



THE MOOSE CALL

The Newsletter of The Friends of Mt.
Spokane State Park.

Friends of
Mt Spokane
State Park

January 2001

Winter Use Changes

The Interim Trail Plan has placed additional restrictions on snowmobile use within Mt. Spokane State Park, but it has also provided an opportunity for a new snowmobile route to the summit. Snowmobiles are now restricted to the existing groomed snowmobile trail, the Kit Carson and Day Mountain meadows, and the CCC meadows, as well as a couple of designated ungroomed trails. All other cross-country snowmobile use is prohibited. Recreational snowmobile use is not permitted within the boundaries of either the Nordic ski area or the alpine ski area. However, Mt. Spokane 2000 (the alpine area operator) and the Parks Commission did reach agreement to designate a snowmobiling corridor (on a trial basis) from the Cook's Cabin area to the south end of the summit. Snowmobiles will be required to stay within this marked corridor or risk losing the corridor completely. It is critical for skier safety and enjoyment that snowmobiles not enter the ski area and that skiers not enter the snowmobile corridor. Studies of plant growth within the corridor boundaries have also been initiated to help determine any possible effects of snowmobile use on the fragile sub-alpine vegetation. Additionally, snow depths will be monitored so that the meadows can be closed to snowmobiling when depths are insufficient. Park staff also reached an agreement with officials at Inland Empire Paper to prohibit snowmobiling on the north summit of Shadow Mountain at the far end of the Nordic area. And as part of the recent road repair, a parking area was added to the Lower Kit Carson Loop Trail Head (the hairpin). A \$20 Sno-Park permit is required to park in this lot during the winter. Trails 100 and 110 (accessible from the new parking area), and trails 120a and 120b (accessible from the park entrance), have been designated for snowshoeing and back country skiing.

IEP Restricts Access

Due to increasing problems with soil erosion, dumping, vandalism, wood theft, tree damage, and illegal off road vehicle use, the Inland Empire Paper Company (IEP) is revising its public use policy. The company is restricting entry to all of its lands and is considering a user fee program. A new gate was installed just below the Selkirk Lodge on the road leading out of the park. It will be kept locked during the summer to prevent unauthorized vehicle access to paper company lands. Illegal ORV use on the Ragged Ridge section of the park has been a problem for over 25 years. Since riders gain access to the ridge through IEP lands, the company's new restrictions should really help put an end to the problem. The company has also promised to assist with closing the trails from IEP land that lead to Ragged Ridge.

Road Repair Completed

The spring of 2000 brought some heavy rains, which washed out a substantial portion of the only paved road into the park. As a result, the road was closed to all but authorized vehicles above the Lower Kit Carson Loop Trail Head. Using funds that were left over from the road reconstruction studies as well as funds previously earmarked for projects in other parks, the road was rebuilt for about \$800,000.00. This included the addition a new parking area and surface patching the rest of the road. Periodic, temporary road closures are expected to continue over the next several years as the remainder of the road is rebuilt.

Volunteers Honored

A bronze plaque, honoring the many volunteers (especially Carl and Roxie Miller) who planned and built the Selkirk Lodge has been installed in the lodge. The Friends Group and the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club split the cost, to remind everyone that the lodge was built by volunteers for the enjoyment of all.

Friends Group and Advisory Committee Combine

The Friends Group is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization established in 1995 to enhance the programs and services of Mt. Spokane State Park and to encourage general awareness, further public interest, and provide public education in an effort to promote the responsible use of the Park and its cultural, recreational, historical, and natural resources.

The Friends Group was formed by the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee as a means for coordinating volunteer involvement in the Park and as a vehicle for raising funds to support Park projects. The Director of the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission appoints the members of the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee.

At its March, 2000 meeting, the Friends Group modified its bylaws and board composition to mirror those of the Advisory Committee, such that the two groups will now operate much more as a single entity. Technically, the Friends Group is not empowered to render advice to the Parks Commission, and the Advisory Committee cannot raise money, so the two groups will maintain their separate functions.

The combined MSSP Advisory Committee and Friends Group Board now consists of Cris Currie (President), Chic Burge (Vice-president), Randy Knight (Secretary and passive summer recreation), Anita Boyden (Friends Group Treasurer), Bill Birk (at large), Phil Bolich and Mark Augenstine (motorized winter recreation), Jeff Corkill (education), Tom Frost (non-motorized winter recreation), Ken Carmichael (equestrians), Gino Lisiecki and Mike Brixey (active summer recreation), Sam Moeller (at large), Sheila Pachernegg (environmental), Avery Peyton (business), Barbee Scheibner (at large), and Sherm Spencer (at large). Ex-officio members are Caroline Halley, Don Hurst, Kirk Duncan, and Aaron Spurway.

