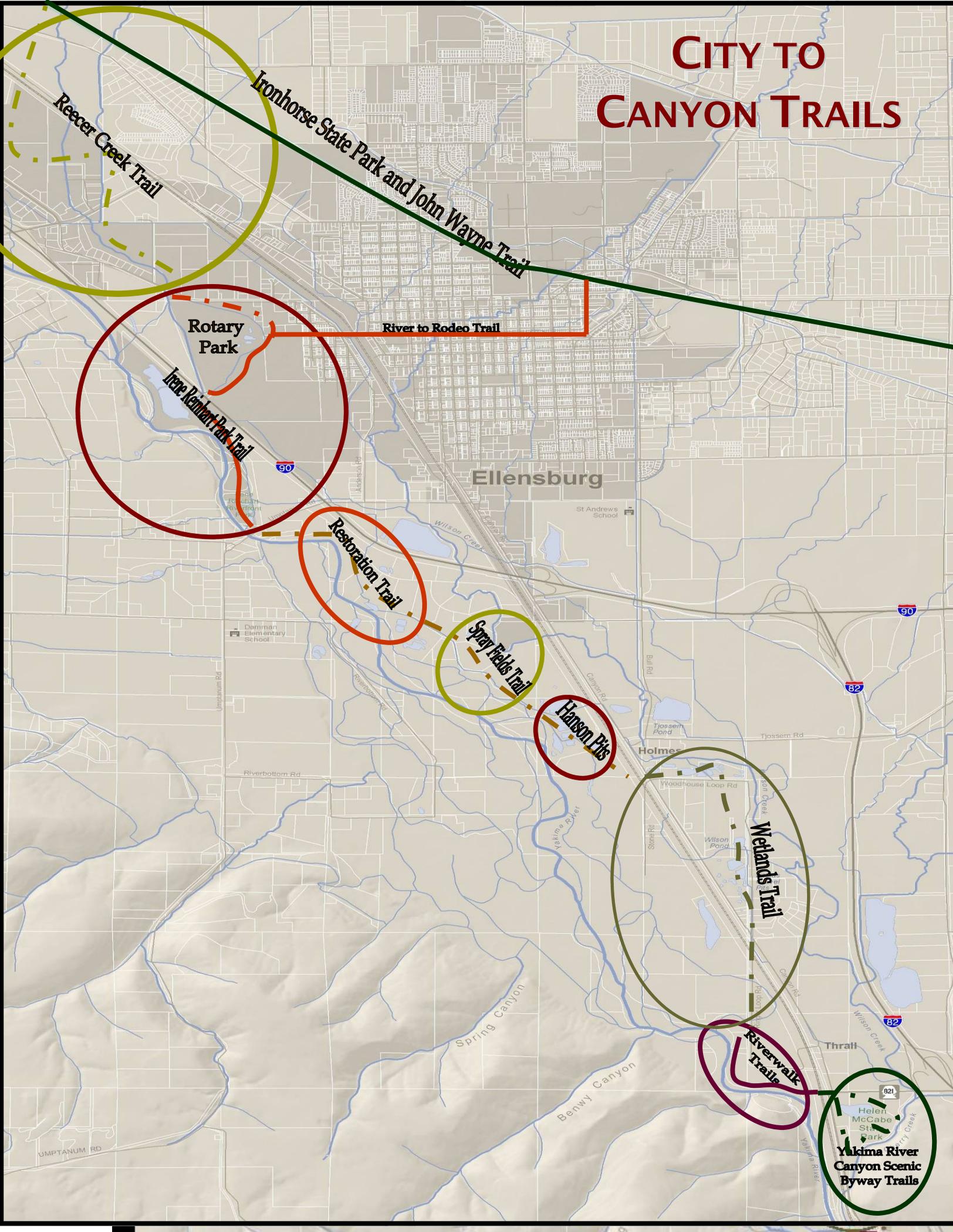
**Existing Facilities**  
along the proposed  
City-to-Canyon Trail route

## **Eight Trail Sections:**

The City-to-Canyon Trails system is divided into eight separate sections—or Trails--based on the character of the landscape they travel through, who owns the land, and the unique educational opportunities inherent to each. The trail sections are listed below, and each is described in a separate profile page that provides further details about trail development strategies, recommendations, and challenges; linkages and connections; approximate length; proposed trail usage and surface type; and suggestions for unique history and interpretive themes.

1. Reecer Creek Trail  
*John Wayne Pioneer Trail at Faust Road to Dolarway Road*
2. City Parks Trails  
*Dolarway Road to Umptanum Road*
3. Bureau of Reclamation Restoration Trail  
*Umptanum Road to spray fields*
4. Spray Fields Trail  
*Bureau of Reclamation Restoration Trail to Hanson Pits*
5. Hanson Pits Trail  
*Spray Fields Trail to Canyon Road and Woodhouse Loop Road*
6. Wetlands Trail  
*Canyon Road at Woodhouse Loop Road to Canyon Road at Ringer Loop Road*
7. River Walk Trail  
*Canyon Road at Woodhouse Loop Road to Canyon Road at Thrall Road and Helen McCabe State Park*
8. Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway  
*Helen McCabe State Park*

