



BACKGROUND

HISTORY

The *Friends of the Centennial Trail (FCT)* was founded in 1992, but the trail dates back more than 11,000 years. American Indian tribes and western pioneers lived along the Spokane river thousands of years ago. In the early 1900s, the Olmstead Brothers encouraged the City of Spokane to make the river a centerpiece of its park development plan. The 1974 EXPO World's fair transformed Spokane and restored the riverfront's public access. By 1979, the Spokane County parks made a bicycle and pedestrian friendly path along the river, which was later expanded to Coeur d'Alene. The trail is non-motorized and begins at the Washington/Idaho state line, where it connects to the Idaho Centennial Trail, and ends at Nine Mile Falls. After the 60 mile long trail was completed, the community came together and made *the Friends of the Centennial Trail* in 1992. More than 2 million visitors use the trail annually.

The Friends of the Centennial Trail is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit Washington corporation that was formed by city, state, and county park representatives to enhance the trail. Kaye Turner served as Executive Director from 1999-2012 and upon her retirement, Loreen McFaul was named Executive Director in January, 2013. She works with the various members and partners to oversee the fundraising, projects and events. The organization has a 13-member volunteer board of directors who assist McFaul.

In 2010, the *Friends of the Centennial Trail* conducted a survey of trail users,

supporters, agencies, and community members to find out specifics about how people use the trail. The survey indicated that 99 percent of the participants believe the trail is a vital community resource. Other findings included that most users visit the trail multiple times each month, 50 percent use the trail for fitness and 27 percent for recreation. Also, more than half of the respondents think there are problem areas on the trail that need to be worked on, and 90 percent would be willing to pay an annual membership to keep the trail available to the community in the current condition or better.

CURRENT STATUS

The Friends of the Centennial Trail's mission is *to assist in the maintenance and development of the Spokane River Centennial Trail, and its adjacent parklands and connecting trails*. The organization's philosophy is to preserve and improve the trail for years to come. Currently, the users of the trail are of no set demographic and people from all walks of life. *The Friends of the Centennial Trail* believes the trail is a sustainable resource that relies on community support, grants, and donations for development. Its current projects and programs are centered on this idea.

Most of the organization's efforts are focused on maintaining the trail and overseeing projects. For example, the "Trail Builders" program funds projects related to the completion and enhancement of Spokane's Centennial Trail. The fund is in place to encourage users to contribute tax-deductible donations to help complete projects and unfinished trail sections. Donations to the program are allotted to different parts of the trail including: gaps at Mission Avenue and Argonne Road, completing the trail in the West Central Neighborhood between Boone Avenue and Pettet Drive, and funding an asphalt overlay on the majority of Centennial Trail miles.

The “Adopt-a-Mile” program allows corporate partners to donate to “adopt” a mile along the trail. “Unveil the Trail” is an annual event in which all the Adopt-a-Mile groups clean up each adopted mile along the trail. Adopt-a-Mile groups include Visit Spokane, the Kiwanis Club of Liberty Lake, Avista Corp., Hotstart, Inc., SCAFCO, Hart Capital Management, Inland Imaging LLC, Spokane Bicycle Club, Numerica Credit Union, Greenstone and more. In conjunction with Earth Day day each spring, members from participating organizations gather to clean the trail.

The Centennial Trail is administered by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and is maintained through the provisions of a Cooperative Agreement among the commission and the city and county parks departments. A Coordinating Council comprising members of state, city, and county parks representatives, as well as a member of the *Friends of the Centennial Trail*, are responsible for implementation of the Cooperative Agreement.

The organization also seeks to raise awareness about proper use of the trail. The organization publishes maps and brochures highlighting the rules, etiquette, safety tips, and access points of the trail, as well as having this information readily available on the organization’s website, www.spokanecentennialtrail.org.