Be sure to go to our new web page at www.mtspokane.org for a trail map and guide, park history, land classifications, information on the Friends Group, volunteer opportunities, and much more!

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cris M. Currie

It was a very busy two years for the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park and the MSSP Advisory Committee. The two groups worked very closely together on the Mt. Spokane State Park Classification and Management Planning project (CAMP). In March of 1999, the CAMP project officially began with a Parks Commission staff meeting I was privileged to attend at Hyak Lodge, a new state parks facility on Snoqualmie Pass. Olympia staff members also spent several days touring the park and holding additional meetings in Spokane. They met with the Advisory Committee at its June meeting and throughout the summer for a total of 11 additional meetings, to reach agreement on a set of proposals for the park classification and management plan. The Committee was able to reach consensus among its own members and with staff representatives on all but two issues. Some disagreement remained concerning whether some areas deserving higher protection should be classified as Natural Forest Areas, or as Resource Recreation Areas with a special added emphasis on resource protection.

The Committee also expressed stronger concerns than staff over the possibility of expanding the alpine ski area to the west side of the summit. Many Advisory Committee and Friends Group members attended the public meetings on August 19 and October 6, in addition to the Parks Commission meeting on October 29, where the Commission after several hours of further discussion finally approved the staff proposed classification plan.

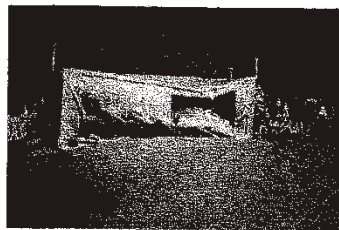
Once the classification plan was approved, the task of creating an interim trail plan was initiated. Additional input from mountain bikers and snowmobilers was obtained during two trail planning meetings in November, and additional data were gathered from the field. Olympia staff then presented their draft interim trail-planning document to the Advisory Committee at its

February 2000 meeting for comments. The plan was finalized and approved in October 2000. The interim plan will be in effect until the long-range trail plan is completed.



Rob Fimbel and Nora Searing studying vegetation on Mt. Spokane. August 2000

In July 1999, the Friends Group held its second annual Mt. Spokane State Park Appreciation Day. Dr. Arthur Partridge, retired professor of entomology and forest pathology, joined Friends Group Board Member and retired natural resources professor Bill Birk, in an afternoon of environmental awareness experiences near the newly reconstructed CCC cabin. Various displays were set up in the cabin, and a potluck picnic supper was held. The event was open to the general public and about 40 people attended. The Friends sold newly created t-shirts at the event along with the new park trail maps that the Back Country Horsemen had just published. The annual event had to be canceled for 2000 because of the road washout.



This old building has been removed from the summit of Quartz Mountain!

The Friends Group and Advisory Committee also helped to secure the purchase by the Parks Commission of the 160-acre Quartz Mountain property. After obtaining a copy of the Quartz Mountain owner's Forest Practice Act

application, Friends Group members submitted extensive comments to the Department of Natural Resources regarding the owner's logging plan. As a result, the proposed logging operation was further delayed and Parks was able to complete their purchase of the property on December 30, 1999. Quartz Mountain is now officially part of Mt. Spokane State Park!

This last summer, several trail improvement projects were completed by Friends Group volunteers. About new or modified trail number signs were erected at trailheads and intersections. These signs will make it much easier to navigate the trails on the new brochure, map, and trail guide are completed. Several log water bars and steps were installed on Trail 110 to help control some badly eroded areas. Numerous illegal trails were filled with slash and rocks to also help control erosion. Volunteers also re-routed the lower part of Trail 110 near the park entrance to help prevent accidents for cyclists coming down the hill and riding out into the main road. A patch of Spotted Knapweed was discovered on the trail on Ragged Ridge, so volunteers hiked out four different times through the summer to hand-pull these highly invasive noxious weeds. The Friends Group is committed to doing this every summer until the weeds disappear. Volunteers are truly making a big difference at Mt. Spokane State Park!



Bill Birk doing erosion control Summer 2000

CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATOR

According to Cleve Pinnix, Director of the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission, our Washington State Parks are in an

advanced state of decay and getting worse fast.¹ Consider a few facts:

While our park system is the fourth most visited and one of the largest in the country, it ranks 49th in per visit spending.

Washington currently spends about \$0.63 per visitor compared to the national average of \$1.85 per visitor.

The ancient campground electrical system recently failed at Deception Pass, while the main access road at Mt. Spokane actually slid down the hill last April resulting in an \$800,000 repair. Addressing both of these crises required putting projects in other parks even further behind.