# CITY TO CANYON TRAILS



Reecer Creek Trail

Ironhorse State Park and John Wayne Trail

Rotary Park

Irene Reimart Park Trail

River to Rodeo Trail

Restoration Trail

Spray Fields Trail

Hanson Pits

Wetlands Trail

Riverwalk Trails

Yukima River Canyon Scenic Byway Trails

Ellensburg

Holmes

Thrall

Demman Elementary School

St Andrew's School

UMPTANUM RD

Riverbottom Rd

Spring Canyon

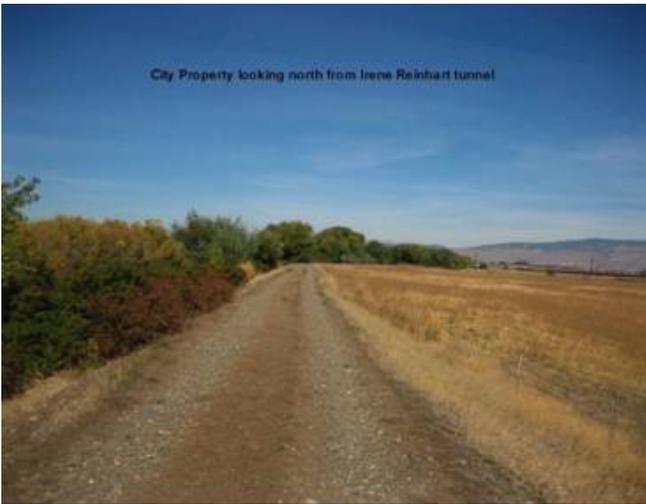
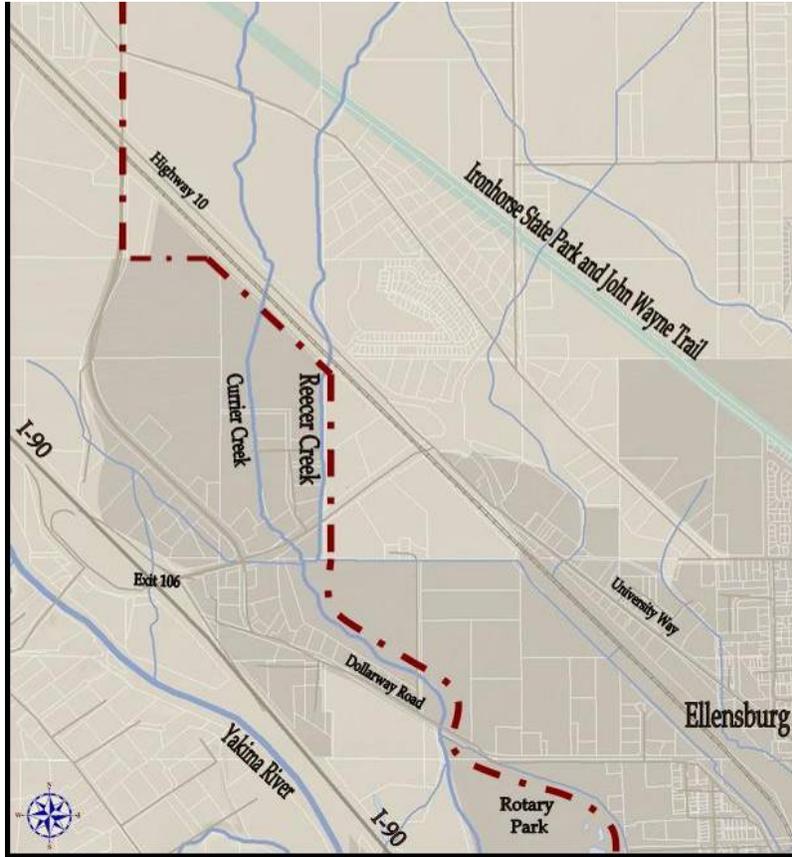
Benwy Canyon

821

**Canyon-to-City Trail Profiles: Connecting Community to Nature and History**



## Reecer Creek Trail



## Reecer Creek Trail

*John Wayne Pioneer Trail at Faust Road to Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park*

Status: Agreements have been made with private land owners; trail is NOT open to the public at this time.

### Trail Development

#### Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges:

The idea of creating this trail was a collaborative effort between the City of Ellensburg and the seven (7) private property owners along the proposed trail route. One of the major challenges facing this section of the City-to-Canyon Trails network is the timing, or sequencing, of when the property owners develop their land. All of the landowners have some other development project taking place on their property in addition to the trail development. Some are planning to construct single or multi-family residential housing, while others are looking at developing their land for retail uses.

Trail Partners/Owners: Pat Deneen, Stephen Hayden, Casey Kelley, Gary Jones, Greg Newhall, Don Terrell, City of Ellensburg

Approximate length: 3.4 miles

#### Approved Trail Usage/Surface Type:

A 10-foot-wide asphalt trail, with 2 foot shoulders on each side of the trail, open to pedestrian traffic and recreational wheels (bicycles, skateboards, in-line skates); equestrian use will not be permitted. In some sections the trail will be fenced on both sides to separate trail use from surrounding development.

#### Landscape Character:

The trail will traverse a variety of landscape types. When the adjacent properties are built out the trail will meander alongside Reecer Creek through a multi-family residential development; border and provide connectivity to a regional retail shopping center; and go through high density single family residential development. Near the existing Iron Horse State Park, the trail will go through a more agricultural landscape.

#### History/Interpretive Theme(s):

*Reecer Creek floodplain conceptual*

Linkages & Connections: Connects to the cross-state Iron Horse State Park Trail at Faust Road, providing direct access for those on the cross-state trail to downtown Ellensburg (via 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and to the Yakima River. Trail would connect proposed West Interchange retail center and residential development to the Yakima River, City Park facilities, down town and other neighborhoods. To the north, the Reecer Creek trail connects to the West Interchange retail area and neighborhoods. South of Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, a trail could connect to DFW fishing pond, retail, hotels and a planned water park in addition to the BOR wetlands.

## City Parks Trails



## City Parks Trails

### *Reecer Creek Trail to Bureau of Reclamation Wetlands*

Status: Complete within the park, open to the public

Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges:

There is still some question as to how Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park and the BOR property will be connected. Three different options have been proposed.

Option #1 is the most expensive choice and would require that the City, County or WSDOT or a private non-profit partner acquire the property located between IRRP and Interstate 90 (formerly Reecer Creek Golf Course), relocate the existing IRRP entrance road and levee closer to I-90 and develop the golf course property into fish rearing habitat through tree plantings and stream restoration, and create walking paths that could provide a direct path from the 'developed areas' of IRRP to the BOR property.

