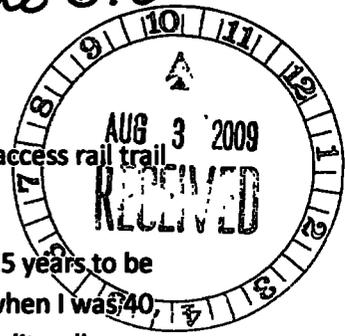


Ex Parte 690

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Here's my personal tale of what having a former railway in Ferry County become a public access rail trail looks like.

First of all, I am a single female of retirement age. I have worked at 2 ½ jobs for the past 25 years to be able to get the prospect of a pleasant retirement lined up. My ex- husband divorced me when I was 40, trading me in, not for two twenties, but for a 38 who met his needs better than I did. I was literally dumped at that age with nothing and two kids. He and I split custody of the kids and I started the grueling work schedule as the only way I knew of to make up for starting over at 40. I divorced in a NON Community property state and as I stay at home Mom, I got almost nothing from the divorce. The crazy housing market a few years ago in the southwest allowed enough equity in my tiny home to try to find something and plan a retirement. I found a piece of property which I loved, but it had a railroad line running through it. The line was used only twice a week and so I went ahead feeling that the inconvenience wasn't enough to make up for the good things about the land. I went ahead and am working into my late 60's in hopes of being able to build and retire on the land. Now, the railroad has sold the right of way to the county and they want a public trail through the land! Really what they want to do is allow the public to use my land (and that of my neighbors of course). **I say this with certainty because if a 12 foot high fence were erected along the trail corridor, no one would want to enter it, so it is clear that the intention is to allow public use of what I have worked extremely hard to acquire.** I also imagine that the use involves trash pick up- I am supposed to do that?, What about restroom facilities? Children and dogs are not easily regimented in these regards, even if public restrooms are positioned here and there. What do I do if someone under the influence of alcohol, or drugs crosses my land and makes me feel unsafe? I am alone and getting on in years. I guess I will have to enroll in a gun safety class, arm myself and invest in security systems. The sheriff can be called but town is miles away. What if I just want to be sitting under a tree and people want to walk by and stare at the locals. That doesn't seem fair to me when I bought this land to find peace.

Of course, some even want to make the trail motorized! So I kill myself for years, for this golden retirement after a lot of disappointment in life, and now I get quad runners, and snow mobiles in the middle of it!! I can't believe how the advocates of this entire program are ignoring the rights of landowners with total callousness. I wonder if the thought has occurred to them what it would be like to have public access across their yards, looking in their windows and using what they have struggled to own? I doubt many people would like that very much, and yet they seem very willing to advocate doing it to myself and other landowners. Empathy is an elusive human gift. **If a rail trail is to be constructed in Ferry County, then it must not include sections which intimately cross peoples' yards.** There are stretches which go through pasture lands and don't impinge on homes. They can be connected and result in a suitable trail Put yourself in the position of one such as myself and imagine how it would feel to advocate a trail and then find it had admitted damage, destruction and even death to me!! I have done nothing in my life to deserve this.

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