Numerous other emergency problems caused by neglect have forced the Parks Commission to defer more and more preventive maintenance, which has in turn caused more deterioration, compromising visitor safety and substantially reducing the overall attractiveness of our parks.

Why is this important? Parks are an essential part of a healthy community. They provide much needed environments for leisure activities and challenging sports. The Parks Commission's mission is to acquire, operate, enhance, and protect a very diverse system of recreational, cultural, historical, and natural sites. The Commission fosters both recreational use and preservation to ensure that our incredible natural resources continue to enrich future generations. And our parks are very important to an economy based increasingly on tourism. According to Pinnix, "spending by visitors who use the state parks system returns about \$80 million a year in state sales tax. So if you just look at it as a numbers-cruncher, you'd say this system more than pays its own way."

Washington State Parks deserve better. For the 2001-2003 biennium, the Commission is proposing a much larger budget than ever before, \$124 million. Legislators are now better informed with regard to the extreme need, and there have been indications that over two decades of waiting could

be near its end. But it is critical that our legislators hear from those of us who really value our parks. Therefore, the Board of the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park would like to encourage every local state park user to contact their state legislators and tell them to fully fund our state parks over the next biennium. Please see our web site for a sample letter. You can also call the legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Thank you!!

¹See "State of Decay" by Bob Mottram, Tacoma News Tribune, 8/23/00.

COMMITTEES NEED HELP

If you would like to join a Friends Group committee, please contact Cris Currie at 466-9540 or by e-mail at criscurrie@igc.org.

The Trails Committee assists in implementing the trail plans and in organizing volunteer work parties. The Education Committee is producing new park brochures, a Friends Group web site, and other park interpretation materials. The Newsletter Committee is keeping our growing membership better informed. And the Park History Committee will eventually publish a comprehensive park history.

INTERIM TRAIL PLAN SUMMARY

Generally, the Interim Trail Use Plan is designed to address only issues requiring immediate attention, including protecting park natural/cultural resources, ensuring visitor safety, and avoiding any increase in trail user conflicts. Below is a brief summary of the plan's major provisions.

Summer Trail Use Management

1. Most trails will be managed for shared pedestrian, cycling, and equestrian use.
2. Visitor impacts and risks to visitor safety will be measured and managed using the Limits of Acceptable Change adaptive management system.
3. Trail 110 will be reconfigured at its intersection with the paved park entrance road to improve the safety of cyclists exiting the trail. (project completed)
4. Trail 130 will be improved near the intersection with the Kit Carson Loop Road to prevent erosion. This trail will

be closed to cyclists until work is completed.

5. Trails 100 and 110 will be improved near the lower Kit Carson Loop Road to prevent further soil erosion and protect stream crossings.
6. Trail 170 to the summit of Mt. Kit Carson may be closed to all uses to prevent further erosion. Trail 115 down to Smith Gap will be closed to cyclists.
7. The Ragged Ridge Trail will be opened to pedestrian and educational use only.
8. Additional trail numbering/use signs and maps will be developed.
 1. Snowmobiles will be permitted only on the groomed snowmobile trails, designated ungroomed trails (Day Mt. Spokane Road, Blanchard Creek Road, Connector from Blanchard Creek Road, Trail 115 from Smith Gap to Mt. Kit Carson, Day Mountain Trail 130, and the Kit Carson Loop Road from Smith Gap east to Trail 110), and in designated play areas (CCC, Day Mountain, and Mt. Kit Carson meadows).
 2. A Cook's Cabin to summit snowmobile corridor will be designated on a one-year trial basis.
 3. Impacts of snowmobiles will be measured and managed using the LAC adaptive management system.
 4. The groomed snowmobile trails will be opened for use after initial grooming operations are completed. Play areas will be opened after adequate snow cover is determined (minimum 36").
 5. Backcountry skiing in the Nordic area in a manner that disturbs track grooming will not be permitted.
 6. Snowshoeing and backcountry skiing will be encouraged in areas not designated for snowmobile use. Both will still be permitted on groomed snowmobile trails.
 7. A formal winter trail user education program will be developed.
 8. A multi-organizational snowmobile rules enforcement program will be developed.
 9. Winter use boundary and permitted trail use signs will be installed.

Joining the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park

Individual Membership: \$25 or 5 hours of volunteer service per year.

Family Membership: \$40 or 10 hours of volunteer service per year.

Corporate Membership: \$100 per year or more!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Send to The Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park

621 W. Mallon Suite 509

Spokane, WA 99201

Message phone: 509-467-9343

All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

Check out our new web page at www.mtspokane.o

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