Option #2 is to create a path leading along the Yakima River from the lower IRRP parking lot along Kittitas County owned land to the BOR property. This would require clearing vegetation for the trail, and possibly removing the single family residential house located on the County's property. During periods when the Yakima River is running high this trail would be under water and could potentially wash away.

Option #3 is to use the shoulder of Umptanum Road between the IRRP lower parking lot and the entrance to the BOR property off Umptanum Road. Depending on the width of right-of-way, a trail could be developed off the roadway (not sure on footage needed) feet with buffer of trees/landscape developed between traffic and trail users to increase safety.

Trail Partners/Owners: City of Ellensburg, Kittitas County

Approximate length: 1.2 miles

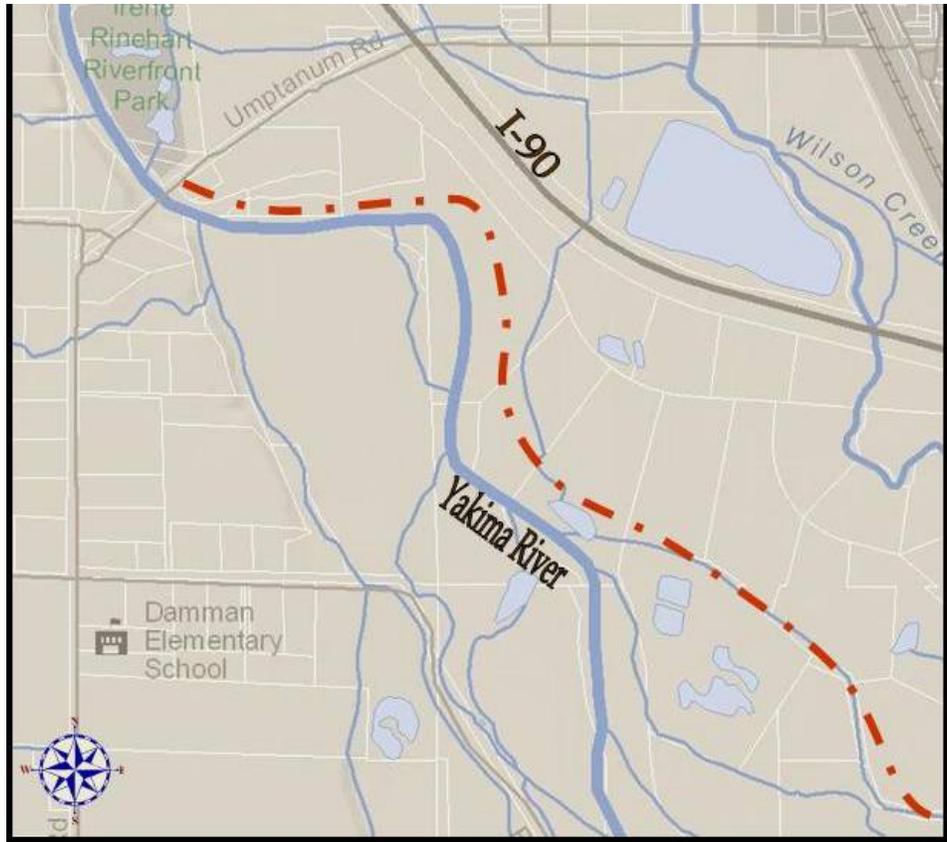
Trail Usage/Surface Type: natural, crushed gravel trail

Landscape Character: Natural wooded area along the Yakima River

History/Interpretive Theme(s):

Linkages & Connections: The existing Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park trail connects to Rotary Park via a trail under I-90. To the east, the trail joins the River to Rodeo trail along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue through downtown, and to Central Washington University, and the John Wayne Pioneer Trail.

## Bureau of Reclamation Restoration Trail



## **Bureau of Reclamation Restoration Trail**

*Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park to Twin City Foods*

Status: Reclamation is currently contracting for Phase I of the Schaake Property Restoration Project. Phase I will work with stakeholders to develop alternatives for restoration. This trail section is NOT open to the public.

Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges: Decisions will be made through the planning process to locate the trail on the old levee or the new setback levee

Approximate length: Old levee location – Approximately 1 mile, New Levee location – Approximately – 1.4 miles

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type: Trail Usage will be determined through the planning process. Surface type will be earthen - the trail will most likely be located on the top of a levee.

Landscape Character: A natural wooded area along the Yakima River on the old levee, or on top of the new setback levee, or a combination of the two.

Trail Partners/Owners: Reclamation owns the property and will partner for the operations and maintenance.

