

Rail Runners Humboldt Bay



The view over Eureka Slough

The Concept:

Rail Runners Humboldt Bay is a recreational concession for passengers to experience a peddle-powered rail vehicle for an excursion along Humboldt Bay.

This proposal is to promote rides along existing rail road tracks around Humboldt Bay.

This new partnership will be an agreement between private entity rail bike owners, Uri & Chris Driscoll, Timber Heritage Association (THA) and North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA).

The Vehicle:

Rail bikes are light weight pedal powered vehicles that use existing but underutilized rail lines.

The design of the 4 seat rail bike allows families of various abilities to ride together.

Two trained guides would accompany customers on each tour.

Due to the open-air design of the rail bikes we will be operational for six months per year from May 1- October 31, 2019.

While we recognize the value of human powered locomotion for recreational opportunities, we also recognize the need for power assisted vehicles for disabled persons. We expect to be able to develop vehicles for such purposes once Rail Runners Humboldt Bay is operational.

Staging:

Staging areas will be located within the railroad right of way. Photos are attached of a small Junior Barn building for concession, tickets & office, and a secure container building for the rail bike storage. Total staging area would be approximately 50 x 150 feet.

Location:

Two potential locations are currently being considered. The first one would begin under the Samoa Bridge at Halvorsen Park, Eureka and head north toward Bracut. This is a unique view of Humboldt Bay near the new hiking trail crossing the Eureka Slough and traveling along the eastern shore of the bay.

The second location being considered would begin near the Timber Heritage Association & Samoa Cookhouse and turn around at the popular mini golf course and community park in Manila. This tour would encompass the western side of Humboldt Bay.

Partners:

We are developing a working partnership with the Timber Heritage Association. That partnership will include commitments to track clearing and maintenance. Liability insurance is available for this specific type of concession and will be tailored according to the needs of the contract.

The North Coast Rail Authority can be assured of our financial commitment to this proposal. Rail Runners will benefit THA by providing additional revenue to clear and maintain sections of rail currently in use for their popular Speeder rides. NCRA will benefit by increased support and efforts to keep existing rail lines clear and in use. Rail Runners has the direct and full support of the THA and a friendly and supportive relationship with the successful Oregon Coast Rail Riders owners and management.

Response:

There has been an overwhelming positive response from the test runs we have done so far. The use of pedal powered rail bikes has become very popular throughout the country for people wanting a safe, exhilarating and environmentally friendly experience. Our existing infrastructure and large tourist population coupled with local interest in healthy outdoor experiences seem to go hand in hand with such a business. There is a growing trend to re-purpose under used or unused rail tracks throughout the U.S. and in Europe. We hope to partner with NCRA in this new venture.

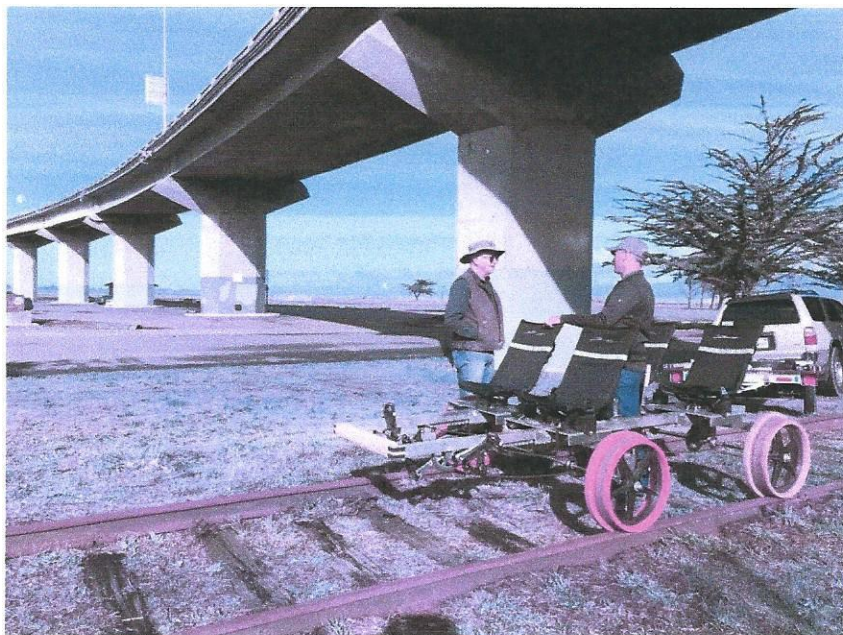
Conclusion:

Our immediate priority is to establish a mutually beneficial operational agreement with the North Coast Rail Authority for use of the rail line and appropriate staging areas in the area of Humboldt Bay. If approved, we are ready to order 12 rail bikes from the manufacturer, develop the staging site, hire staff and establish marketing plan for launch in Spring 2019.

We would also like to work with NCRA and THA to identify other areas where sections of the rail lines can be preserved for future generations to enjoy this unique type of recreational activity.



Oregon Coast Rail Rider staging in Tillamook Oregon



Potential staging area at Halvorsen Park Eureka



Proposed routes
Route #1 (blue): Halvorsen Park north
Route #2 (red): Samoa to Manila mini golf

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*Rail Runners Humboldt Bay is a concession that provides four-wheel pedal powered vehicles that seat four people at a time for use along the NCRA right of way in Humboldt county. A convoy of up to ten vehicles would pedal along the existing rail track from the staging area for approximately 3.5 miles. Upon reaching a turnaround point they would then return to the staging area.

*The routes currently under consideration are from Halverson Park to the Arcata Redwood mill site and/or the Samoa Cookhouse to the Manila mini golf and community park. Both of these locations would provide visitors and local enthusiasts a unique opportunity to explore the incredible vistas and wildlife of Humboldt Bay in a healthy, eco and family friendly way. Currently these rail corridors are unavailable for public use.

* The riders would be accompanied by two Rail Runner employees properly trained in Federal Railroad Authority safety protocols in order to flag the one road crossing, provide assistance and turn the vehicles around. Riders would wear seatbelts and visibility vests. A third employee would stay at the staging area in direct radio communication with the caravan of rail bikes.

* Timber Heritage Association uses these sections of rail for their popular speeder runs several times per year. We have been in regular communication with THA and in fact have formed a Rail Runner Committee to further develop rail bike use. Rail Runners Humboldt Bay would not impede the THA use and would coordinate schedules, share facilities and special event dates.

*We are modeling our proposal after the Oregon Coast Rail Riders who have a total of five locations already in operation and are preparing to open a sixth this year or next. Other similar operations such as Rail Explorers and the Skunk train are also open in other parts of the country. Examples of current contracts for the Oregon locations are provided in your packet. Rail bike concessions are currently operating on both active and inactive tracks.

*Rail bike designs allows people of lesser abilities to also enjoy this form of travel. We intend for future designs to include features that would comply with ADA requirements.

*Because of the simple open-air design of these rail bikes we would be operating from May thru October. We would operate five days per week with occasional special event days.

* Although priced to be affordable for families, teams, and other groups we have included in our cost analysis funds to assist in rail clearing and maintenance expenses currently being incurred by THA. Eureka police have shown extreme gratitude for this service as it has greatly reduced the establishment of homeless encampments along the rail corridor as well as associated litter and bio hazards next to the bay.

*Rail Runners Humboldt Bay would assume costs associated with operations including start up, employees, insurance. We have already had significant interest in partnering from local businesses, visitor bureaus, vacation rental providers, bird watchers, etc.

* Rail Runners Humboldt Bay needs an operating agreement in the form of either a separate contract with NCHA or an amendment to the current contract between NCRA and THA that would include the use of rail bikes. The Oregon Coast Rail Rider owners and operators have generously offered their help in navigating successful contracts and operational logistics.