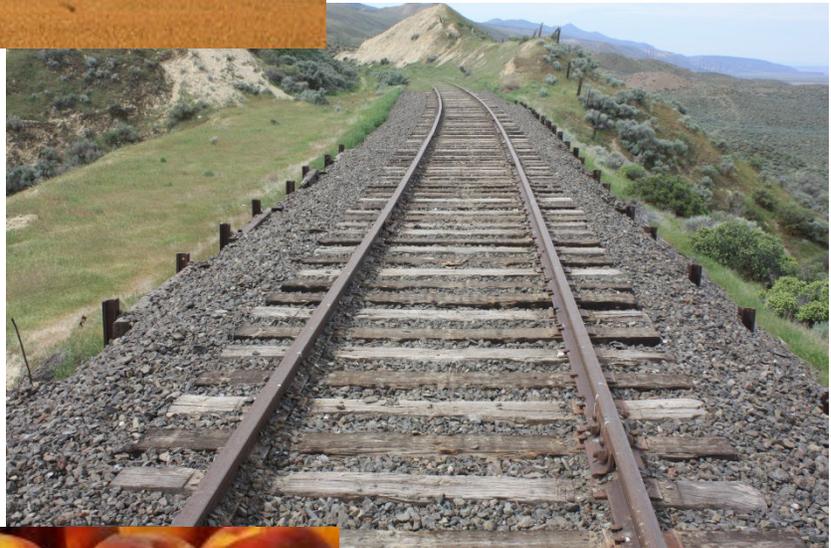


Royal Slope Railroad Inspection

April 2015



Purpose

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the current condition of the WSDOT owned Royal Slope Rail line. The report utilizes information contained in the October 2009, Royal Slope Railroad Inspection and Assessment, performed by WSDOT and updates information in the Final Inspection Report performed by US Rail Partners, Ltd. after the rehabilitation contract by RailWorks Track Systems using funds provided by the Washington State Legislature.

Developments since the 2009 Inspection and Assessment Report

The Condition Assessment in 2009 estimated, at a minimum, \$1.15 million to return the line to a condition allowing for safe operations at relatively low traffic volumes of less than 2,500 rail cars per year. Through Proviso, the Port of Royal Slope was granted \$750,000 by the Washington State Legislature in the 2011-13 biennium to upgrade the line to provide rail service to Royal City, WA. The Port then worked with US Rail Partners Ltd. to develop a scope of work, schedule and budget to bring the line back to operational status. US Rail Partners provided the technical information for the Port to put in a bid package for the rehabilitation work which was advertised and subsequently awarded to RailWorks Track Systems. The work resulted in the replacement of more than 2,600 cross ties and placement of close to 3,000 tons of ballast, it also surfaced, lined & dressed approximately 6,550 track feet.

The rehabilitation work was completed in the summer of 2013, after which US Rail Partners performed the Final Inspection Report. This report concluded that the Royal Slope line was FRA Class 1 track (10 MPH) with three exceptions or defects, which were specific to tie replacement and vegetation control. The report further stated that those defects concerning vegetation should be removed as a result of the vegetation control efforts. And, if the defects which require tie replacement can be corrected by the new operator within the first 30 days of operation, the track can remain in FRA Class 1. The report also recommended that a vegetation control contractor be selected and that the contractor treat the entire right of way so as to both kill vegetation then growing, particularly at MP 1992.5 and between MP 1995.3 and at 1995.4, as well as to prevent any new vegetative growth.

Current Conditions

On April 23, 2015, WSDOT Staff, accompanied by Port Commissioners Alan Schrom and Davey Miller, conducted an inspection of the Royal Slope railroad. The port provided a speeder car to perform the line inspection. The inspection began at the crossing of the East Pothole Canal and proceeded west. The greatest immediate needs on the line are vegetation control and drainage maintenance. Figure 1 below shows the results of not implementing a regular vegetation maintenance program. Another issue pointed out in the Final Inspection Report is the right of way encroachments in the section between MP 1990.6 and MP 1991.1. This can be addressed through communication with the landowners, the installation of No Trespassing Signs or the most expensive option of installing fencing. Figure 2 below shows typical drainage and vegetation issues encountered on the first miles of the line. Vegetation control and drainage maintenance has not been performed. While not severe yet, continued negligence of these activities will lead to further degradation of the line and increased costs in the future to bring the line in to operation.



Figure 1 MP 1989.6 Vicinity



Figure 2 MP 1995.5 Vicinity



Figure 3 MP 1999.5 Vicinity



Figure 4 MP 2008.4 Vicinity

Additional work to return the line to service will be to address rock slides in the vicinity of 1999.5 as shown in Figure 3 above. This section appears to be prone to periodic slides, so that ditching and clearing the tracks of rocks will likely be a continuous type of maintenance activity for the approx. 1 mile of track along this cut. Figure 4 above shows another section of the line where ditching and drainage maintenance will be required. The immediate need is to perform vegetation control reestablish the ditches and ensure proper drainage away from the track. Longer term issues here involve finding and cleaning existing drainage structures or installing additional drainage structures. Also an examination of removing the earth berm on the north side of the tracks should be undertaken to determine if this provides an improvement in the track drainage. Other washouts creating conditions similar to that in Figure 4 exist at MP 2009 and 2009.5 vicinity.

Material Inventory

The Port has on hand an inventory of \$62,000 in rail supplies that includes: 540 cross ties, 221 crossing timbers, 400 feet of flange guard, 300 track bolts, 200 lock washers, 1,000 lag bolts and 18 kegs of rail spikes.

Summary

While several locations have conditions that have deteriorated since the 2013 Final Inspection Report, the findings contained therein remain valid. The Royal Slope line can be brought into operations as a Class 1 facility by addressing the issues outlined in that report and reviewing the conditions highlighted here.

Appendix 1 – Royal Slope Railroad Inspection and Assessment, October 2009, WSDOT

Appendix 2 – Final Inspection Report, June 2013, US Rail Partners, Ltd.