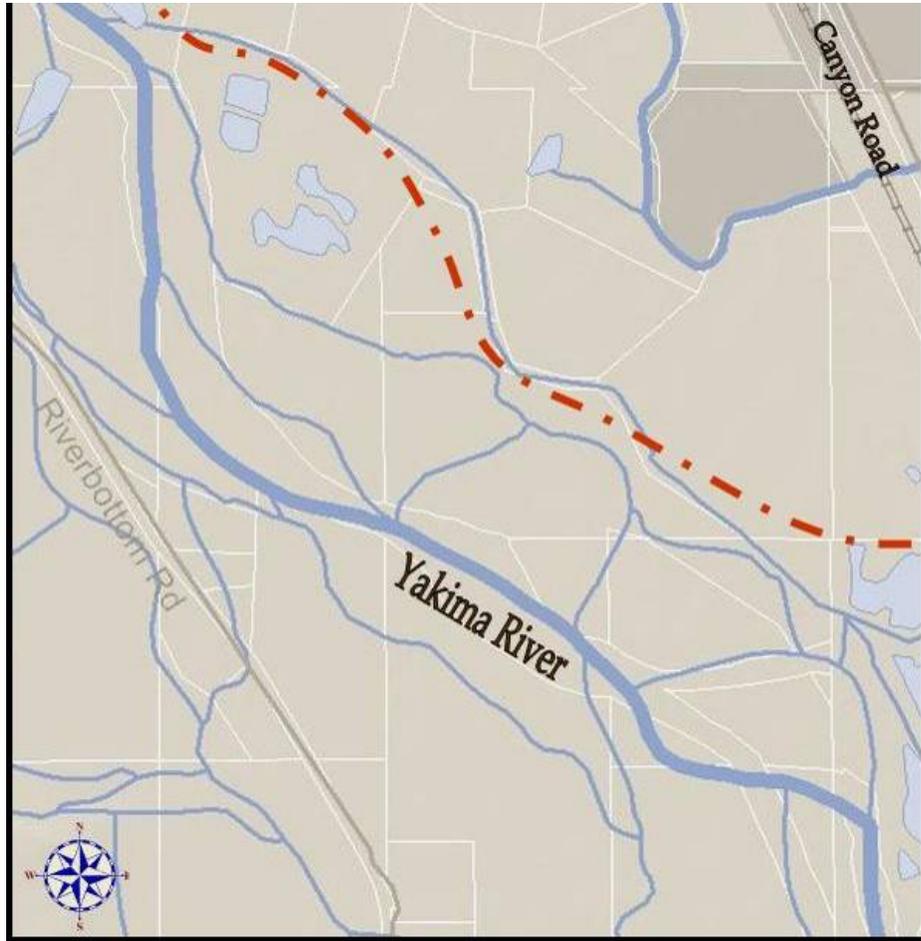
History/Interpretive Theme(s):

Schaake Meat Packing Plant, Feed Yard, Lagoons

Twin City Foods Spray Fields

TJosseem Ditch

## Spray Fields Trail



## Spray Fields Trail

*Bureau of Reclamation Restoration Trail to Hanson Pits*

Status: Planning Phase, NOT open to public

### Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges:

The challenges on this relatively short section of trail include how to avoid the spray field irrigation systems, the smell this process creates during the summer, heavy concentration of bugs and insects and potential conflicts created by inviting the public into an area where equipment and supplies are stored. Further exploration needs to be done to determine if it is feasible to create a trail through the more heavily wooded areas, west of the spray fields, adjacent to the Yakima River. If this possibility exists it will provide a similar recreational experience as the IRRP section of trail and avoid the challenges associated with the spray fields.

Trail Partners/Owners: Twin City Food, City of Ellensburg, Kittitas County

Approximate length: 0.4 miles

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type: natural, crushed gravel

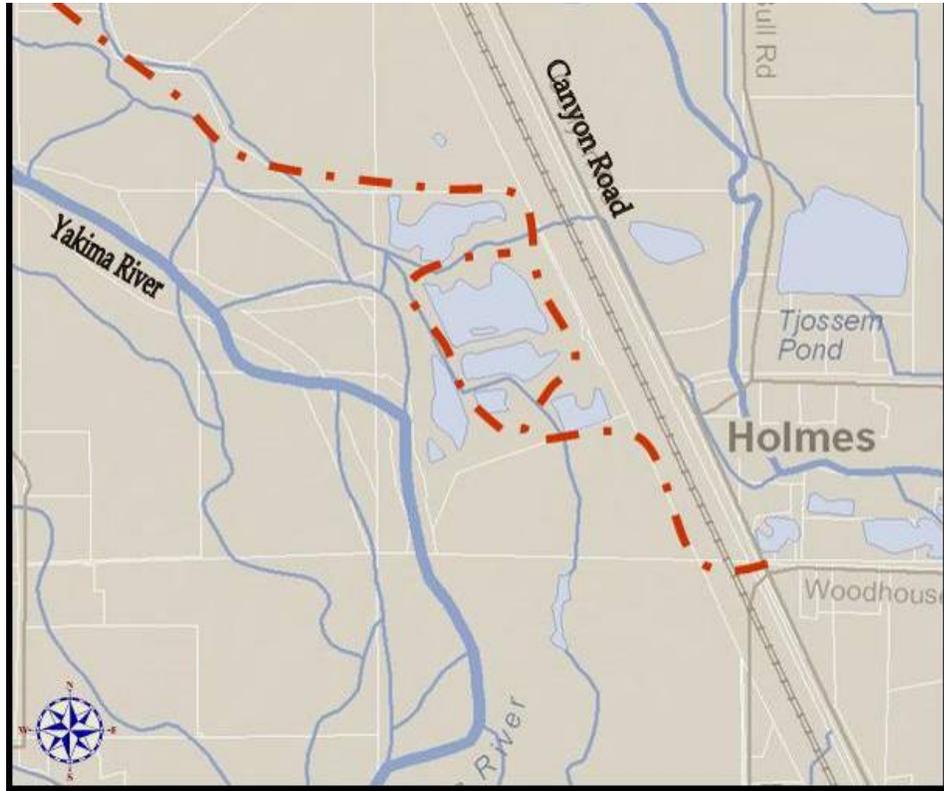
### Landscape Character:

Industrial use of food product waste; effluent is sprayed with overhead irrigation systems and used for growing crops such none of which are used for human consumption. To the passerby, the fields look just like the others in the agricultural landscape

### History/Interpretive Theme(s):

Provide information on how the City of Ellensburg Waste Water Treatment Plant operates, the process by which Twin City foods disposes of their water and how it is utilized in environmentally friendly way. *(YES, and more...big story to tell, national company, long history in Ellensburg; unseen pipe network laid all the way from downtown. Could be a fun destination for kids ("flying vegetables" lesson, etc. etc. etc.: juice it up!!), a great tour for the Chamber of Commerce to run/advertise(&maybe sell those plastic raincoats; in Austin, TX, they advertise every day what time the bats will fly out from their colonies underneath the bridge...in Ellensburg you could publish in the paper what kind of effluent would be sprayed on a particular day or week: along the lines of: "if it's Tuesday, it must be Tomatoes...." )*

# Hanson Pits Trail



## Hanson Pits Trail

*Spray Fields Trail to Woodhouse Loop Road*

Status: Planning phase, NOT currently open to the public.

