

## Rocky Reach Trail to happen in phases

by Michelle McNiel

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*Photo provided/World photo/Mike Bonnicksen*

*Bikers on a spur trail just north of the Odabashian Bridge that leads to the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail.*

WENATCHEE — The Rocky Reach Trail may some day be an extension of Wenatchee's waterfront loop trail, but not anytime soon.

To begin with, Washington State Parks will build a one-mile section of the five-mile-long proposed trail, starting from the north at Lincoln Rock State Park and ending at a new scenic overlook below Rocky Reach Dam.

That work is scheduled to be done next spring.

The trail work will start from the north — rather than the more heavily used southern end — because it is being partially funded by a grant from the Chelan County PUD that is specifically earmarked to build a trail and overlook near the dam.

In addition to the PUD, State Parks and the Complete the Loop Coalition are kicking in money toward the \$1.2 million first phase of the Rocky Reach Trail, said Bill Fraser, regional state parks planner.

State Parks has applied for grant funding to do a second phase that would add a half mile of trail from the south and a new interpretive station. If the grant is awarded, the work would start in fall 2013 at the earliest, Fraser said. That section would extend a short spur near Odabashian Bridge that ties into the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail. That work is projected to cost about \$300,000.

Fraser said State Parks has requested \$3.5 million in its 2013-2015 budget to complete the middle three and a half miles of the trail. However, it's not known if or when that money will be available.

He said that middle section of trail runs through orchards, so construction would be timed after harvest. If the funding is awarded by the state, it likely would not be started until the spring of 2014 at the soonest.

The trail extension project, which is estimated to cost a total of about \$5 million, has been in the planning stages for two decades. Fraser said he's been working on it since 1995. It weathered years of legal battles before the state Supreme Court last year dismissed the final challenges by a coalition of orchardists.

Now funding is the primary hurdle to completing it.

"Most folks are pretty excited that we're now talking about getting started," Fraser said. "Now that the legal actions are over, the next stage is finding the money."

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