Linkages & Connections: The Hanson Pits are potentially accessible to the public via vehicles from Canyon Road. This could be a key trailhead for users if current access challenges are resolved.

Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges: The greatest challenge for this section of the City-to-Canyon Trails system is access. The pits are conveniently located in the center of the planned trail and have space for parking, but accessing the pits from Canyon Road requires crossing the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. The existing crossing is not suitable as a public crossing. An alternative crossing was discussed with the railroad in the past and involves construction of an improved crossing and new intersection alignment at the Stone Road & Canyon Road intersection. The Hanson Pits are currently not an area open for public recreation. The use of the property would need to be re-designated--likely to a publicly accessible park--and maintenance responsibilities need further discussion.

Trail Partners/Owners: Hansen Pits are currently owned by Kittitas County Public Works.

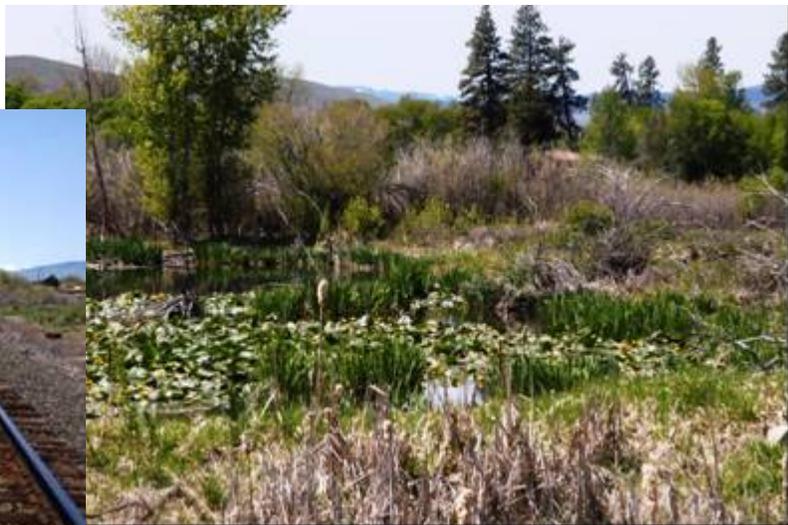
Approximate length: The section of trail through the Hanson Pits is approximately .75 miles in length. There is potential to construct almost 2 miles of trail throughout the property.

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type: The Hanson Pits section of the trail can be used by those traveling the entire trail or by those fishing the ponds or walking the area. The trail will be gravel surface and constructed primarily on old gravel pit access roads.

Landscape Character: The site is comprised of six ponds separated by narrow strips of land that will make up the future trail system. The land is flat and tree lined around the ponds. A portion of the property is used as Twin City Foods spray fields.

History/Interpretive Theme(s): The Hanson Pits Trail travels through an old Kittitas County gravel pit that has been reclaimed. The gravel pit was active from 19xx to 19xx when it was reclaimed. History of how the interstate highways and major roadways were created using the gravel from the Hansen Pits; how this process has created recreational opportunities and benefits to the environment.

# Wetlands Trail



## **Wetlands Trail**

*Hanson Pits Trail to Ringer Loop Road*

Status: Planning Phase; fenced sections are NOT open to the public.

Linkages & Connections: This part of the trail highlights the resource-rich wetland complex owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and DOT. It connects Hanson Pits to the north to the River Walk trail to the south, crossing Canyon Road at both the beginning and end of this trail section.

Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges: The current challenges include creating an access point off of Woodhouse Loop Road onto the WDFW property. The open field that is owned by WDFW could easily have a meandering trail developed – preferably nearer to the large trees on the west side of the property to provide some shade. The wetland complex presents a larger challenge. The trail committee will need to work closely with WDFW to find an acceptable route which minimizes potential damage to the wetlands. Additionally we may need to seek special funding to develop a raised-boardwalk type trail surface in parts of the wetland to minimize damage.

Signage and educational/interpretive materials will need to be specifically created for this stretch of trail. Trail users will also need to traverse Woodhouse Loop Road--a county road--for the beginning and end stretches of this trail segment. The trail committee will need to work closely with the County and with residential owners along the road to address safety issues for this section of trail. This trail also crosses Canyon Road twice – at both ends of the segment. The trail committee will need to work with the County to create safe crossing points.

Trail Partners/Owners: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of transportation are the primary owner of this stretch of the trail system. Kittitas County Public Works and neighboring private homeowners also must be involved.

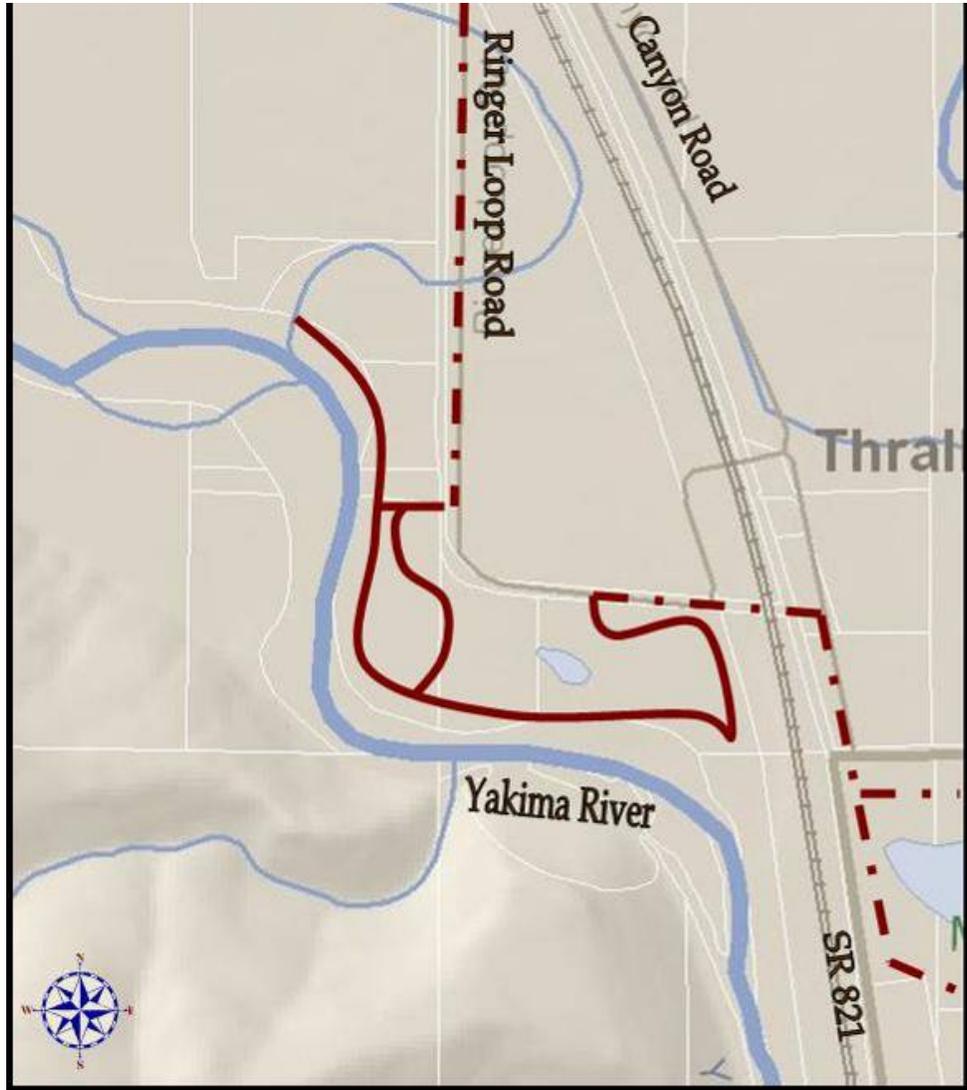
Approximate length: Approximately 1.7 miles in length; there is potential for a longer trail, depending on the route taken through the wetlands.

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type: Through the wetland complex the trail surface may need to be a raised boardwalk in order to protect the sensitive habitat. The remainder of the property is open field and the trail surface could be of similar design to the rest of the trail system.

Landscape Character: The property is a mix of open fields and wetlands. Some residential development borders the field and care will need to be taken in order to avoid any conflicts between trail users and residential owners. The DOT property is currently completely fenced.

History/Interpretive Theme(s): WDFW assistance and leadership is needed to develop interpretive themes based on historic or past land uses in this section of trail corridor. Likely the open field portion of the property was in the same tax parcel as the wetland complex when it came into state ownership – and probably it was farmed as a hay field or used for pasture. The wetland complex contains a lot of potential for interpretation based on the unique ecosystem habitat. Borrow pits, fishing ponds...

## River Walk Trail



## River Walk Trail

Woodhouse Loop Rd to Helen McCabe  
State Park

Linkages & Connections: This segment of trail connects the Wetlands Trail and the Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway Trail system and involves several public owners.

Status: Developed and in use

### Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges:

The main challenges for this segment of the trail are multiple road and railroad crossings. Ensuring the safety of trail users will be paramount. The public landowners – WDFW, City of Ellensburg and the Bureau of Land Management have well developed trails on their property already and they can easily be incorporated in to the larger trail system. Crossing Canyon Road and the railroad twice presents a larger problem. The committee will need to work very closely with the County, WSDOT and the railroad to ensure trail user safety at these crossings. Getting from Ringer Loop Road to Helen McCabe State Park along Canyon Road will require permission from WSDOT to use the highway right-of-way.

Trail Partners/Owners: BLM, WDFW, City of Ellensburg, Railroad?

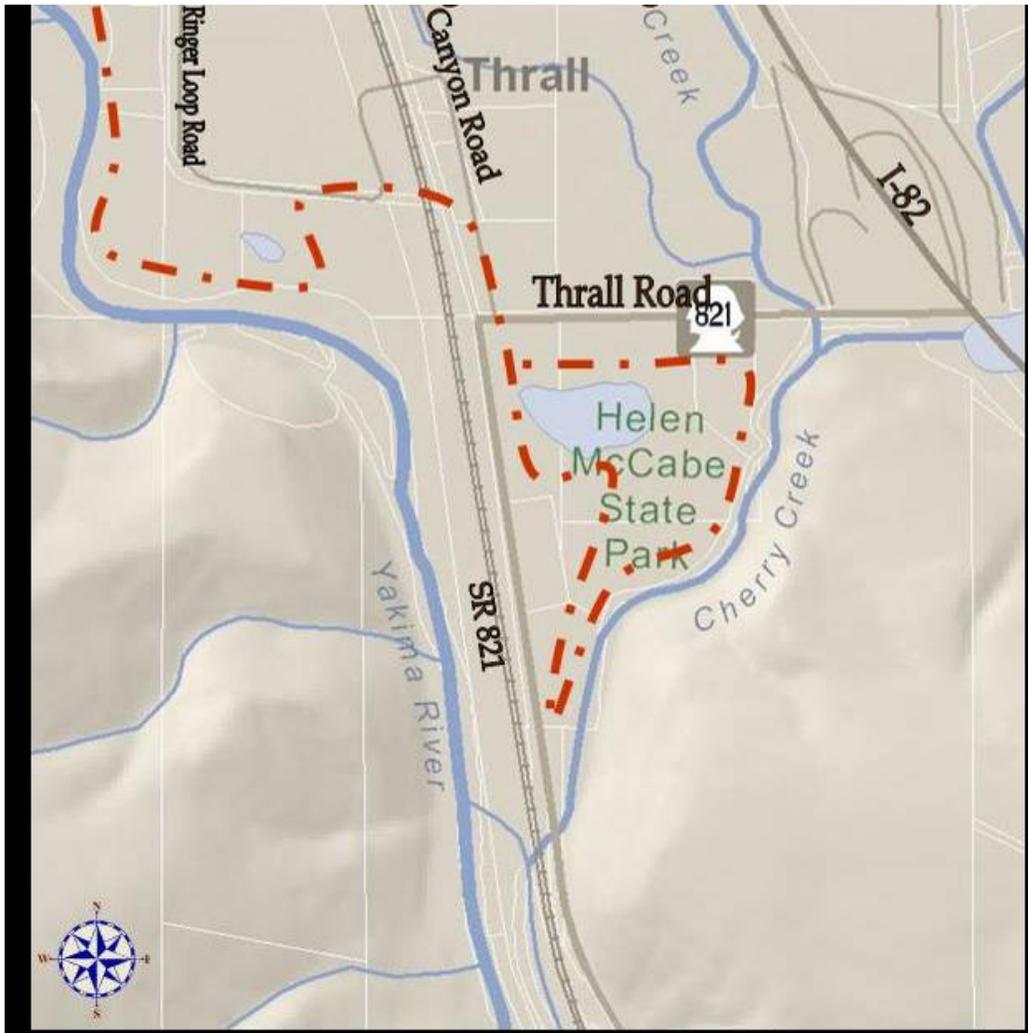
Approximate length: Ranges between ½ mile to 3 miles, depending on the route established. The trail could meander and loop around the BLM property; existing trails connect with the DFW boat launch.

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type: The majority of this trail segment is hard packed earth surface due to the fact that the Yakima River floods here on a nearly annual basis. Trail users could choose to bypass the hard packed earth trail to stay on the paved Ringer Loop Road and then connect to the State Scenic Byway at the mouth of the Yakima River Canyon.

Landscape Character: From the Wetlands Trail, cross Canyon Road, then travel on Ringer Loop to the BLM trailhead, where there is a small parking facility. On BLM property existing natural trails allow access to the meandering Yakima River and a dense riparian habitat of grasses, willows, cottonwoods, and other water-loving plants. Wildlife sightings, especially of river-dependent bird species like Osprey and Bald Eagle, will abound. Owls, deer, turtles, and small mammals also frequent this section of the trail. DFW maintains a vehicle capacity trailhead and boat launch, including a vault toilet, just south of BLM property. A permit is required to park here. South of the Boat Launch, the City is developing an off-leash dog park. Trail users who want to avoid interaction with loose dogs can travel Ringer Loop Road from the Boat Launch. The proposed trail parallels Canyon Road within the ROW to a crossing Thrall Road.

History/Interpretive Theme(s): Assistance from public land managers will be sought to identify themes for this trail segment--school kids and community members may also have ideas. Possibilities include riparian habitat, flooding and impacts, ranching history, fishing tales, the movement of rivers, and many more. Themes could include stream restoration efforts – root wads, bank stabilization and the effects of flooding. Dog Park information and safety could also be possibilities.

## Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway Connection



## **Yakima River Canyon Scenic Byway Connection**

*Helen McCabe State Park*

Status: Master planning is currently underway for the development of trails and an interpretive center at Helen McCabe State Park and the 27 mile long byway between Ellensburg and Selah.

### Trail Development Strategies/Recommendations/Challenges:

Funding for the Interpretive Center Master Plan is in place and a committee is meeting regularly. Main challenges at this time are crossing the Canyon Road (a County road) and determining where to cross either Thrall Road or SR821 (both State highways). The trail committee will need to work closely with all parties to determine the best route for public safety.

Approximate length: Depending on the specific route alignment, trail length could range from ½ mile to up to 4 miles. The long-term goal is to extend this trail segment through the Yakima Canyon all the way to the Yakima Greenway in Selah—a distance of 30 miles.

Proposed Trail Usage/Surface Type/Facilities: With the exception of the road crossings, the trail surface is currently hard packed earth. An alternate trail surface appropriate for higher use may be recommended in the future, dependent on available funding. Trailhead parking and restroom facilities will be provided in future with grant monies.

Landscape Character: The 64-acre State Park contains a large pond, riparian corridor, ponderosa pine stand, and fields currently used for grazing cattle.

Trail Partners/Owners: Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation is the current owner of the park property. The Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) holds a lease on the property to develop an interpretive center. Kittitas County Field and Stream, Cascade Land Conservancy, WDFW, and Kittitas County, all have significant investments in the property that support habitat restoration and fishing access.

History/Interpretive Theme(s): KEEN is currently developing interpretation recommendations as part of the planning process for the interpretive center. The new Interpretive Center will be a destination for Ellensburg residents, local school kids, and Interstate 90 travelers who are either drawn to the Center as a stop while in town, or pass it on their way along the scenic route to Yakima.

*Can you clarify if the interpretive center being planned by KEENE is the same one as the Scenic Byway Interpretive Center? If so, what is the relationship between the KEENE and the Scenic Byway Program? If they are the same, it is worth going on here more about the sustainable, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art GREEN design—straw bale construction—and other cool things proposed for this facility.*

*Also, something here about the basic premise of the Scenic Byway—the outstanding features of the Yakima River Canyon, would help create more interest and substantiation for extending the City-to-Canyon Trails network through the canyon.*

## Appendices

## Trail Partner Coordination: Plans and Policies

### City of Ellensburg Park & Recreation & Open Space Plan (2002)

Based on the information collected from the public, over 54% of the respondents ranked 'developing a network of on- and off-road sidewalks and walking trails providing connections to the John Wayne Trail, Yakima River and local schools, parks and other community facilities' as a high priority (*pg. 219, 2002 Park Recreation and Open Space Plan*). Major components of the plan included identifying land and facility needs and collecting public opinions concerning park, recreation, and open space issues. The study identified all of the trail inventory in Ellensburg, and using the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) standards, determined that 'the present supply should be increased by another 4.6 acres to provide local trail systems between the Iron Horse State Park (John Wayne Pioneer Trail), the Yakima River and local parks and neighborhoods (*pg. 56, 2002 Park Recreation and Open Space Plan*).

### City of Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan (2006)

The City Comprehensive Plan includes land use goals and policies that promote compact development, mixed use live-work areas, neighborhood commercial areas, and other strategies to build a community in which walking and biking are easier. Land use policies are an integral part of accomplishing non motorized goals. The Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://www.cityofellensburg.org/community/compplan2006.pdf>.

### City of Ellensburg Non Motorized Transportation Plan 2008

Two main goals of the plan support development of community trail systems. The City-to-Canyon Trail corridor appears on the prioritized non motorized facility improvement projects list in Table 3.1a.

**NMT 1:** Plan a coordinated, continuous network of non-motorized transportation facilities that effectively provide access to local and regional destinations.

**NMT 2:** Create a comprehensive system of multi-use off-road trails using alignments along public road rights-of-way, greenway belts, and open space areas, as well as cooperating private properties where appropriate.

### Bureau of Reclamation Management Plan (2009-2011)

The Bureau of Reclamation purchased the former Schaake property in August 2003 because of the high potential for habitat improvement outlined in the Reaches Project (Stanford et al., 2002) to improve steelhead and salmon habitat and to place additional riparian land into public ownership with increased public benefit. The property is approximately 285 acres and historically supported a slaughterhouse and stockyards that have now been removed. Approximately 80 acres of the property was leased to Twin City Foods for the application of their food processing wastewater onto grass hay. The Bureau of Reclamation has completed habitat improvement studies and soil and water quality studies which present alternatives for restoring and enhancing fish and riparian habitat on the former Schaake property.

Reclamation is currently contracting for Phase I of the Schaake Property Restoration Project. Completion of the project is dependent on stakeholder consensus and funding availability. A trail through reclamation property is a component of the restoration plan. Public access through the Reclamation property will have to wait until the project is completed.

### Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan 2007

GPO 5.25 states that Kittitas County shall consider recreation needs and services, which the County is able to provide by developing a countywide recreation plan in coordination with other agencies and jurisdictions within Kittitas County. Recreation opportunities and facilities include, but are not limited to parks, trails, river access, public lands access, campgrounds and picnic facilities.

### Kittitas County Transportation Plan

Page 55 states: "The City has also identified a Yakima River Trail. A portion of this trail currently exists, with access from Irene Reinhart Riverfront Park. The proposed trail route will follow the Yakima River from the Thorp Mill to Helen McCabe State Park, located at SR 821 and Thrall Road. Pg 58 "10-5 GPO: Non-motorized travel between communities shall be encouraged by providing a safe and convenient trail system.

### Yakima River Greenway

The Yakima Greenway Foundation was formed in 1980 as a private, nonprofit land trust. Its mission is to conserve, enhance and maintain the Yakima Greenway as a continuing living resource for future generations. The Greenway now stretches from Selah Gap to Union Gap, and west along the Naches River. Over ten miles of paved pathway connect parks, river access landings, nature trails, fishing lakes, and protected natural areas. The Foundation would like to see further development and partnership in lengthening the trail through the Yakima Canyon.

### Washington State Nutrition & Physical Activity Plan Policy & Environmental Approaches

There are three main physical activity goals in the state plan: 1) Increase the number of people who have access to free or low cost recreational opportunities for physical activity; 2) Increase the number of physical activity opportunities available to children and 3) Increase the number of Active Community Environments in Washington.

Priority recommendations include: provide funding to maintain established local and city parks and recreational facilities--especially trails and paths for walking and bicycling; support land acquisition and construction of new trails and paths for walking and bicycling; increase options for physical activity in the community; build connectivity between trails, paths, neighborhoods, schools and sidewalks to enhance the ability to be physically active; and develop a trail/path system in a community and educate the public on how to use it. For more information on the state plan visit:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/NutritionPA/default.htm>

### Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission Centennial 2013

This is the agency's plan in support of the state park system's 100th birthday in 2013 and a second century of service to citizens. To guide preparations, the Commission adopted the Centennial 2013 Vision: "In 2013, Washington's state parks will be premier destinations of uncommon quality, including state and regionally significant natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources that are outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment and learning of all people." Priority No. 3 states: Add new parks, trails and services and work towards opening new parks.

### The Cascade Agenda

The Cascade Agenda recognizes that the Puget Sound region is at a critical moment in history. Locally, we expect our population to double in the next century, growing to more than 10 million people, about the size of Los Angeles today. Globally, we know that climate change threatens our natural environment, economy and standard of living. In response to these mounting pressures, The Agenda offers the opportunity to protect our quality of life now and create a better future for those who come after us.

This collective vision for the region is grounded in the belief that a broad coalition can achieve fundamental change. Led by the Cascade Land Conservancy, nearly 100 businesses, organizations and government agencies and more than 750 community leaders and passionate citizens from King, Kittitas, Pierce and Snohomish Counties stand behind The Cascade Agenda. Supporters range broadly from farmers, foresters and tribes to housing, arts and cultural interests. Clearly, the ideas behind The Agenda speak powerfully to our community. Together, these community visionaries are advancing two big goals outlined in The Agenda:

- Our Lands: Conserve nearly 1.3 million acres of working forest, farmlands, shorelines, parks and natural areas.
- Our Communities: Make our cities and towns great places to live, work and raise our families.

### Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan (2008)-

The trail will support the outreach and education goals of the Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan (2008), a document which addresses the actions necessary to recover steelhead stocks in the Yakima Basin. The plan states: “Effectively implementing the recovery actions identified in this plan will require outreach and education activities that: 1) build support for steelhead recovery actions among decision makers, land managers and the public at large, and 2) increase public understanding of how individual actions affect steelhead and their habitat.”